

Give Me Some Space

Author/Illustrator
Philip Bunting



Synopsis

Ever since she was a baby, Una has been fascinated with space. Her birthday cakes are all astronomy themed, her walls are covered with space posters, and even her goldfish is named after an astronaut. Una plans to become an astronaut herself one day, and to go out into space and search for life amongst the stars. But she will have to wait to become an astronaut, and waiting is not something that she is nearly as excited about, so she takes matters into her own hands, designs and builds herself a spacesuit, and creates a rocket to carry her out into the furthest reaches of our solar system. Surrounded by all the wonders of the solar system, Una spots a scintillating blue orb in the distance, and when she comes closer she realises that she has made the most amazing discovery of all - she has fulfilled her mission and found life in space! Una's greatest discovery is not an alien spacecraft though, or an unexpected comet, but instead is the realisation that our planet is the most amazing spacecraft ever, with air and water provided, and teeming with plant and animal life. It is ours to cherish and nurture, and our responsibility to protect it and all the life which it shelters and nourishes. Earth truly is the most amazing thing we could ever find when exploring space.

About the Author/Illustrator

Philip Bunting is a designer, illustrator and creative director. During 10 years in the creative industries, he has seen his work published around the globe; and designed more magazines, websites, identities, books and apps than he could poke a stick at. Within a year, his titles have gained international attention and sales, with his debut title, *Mopoke* (2017) being listed for several upcoming awards, including being long listed for the 2018 ABIA's and an Honour Book in the 2018 CBCA Picture Book of the Year

Themes

Key Themes include: Space exploration; astronomy; science; inventiveness; passion; the solar system; Earth; environmental conservation; hope; wonder; perspectives and viewpoints.

Writing Style

Written throughout in the third person, for the most part the viewpoint follows that of Una, a young and determined child who is dedicated to the idea of one day becoming an astronaut and travelling into

space. With a matter-of-fact tone, Bunting shares Una's hopes, dreams, and motivations, before presenting her imaginary journey amongst the planets as a factual experience. Descriptions of what Una sees, and does, make good use of such literary devices as alliteration and metaphor, while her thoughts and feelings are consistently made clear to the audience. In the final pages Bunting seamlessly transitions to directly addressing the reader, while the viewpoint expands to encompass the readership - and humanity - as a whole. Sentences are clear and well suited to reading aloud, while the story is whimsically engaging as well as factually informative, and the overall message is one that is just as relevant to a senior citizen as it is to the youngest of readers.

Illustration Style

Created using Bunting's signature style featuring solidly shaped figures and foreground details set against a variety of densely coloured backgrounds, the artwork in *Give me some Space* utilises a broad palette of bright, natural, and deep shades and tones. The illustrations are a mixture of single page spreads, double page spreads, and half-pages with multiple instances of interrelated vignettes. Different backgrounds utilise a wide range of colours and shades, while within each individual illustration the background colours are cohesively palette-limited. The vastness of space is shown in sweeping lines and natural curves while figures and foreground details are blockier with straighter edges and abrupt curves. The visual and textual narratives are densely interwoven throughout the entirety of the story, and the distinction between illustrations and text is at times ambiguous, the two aspects of the dual narrative building upon and enhancing each other throughout.

TEACHER NOTES

- 1) Before reading the story, as a class look closely at the cover and title, and discuss what you can learn from it. Some things you might wish to include in your discussion could be:
 - What does the image on the cover show?
 - What is happening in the cover art?
 - What do you think might happen in the story?
 - What does the phrase *give me some space* commonly mean?
 - What do you think the title *Give me some Space* is being used to mean in this story, and why do you think so?
 - Who do you think is the intended audience of this story - who might it be written for?
- 2) What does it mean when the author says that with each birthday Una's cakes become *ascendingly astronomical* ?
- 3) How do you think the astronomically themed birthday cakes shown in the book could be constructed? What do you think the different features of them might be made of, and how could they be held together?
- 4) Design an astronomical birthday cake of your own. Think about what astronomical feature or aspect you would like your cake to highlight, how you will represent this feature, and what your cake will be made from. Draw a labelled diagram of your design sharing the construction and composition details, as well as a coloured 'artist's impression' of what the finished product should look like. For a

challenge, make a 3D model of your cake from cardboard or modelling clay. For a super challenge you can try baking and decorating your cake design.

- 5) What do we commonly call a *lap around the sun*? Why do you think the author chose to use this phrase to describe the passing of time?
- 6) What do all the posters on the walls of Una's home show? Look carefully at all the illustrations in the story, and working in pairs make a list of the different space-related posters and artwork that you can see in Una's home. Choose one of the items on your list and research it further. Use your research findings to create an informative poster of your own about this astronomical feature or phenomenon to display on your classroom wall.
- 7) Una's goldfish is called Neil. Why do you think she has named him this? Who might he be named after, and why is this person important to the history of space exploration?
- 8) Una tries to build a rocket powered by soda and mints - but it fails to take her to space (can you think of a good reason why it didn't work?) Soda and mints can, however, create a rather spectacular geyser if the bottle is pointing up, so it should theoretically be possible to create a model rocket powered with them.
 - Test this out for yourself and see how high a fountain you can make by putting mints in a bottle of soda.
 - In pairs or small groups, research the chemical reaction between soda and mints, and design and test a model rocket propulsion system using them.
 - Which types of mints work best?
 - Which type of soda?
 - How can you find this out?
 - Create a short educational documentary showing both your research and testing process, and your final test-flight.
 - In your documentary be sure to share:
 - what happened;
 - why you got results you did;
 - how you researched the matter;
 - where you found your information;
 - and what experiments you designed and performed in the course of your project.
 - Suggest some possible improvements to your design that could help make it more successful in future.
- 9) When Una sees the *spinning, sparkling sphere a trillion possibilities rushed through Una's mind*. What do you think some of these possibilities might have been? In small groups, make a list of as many possibilities as you can of things that Una might have thought of, and use your list to help you write a space adventure story of your own.
- 10) Where did Una find life in space? Why is this so important?
- 11) What is the most important message in the story? Why do you think this message is so essential for everyone to share? Were you expecting this message (or a similar one) at the end of the story or did it come as a surprise to you?

- 12) When Una packs a picnic to take into space, what does she put in her lunch basket? If you were going on a trip into space, what food would you take and why? In pairs create a menu for a space-picnic...and be sure to think about how different foods might behave when outside the earth's gravity field!
- 13) What is astronaut ice-cream, how is it different from regular ice-cream, and why do you think that astronauts don't get ordinary ice-cream in space?
- 14) Using the artwork in the book as inspiration, create a space-themed painting of your own. Experiment with water-colour background washes, and different methods for creating a starscape on top of them. You might like to try spraying water onto a dried watercolour background to make dim and distant stars, flicking white paint from a toothbrush for closer stars, dotting white paint on the end of a paintbrush or tip of a pencil, or even using an eraser to remove some of the background colour. Foreground details such as planets, moons, comets and asteroids might be painted over the top of your background using thick acrylic paints, or drawn and coloured on a separate piece of paper or tinfoil, before being cut out and glued to your background.
- 15) What is Una's new mission now that she has found life in space? How can you make her new mission your own - and why should we all make it our mission? In groups, or as a class, brainstorm a list of practical and achievable things that will help us all achieve Una's new mission.
- 16) How does the end of the story make you feel? After reading the book, what ideas and feelings are you left with? What actions does the story inspire you to take? Write an illustrated paragraph sharing your response to the story overall and more specifically to the ending.