

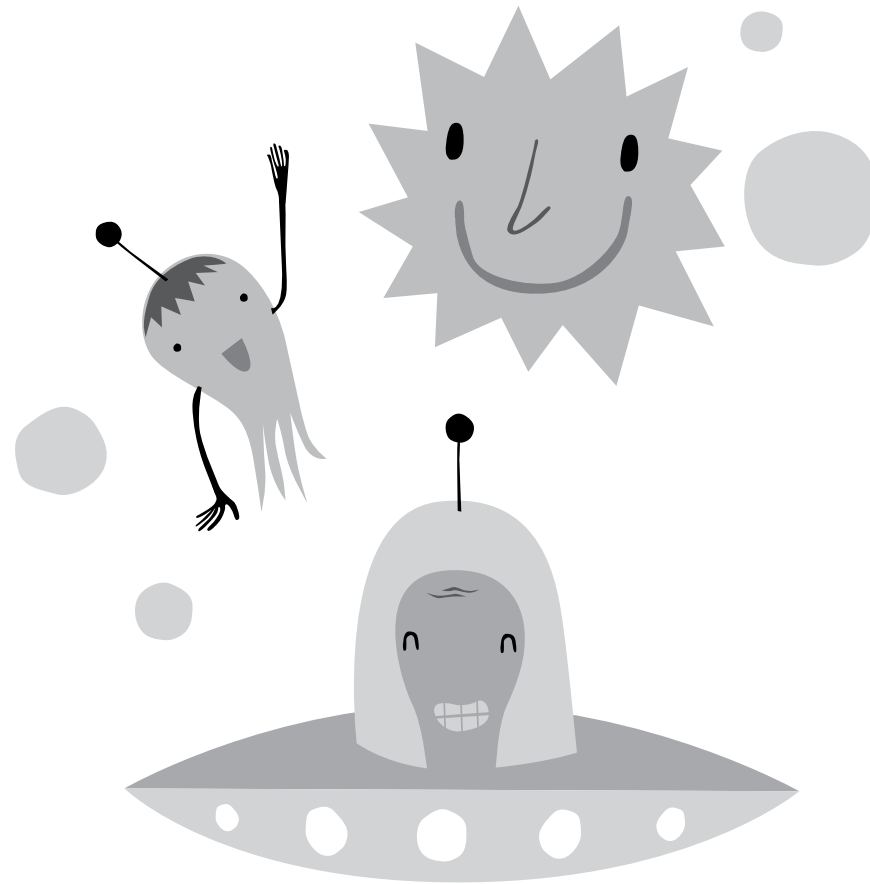
about the book



A LONG WAY AWAY
by Frank Viva
978-0-316-22196-2

In the first reading experience of its kind, blast off on a journey through twenty-six feet of continuous vertical art, which reads beautifully no matter which cover you start from. Begin at one end, and you're on the ocean floor; follow a creature along a bright yellow trail up into deep space to his alien family's embrace. Or, start from the other end and follow an alien floating down into the depths of the ocean to rest.

Whether journeying home or heading to bed, enjoy a satisfying and surprising trip from rising star Frank Viva.



about the author



Frank Viva is an award-winning illustrator and graphic designer. His illustrations have appeared in *The New York Times*, on the cover of *The New Yorker*, on scaffolding surrounding a library, and on the illustrated stationary produced by his company Whigby. But ever since publishing his first picture book, *Along a Long Road*, making books is his favorite thing to do.

A LONG WAY AWAY



Curriculum connections

- ❖ Vocabulary
- ❖ Spatial Relations
- ❖ Science

Preschool – Grade 1

by Frank Viva



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Educator's Guide prepared by Jennifer McMahon.
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ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Building Background

Thinking About How Books Work

An understanding of how print works is developed over time after plenty of exposure to books and other reading material. Before reading *A Long Way Away*, talk with students about what they know about books. Where do they begin reading? Where would they usually find the author's name? What do they often see at the end of a sentence? Have students share what they know about books, and record their thoughts on chart paper. Then, explain that the book *A Long Way Away* may challenge some of their ideas about what they know about books. As they read, have them look for the ways it differs from what they thought they knew. Why is this book unique? How is it the same as other books they have read?

