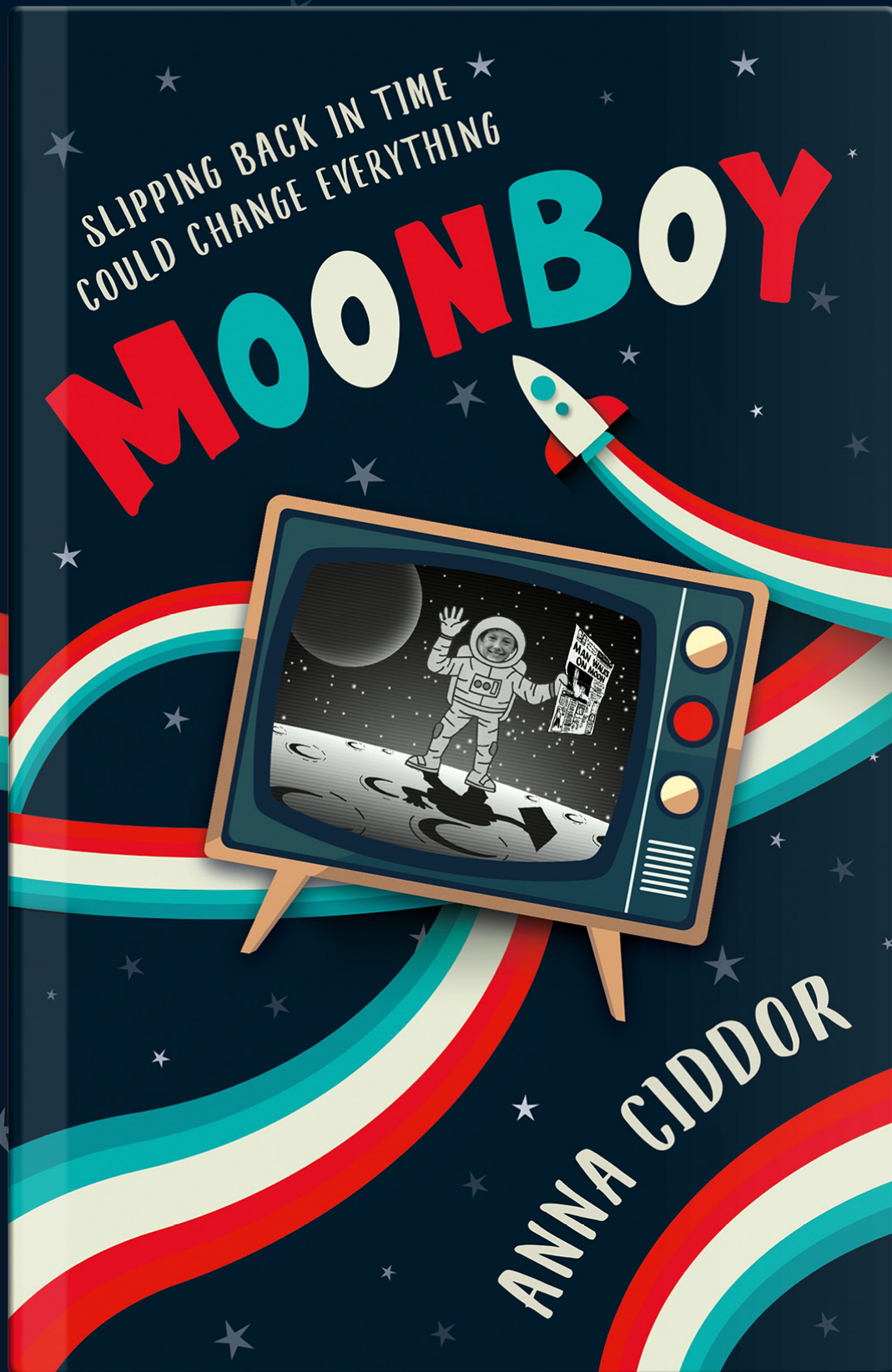


READING GROUP GUIDE

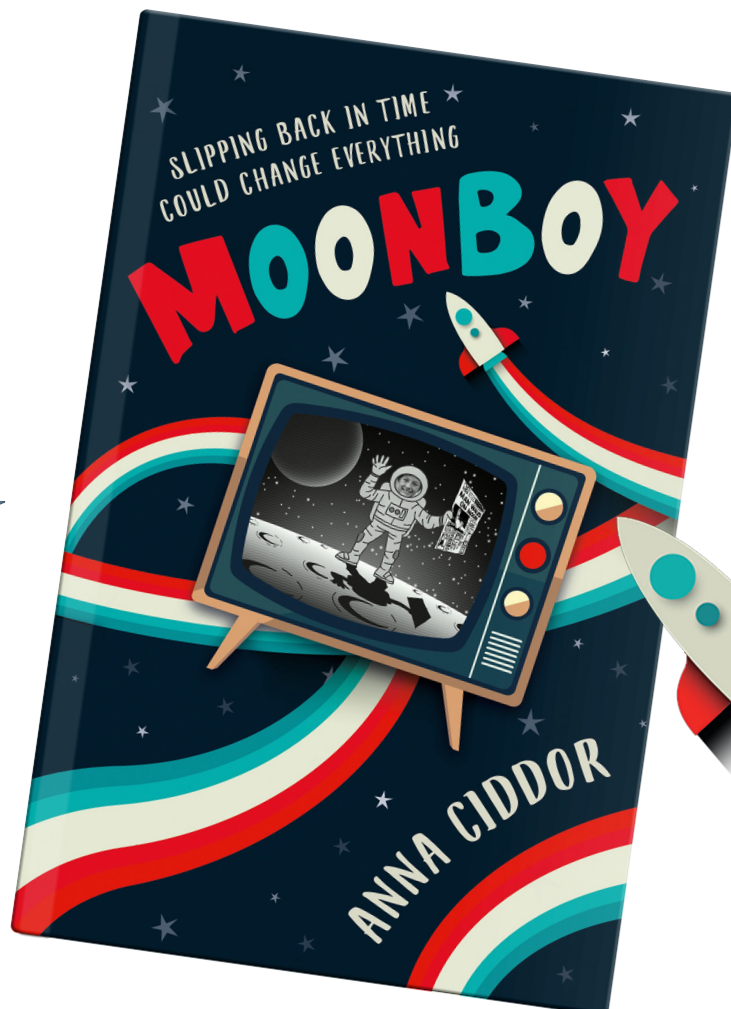


ABOUT MOONBOY

When a boy called Keith pops up from nowhere in Letty's bedroom and accuses her of invading his room, Letty is astonished—but things get even stranger when she realises she is caught up in an incredible adventure, able to slip back and forth in time!

Keith lives in the world of 1969, and Letty joins in the thrill and excitement of the first astronauts about to land on the moon.

But when she discovers her trips to the past are changing history, she starts to worry. What if something she says or does causes a disaster—or even messes up the moon landing?



Q&A WITH ANNA CIDOR

What inspired you to write *Moonboy*?

It sprang out of my memory of living through one of the most significant events in history—the Apollo 11 moon landing. I can still feel the intense fear and suspense I went through when Armstrong and Aldrin finished their moon walk and had to take off again from the moon. At four in the morning, I lay in a darkened bedroom beside my sleeping sisters, a scratchy transistor radio clutched to my ear, listening to the astronauts speak to Houston as they prepared to take off. Would the booster rockets work? Would they manage to meet up and dock with the command ship? Or would they be stranded in space forever?



Why did you decide to have a modern girl, Letty, go back in time to tell the story of the moon landing?

