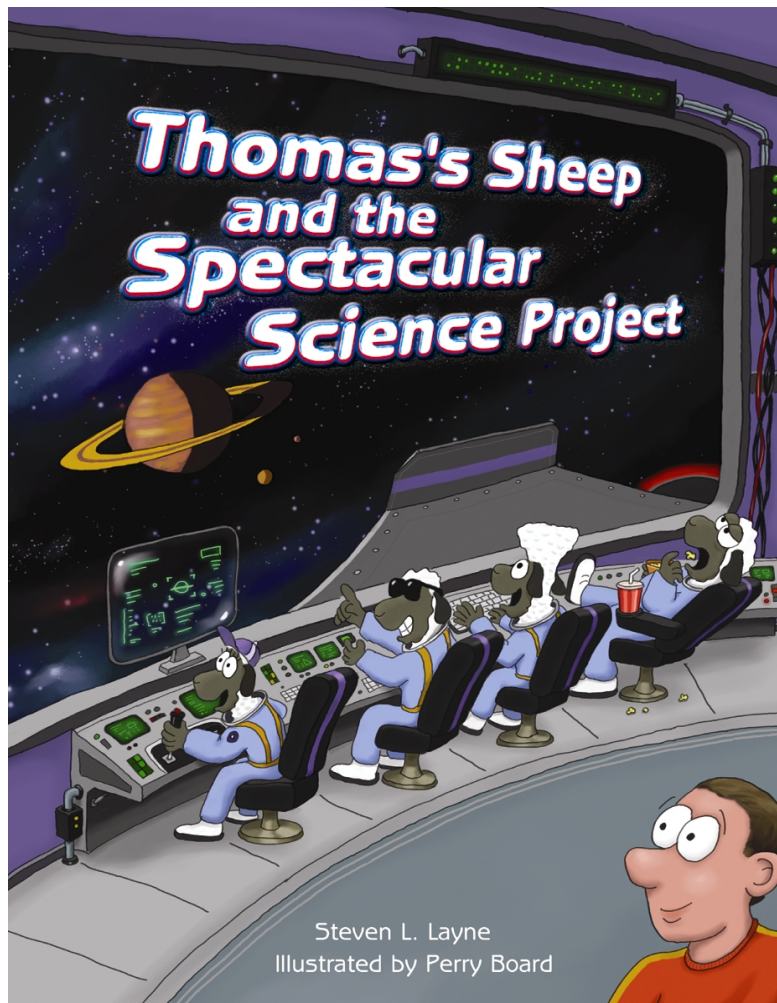


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Study Guide for Thomas's Sheep and the Spectacular Science Project



This study guide includes
Writing and reading workshops • Leads and conclusions
Bio-poems
Sense of Place – an exercise in looking for literary clues
••
Worksheets are fully reproducible
••
Study guide created by Dr. Jill Cole



Writing Workshop



1. Give names to each of the four sheep and write your own story about them. How do their names reflect their personalities? Collect your friends' stories about the four sheep and bind them into a book. Read it whenever you can't sleep at night!
2. Have you ever thought about being an astronaut when you grow up? If not, what other occupation interests you? Write about what your life will be like when you grow up and take on that job. Keep this in your personal journal. Look at it again in a year and see if your plans for your future have changed.
3. Create a Big Book of the Solar System with your classmates. On the top of each page draw a picture of a planet and then write the facts you know about the planet on the bottom. Put the pages in the order in which the planets orbit the sun, bind the book, and put it in the nonfiction section of your classroom library.
4. Create another Big Book of the Solar System that is fiction. Draw a planet on the top of each page and write what you'd like to do on that planet or what you think you might find on that planet. What are the differences between the fiction book and the nonfiction book?
5. What do you think Space Camp would be like? Research it in your library and on the internet. Write a daily schedule for yourself. What would you like to do at Space Camp each day for a week?



Did anybody
remember to pack
sunscreen?





Reading Workshop



Go to the library, find books on the solar system, and do some research. Choose a planet and read about that planet in each book you find. Write down what you learn and share your information with others in the form of a report, a story, or even a poem. Maybe you could give an oral report to the class or a small group or your family. Show how knowledgeable you are!