Making Connections

Along a Long Road Comparison

Frank Viva is also the author/illustrator of the book *Along a Long Road*. Share this book with students and ask them to look for things that are the same and different. Then, have them list their ideas. When they have their list, ask them to stand back to back with another student and take turns reading the ideas they think are the same and different in both books. If the other student has the same thing on their list, students should turn and give each other a high five. When they have given each other three high-fives, students should turn toward each other and perform a short "victory dance," this is a movement inspired by an alien, a sea creature, or someone on a bicycle. Then, students can try the same process with a new student. After the activity, gather as a group and create a class list of similarities and differences they discovered. Students may also want to share their favorite themed victory dance. It is always helpful if an adult

models the process (and the victory dance idea) before students are asked to demonstrate it.

Sticky Note Emotions

Using sticky notes, describe the emotions of the creature as he travels down to the ocean. Record these emotions. Then do the same activity as the creature travels up to space. Did he seem to have different emotions at the same point in the story depending on which way he was traveling? Why might this be the case? Use the sticky notes to talk about different feeling words. Create a class list of emotion words. Then, have each student choose three of these words and draw a picture that shows that emotion. Extend the learning by having them write a sentence about themselves that says, "I feel _____ when _____."

Alien Design

Using the story *A Long Way Away* as a starting point, talk about what the alien/sea creature looks like. Ask questions such as: Is it big? What color is it? How many arms does it have? Do you think it is smooth or rough? What do you think it smells like? What do you think it eats? Then, have students design their own alien. They should be able to tell what color it is, how big it is, where it lives, and what it likes to eat. Then, have students draw a picture that matches the description they gave. As an extension, or for students who finish early, they can write one or two sentences about their alien. A template is included as a blackline master.

Summarizing

Picture Scavenger Hunt

The ability to "read" pictures and look for details is a skill that is important for early reading, as well as a foundation for more sophisticated analysis. Use a picture hunt to help students look for details in the

story. Working in pairs, have students look for the specific pictures and count the number of each item they find. (Decide in advance if the pictures on the cover will be included in the tally, and if a boot and a shoe are the same.) An example scavenger hunt sheet is included as a blackline master. For older students or more advanced readers, they might want to create their own scavenger hunt to test their classmates.

Backward and Forward

A book that can be read forward and backward is something quite unique. Help students understand how changing the order of a story often changes the story itself. Begin by choosing a familiar story, such as *The Three Little Pigs*. Have students identify the main events in that story and using a storyboard or comic strip format, have them illustrate those main events. Then, have students cut each section of the storyboard and mix up the events. Have teams of students take turns trying to tell the story out of order. Discuss how this changes or doesn't change the story. Why is organization an important part of writing? Why does *A Long Way Away* make sense when read in either direction? Is it the same story in both directions? Why or why not? As an extension, have students choose a different story and complete the storyboard activity independently.

Working with Words

Sorting the /oo/

Look for words that have the /oo/ sound and sort them into two categories: words that sound like "moon" and words that sound like "book." Have students draw a picture of a moon and a picture of a book (or provide pictures for them). Then, encourage students to begin by looking for /oo/ words in *A Long Way Away*. As they find them, have them sort the words according to whether the /oo/ sounds like "book" or "moon." After students find all of the words in *A Long Way Away*,

have them think of other words to add to their lists. Ask students to share their lists, and then combine all ideas into one class list.

Letter Wands

A Long Way Away offers the opportunity for students to see how words they know can help them solve unknown words. Start with the word "way" found in the title and show how knowing "way" can help students solve "away." By changing the beginning sound, we can make many new words. Guide students through this discovery by providing craft sticks with letters written on them. The letters should be printed at the very end of each craft stick. Then, have students use their "letter wands" to make new words as they look through the book by placing the craft stick at the beginning of words. This works well as a partner activity because students can check with one another to see whether or not the words they make sound like real words or not. Have students record the words in their notebooks and then share as a class. Differentiate this activity by giving more advanced readers craft sticks with consonant clusters, or ask them to search for other word families within the book.

Fluency

Read to the Beat

The ability to read smoothly, with expression, and at an adequate rate helps students comprehend. One way to practice this is with repeated readings of the same text. This can become tedious, so make it more interesting for students by adding rhythm instruments or a drum beat. Working in pairs, have one student read while the other student sets the beat. Have students try to read to the beat. Then, change the beat (and the person reading) and read it again. Have students experiment with a rhythm that works well with the book, and then have them perform it for the class.

