



## To Boldly Go

*"Take a scientific fact or theory, add a futuristic or other-worldly setting, stir in an imaginative plot and fascinating characters, and a science fiction novel emerges from the cosmic mix...The best authors of science fiction turn a "what if?" into a "why not?"...If, after reading one of the following selections, your present world starts to look a bit different to you, then the author has succeeded."*

*Quote from Yvonne Coleman (from [http://archive.parentschoice.org/article.cfm?art\\_id=110&the\\_page=reading\\_list](http://archive.parentschoice.org/article.cfm?art_id=110&the_page=reading_list))*

## Overview

This activity asks students to become science fiction (sci-fi) writers. In this section, students will integrate what they know and have already learned about the moon and other off-Earth locations and apply this knowledge to the creation of either a science fiction story, which can be presented as a short story, comic, or even a short film. Through this activity, students will be able to demonstrate their knowledge of space history and future exploration, while also using communications strategies in a creative way.

*\*As an option, students can create a sci-fi project within a small group, especially if students are creating an alternative assignment such as a film.*

## Materials Needed

- Handouts (sci-fi story summary sheet, sci-fi story chart, new story summary and feedback sheet): one per student
- Optional sci-fi movie trailer (easily found on the internet)

## Engagement

Ask students to list or talk about any science fiction books or movies they are familiar with. Make a list of these on the board. If desired, you can select a sci-fi movie trailer to show students, which may help them to focus on their upcoming task.



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### *Exploration*

Break students into small groups and ask them to each discuss one sci-fi story (book or movie). They should each be able to answer the following:

- Title (and author if possible)
- Plot summary--this should be able to be completed in 3-4 sentences
- Main characters (including at least one detail about them, whether it is what they look like or another unique attribute)
- Conflict and resolution
- Setting

As a group, they should create a chart that summarizes the main components listed above (a worksheet is included for use, if desired).

After each group has completed their part of the activity, the entire class should come back together to share their findings. The goal, by the end of this activity, is to start recognizing trends or patterns in these types of stories.

### *Explanation*

Review the basic elements of a story, focusing on the elements that are inherent to most sci-fi stories. If needed, there are many different resources available to you to help with this that can be found through a simple internet search.

The stories students create should include several moon elements. This could include using the moon as at least one of the story settings, integrating at least three historical aspects of moon exploration, integrating at least one moon explorer or contributor to moon exploration from the past, and any other ideas you might want to have them include based on what they've already learned.

Students will begin to outline their story. This can be done as a more traditional outline, through the creation of a storyboard, with notecards, or any other strategy you choose to allow them to implement. The components listed above can be a good start when asking students what their story will be about.

Sci-fi contains many of the same elements of any good story. However, here are a few specific pointers that can help strengthen student sci-fi stories:

- Make the story believable--Sci-fi readers love to be able to suspend belief, but only if you start with something that makes sense. Oftentimes sci-fi stories pull facts and



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details from actual historical events, which provides readers with a bit of reality, then mixed with the “what if?” of the future.

- Create complex characters--At times, there may be sci-fi characters who can breathe underwater or have unique physical traits--but make sure those characters are more than that. Readers want characters that have depth, reasons for doing what they do, and are able to be loved (or hated, depending on the type of character).
- Have a theme or meaning--What is the message you are trying to tell the audience? Is there a moral to the story? A good sci-fi story should have more than interesting characters and an amazing setting.
- A setting worth remembering--speaking of setting, this element is crucial in a sci-fi story. Will the story take place on another planet? Is it a location we know about, or something completely created in the author’s mind? Either way, make it a place the reader can envision, including strong, deep details that allow the reader to visit the location. Sights, smells, and tiny nuances can bring a setting alive.

Students should complete their new story summary and feedback worksheet, then share their work with at least one other student, who will provide feedback on that sheet. Once any adjustments have been made, students will then work to turn their summary into their sci-fi story.