Here are some books about the solar system. Some are fiction and some are nonfiction. How do they ALL help you learn about the solar system?

About Space (We Both Read) by Jana Carson

Angus Thought He was Big by A. Graham and W. Wood.

The Complete Book of Our Solar System by McGraw-Hill
Children's Publishing.

Earth and Moon by Fred and Jeanne Biddulph.

The Magic School Bus Lost in the Solar System by Joanna Cole,
illustrated by Bruce Degen.

The Planets by Gail Gibbons

Somewhere in the Universe by David Drew.

There's No Place like Space by Tish Rabe

Our Solar System by Seymour Simon.

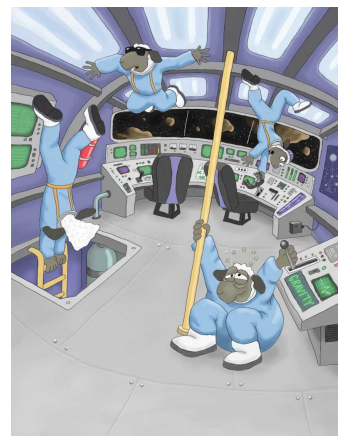
Postcards From Outer Space by Melanie Chrismer

Add your own favorite books about space on the lines below!

_____ by _____

_____ by _____

_____ by _____





Leads and Conclusions



The lead in a picture book is usually the first paragraph. Read the lead in *Thomas's Sheep and the Spectacular Science Project*.

The author, Steven Layne, put a lot of time and effort into the first few lines of his book. He wants the first paragraph to convince you to read the entire book.

What parts of the lead catch your attention? Write down the line that you like the best from the first page.

The conclusion of a picture book is often the last paragraph. The conclusion is just as important as the lead. Read the conclusion of *Thomas's Sheep and the Spectacular Science Project*.

The author wants you, the reader, to feel satisfied at the end of his book.

Did you expect the ending or was it a surprise?

Some readers like surprising endings that make them feel satisfied with the book. Other readers find predictable endings more satisfying. Which kind of reader are you?



Bio-Poems

In his story, Steven Layne tells us a little bit about each planet. Choose a planet and do some more research so you can write a bio-poem like the one below.

The Sun

Fiery, hot, violent

Huge and yellow orange

With solar flares, sunspots, and sizzling gases

I would like to have a barbecue with hot dogs

But I'd be barbecued myself.

The sun.



Here are the rules to follow:

Line 1 - The name of the planet

Line 2 - Three adjectives describing the planet

Line 3 - Size and color of the planet

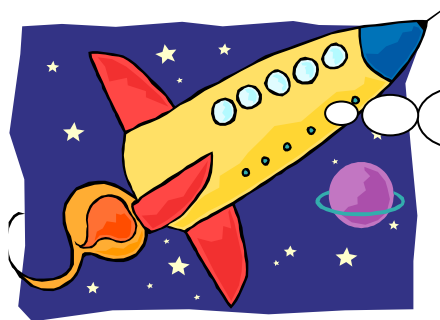
Line 4 - Three things on the planet

Line 5 - Something you'd like to do on the planet

Line 6 - Why you can or can't accomplish *Line 5*

Line 7 - Repeat the name of the planet

Write your poem on a poster and create an illustration to go with it. Ask your classmates to do the same. Hang the posters around the room and invite other classes to come in and take a trip through the solar system!



Next time, read the
official Ring
Inspection Guidebook
before taking a walk!



A Sense of Place

Perry Board's illustrations for *Thomas's Sheep and the Spectacular Science Project* enable you, as the reader, to feel a sense of place as you travel through the solar system with the sheep. Each illustration is filled with details.

Look at the front cover. Do you see:

- Two planets?
- A keyboard?
- Popcorn?
- A joystick?
- A cup with a straw?
- Power cords?
- The sheep with the patch on his shoulder?
- The reclining chair?
- The female sheep?
- Blinking lights?



How do all these details help you get a sense of place? Where exactly are the four sheep?

Choose a page in the book. Make a list of all the small details you see in the illustration. Can you find at least 10?