MATH

Opinion Data

Do students like the story better when it is read forward or backward? Ask students to stand up if they like the story that began in space, and have them sit down if they like the story that began in the ocean. Then, encourage students to ask others their opinions too. Have students collect data from teachers, other classes, parents, or older students. Then, work together to classify the information and display it in a graph. Have students look at the information and decide the best way to show the opinions. Do they want to compare the opinions of students and parents? How about teachers and older students? Was there a difference in the opinions of boy and girls? Did they notice any trends in their data? Have students work together to decide what kind of graph or table is the best way to show the opinions of many different people, and then display the information in several different ways.

SCIENCE

Ocean Animal Research Mini-Report:

5 Facts or 10 Facts Posters

Deep in the ocean there are many animals. In the story *A Long Way Away*, many sea creatures can be seen. Have students choose a sea animal and learn more about it. To keep the process simple and manageable, have students learn 5 Facts or 10 Facts about their animal and create a poster or another visual display to share their information. This is a great way to introduce students to research without overwhelming them.

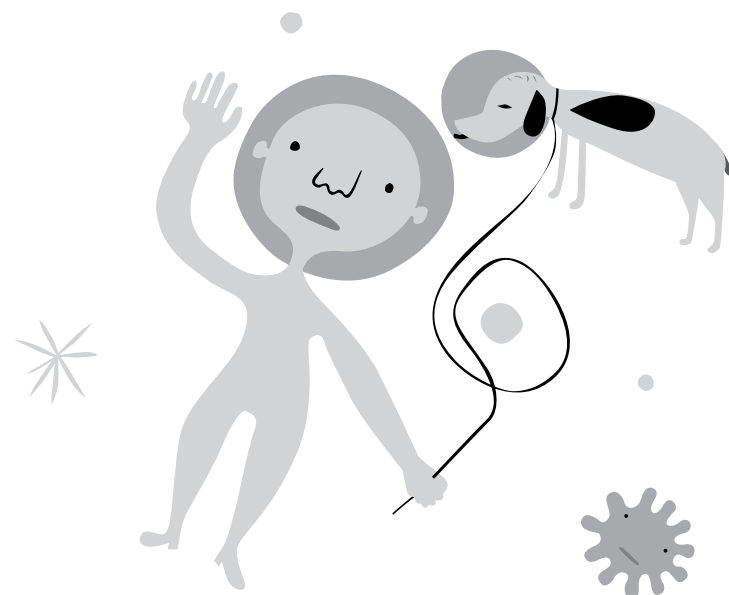
Space Fact Mission

Challenge students to create an interactive bulletin board about space. Begin by covering a bulletin board with black paper. Then have students design space

objects to decorate the board. These might be planet shapes, stars, satellites, etc. Then, ask students to brainstorm questions about space and have each student choose one to research. Have them write their answer on an index card and write the question they researched on one of the space shapes. Glue the space shapes onto an envelope and attach these envelopes to the bulletin board. Place the answers inside the decorated envelopes and encourage students to use the interactive bulletin board to learn more about space.

Space and Ocean

In what ways are space and the ocean the same? In what ways are they different? Ask questions about what is needed to survive under water and what is needed to survive in space. Then, provide pictures of equipment used by astronauts and equipment used by deep-sea divers, and read several informational books about space and oceans. Discuss how space and the ocean are similar and different, and then have students draw pictures of at least two things that are the same and two things that are different. Next, ask students to craft a sentence that states one of the similarities or differences. For example, they might say, "People cannot breathe under water or in space without special equipment."



MOVEMENT AND GAMES

Act out the Story

Kinesthetic reinforcement can help students remember vocabulary. Add actions to the story and have students act it out as they read. The class may want to create their own actions for each key word, or use the following:

Home – steeple hands to look like a house

Hug – students hug themselves

Happy face – smile in a goofy way

Happy place – gesture to the area around them while smiling

A long way away – wipe brow and stick out tongue (like the illustration)

Friend – wave

Smile – smile

Ship – wave

Shoe – point to foot

Zooming around – turn in a circle

Over – jump

Under – crouch down

Downside – point to the ground

Upside – point up

Around side – twist from side to side

Turned – face the other direction

No way back – make a sad face

BLACK – cover eyes

The Moon is a balloon – hold hands out like they are holding a ball and then CLAP on the word “balloon”

