

Learning Resources for
Ballpark Mysteries #4

The Astro Outlaw
By David A. Kelly

Background

About the Book

The Astro Outlaw is the 4th team book in the Ballpark Mysteries series. There are also four Ballpark Mysteries Super Specials that take place in special locations (such as the World Series or the Cooperstown Hall of Fame).

In **The Astro Outlaw**, Mike and Kate travel to Houston, Texas. Astronaut, Commander Nicholas Rice is supposed to be signing autographs and showing a moon rock at an Astros game. But when it is time for the commander to throw out the first pitch, he is nowhere to be found. Mike and Kate have another mystery on their hands! Can they find the commander?

About the Author

David A. Kelly is a children's book author, travel writer and technology analyst. He's the author of the *Ballpark Mysteries* series from Random House, in which cousins Kate and Mike solve mysteries at different major league ballparks, and the *Most Valuable Players* (MVP) series from Random House as well, in which a group of elementary school kids have adventures playing different sports. Mr. Kelly is also the author of the early reader, *Babe Ruth and the Baseball Curse* and the picture book *Miracle Mud: Lena Blackburne and Secret Mud that Changed Baseball*.

He has written about travel and technology for the New York Times, the Boston Globe, the Chicago Sun Times, and many other publications.

Mr. Kelly lives in Newton, MA, with his wife and two sons.

For more information, visit David's webpage – www.davidakellybooks.com

You can follow Mr. Kelly on social media:

- Twitter @davidakelly
- Instagram @davidakellybooks
- Facebook @ballparkmysteries

Signed and personalized books are available at: www.buydavidakellybooks.com

Free Q&A Skype sessions are available at: www.dakskype.com

In-person and virtual author visits are available at: www.dakvisits.com

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The Houston Astros Stadium

Book Tie-in:

Much of *The Outlaw Astro* takes place at the Minute Maid Park. The stadium is one of the most unique stadiums in the MLB.

TEKS Standards:

- ★ Grade 2: Comprehension skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student uses metacognitive skills to both develop and deepen comprehension of increasingly complex texts. The student is expected to:
 - A. Establish purpose for reading assigned and self-selected texts.
 - H. Synthesize information to create new understanding.
 - I. Monitor comprehension and make adjustments such as re-reading, using background knowledge, checking for visual cues, and asking questions when understanding breaks.

CCSS:

- ★ Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text. (RI.2.1)
- ★ Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers. (RI..3.1)

Objectives:

- ★ Improve reading comprehension
- ★ Reread a passage to find answers to questions

Procedures:

- ★ Watch the following videos
 - [Overview \(2:53\)](#)
 - [The Train \(2:04\)](#)
- ★ Have students read the informational passage, “Houston Astros Stadium”. This can be done in the following ways:

- Teacher read aloud
- Guided Reading Group
- Partner Reading
- Independent Reading

★ Ask students the following questions:

- What are the headings in this passage? (The Roof, The Train, Tal's Hill)
- How are headings helpful to the reader? (They tell the reader what the next section is mostly about.)
- When was the stadium built? (2000)
- What is a retractable roof? (It is a roof that can open and close).
- What sentence helped you figure out the meaning of retractable? (This means that the roof can open and close.)
- What was built in the outfield? (A hill)
- Who was the hill named after? (Tal Smith, Executive Manager of the Astros)
- What else was on the hill? (flag pole)
- What happened at the end of the 2016 season? (Tal's Hill was taken away)

★ Have students complete the worksheet on the stadium.



THE HOUSTON ASTROS STADIUM

The baseball stadium for the Houston Astros' was built in 2000. It has many interesting parts.

The Roof

The stadium has a retractable roof. This means that the roof can open and closed. When the weather is nice, the roof is open. When the weather is too hot or it is rainy, the roof is closed. It takes 12-20 minutes for the roof to move from an open position to a closed position.

The Train

The stadium also has a train. But it is not on the ground. It is above the seats in the

stadium! The train is on an 800 feet long track. The train moves down the track when there is a home run. The trip down the track takes 40 seconds.

Tal's Hill

When the stadium was first built it had a hill in the outfield. The hill also had a flag pole with a flag. The hill was named after Tal Smith who was the executive manager of the Houston Astros at the time.

