

REACHING FOR THE MOON

Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award Nominee 2008 Grades 3-5

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Reaching for the Moon by Buzz Aldrin. Illustrated by Wendell Minor. HarperCollins, 2005. 40 pages.

Summary

Aldrin's inspirational picture book autobiography provides details about his childhood, high school sports, education at West Point, and military career, including combat missions during the Korean War. At each stage of his life, he emphasizes the importance of determination, hard work and believing in yourself. Wendell Minor's outstanding realistic paintings complement Aldrin's writing style.

The first time Aldrin applied for the astronaut program, he was not accepted. But after earning a masters degree, he applied again and was accepted into the program. Aldrin describes his training and work on the Gemini 12 mission and his historical trip to the moon on Apollo 11 with Neil Armstrong and Mike Collins. His vivid descriptions of the details of the flight and the walk on the moon provide a very personal view of what it was like to be one of the first humans on the moon. Young readers will be motivated to learn more about space exploration, and they will be encouraged to make their own dreams come true.

Awards and "Best Book" Lists

Parent's Choice Award by the Parents Choice Award Foundation
Best Children's Books, 2005; Publisher's Weekly
Best Children's Books of the Year, 2005; Bank Street College of Education
Outstanding Science Trade Books for Students, 2005

Author's Biography

Buzz Aldrin grew up in Montclair, New Jersey before attending West Point until 1951. He then joined the U.S. Air Force and flew in the Korean War. Aldrin also went to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he studied orbital mechanics until he was admitted into the astronaut program in 1966. On July 20, 1969, Buzz Aldrin became the second man to ever walk on the moon. Since then, he has retired from NASA and the Air Force. He is currently involved in space endeavors with Starcraft Enterprises. Buzz Aldrin is married with six children and one grandson. He has written several books about his experiences, but *Reaching for the Moon* is his first book for children.

www.jsc.nasa.gov/Bios/htmlbios/aldrin-b.html

www.answers.com/topic/buzz-aldrin

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buzz_Aldrin

Illustrator's Biography

Wendell Minor was born and raised in Aurora, Illinois. He attended the Ringling School of Art and Design in Sarasota, Florida before beginning to design books for a publisher in New York. His extensive work has earned him many prestigious awards, including Notable Children's Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies for several books, the Oppenheim Best Book Award, Smithsonian's Notable Books for Children Award, and Outstanding Science Trade Books for

Children. He currently lives in Connecticut with his wife and business partner Florence Friedmann Minor and their two cats.

<http://www.minorart.com/home.htm>

Related Titles

Alan Shepard: The First American in Space by Tamra B. Orr.

Apollo 11: First Moon Landing by Michael D. Cole.

A Day In Space by Suzanne Lord and Jolie Epstein.

Buzz Aldrin: The Pilot of the First Moon Landing by Amy Sterling Casil.

First Man: The Life of Neil A. Armstrong by James R. Hansen.

First on the Moon: What It Was Like When Man Landed on the Moon by Barbara Hehner.

Footprints on the Moon by Alexandra Siy.

If You Decide to Go to the Moon by Faith McNulty.

Neil, Buzz, and Mike go to the Moon by Richard Hilliard.

One Giant Step by Don Brown.

Sky Walking: An Astronaut's Memoir by Thomas D. Jones.

Project Apollo by Diane Moser and Ray Spangeburg.

Classroom Connections

Social Studies

- The book includes a timeline from 1909 until 2004. Have the students discuss and research each significant event on the timeline.
- Discuss what astronauts do while they are in space.
- Space Day is the first week in May. This website includes activities that the Astronauts do to train before they go to space. www.spaceday.com
- **Private Universe: Classroom Activities**
http://www.learner.org/teacherslab/pup/class_acts.html This site has three activities about the moon for students in grades 4-8: the distance between the earth and the moon, the size difference in the two, and the phases of the moon.
- **The Eagle Has Landed**
<http://video.google.co.uk/videoplay?docid=4166049933953240830&q=label%3Athe+eagle+has+landed> This 28 minute video from the National Archives and Records Administration details the events of the Eagle's landing on the moon.
- After viewing *The Eagle Has Landed* video, discuss why the US was rushing to put the first man on the moon. Ask students: Do you think it was important that the US be first, why or why not? Connect their answers to their daily lives. Are there times why you want to be first?
- **Scholastic - Challenging the Space Frontier**
<http://content.scholastic.com/browse/article.jsp?id=7661> This is an online lesson plan and web quest that teaches the important events in space history. The lesson includes an interview with Buzz Aldrin and two games.

