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A Lesson on The Astronaut's Diary by Stephanie McLaughlin

Grade Level: Grade 4

Subject Area: English Language Arts

Lesson Length: 1 hour 30 minutes

Lesson Keywords: Reading, Discussion, Writing, Space, The Astronaut's Diary

Lesson Description: The goal of the lesson is to provide students with an opportunity to utilize the reading and writing thinking skills they have been developing over the entire school year. Students will read and re-read the story "The Astronaut's Diary" for understanding while answering questions about the text. The students will explore why the life of an astronaut is so challenging.

Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.1: Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.4.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.4: Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.4.4: Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.1b: Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.

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Lesson Content: Book/Story/Reading Passage

Instructions: Please read the following reading passage as many times as needed (aloud and silent) before starting to go through other lesson pages. Understanding the content of this passage is very important since the lesson activities will be all about this content. Feel free to print the passage if needed.

The Astronaut's Diary

by

Content: We were exhausted from all the work. We slept in shifts. One of us had to be awake all the time. There was so much work to do.

Finally, we got to our destination. We had reached the space station. There, we would do more work, but we would have less pressure. We had so much to do every day on our ship. Now there would be more people to help us. We would be on a collaborative team. We would be able to share the work.

When we moved into the space station, I felt great. There was so much more space. We would have real beds to sleep in. We would have better food. They had a garden on the space station. They grew vegetables.

The six astronauts on the space station were happy to see us. They said, We have been waiting for you. We were glad to see them, too. We had been worried. We heard that one of them had been sick.

We asked how she was feeling. She said she was better now. It had been a cold. We were relieved. We could stop worrying now.

That first night on the space station was great. We had good food. We had a good dinner. Then we were going to sleep. But one of the astronauts said, We need to give you a job. Each person has to take turns staying awake. Here is the schedule. So I had a shift again.

I saw I was first. I would have to stay awake tonight. I was disappointed. I felt fatigued. I had been awake and working for 20 hours. But I knew it was my duty. So I sighed and said, See you in the morning.

I became an astronaut so that I could travel in space. Now I'm here. It is hard work. It's even more challenging than I expected.

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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: Fatigued **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: The author in the story says "I felt fatigued." What does the word "fatigued" mean in this sentence?

- A: Hungry
- B: Sick
- C: Tired
- D: Uncomfortable

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the word "fatigued" properly?

- A: The little boy was fatigued so he ate a sandwich.
 - B: She fatigued until she fell asleep.
 - C: I feel fatigued after a good night's sleep.
 - D: The dog chased the ball for 2 hours and became fatigued.
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Q: 2 WordPhrase: Challenging **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: The author in the story said being an astronaut is "even more challenging than I expected." What does the word "challenging" mean in the sentence?

- A: to take part in a competition
- B: to test a person's ability
- C: to tell a lie
- D: to move very fast

Question: Which one of the following sentences uses the word "challenging" properly in relation to the story?

- A: I found it very challenging to lift the heavy box.
 - B: I am challenging you to a race.
 - C: He challenged you to think of another way to do that.
 - D: Saying hello.
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Q: 3 WordPhrase: Destination **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The author in the story says "Finally, we got to our destination." What does the word "destination" mean?

- A: A planet
- B: The place you are travelling to
- C: The name of the space station
- D: To fly through space

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the word "destination" correctly as it relates to the story?

- A: I threw the ball in the destination.
 - B: We got in the destination and went to the store.
 - C: We had a destination for lunch.
 - D: We had a long car ride and finally reached our destination.
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Q: 4 WordPhrase: Shifts **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: In the story, the author says "We slept in shifts." What does the word "shifts" mean in this sentence?

- A: To move from one place to another.
- B: To do something very quickly.
- C: Doing the same activity one after the other.
- D: A slight change in direction.

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the word "shifts" correctly as it relates to the story?

- A: He shifts to the right to avoid the sun.
 - B: The wind usually shifts later in the day.
 - C: They shifts over to the gymnasium.
 - D: We work in shifts to get everything finished.
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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 two peer responses for each topic.

1 - Why Was the Astronaut So Tired?

Why was the astronaut so tired? ?What happened to make him feel better? ?

2 - Why Did the Astronaut Think They Would Have Better Food at the Space Station?

Why did the astronaut think they would have better food at the space station? ?

3 - What Were the Astronauts Worried About?

What were the astronauts worried about? ?Why do you think they were so worried? ?

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Task 3: Writing Activity

Instructions: After reading The Astronaut's Diary, what do you think is the hardest part about being an astronaut?
Please make sure to provide specific examples from the passage.

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