Tal's Hill was removed at the end of the 2016 season. There is now a seating area for fans.

A close-up photograph of a baseball field, showing the red dirt of the infield and the green grass of the outfield, separated by a white chalk line.

THE HOUSTON ASTROS STADIUM

Read the passage and the Houston Astro's Stadium. Then complete the sentences below.

The stadium was built in .

A roof that can open and close is .

The train moves when a is hit.

Tal's Hill had a .

Tal's Hill was removed in .

A close-up, high-angle photograph of a baseball field. The image shows the green grass of the outfield and the reddish-brown dirt of the infield. A white chalk line, likely the baseline, runs diagonally from the top right towards the bottom left, separating the grass from the dirt. The title 'THE HOUSTON ASTRO'S STADIUM' is written in large, bold, white, sans-serif capital letters across the top half of the image. A small white rectangular box with the word 'Key' in red is positioned on the left side, overlapping the dirt area.

THE HOUSTON ASTRO'S STADIUM

Key

Read the passage and the Houston Astro's Stadium. Then complete the sentences below.

The stadium was built in

2000

.

A roof that can open and close is

retractable

.

The train moves when a

homerun

is hit.

Tal's Hill had a

flagpole

.

Tal's Hill was removed in

2016

.



Astro Adjectives

Book Tie-in:

The author, David A. Kelly uses lots of adjectives in *The Outlaw Astro*. Encourage students to highlight these adjectives as they read the book.

TEKS Standards:

- ★ Grade 2: Composition: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts--writing process. The student uses the writing process recursively to compose multiple texts that are legible and uses appropriate conventions. The student is expected to:
 - D. edit drafts using standard English conventions, including:
 - adjectives, including articles
- ★ Grade 3: Composition: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts-- writing process. The student uses the writing process recursively to compose multiple texts that are legible and uses appropriate conventions. The student is expected to:
 - edit drafts using standard English conventions, including:
 - adjectives, including their comparative and superlative forms

CCSS:

- ★ Use adjectives and adverbs, and choose between them depending on what is to be modified. (L.2.1.E)
- ★ Explain the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in general and their functions in particular sentences. (L.3.1.A)

Objectives:

- ★ Define adjectives
- ★ Identify adjectives in a sentence.

Procedure:

- ★ Review the definition of an adjective by using the [video](#). (2:46)
- ★ Reread pages 42-43 in *The Astro Outlaw*. After reading these pages ask students to locate the adjectives. Record them on chart paper for future reference. Underline the adjectives and circle the nouns that they describe.
- ★ Have students complete the Astro Adjective Worksheet.
- ★ Extension: Have students write their own sentences using adjectives. Use the template provided.