My big challenge as an author was to help the reader feel the same gripping emotions for an event that took place so long ago—and for which the ending is known. My solution was to create a main character, Letty, whose time-slipping antics change the past—and put the Apollo 11 mission at risk.

Letty's grandfather plays an important role in the story—both in the contemporary and 1969 setting. Tell us about why you included him.

I decided, for fun, to have Letty meet her own grandfather in the past...and then I had one of those lightbulb moments that are such a thrill for an author. Grampa would be in a nursing home suffering from dementia, and Letty's travels to the past will reveal his childhood interest in the moon landing and give her a topic to discuss with him in modern times and wake him out of his dementia shell. Intensive research into dementia gave me lots of information to help me create this scenario, and I am thrilled that this aspect of the book provides a helpful insight into how to communicate with dementia sufferers in real life.

Q&A WITH ANNA CIDOR

What other research did you do to recreate Australia in 1969?

Luckily, because I am old enough to have lived in Australia in the 1960s, a lot of the lifestyle was based on my own memories, and the memories of friends and family. We all had lots of fun reminiscing and looking at old photos! However, I did need to check on details of things like timing of the various events in the Apollo 11 mission, and the role of Honeysuckle Creek—that's how I found out about the true incident of the computer switch being bumped by a cleaner that I wove into the story.

What do you hope kids will take away from reading *Moonboy*?

