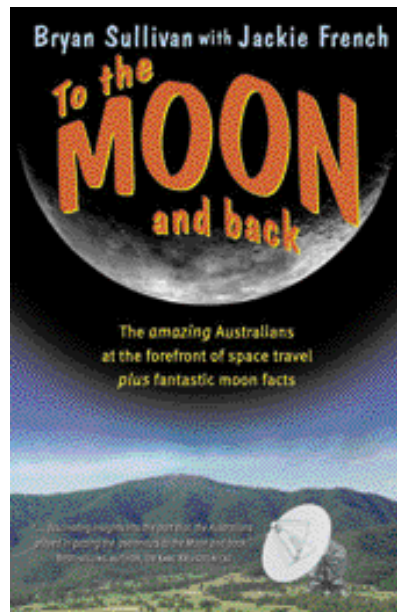


TEACHER NOTES

To the Moon and Back

by Bryan Sullivan and Jackie French



Space travel is a vast and exciting world to be explored. This book not only looks at the history of space travel but also records the experiences of the people involved in the adventure.

The book can be read on several levels—as an information text, as a personal recount of life in the early years of space exploration, as an explanation of the experience of space travel, and as a humorous collection of unusual space facts and anecdotes.

More particularly it introduces the reader to the human face of the Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station in Canberra through the experiences of Bryan Sullivan, a technician who worked there. His recollections of the moon landings are recorded in such a way that they highlight not only the astronauts involved in each mission but also the vast number of people involved 'behind the scenes' all over the world.

As a teaching resource, information is written in a combination of identifiable genres – recounts of the stories of those involved in the space race, explanations of scientific facts, and narratives of life experiences through the autobiographical details of Bryan Sullivan’s life. These all work together to give readers a more personal and intimate view of space travel than they might otherwise have.

Jackie French, well-known children’s book author and Bryan Sullivan’s wife, co-wrote the book, and the informal, intimate and often humorous style evident in many of her other books enhances the subject matter of this one.

Teaching notes

- The human face of space: Sullivan writes in the first person in many of the chapters. Discuss how this personalises the history of space exploration.
- Highlight the ‘emu in the sky’ in the introduction to the book. Research creation stories focussing on cultures from different continents. Record the stories on large outlines of each continent to be displayed on the floor. Perhaps some school library space could be used.
- Spotlight on space: Using the short information grabs at the end of each chapter, you might display a question each day on an appropriate astronomical shape, eg star, rocket, comet. Place the book in a prominent position near the question for students to access the answers. Consider supplying sheets of space-themed paper to write on.

- The Apollo missions were named after Apollo, a Greek god from ancient mythology. Research facts about Apollo and make a list of products or businesses in Australia that use the name today.
- Observations about observatories: There are many observatories throughout Australia. Working in groups, students could record facts about each of them.
- Create a timeline for the Honeysuckle Creek Tracking Station. Begin 1965 when the building commenced. Using the book, students could record significant events in the life of the tracking station.
- On track!: Use large paper plates as tracking 'dishes' to display facts about space tracking in Australia. Sullivan and French have provided an excellent list of websites for students to visit (page 184).
- The Apollo 13 recount (Chapter 24) makes for nail-biting reading. Read it aloud to the class. You might ask: 'How does it make the listener/reader feel?' 'How would the astronauts, their families and those guiding the mission have felt?' Encourage discussion about the responsibilities of planning missions into space.
- The reader is given an account of holidaying on the moon on page 175. After reading the account as a class, create postcards using pictures of space or imaginative drawings. Students could write postcards to fellow classmates or to students in other classes. These could be delivered in a rocket created from a postage mailing tube suitably decorated!
- Our moon does not have a name like the moons associated with other planets (page 40). Ask students for their ideas as to what they think it should be called. Yellow or gold balloons hanging in the classroom

would make terrific 'moons' to display students' suggestions. Include rationales as to why the names were chosen.