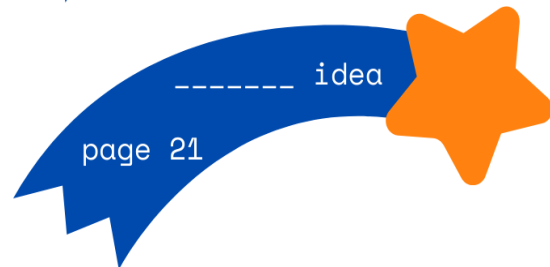
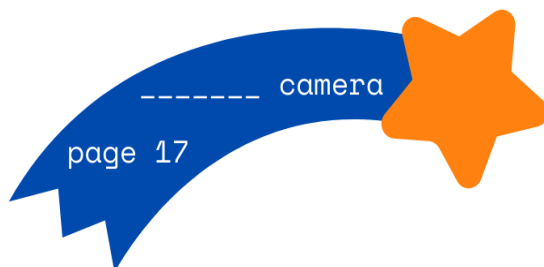
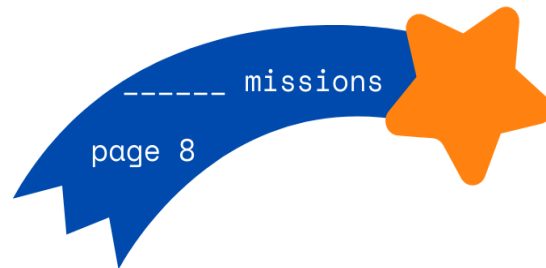
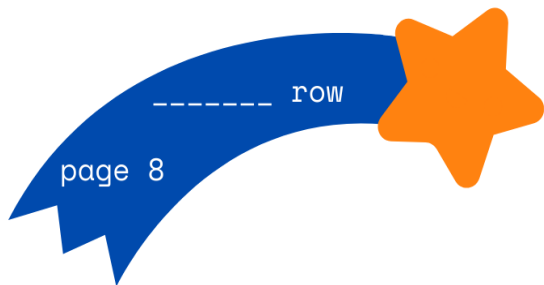
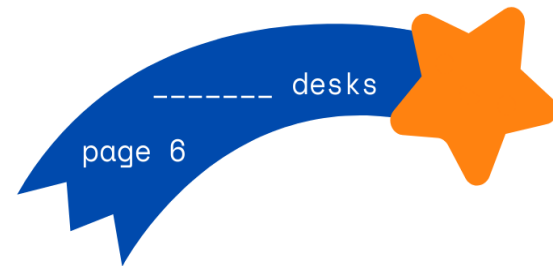
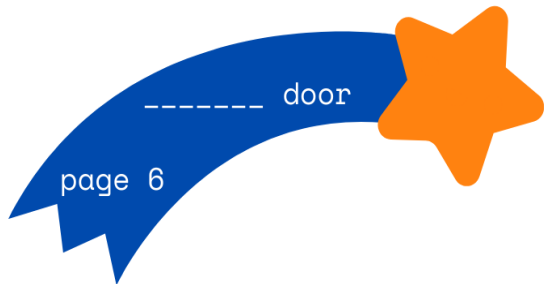
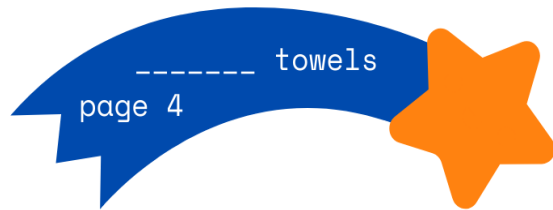
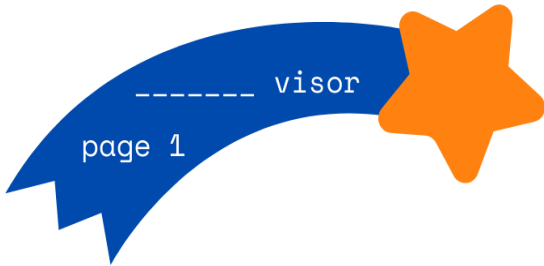
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Astro Adjectives



Adjectives describe nouns. Find the adjectives that describe these nouns using *The Astro Outlaw*. Write the answer on the star.