1	_____
2	_____
3	_____
4	_____
5	_____

6	_____
7	_____
8	_____
9	_____
10	_____

Get together with a classmate. Trade lists and see if you can find all the details!





Word Wall of Wonder



Ask your teacher if you and your classmates can create a bulletin board. Write the names of the planets on cards and put them on your word wall bulletin board. This will be the beginning of your Solar System Word Wall. For the next several weeks, anytime you or your classmates find words that are about space and the solar system, put them on your word wall. Then sit back and watch your word wall grow!

As the words on your word wall increase, here are some games you can play with them.

- Play Word Wall Tic-Tac-Toe. Write nine words from the word wall on a blank tic-tac-toe board. In order to put an X or an O in a square, the player must say the word and use it in a sentence. The first one with three in a row, wins!
- Do a Word Wall Scavenger Hunt. One student asks a question like, “Who can find a word that begins with an S and has a ring?” or “Who can find a word that means a person who flies in a space shuttle?” The student who guesses correctly can ask the next question.
- Try Word Wall Anagrams. The teacher hands out a set of letters, placing each letter on its own small card. Students can see how many word wall words they can spell with those letters.
- Play Word Wall Trivia. Copy a selection of word wall words on cards. On the back of each card, write a question about the word. Stack up your cards and the cards of a partner. Take turns drawing cards and asking the questions. If a player gets an answer correct, he/she gets to keep the card. If the answer is incorrect, the card goes back in the pile. When all the cards are gone, whoever has the most, wins.
- Read all the words on the word wall. Now try to sort the words into categories. What categories can you think of? How many words fit into each category?
- Try Fast Forward Word Wall. Get with a partner. One player decides on a word characteristic, such as words beginning with (P) or words that describe stars. The second partner scans the word wall and reads the words that fit the characteristic as fast as he/she can. Then the roles are reversed. Who found the most words? Who found them the fastest?
- Play Word Wall Pictionary. In a small group, one player chooses a word from the word wall and has one minute to draw it while the other players guess what it is. The one who guesses correctly, gets a point. Give someone else a chance to draw.

**Titles by
Steven L. Layne
from Pelican Publishing Co.**

Verses for Dad's Heart
Illustrated by Gail Greaves Klinger
☞ Poetry

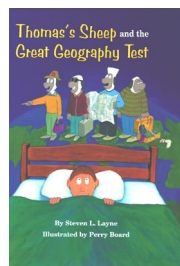
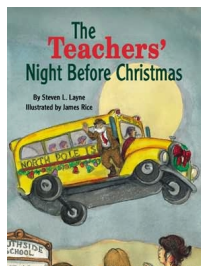
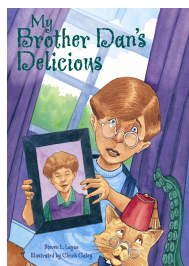
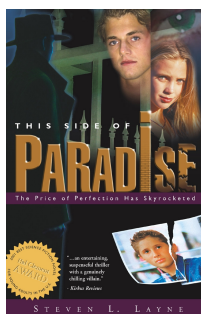
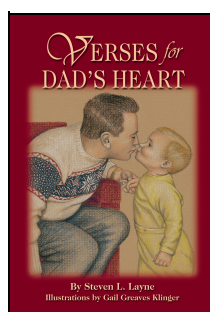
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About the Author

Steven L. Layne is a faculty member in the Department of Education at Judson College in Elgin, IL, where he teaches courses in both literature and pedagogy. He also serves as a respected literacy consultant, motivational keynote speaker, and featured children's author both in and outside of the United States. Steve's writing for both children and teens has been honored with multiple awards, and he has written two best-selling gift books of poetry. He lives with his wife and children in St. Charles, Illinois. More information is available on his Web site at www.stevelayne.com.

**About the study guide developer
Jill Cole**

Dr. Jill Cole taught at Henry-Senachwine Grade School in Henry, Illinois, for 22 years. She has loved all the grade levels she has taught which include 1st grade, 2nd grade, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade literacy. In 2002, she moved to Dover, Delaware, to teach at Wesley College in the education department. She teaches courses in literacy, classroom management, and teacher research. Her passion is intrinsically motivating students of all ages to read and enjoy great books.



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