



If You Were the Moon Teaching Guide

book by Laura Purdie Salas
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Story Summary: If you were the moon, what would you do? You'd spin like a twilight ballerina and play dodgeball with space rocks! Find out more in this lyrical list poem accompanied by luminous, lively illustrations.

Laura Purdie Salas is a Minnesota poet and writer. She has written more than 120 books, including *Water Can Be...* and *BookSpeak! Poems About Books*. She especially loves combining poetry and science in her writing. Her books have been honored with Bank Street Best Book; NCTE Notable Children's Book; Minnesota Book Award; and more. Laura's dad worked for NASA, and she spent her childhood watching the moon from Florida. She presents often at schools and conferences. Learn more at laurasalas.com.



Jaime (Jimyung) Kim was born and raised in Korea before moving to the USA at 18. Although she was a timid child who was afraid of just about everything, she found serenity in drawing. She works with gouache and acrylics to create nostalgic and dreamlike illustrations. Her favorite things are the sun, the moon, the sky and stars – which is why they always creep into her artwork. Learn more at jaimekim.com.

Reviews:

Kirkus: Orbiting between poetic lullaby and astro-powered essentials, Salas and Kim provide a great addition to a nighttime-window reading shelf and/or early-science classroom.” [Full review](#)

Pre-Reading:

1. Previewing a text and making predictions are two strategies that promote comprehension. This “Picture Walk” guides students in both of these.
2. Point out and discuss the difference between the author and illustrator.
3. Ask: *Based on the title and cover illustration, what do you think the book will be about?*
4. Turn to the first full spread. Ask: *Looking at the picture, what do you think is happening? What do you notice about the way the text (words) is displayed on the page?*
5. Continue quickly with a preview of the illustrations. Stop occasionally to have students make inferences based on the illustrations. For example, on the “Tease the Earth” spread, ask: *Why do you think there are four moons on this page?*
6. Point out the glossary on the last page. Ask student why a glossary might be needed with this book. Pre-teach the glossary words, clarifying understanding.

Post-Reading: Check comprehension with questions such as:

1. *Does this book tell a story or give information?* Have students recall the difference between each of the two types of text in the story. Explain that the text is framed in a story of the moon talking to the child. The nonfiction call-outs are informational, because they give facts about the moon.
2. *How is the earth the moon’s mother?*
3. *What keeps the earth in balance?*
4. *How is the moon like a ballerina? Why do you think the author chose this comparison, and not another, like a spinning top?*
5. *How do meteorites affect the moon’s surface?*
6. *What is a phase? How does the moon go through phases? What other things go through different phases? (butterflies, frogs, children, etc.)*



Response to Story:

Math: Sharing the Moon

1. Help students find shapes in the illustrations on the cover and first spread.
2. Introduce the idea of partitions. Today, we will focus on partitioning a circle.
3. Have a chart prepared with a whole circle, a circle partitioned into halves, and a circle partitioned into quarters or fourths. Go over each one and show how each was partitioned. Demonstrate non-examples (with unequal parts).
4. Have students practice partitioning circles using clay, a rolling pin, and a plastic knife, or use pre-cut construction paper whole circles and have students draw partitions and cut out the parts.

Science: **Edible Moon Phases**

1. Review the phases of the moon with students.
2. Show a diagram of the different moon phases, such as this one from stardude.org: <http://www.stardude.org/moon>.
3. Guide students through creating models of moon phases with Oreo™ cookies.

Social Studies: **The Chinese Moon Festival**

1. Review the note on the “Weave a spell” spread about the Baule people of the Ivory Coast. Tell students that another culture that pays tribute to the moon is China. Point out China on a world map.
2. Tell students that China has a 600-year-old annual Moon Festival. In China, the full moon symbolizes togetherness.
3. Discuss the concept of traditions. Give examples from holidays students celebrate. Explain some traditions associated with the Moon festival:
 - Giving gifts
 - Gazing at the moon from the roof, a mountaintop, or a lake
 - Making and playing with paper lanterns.
 - Eating mooncakes. People in China try to make record-breaking mooncakes. One 2013 mooncake weighed more than 5,000 pounds!
4. Show other pictures of Moon Festival celebrations: <http://www.bbc.com/news/in-pictures-29106028>
5. For fun, hold a class Moon Festival: Make paper lanterns, eat mooncakes (or MoonPies™), and read the story of The Lady on the Moon.



Movement: **Play Mother/Father Earth Says**



This game is played like Simon Says. Mother or Father Earth should use the verbs from the book as commands for the moons.

- Hover near your mom.
- Spin on your axis.
- Orbit Mother Earth.
- Dodge meteorites.
- Hide in the shadows.
- Play Peekaboo with Mother Earth.
- Catch and throw imaginary light.
- Play tug-of-war with the ocean.

Art: **Make a Paper Lantern**

1. Fold a piece of construction paper in half, lengthwise.
2. Make a series of cuts along the fold line, to about an inch from the bottom.
3. Have students write good wishes on the outer strips of the lantern.
4. Open the paper and staple the short ends together.
5. Make a handle for the lantern by gluing or stapling a 6 inch by ½ inch string of paper to the top.
6. String the lanterns together and hang in the room.

Language Arts: Write a Things To Do Poem

1. Explain that *If You Were the Moon* began as a Things to Do poem. Share:

Things to Do If You Are Dandelion Fluff

Re-e-e-a-c-c-c-h toward sky
Wave in breeze
High-five trees
Hold hands with soil and
Don't
Let
Go

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Things to Do If You Are Lichen

Wear mustard-colored ruffles
Hide summer in your shadows
Dream of being a bouquet

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2. Ask students what they notice: How long are the poems? What kind of words begin each line? Review verbs and personification.

3. Explain that you are going to guide the class in writing a Things to Do Poem. Brainstorm subjects or have students vote on topics/images you've prepared.

4. Record students' answers to the brainstorming questions below. This will generate lots of ideas for writing. Some ideas you will use, but some you won't.

- What do we know about the object?
- Where do we usually see it?
- What does it do?
- With whom or what does it interact?
- What does it sound like?
- What does it look like?
- What does it feel like?
- What does it taste like?



5. Using the brainstorming notes, jot down a list of verbs that would work with your object. Elicit those that would personify the object. (Wear, skip, bite, etc.)

6. Choose a verb to begin your first line, and call on volunteers to finish the line.

7. Continue with several more lines, prompting students as needed. For example, ask: Where would a _____ hide? Where would a _____ sneak? Emphasize that there are no wrong answers. This is about expressing ideas in a creative way.

8. Once you get several lines written, have students help decide what order works best. Which line would make the best opening? Closing? If there is not a line that gives a sense of closure, guide students in writing one. Read aloud the poem to see if it flows. Rework the order and add or take out lines if needed.

9. Once the poem is finished, do a choral or echo read of the poem.