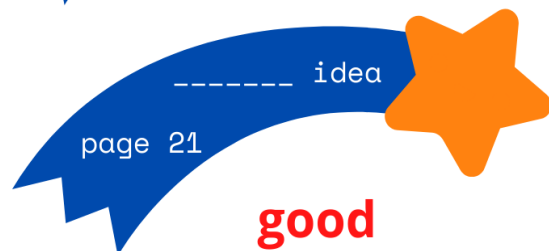
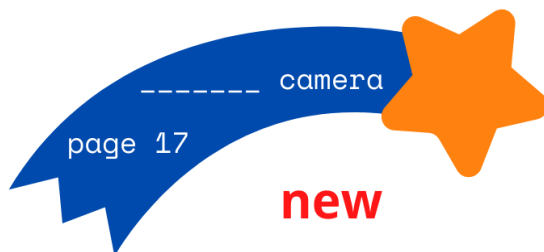
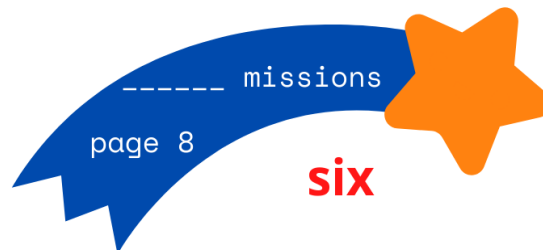
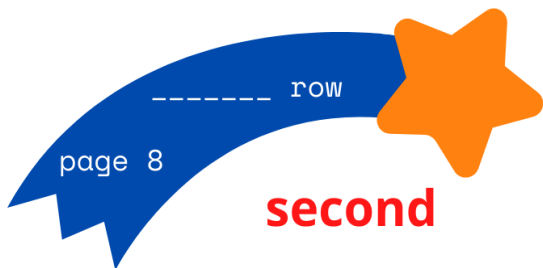
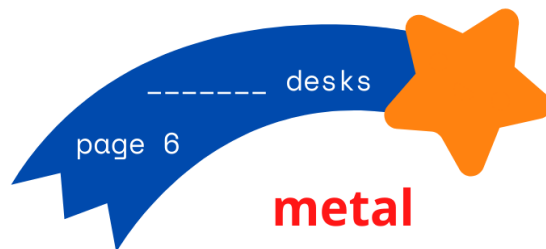
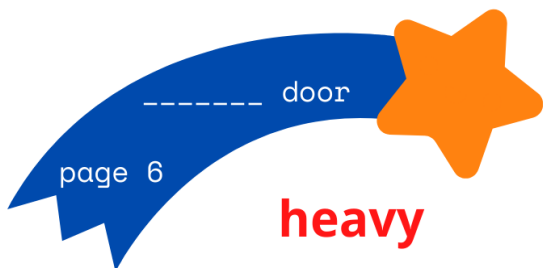
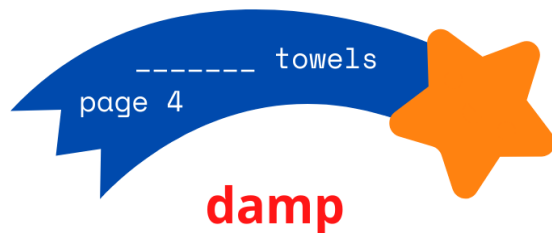
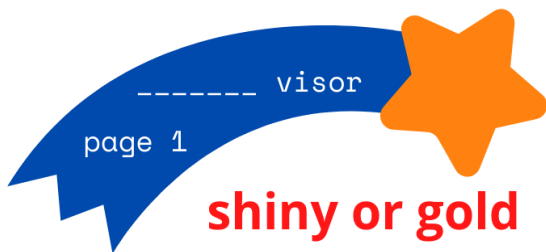
Name : _____ **Key** _____

