



## A Lesson on The Astronaut's Diary by Liz Pope

**Grade Level:** Grade 4

**Subject Area:** English Language Arts

**Lesson Length:** 1 hour

**Lesson Keywords:** Reading, vocabulary, creative writing, writing, critical thinking skills

**Lesson Description:** This lesson is about the story *The Astronaut's Diary*, with comprehensive assignments that go along with the story as well. The goal of this lesson is for students to think critically about the author's feelings, and to draw from these emotions to answer the discussion questions. The vocabulary questions draw from the passage and allow the student to use critical reading skills to derive the definitions of these words while expanding their vocabulary. At the end of this lesson plan is a creative writing assignment that asks students to put themselves in the astronaut's shoes and explain why or why not they would like to be an astronaut, letting the students be creative while still using critical reading skills to draw details from the story to support their answers.

### Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

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.RI.4.8: Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RF.4.3: Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words.

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.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)

=====

## 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.

=====

---

## 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:** Disappointed **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** When the astronaut said that he was "disappointed" that he would have to stay awake, what does he mean?

- A: He is excited
- B: He is confused
- C: He is sad
- D: He is unsure

**Question:** Which sentence best uses the word "disappointed" like it's used in the story?

- A: When I realized the cake was gone, I was disappointed.
  - B: My teacher told me directions that I couldn't understand and disappointed me.
  - C: I was disappointed when I realized I was getting free ice cream.
  - D: My puppy disappointed me by licking my face.
- 

**Q: 2 WordPhrase:** Relieved **WordPhraseTier:** 2

**Question:** What does the word "relieved" mean in this story?

- A: Confused
- B: Tired
- C: Sad
- D: Happy

**Question:** Which sentence uses the word "relieved" properly?

- A: Richard was relieved that he fell while skateboarding
  - B: Mom was relieved that I finally cleaned my room
  - C: When the I failed the test, I was relieved
  - D: I was relieved that I couldn't go to the park with my friends
- 

**Q: 3 WordPhrase:** Collaborative **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** When the astronaut said that he would be "collaborative" on a team, what did he mean?

- A: He would be thankful
- B: He would be sad
- C: He would work together
- D: He would be tired

**Question:** How do you use the word collaborative in a sentence, the way it's used in this story?

- A: During class we were collaborative, and helped each other finish the assignment
  - B: We were too collaborative on the playground during recess, so the teacher made us come inside.
  - C: When we were collaborative, we all started arguing.
  - D: I tried to be collaborative, so I argued with my team mates.
- 

**Q: 4 WordPhrase:** Fatigued **WordPhraseTier:** 3

**Question:** What does the word "fatigued" mean?

- A: Unsure
- B: Tired
- C: Excited
- D: Late

**Question:** Which option correctly uses "fatigued" in the sentence?

- A: We were fatigued after staying out late last night.
  - B: I couldn't finish my homework, so the teacher was fatigued with me.
  - C: Richard was fatigued, so he ran the fastest mile.
  - D: My mom was fatigued with us, so we got ice cream.
-

=====

## 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 - Late nights...

How do you think the astronaut felt when he learned he would have to stay up so late to do his duty? How would you have felt in this situation??

### 2 - Why do astronauts get sick?

How do you think the astronaut got sick? Why do you think they were worried about this?

### 3 - The Space Station

Why do you think the astronaut was so excited to get to the space station?

=====

=====

Task 3: Writing Activity

**Instructions:** Write 2 full paragraphs stating why you would or wouldn't want to be an astronaut, and support your decision using details from the story. What would be fun about being an astronaut? What wouldn't be? Does this sound like something you'd want to do?

=====