


TEXT SET TOPIC: The Sun, the Moon, and the Stars

Grade Level Recommendation: Grade 1

Key Focus Areas for Design:

Counternarratives Current Events **Identity** Language Perspectives Social Justice

Topic: Expanding students' study of the sun, moon, and stars to include Black astronauts, scientists, artists and musicians.

Curriculum Connection:  *This text set can be done as is but is also suggested as a companion resource for [EL Education, Grade 1, Module 2](#).*

Context/Rationale/Reflections: In this unit, students build their literacy and science skills as they engage in a study of the sun, moon, and stars. Through various narrative texts, students begin to understand how and why the sun, moon, and stars inspire authors and ourselves. Students delve into the scientific concept of observable patterns as they track observations and gaze with wonder at these celestial bodies. This text set adds the voices of Black scientists, astronauts, and artists to this unit.



Resources to build teacher background knowledge:

[Black Americans in science and space](#) This article outlines the contributions of 16 Black Americans to astronomy and space exploration.

[Ellen Ochoa: Inventor, Astronaut, Pioneer](#) This article gives biographical information about Ellen Ochoa, the first Hispanic woman in space.

[Why the Universe Needs More Black and Latino Astronomers](#) This article is about a Harvard program attempting to recruit and retain a more diverse group of astronomers.



A note for multilingual students:



Text Sets are meant to support knowledge building! Support opportunities for student [translanguaging](#) while using this text set by encouraging students to write, discuss, and present in their home language(s), English, or a combination while they are learning.

Text/ Resource	Author/ Creator	Brief Description/ Notes	Why use this resource?	Considerations for using this resource
Mae Among the Stars TEXT	Roda Ahmed	A picture book inspired by the life of Mae Jemison, the first Black woman to travel in space.	Students are given insight and representation into the childhood of a Black astronaut and the events which inspired her career in space. Students can make text to self connections with the young Mae Jemison.	Suggest using text as a whole-class read-aloud.
Starstruck: The Cosmic Journey of Neil deGrasse Tyson TEXT	Kathleen Krull and Paul A. Brewer	Picture book biography on Neil deGrasse Tyson. It tells about how his love of space growing up as a young boy in the Bronx led him to a career as a star scientist.	Students are given insight and representation into the career of astronomy. It offers a narrative of someone living whom they can see doing this work currently.	Suggest using text as a whole-class read-aloud. A video version is available here .
My People POEM	Langston Hughes	A beautiful poem comparing Black people to the sun, moon, and stars.	Students are given an opportunity to see how a writer is inspired by the sun, moon, and stars. Ask students to ponder why an author would choose to compare the beauty of the sun, moon, and stars to the beauty he sees in people.	Poem can be shared on an anchor chart; students can engage in repeated re-reads.
You Are the Sunshine of My Life SONG	Stevie Wonder	Stevie Wonder sings of love comparing the feeling to sunshine.	Students can listen to this song and think about why artists get inspired by the sun, moon, and stars. If an artist is comparing a person to the sun, what do they mean? How do they feel about that person?	Play song multiple times; print lyrics to review.

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Night Flight ART	Hebru Brantley	Chicago native Hebru Brantley paints portraits of Black kids flying above the city. This particular piece features a kid on a rocket ship up in space.	Students can look at this artwork and think about why artists get inspired by the sun, moon, and stars. Why would Hebru Brantley choose to paint images of children flying among the sun, moon, and stars?	Consider looking at multiple pieces by this artist. Also, discuss the concept of murals. While many of Brantley's pieces are for sale, he's done lots of murals around Chicago.
Why the Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky FOLKTALE	Various Authors (longer picture book version by Elphinstone Dayrell)	This classic folktale from the Igbo of Nigeria explains how the sun and the moon came to be in the sky.	Students can learn that the sun, moon, and stars have served as an inspiration for centuries. They are so significant that indigenous communities across the globe have origin stories of the sun, moon, and stars.	Suggest using text as a whole-class read-aloud.