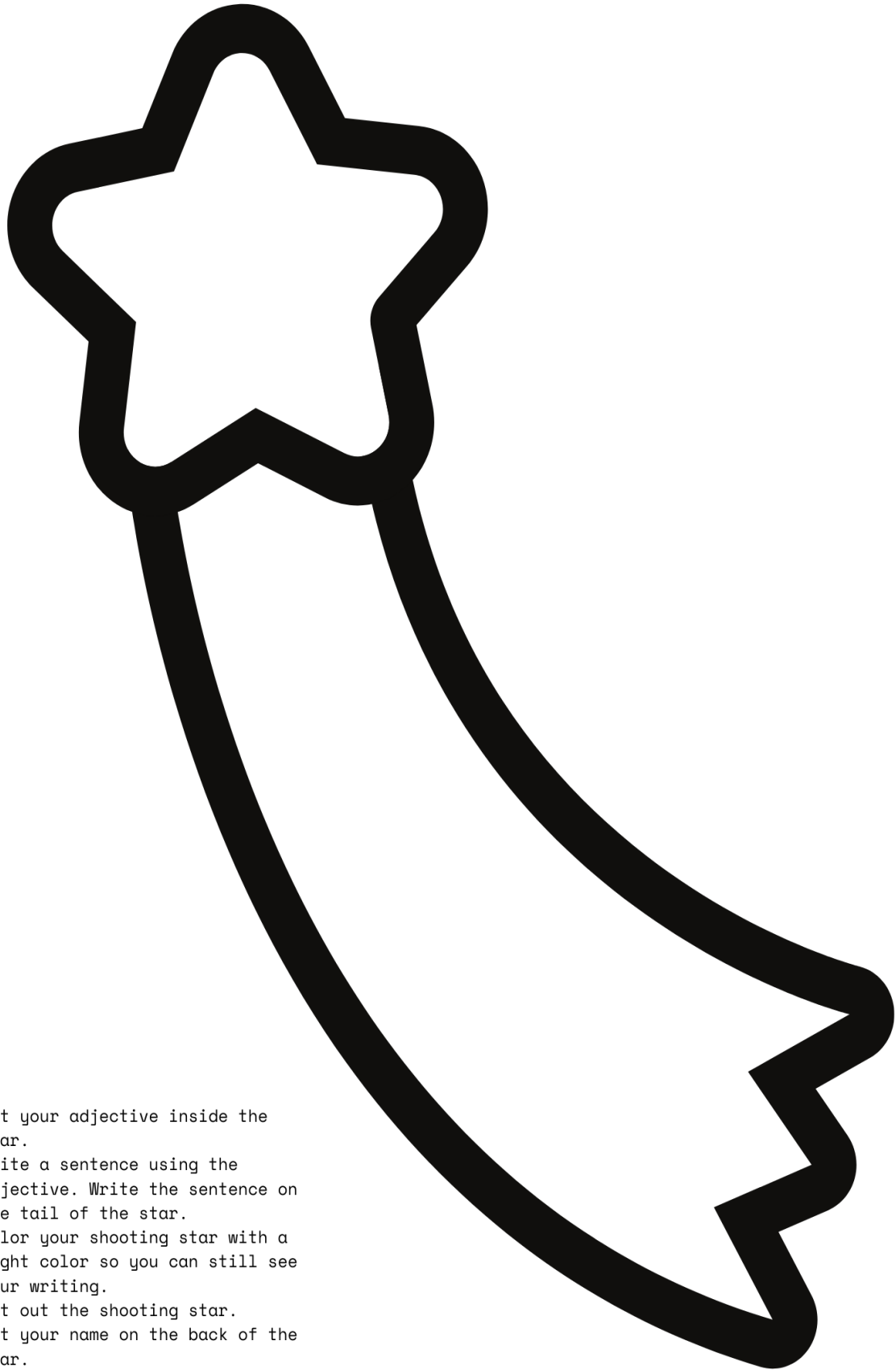


Astro Adjectives



Adjectives describe nouns. Find the adjectives that describe these nouns using *The Astro Outlaw*. Write the answer on the star.





1. Put your adjective inside the star.
2. Write a sentence using the adjective. Write the sentence on the tail of the star.
3. Color your shooting star with a light color so you can still see your writing.
4. Cut out the shooting star.
5. Put your name on the back of the star.



Life On A Space Station

Book Tie-in:

Commander Nicholas Rice is a main character in *The Outlaw Astro*. He is an astronaut for NASA. This activity provides background knowledge about life on a space station.

TEKS Standards:

- ★ Grade 2: Comprehension skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student uses metacognitive skills to both develop and deepen comprehension of increasingly complex texts. The student is expected to:
 - A. establish a purpose for reading assigned and self-selected texts.
 - B. generate questions about text before, during, and after reading to deepen understanding and gain information.
 - D. create mental images to deepen understanding.
 - E. make connections to personal experiences, ideas in other texts, and society.
- ★ Grade 2: Response skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student responds to an increasingly challenging variety of sources that are read, heard, or viewed. The student is expected to:
 - write brief comments on literary or informational texts that demonstrate an understanding of the text.
- ★ Grade 3: Comprehension skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student uses metacognitive skills to both develop and deepen comprehension of increasingly complex texts. The student is expected to:
 - A. establish purpose for reading assigned and self-selected texts.
 - B. generate questions about text before, during, and after reading to deepen understanding and gain information.
 - D. create mental images to deepen understanding.
 - E. make connections to personal experiences, ideas in other texts, and society.
- ★ Grade 3: Response skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student responds to an increasingly challenging variety of sources that are read, heard, or viewed. The student is expected to:

- B. write a response to a literary or informational text that demonstrates an understanding of a text.