## *Extension*

It is time to share sci-fi stories, which can be done in a variety of ways. This can be completed in a showcase-style setting, where students read their stories to the larger group (or to others who have been invited to the showcase), or in a more intimate reading session, where individuals read stories, comics, and/or watch films independently. An additional element would be to ask students to serve as reviewers and to write critiques, reviews, and/or recommendations.

## *Evaluation*

Student projects can be evaluated using the rubric below, or an adaptation of this rubric.

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## Science Fiction Story Summary

Think of a science fiction story you know. This can be a book, comic, or movie. Answer the following questions about the story to help prepare for the group discussion.

- Title (and author if possible)
- Plot summary--this should be able to be completed in 3-4 sentences
- Main characters (including at least one detail about them, whether it is what they look like or another unique attribute)
- Conflict and resolution (What main conflict did the characters need to solve? What was the final resolution?)
- Setting (describe as much about the setting as possible--if there is more than one setting, choose one that is the main setting of the story)

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## Science Fiction Summary Chart

On this worksheet, enter information about the stories other group-mates shared. The goal of completing this worksheet is to spot commonalities and differences in these stories, which will help you create your own story later.

Story title	Author (if known)	Plot summary	Main Characters	Conflict and Resolution	Setting

List several commonalities you see between the stories:

- \*
- \*
- \*
- \*
- \*

What is unique about at least one of the stories? How is it unique?

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SHARE SPACE  
— EDUCATION —

## Story Outline and Feedback

Now it's your turn. It's time to come up with a story of your own. Where do you start? With an outline. Use this worksheet (or another format if you'd like) to develop your story idea. You will then get feedback from at least one of your peers, make adjustments, then turn it into a final product. This story can be produced as a short story, comic, or even a short film--the choice is yours. Good luck and have fun!

- Title
- Plot summary--this should be able to be completed in 3-4 sentences
- Main characters (including at least one detail about them, whether it is what they look like or another unique attribute)
- Conflict and resolution (What main conflict did the characters need to solve? What was the final resolution?)

Setting (describe as much about the setting as possible--if there is more than one setting, choose one that is the main setting of the story)

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## Peer Feedback

Gather feedback from at least one of your peers (you can gather more feedback if you'd like). They should read your outline, then provide feedback in the section below. Once you look at their feedback, make any adjustments to your story before you work on your final project. Briefly describe any adjustments you are planning to make below the Peer Feedback provided.

Peer Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Briefly summarize the basic plot of the story, including the main conflict:

Summary: Where is the story taking place?

Who is the character who seems to be the main character of the story?

Overall strengths of this story:

What would you improve about this story or what do you want to know more details about?

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Author response to peer feedback

Based on the peer feedback you received, what will you change, if anything, about your story?  
(If you don't plan on changing anything about your story, explain why it is not needed.)



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## Evaluation Rubric

	<b>0-1 Point</b>	<b>2-3 Points</b>	<b>4-5 Points</b>	<b>Point Total</b>
<b>Sci-Fi Story Summary</b>	Summary is missing or mostly incomplete	Summary is somewhat complete but is lacking some of the main components	Summary is complete and categories are thoroughly answered	
<b>Sci-Fi Chart</b>	Chart is missing or mostly incomplete	Chart is somewhat complete but is missing several categories or sections	Chart is complete and categories are thoroughly answered	
<b>Story Outline</b>	Story outline is missing or mostly incomplete	Outline is somewhat complete but is missing some components	Outline is complete and categories are thoroughly answered	
<b>Peer Feedback</b>	Peer feedback is missing or mostly incomplete	Peer feedback is completed but is not thorough or has some aspects missing	Peer feedback is completed and answered thoroughly	
<b>Final Sci-Fi Story Project</b>	Final Sci-fi story is missing or mostly incomplete	Sci-fi story is finished but is missing some of what is needed	Sci-fi story is finished, with a fully fleshed out story, characters, setting, and is well done.	
<b>Historical moon References</b>	Sci-fi story does not contain any required moon references	Sci-fi story has some, but not all, of the required moon references	Sci-fi story has all required moon references	
			<b>TOTAL POINTS:</b>	