Science

- Buzz liked to collect rocks when he was a kid and much of what Neil and Buzz did after landing on the moon was collect moon rocks. Have students collect rocks at home and record their findings on a rock collection chart available at <http://www.fi.edu/pieces/schutte/print.html>
- Why does the moon rotate around the Earth? Explain gravity and conduct a gravitational experiment using a large sheet (so all members of the class can hold it), a heavier ball,

and a lighter ball. With everyone holding the sheet taut place, the heavier ball in the center and then roll the lighter ball near it but not directly. The link below offers a good explanation of gravity. <http://www.cs.dartmouth.edu/farid/sciencekids/gravity.html>

Language Arts

- Read the book *If You Decide to Go to the Moon* by Faith McNulty and Steven Kellogg. This book is for children 4 to 8 years of age, but it will provide a basis for the students to pretend that they are going to the moon. Have the students make a list of items that they would take with them to the moon.
- Write a letter to Buzz Aldrin to ask him questions about the trip. Then e-mail your letter through his web site (web site listed below).
- After reading the book, watch the interactive video *Reaching for the Moon*, with a special message of encouragement to children. <http://www.buzzaldrin.com>
- Aldrin's book explains how hard work will help to achieve a goal. Ask students to set a goal for their future and list the things they are doing now and will do in the future to achieve that goal.

Math

- **Hands-On Activities** <http://lunar.arc.nasa.gov/education/activities/active16a.htm>
This page includes instructions on how to calculate a person's weight on different planets and the moon.
- Learn the distance between the Earth and the moon and calculate how long it takes to get to the moon.
- Learn the moon's speed of orbit around the earth and compare it to the Earth's speed of rotation around the sun.
- Complete space related word problems on Scholastic's web site. <http://teacher.scholastic.com/mathhunt/StartGame.asp?QuizID=11>

Kinesiology

- Shoot a small rocket outside for the class to view.
- Have volunteers compete to see who can do the best moonwalk.

Art

- Build and paint a papier maché model of the moon with important craters in the right spot. A map of the moon can be located at *The Full Moon Atlas* web site. <http://www.lunarepublic.com/atlas/index.shtml>
- As it states on Buzz Aldrin's web site, he hopes that humans can one day live on the moon or Mars. Draw a picture or create a diorama depicting a human settlement on the moon or Mars.

A to Z Kids Stuff Space

<http://www.atozkidsstuff.com/space.html>

This site offers a list of different activities for the classroom related to the moon, planets, and space. Snack, game, and art are included for each topic.

Web Sites

Moon Phases

<http://its.guilford.k12.nc.us/webquests/Moon/moon.htm>

This site includes links to various moon activities.

Whoosh-The Space Playground

<http://www.abc.net.au/children/space/>

This site provided information about the planets.

Apollo 11 UFO

<http://video.google.co.uk/videoplay?docid=6647204125621625190>

This short video clip shows Buzz discussing the possibility of a UFO sighting on the Apollo 11 mission. It's completely unfounded, but kids will get a kick out of it.

NASA Kids Club

<http://www.nasa.gov/audience/forkids/kidsclub/flash/index.html>

This NASA site provides kids with information about NASA's current crew and mission, with photographs, and activities related to the mission.

NASA Space Place

http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/friends_share.shtml

This is a different NASA site for kids with a variety of fun activities and projects for kids on a variety of space related subjects. This site differs from the Kids Club in that it does not deal with current NASA mission, it has mostly animated instead of real pictures.

Destination Moon

<http://www.fi.edu/pieces/schutte/print.html>

This site contains printable activities to use with an Apollo 11 lesson. The site includes a crossword puzzle, word search, a survivor game that can be a group activity, a moon mapping activity, and more. These activities would be good to use as an assessment after students complete the Scholastic - Challenging the Space Frontier Web Quest.