CCSS:

- ★ Ask and answer such questions as *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, *why*, and *how* to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text. (RI.2.1)
- ★ Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers. (RI.3.1)
- ★ Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section. (W.2.2)
- ★ Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section. (W.3.2)

Objectives:

- ★ Improve reading comprehension.
- ★ Use facts from an informational passage to write an expository paragraph.

Procedure:

- ★ Read the passage, "Life On A Space Station". This can be done in the following ways:
 - Teacher read aloud
 - Guided Reading Group
 - Partner Reading
 - Independent Reading
- ★ Ask students the following questions:
 - What form is salt and pepper in on the space station? (liquid)
 - What might happen if the salt and pepper were in solid form? (They could get into the astronauts' eyes.)
 - Why do astronauts attach themselves to something when they go to sleep? (So they won't float around)
 - Where do astronauts sleep? (In a sleeping bag/In a crew cabin)
 - Name something that astronauts do in their free time. (They exercise, play cards, and watch movies. They watch sunrises and sunsets.)
- ★ Have students use their reading passages to write about life in space. Teachers may provide the following topic sentence: My life in space is exciting!

- ★ After students finish writing their paragraphs, have them share their writing with the class.

Life On The Space Station

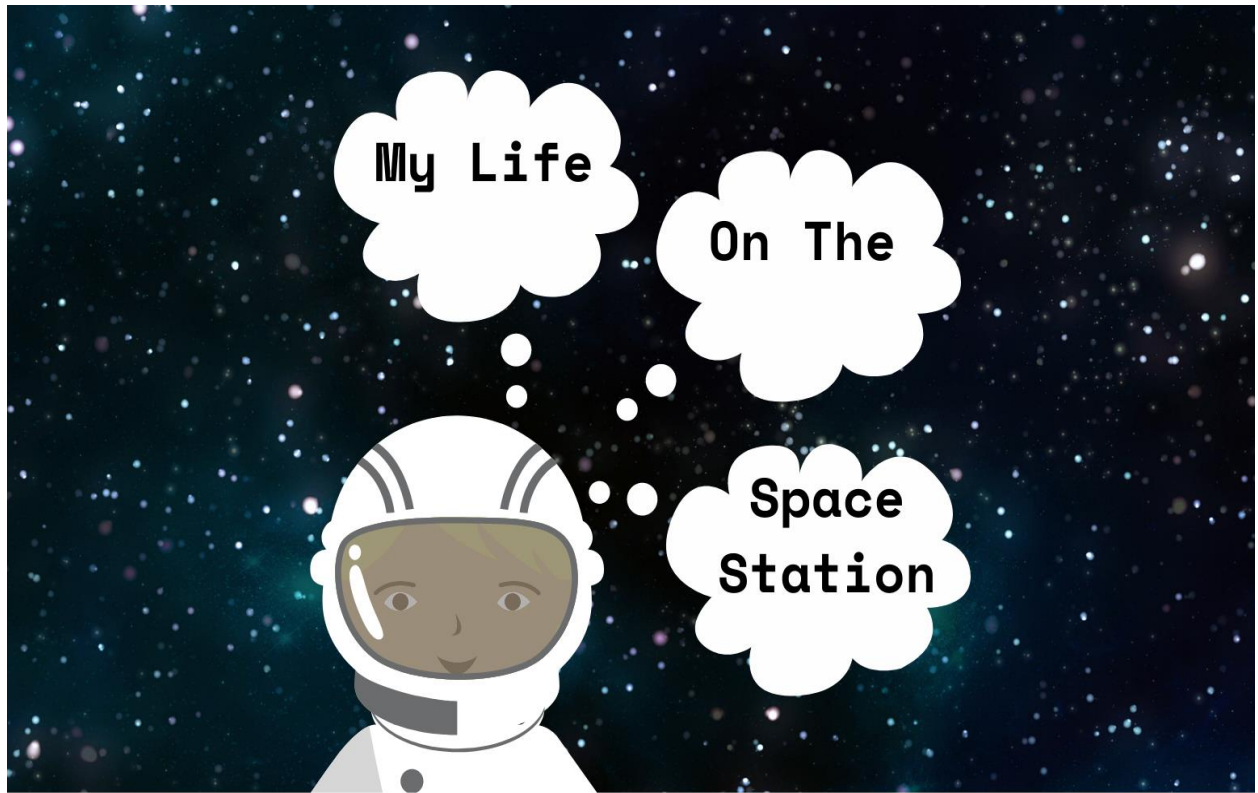
Salt and pepper are in liquid form. If it was in solid form, it would float away. The particles could get into the astronauts eyes.