When I was a kid we didn't have the medical and technological advances that are around now. This meant we were all astounded and impressed by any achievements by scientists, such as immunisations, microwave ovens, computers or mobile phones. I think the world has lost that wonder in innovation now, and I hope that taking you back in time will bring some of that back—especially the excitement for the next planned moon landing. I also hope that Charlotte's experiences with her grandfather will give you insight into ways to communicate with people with dementia.



LET'S TALK ABOUT MOONBOY

Cover: Why do you think the book might be called *Moonboy*?

Chapter 1: Why is Letty initially reluctant to visit her grandfather? Would you feel the same way?

Chapter 2: Letty feels trapped in a situation she doesn't like. Has that ever happened to you?

Chapter 3: If you could give yourself a new name and a new identity, what would you change it to? What characteristics or talents would you like to gain—or lose?

Chapter 4: Why does Charlotte put on the tattered old footy jumper? What do you think might happen in the next chapter?

Chapter 5: List the clues in the chapter that make Charlotte suspect she might have gone back in time.

Chapter 6: Start a list of some of the odd old-fashioned Aussie expressions used by Grampa/Keith and try to work out the meaning of each. Add more as you continue reading the novel.

Chapter 7: Imagine you are meeting a great-aunt for the first time. What would be the three most important things you would tell her about yourself so that she could get to know you?

Chapter 8: The illustration for this chapter is the Watsons' milk bar. Draw your own version of the front of the milk bar and add in some of the items that you would expect to see in the window, as well as some of the characters from the story..

Chapter 9: On p 46 Gwen comments, 'Boys don't cry,' which was a typical 1960s attitude. Do you think there are still expectations nowadays for gender-specific behaviour?

Chapter 10: The author has created some very vivid word pictures in this chapter. How many can you identify?

Chapter 11: What alternatives to the word 'said' has the author used in this chapter? What does she achieve in each case by choosing an alternative?

Chapter 12: If you could go back in time and change something, what would you change?

Chapter 13: If you collected together a box of treasured possessions, what would you put in it? Maybe you really could create a treasure box.

LET'S TALK ABOUT MOONBOY

Chapter 14: For the first time in decades, NASA is planning to send astronauts to the moon again. This is supposed to happen in the next year or so. You, like Moonboy, should be able to follow each exciting and dangerous moment of this trip—from takeoff, to exploring the moon, to arriving back on Earth. See what you can find out about it. Who are the chosen astronauts? What new things are they hoping to accomplish?

Chapter 15: Can you think up a scenario to explain why there are cuttings about the Apollo 11 moon mission missing from the treasure box?

Chapter 16: This novel is a subtle mixture of truth and fiction. Can you work out which parts of this chapter are true?

Chapter 17: The theme of dementia is not mentioned in the back cover blurb. Do you think it should have been? Explain your answer.

Chapter 18: What do you think Charlotte sees out the window? How would you begin the next chapter? You might like to have a go at writing it yourself, then read the author's version.

Chapter 19: The firecrackers in this chapter were left over from Guy Fawkes Night. Find out the origins of this annual event. Why do you think Australians celebrated a British festival in the past? Explore some of the festivals from many different cultures Australians celebrate today.

Chapter 20: List all the ways the author shows how impatient Charlotte is feeling in this chapter.

Chapter 21: What are the things that make both Charlotte and Elizabeth feel embarrassment in this chapter? What type of occasions or incidents have caused you embarrassment?

Chapter 22: Why do you think Charlotte says, 'I don't like cooking' on page 108?

Chapter 23: If you met someone from the past, what would you tell them about your own time?

Chapter 24: In this chapter Charlotte sees that there is only one telephone in Keith's home, attached to a wall. How would your life change if there were no mobile phones? Make a list of all the things you can remember that are different in Keith's 1960s world and add to it as you read on.

Chapter 25: What has the author done to create suspense in the story, so that Charlotte—and the reader—are worried that the moon mission will go wrong?

LET'S TALK ABOUT MOONBOY

Chapter 26: What would you suggest for a combined party for Charlotte and Grampa at the nursing home?

Chapter 27: What makes Charlotte change her mind about Elizabeth? Have you ever changed your opinion of someone after getting to know them better?

Chapter 28: In this chapter Charlotte finds that the sight of swap cards awakens happy memories for the people in the nursing home and encourages them to communicate. Have you ever enjoyed collecting something such as footy cards or supermarket collectables? What is the appeal of collecting? Do you find it can be a way to make friends?