This away – take a step to the left

That away – take a step to the right

High Above – make airplane arms and pretend to soar (in place)

Far below – look down

Oh Noo! – shake head side to side

Oh Hello – wave

Good afternoon – shake hands

Lagoon – stomp feet like splashing in water

Splash – keep splashing

Tug – make a tugging motion with hands

Boot – point to foot

Bite – make a chomping motion with teeth

Left – lean left

Right – lean right

Away, way, way, and away – slowly sink toward the ground (or upward if reading it from back to front)

Getting ready – take a deep breath

Steady – pick up each foot and set it firmly on the ground

Deep asleep – close eyes

Try reading the story backwards, modifying the actions as needed.

Preposition Obstacle Course and Treasure Maps

Prepositions can be tricky, so reinforce their meaning with an obstacle course treasure hunt! After reading *A Long Way Away*, make a list of prepositions found in the book. Then, add to the list by brainstorming other prepositions. Divide students into small groups and give each group a list of the prepositions and a list of props they can use. Outdoor props might include playground equipment such as slides, climbing walls, and swings. Indoor props may include things like chairs, tables, boxes, or books. Have each team design an obstacle course and treasure map using the prepositions and props. For example, students may direct one another to crawl under the slide, climb over the wall, and skip around the swings as they try to

A LONG WAY AWAY

find the treasure. The class may designate something as the treasure, and this should be “hidden” at the end of the obstacle course and marked with an “X” on the map. Challenge each group to use as many prepositions as possible when designing their obstacle course and making their maps. Have groups take turns as they challenge each other to follow the maps, overcome obstacles, and find the treasure. Older students may want to extend their learning by including a compass rose and map key.

MUSIC

Picture Book Mood Music

Music creates a mood and sets a tone. Have students listen to a variety of music and then choose at least one song to represent the main character’s journey from space to the sea. Then, have students choose another song to represent the journey from the bottom of the sea to space. Ask students to explain why they chose those particular songs. To help students fully appreciate this experience, provide a wide range of music to choose from, including large orchestral pieces, piano concertos, music featuring flutes, and music featuring brass instruments. As an extension, have students create their own music using rhythm sticks, xylophones, drums, and other classroom instruments. Discuss together which instruments they used and what mood they created.

ART

Twenty-Six Feet of Art

The book *A Long Way Away* was created as a 26 foot long piece of art. Help students understand this idea by measuring out 26 feet of banner paper and encouraging them to create a class mural. Begin by having students guess how long 26 feet might be. Have them write their names on pieces of tape or sticky notes and mark the place in the hallway or

classroom where they think 26 feet would end. Talk together about what tools they will use to measure the distance. Then, measure the banner paper and compare the actual length to student estimates. Did the length surprise them? Next, encourage a discussion about how they might divide the project. Will they all work on their own ideas or collaborate on one design? Will they work on separate sections or focus on one area at a time? How will they decide who gets to work on each part? Let students discuss and decide how they might collaborate on the project, and encourage them to choose a theme. Then, provide art supplies and have students follow the plan they created. After completing the mural, ask students to reflect. Was it harder or easier than they thought? What was the hardest part? What was the easiest part? Can they believe the pictures in *A Long Way Away* started out as 26 feet of art?

It’s A-Maze-ing

As the main character in *A Long Way Away* zips and zooms around and around, students can follow his path by following the yellow line. Maze games found in activity books are designed in a similar way, but they include some false starts and blockades. Challenge students to design their own maze inspired by *A Long Way Away*. Begin by exploring many different activity mazes. Have students comment on the designs they like and talk about which features make a maze simple or difficult. Then, using graph paper, have them design a simple maze. Direct them to start with the correct path, and then add alternative paths by erasing parts of each line to allow the paths to join. They can decorate the outside of their mazes with a space or ocean theme. If students prefer, there are several online sites that allow students to create mazes. Collect all of the maze designs and compile a class book.

A LONG WAY AWAY

Name _____

Date _____

Find: How many did you find?

shoe _____

ice cream cone _____

submarine _____

spaceship _____

bicycle _____

heart _____

smile _____

glasses _____

camera _____

seahorse _____

tree _____

boat _____

dog _____

bird _____

Bonus: Author’s name _____

Challenge: Create your own scavenger hunt and challenge a friend!