Astronauts attach themselves to an object so that they don't float from place to place while they are sleeping.

Astronauts sleep in sleeping bags in a personal crew cabin. They are scheduled to sleep for eight hours.

Astronauts spend their days conducting science experiments. They also take care of the equipment on the space station.

Astronauts have free time on the space station. They exercise, play cards, and watch movies. They watch sunrises and sunsets.



Handwriting practice lines consisting of ten sets of three horizontal lines (top solid, middle dashed, bottom solid).



Onomatopoeia Odyssey

Book Tie-In: The author, David A. Kelly uses onomatopoeia in *The Astro Outlaw*. Encourage students to look for examples of onomatopoeia as they read the book.

TEKS:

- ★ Grade 2: Author's purpose and craft: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student uses critical inquiry to analyze the authors' choices and how they influence and communicate meaning within a variety of texts. The student analyzes and applies the author's craft purposefully in order to develop his or her own products and performances. The student is expected to:
 - D. discuss the use of descriptive, literal, and figurative language.
- ★ Grade 3: Author's purpose and craft: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts. The student uses critical inquiry to analyze the authors' choices and how they influence and communicate meaning within a variety of texts. The student analyzes and applies the author's craft purposefully in order to develop his or her own products and performances. The student is expected to:
 - describe how the author's use of imagery, literal and figurative language such as simile, and sound devices such as onomatopoeia achieves specific purposes.

CCSS:

- ★ Describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song. (L.2.4)
- ★ Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. (L.3.5)

Objectives:

- ★ Students will define, identify, and use onomatopoeia words.

Procedures:

- ★ Explain that onomatopoeia is a sound word. It imitates or mimics the sound it represents.
- ★ Show the video. [Video](#)
- ★ Put the following examples on the board: snap, knock-knock, neigh, whirr. Ask students for additional examples.
- ★ Share with students that the author, David A. Kelly uses onomatopoeia throughout *The Astro Outlaw*. Explain to them that they will be searching for examples of onomatopoeia in the book. Pass out the worksheet, Onomatopoeia Odyssey for students to complete.
- ★ Optional Extension: Have students write sentences that use onomatopoeia.

Name

Onomatopoeia Odyssey

Can you find an example of onomatopoeia?
Use the page numbers to guide you. Write
the onomatopoeia in the helmet.

page 18



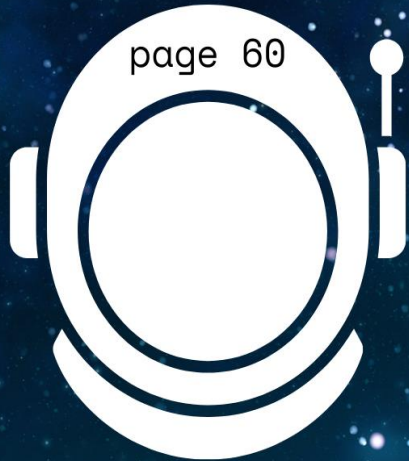
page 19



page 31



page 60



Name **Key**

Onomatopoeia Odyssey

Can you find an example of onomatopoeia?
Use the page numbers to guide you. Write
the onomatopoeia in the helmet.

page 18

THWWWAPP!

page 19

WOOOO-
WOOOO!!

page 31

KNOCK,
KNOCK,
KNOCK!

page 60

CLAP,
CLAP
CLAP,
CLAP!



Design A Cowboy Hat For Fat Hats

Book Tie-In: In *The Astro Outlaw*, Tex Rayburn owns a store called Fat Hats. In this activity, students will design a cowboy hat and then write a descriptive paragraph about it.

TEKS:

- ★ Grade 2: Composition: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts--genres. The student uses genre characteristics and craft to compose multiple texts that are meaningful. The student is expected to:
 - B. compose informational texts, including procedural texts and reports.
- ★ Grade 3: Composition: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts-- genres. The student uses genre characteristics and craft to compose multiple texts that are meaningful. The student is expected to:
 - B. compose informational texts, including brief compositions that convey information about a topic, using a clear central idea and genre characteristics and craft.

