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## A Lesson on Learning about the Solar System by Jarret Gillan

**Grade Level:** Grade 3

**Subject Area:** English Language Arts

**Lesson Length:** 1 hour 15 minutes

**Lesson Keywords:** Solar System, Language Arts, Grade 3

**Lesson Description:** This is an English Language Arts lesson with a concentration on Science. Students will read a short passage about the solar system, including different descriptions of space features, and will develop an understanding of the importance of exploration. After reading, students will be asked to define different level vocabulary words, answer questions pertaining to the text, and provide a reflection of their knowledge. By the end of this lesson, students should be able to determine the main idea and key details from the text, define and understand the meaning of different levels of vocabulary, distinguish their own point of view from their author's, write an opinion piece or reflection, and use sentence contexts to help define words or phrases.

### Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.2: Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.4: Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 3 topic or subject area.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.3.6: Distinguish their own point of view from that of the author of a text.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

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CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.3.4a: Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

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## Lesson Content: Book/Story/Reading Passage

**Instructions:** Please read the following reading passage as many times as needed before beginning the other lesson activities. Understanding this passage is very important since the lesson activities will be all about this content. Feel free to print the passage if needed.

### Learning about the Solar System

by

**Content:** When scientists looked at the stars long ago, they saw patterns. They did not understand everything about what they saw. So they kept looking to learn more. That is what scientists do. They ask questions and look for information to answer their questions. They are like explorers. They do not travel far the way explorers do. But they do make a kind of journey. They want to learn more. They go from what they know to what they discover.

Scientists have learned about our planet. It is very big. It is very diverse. There are places that are hot. There are places that are freezing. There are mountains and plains. There are hills and valleys. There are deep oceans. There are great rivers and waterfalls. There are rainforests. There are deserts. Those are all parts of our planet. There is much more to learn about what is here on Earth. A scientist dedicates much time to learning. The scientist works hard. The scientist helps us all find out more about our world.

Our planet is in a galaxy called the Milky Way. The sun is a big star in our part of this giant galaxy. Our galaxy holds millions of other stars. The sun is very important to our planet. The sun gives us light during the day. It gives us heat, too. Two other planets are closer to the sun than Earth: Mercury and Venus.

Scientists figured out how the Earth changes. Earth orbits the sun once each year. It travels once around the sun every 365 days. The other eight planets in our solar system also orbit around the sun. All travel in a pattern called an ellipse, which is a kind of oval. So at times Earth is farther from the sun. Scientists figured out that made it cooler on Earth then. But they also figured out that it is the tilt of the Earth's axis, however, that has the greatest effect on temperatures.

Scientists are still learning about our galaxy. There is much to discover. Today astronauts travel into space. They are explorers. It is dangerous to travel in space, but they are dauntless. They bravely travel thousands of miles to learn.

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## Task 1: Vocabulary

**Instructions:** Please complete the following vocabulary activity by choosing the correct meaning of each word selected from the passage and use of each word correctly in a sentence.

**Q: 1 WordPhrase:** Diverse **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** In the second paragraph of the passage, the author describes planet Earth. "It is very big. It is very diverse. There are places that are hot. There are places that are freezing. There are mountains and plains. There are hills and valleys. There are deep oceans." What does "diverse" mean in the author's description?

- A: Being very large.
- B: Having few differences.
- C: Having many differences.
- D: Being very small.

**Question:** Which of the sentences below uses the word "diverse" correctly?

- A: The pencil is very diverse.
- B: The school is very diverse.
- C: The mountain is very diverse.
- D: The car is very diverse.

**Q: 2 WordPhrase:** Dauntless **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** In the last paragraph of the passage, the author describes astronauts. "They are explorers. It is dangerous to travel into space, but they are dauntless." What does the word "dauntless" mean in this sentence?

- A: Happy
- B: Tired
- C: Scared
- D: Fearless

**Question:** Which of the sentences below uses the word "dauntless" correctly?

- A: The firefighter was dauntless as he ran into the burning building to save the dog.
- B: The teacher was dauntless as she handed out worksheets to her students.
- C: The student was dauntless as they ate their lunch in the cafeteria.
- D: The bridge was dauntless even as the winds blew strongly and fiercely.

**Q: 3 WordPhrase:** Orbits **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** "Earth orbits the sun once a year". What does the word "orbits" mean in this sentence?

- A: Move freely
- B: Stand still
- C: Rotates around
- D: To jump

**Question:** Which sentence below uses the word "orbits" correctly?

- A: The cow orbits grass for breakfast.
- B: The whale orbits the sea.
- C: The principal orbits at his desk.
- D: The minute hand orbits the clock.

**Q: 4 WordPhrase:** Galaxy **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** "The sun is a big star in our part of this giant galaxy." Which word below is most accurate to the meaning of "galaxy" in this sentence?

- A: Collection of stars
- B: Event
- C: Sequence
- D: Place

**Question:** Which of the sentences below uses the word "galaxy" in the correct context?

- A: The galaxy is very small.
- B: The many stars and planets make up the galaxy.
- C: The many galaxies make up the stars and planets.
- D: The galaxy was very sad.

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## Task 2: Forum Discussion

**Instructions:** This discussion forum will have questions for students to respond. Read the posted questions, and respond to each. Students are responsible for posting one initial and and two peer responses for each topic.

### 1 - Author's Purpose

What was the author's purpose for writing?this passage??

### 2 - Thinking Beyond the Passage

In the last paragraph, the author mentions that there is much to discover. Given your understanding of this passage, what else do you think there is to learn about the solar system or space in general??

### 3 - Time Dedication

In the second paragraph, the author says that a scientist dedicates much time to learning. Why do you think this is?

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Task 3: Writing Activity

**Instructions:** In three (3) paragraphs, reflect on your knowledge of space given the passage's context for your writing assignment. Is there anything that specific that you learned from this passage? Are there any questions that you are now curious about? Make sure to include specific references to the two following terms in your response: earth, and the sun.?

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