Chapters 29–31: Write a list of ways you expect a best friend to behave towards you. Do you think you would like Charlotte to be your friend? Why or why not?

Chapter 32: Construct a rocket out of recyclables.

Chapter 33: If you could go back in time, what time would you choose, and why?

Chapter 34: Compose your own poem about being an astronaut.

Chapter 35: Have a go at playing some of the 1960s games such as hopscotch, marbles or 'What's the Time Mr Wolf?'

Chapter 36: Try to view some real photos and videos of the first moon walk.

Chapter 37: Moonboy tries to imagine Charlotte's world—a world that is over 50 years in the future. Have a go at predicting what the world will be like 50 years into your own future. Think about food, transport, communication and medicine.

Chapter 38: Plan what you would research if you were doing a project about the moon. Maybe you could actually do the project.

Chapters 39–40: The author was inspired to write this story by her own memories of the first moon landing. Write a story based on your own real memory of an important or exciting event.

Chapter 41: Charlotte discovers that in 1969, kids can have jobs such as delivering newspapers on their own very early in the morning. Would you like a job like that? Why—or why not?

LET'S TALK ABOUT MOONBOY

Chapter 42: What does the author mean on p209 by, 'Charlotte felt as if someone had shoved a moon rock down her throat'? Make up your own interesting expressions and similes to express emotions such as shock, fear and joy.

Chapter 43: Create a word portrait of a person.

Chapter 44: Can you list all the different emotions Charlotte experiences in this chapter?

Chapter 45: Design—and maybe make—your own space party costume.

Chapters 46–47: Interview older people about their own memories of the first moon landing. Why do you think crowds of people came to watch the moon landing on TV screens at the Myer department store in 1969?

Chapter 48: How did the author build up suspense and tension in this chapter, leading to the dramatic climax?

Chapters 49–51:

- a) It is always hard to remember that grown-ups, especially old people, were once young. See if you can find some photos of adults you know—maybe even your teacher—when they were children. Try to imagine what they were like. Maybe interview them to ask what their interests used to be.
- b) In the story, Keith drew a picture of himself as an astronaut. Create a piece of artwork illustrating what you would like to be now or in the future.



ATTENTION TEACHERS!

TIPS TO GET THE MOST OUT OF READING GROUPS

Book discussions, either whole class or in small groups, are a chance for students to share ideas and build interpretations of a text with their peers. In any of these text discussion structures, the goal is for students to engage in enjoyable, constructive talk about texts. This is not an innate process in our students, so here are some tips to assist you create an environment for powerful and productive talk in your classroom.

1. **Set the norms:** you can help students to feel respected and safe in taking risks with their answers by constructing ground rules for how discussions will work. Examples of rules include: explain why you think what you think with textual evidence, listen to others, question what others are saying, respectfully disagree and offer alternative ideas.
2. **Set the talk norms:** the way that we speak to each other varies on context. It is important to show students that all ways of talking are valid and demystify 'academic' talk by modelling for students how to participate in a discussion.
3. **Model participation:** It's important to guide students and scaffold their learning until they're comfortable with such discussions.
4. **Use silence to your advantage:** offer students opportunities to think through a question and formulate a response.
5. **Take up student ideas, don't just evaluate them:** Researchers have found that students offer more elaborated contributions to discussions when teachers do not evaluate student responses by saying things like 'Good,' 'Right,' or 'Not quite'. By refraining from evaluation, you also step out of the role of primary knower and open space for students to be possible knowers: individuals with valid, worthwhile ideas to contribute. From these positions, students can reason together and grapple with ideas, rather than jockey for opportunities to report the 'correct' answer.
6. **Types of Discussions:** there are many types of discussions we can use the above questions for including Book Clubs, Collaborative Reasoning, Instructional Conversations and Literature Circles. Use the approach that you think will suit your students the best.

ABOUT ANNA CIDDOR

Anna Ciddor has been fascinated by the past for as long as she can remember. Even as a child, she spent hours immersing herself in research, digging out the tiniest details so she could imagine being a person living in the olden days. As an adult she has successfully turned this passion into a career, but nowadays, she is just as likely to mine for details in her own childhood, creating stories out of the strange, intriguing and totally different world of the 1960s!

Anna's work has won her many accolades, including the Nance Donkin Award for Children's Literature, a grant from the Australia Council, Notable Book awards from the Children's Book Council of Australia, and shortlistings for numerous other awards. Some of her best-loved books include *Runestone*, *52 Mondays* and *The Boy Who Stepped Through Time*.



OTHER BOOKS BY ANNA CIDDOR

