

Lift-off!

by Diana Noonan

illustrated by Scott Kennedy



Book Summary

Two characters leave Earth far behind as they explore outer space in their rocket.

Features of the Book

- The use of the imperative.
- The contractions – “We’re,” “It’s,” “That’s,” “There’s,” and “Let’s.”
- The repetition of “Let’s” to build expectation over the last pages.
- The use of ellipses to build anticipation.
- The use of the exclamation point.
- The short, “punchy” sentences inviting expressive reading aloud.
- The cartoon-style illustrations.
- The use of technical terms – “space probes” and “asteroids.”

Purpose

Lift-off! can be used in a guided reading setting to introduce and reinforce the following skills and strategies:

- using punctuation cues to read instructional-level books with expression;
- understanding the punctuation cues and their meanings;
- writing using common contractions.

Introducing the text

- Where do you think the two people on the cover are?
- What are they looking at?
- Why are they dressed like that?

Read the title and ensure the children understand that the word “Lift-off” is used after the countdown and means that the rocket is on its way.

- Where do you think the rocket might be going?

During the discussion, introduce terms such as “satellite,” “space station,” “asteroids,” “planets,” and “space probes” so that the children are familiar with them before reading the text.

Read the names of the author and the illustrator to the group.

Reading the text

- Using punctuation cues to read instructional-level books with expression.
- Understanding the punctuation cues and their meanings.

Pages 2 and 3 – Look at the different pieces of the space suits.

- *What do you think lift-off would feel like?*

Pages 4 and 5 – The text says, “We’re rocketing into space.”

- *What’s that below the rocket?*

Pages 6 and 7 – Talk about the “leftovers” from space journeys.

The illustrator, Scott Kennedy, has tried to make some of the pictures funny.

- *Can you see something that shouldn’t be in this picture?*

Pages 8 and 9

- *What do you know about satellites and space stations?*

Pages 10 to 16

- *Where do you think they might be going?*

Children now read the book independently.

Revisiting the text

Identify where the contractive apostrophe has been used and explain its function.

- *Why does the writer use the short form “it’s” and “we’re” instead of “it is” and “we are”?*

Discuss the effect of the ellipses on page 3.

Following Up

- Writing using common contractions.

☞ The children could write an imaginative story about a visit to a planet with a description of its unusual life forms. Encourage them to use contractions in their work.

- Complete the blackline master opposite.