CCSS:

- ★ Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section. (W.2.2)
- ★ Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. (W.3.2)

Objectives:

- ★ Write a descriptive paragraph.

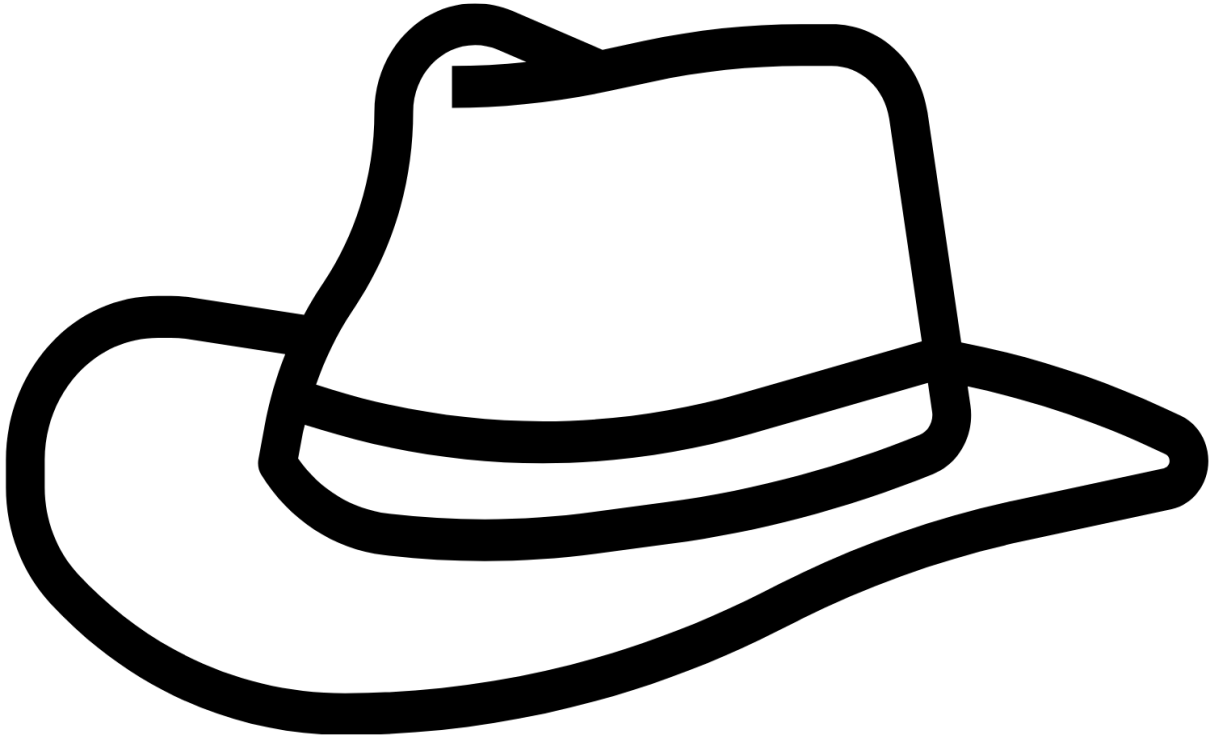
Procedure:

- ★ Reread page 69 to students. This page describes Tex's cowboy hat.
- ★ Explain to students that they will be designing their own cowboy hat.
- ★ Brainstorm ideas with students.
- ★ Pass out the worksheet and have students design their hats.

- ★ Once students have designed their hats, model how to write a descriptive paragraph to describe the hat. Then have students write their own descriptive paragraphs.

Name: _____

DESIGN A COWBOY HAT FOR FAT HATS



Design a hat for Fat Hats. Then write a description about it.

This image shows a blank sheet of handwriting practice paper. It features four identical sets of horizontal guidelines arranged vertically. Each set is composed of three lines: a solid top line, a dashed middle line, and a solid bottom line, providing a structured space for practicing letter formation and alignment.

How many of the Ballpark Mysteries have you read?

