

A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO

"Readers who love Ivy and Bean or Katie Woo
will want to meet Jada Jones."
— School Library Journal



JADA JONES

★ SKY WATCHER ★



★ BY KELLY STARLING LYONS ★



ABOUT THIS BOOK:

JADA JONES is looking forward to portraying her hero, Dr. Mae Jemison, a NASA scientist and the first Black woman to travel into outer space, for her school presentation. But when she learns just how much her hero has accomplished, Jada begins to think she's made a big mistake. Can she pull off portraying someone so pulled together without falling apart?

Age: 6-8 | Fiction | Grades: 1-3

THEMES

- Astronomy
- Inspiration
- Self-confidence
- Creativity
- Family

SKILLS

- Listening
- Summarizing
- Vocabulary
- Drawing Inferences
- Story Elements
- Research

BEFORE YOU READ

- Have students take a close look at the cover of the book and the title.
- Ask the students to predict what the story may be about. Tell students to give reasons to support their predictions based on their observations.
- Ask students to identify the book's genre. What type of story do they think it is?

AS YOU READ

- Have students make a personal connection with the main character. Jada enjoys gazing at the night sky with her family. It's a family tradition that Jada's mother did with her own father. Ask students what they enjoy doing with their families.
- Ask students to identify the problem in the story and predict how Jada will solve it.

AFTER YOU READ

- Ask students to identify the author's purpose. Why do they think she wrote the story? What themes have they noticed in the story?

LANGUAGE ARTS / READING COMPREHENSION

- Name the main character. Give three words that describe this character.
- Who is Dr. Mae Jemison? Why is she important to the main character?
- Which actress from *Star Trek* helped inspire Dr. Mae Jemison to become an astronaut? How did she inspire Mae to dream big dreams?
- Identify the story's setting, characters, the story problem, and the solution. Then walk students through completing a [story map](#).

LANGUAGE ARTS / READING COMPREHENSION CONTINUED

- Inspiration is a very important theme in this story. Why are real people like Mae Jemison, Benjamin Banneker, Nikki Giovanni, Oprah Winfrey, and Stan Lee inspiring to the characters in the story? Name a hero or famous person who inspires you. What about this person's life do you find inspiring?
- As Jada learns more about Dr. Mae Jemison, she starts to have a "sinking feeling" (p. 13). What does it mean to have a sinking feeling? Describe a time you had this feeling.
- Why does Jada begin to lose her confidence? Have you ever doubted yourself or your ability before? Why?
- How does Jada's family support her dream to meet Dr. Mae Jemison?
- In the story, Jada recalls her mother's advice: "Baby steps: That's what she always says gets you to a goal. One foot in front of the other." What do you think this advice means?
- In what ways do Jada's doubts about her project on Dr. Mae Jemison affect her at school?
- What big decision does Jada make about her project while she is jumping rope?
- When Jada snaps at her friend, which steps does she take to make things right with him? Why did she get angry with him in the first place?
- Explain how Jada solves her problem. What does Jada learn about Dr. Jemison that helps her feel more confident about pretending to be her hero?
- The people who inspire you were once kids—just like you. What behaviors do you think they had that helped them grow up to be successful?
- After hearing Dr. Mae Jemison speak, Jada says, "I felt like I was soaring through the sparkling night. I sailed by stars, saw a comet flash like fireworks, and left my footprint somewhere no one had gone before. Watch out, world. I was flying high." (p. 80-81) What does she mean by this? Have you ever had a similar feeling?
- According to Jada, Dr. Mae Jemison "blazed her own path" (p. 61). What do you think this means?
- Jada ends the book with a list of her Rules for Sky Watching. Based on this list, what do you think it means to be a "sky watcher"?

VOCABULARY

As a class discuss, write, or draw pictures to define the following words:

- | | | |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|
| • astronomy | • trailblazer | • telescope |
| • astronaut | • confidence | • planetarium |
| • inspire | • gaze | • NASA |

WRITING

- Summarize the story, making sure to include the story's main conflict and events from the beginning, middle, and end using at least three vocabulary words. Younger children can dictate or draw the story's events. For support, students can use this [graphic organizer](#) or a [book report form](#).
- Jada keeps a Big Dream journal. Have students spend a few minutes each class writing and sketching about their dreams in their own class journal.
- Research one of the five heroes named in the book (Oprah Winfrey, Stan Lee, Benjamin Banneker, Dr. Mae Jemison, Laurie Hernandez) and [write a report](#) about the person. For younger students use this [graphic organizer](#) or write an acrostic poem about their hero. Older Students: Do some extended research on your hero and create a timeline of the hero's life.
- Write a letter to the author or illustrator of the book. Include questions that you may have about the story and what you think about the book. Use this [template and checklist](#) to learn how to write a top-notch letter.
- Read or [listen](#) to Mae Among the Stars. Then, like Mae, write about what you want to be when you grow up. What steps will you need to take to reach your big dream? According to Mae's mom, what should you do if someone doubts you can reach your dream?
- In the story, Dr. Mae Jemison hopes that people will travel beyond our solar system one day. Using your creativity and imagination, write a story about a character that travels to a distant planet.

SOCIAL STUDIES

- Teachers: Put on your own Living Museum Exhibit! Ask students to choose a hero who inspires them to dream big. Have them do research on their hero and create a poster and oral presentation like the one Jada and her friends did in the book.
- In the story, Jada enjoys jumping rope Double Dutch style with her friends. Learn more about the [history of Double Dutch](#) and watch kids from all over the world play the sport. Using a map of the world, mark all the places mentioned in the video where people have practiced the sport.

SCIENCE AND ART

- In school, Jada studies the phases of the moon. Using basic art supplies such as construction paper, scissors, glue, and markers, allow students to illustrate and label the phases of moon. Here's a [video](#) to help review the moon's phases.
- Teachers: Just like Jada's teacher, Miss Taylor, use the [Oreo cookies activity](#) to teach/review the phases of the moon with students.
- Watch this [video](#) or this [one](#) to learn how telescopes work. Then create a [paper towel roll](#) telescope like Jada's!
- Dr. Mae Jemison was a NASA astronaut. NASA is an acronym that stands for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Learn more about NASA and America's space program [here](#).

Common Core Standards

English Language Arts: Reading

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL. 2.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL. 2.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL. 2.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL. 2.5

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL. 2.7

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL. 3.1

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL. 3.2

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL. 3.3

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL. 3.4

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL. 3.7

English Language Arts – Writing

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.2

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.2.8

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.2

English Language Arts – Speaking & Listening

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.1

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.2

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.2.6

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3.1

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3.2

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3.4

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.3.6

Next Generation Science Standards

ESS1.B: Earth and the Solar System

This guide was written by educator, editor, and children's book writer Kesha Grant.

