

Defying Gravity: The Story of Mae Jemison

CLASS ACTIVITIES

Fluent Reading | Grade 2



LITERACY



MINDSET

How can a person achieve their dreams?

Use this essential question to guide student learning with class discussion and inquiry activities.

1. ENGAGE IN CLASS DISCUSSION (20 MINUTES)

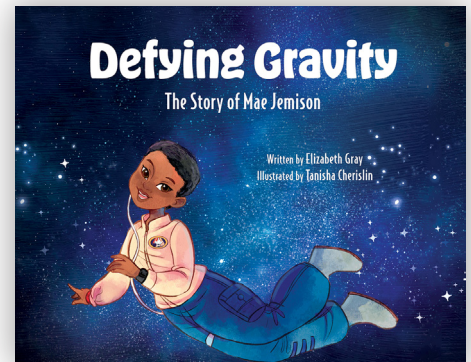
Share this sentence from the book with the class: “Mae’s curiosity kept her questioning, and her creativity and confidence led her to answers.” Guide a class discussion on curiosity using the following questions:

- What does *curiosity* mean?
- What topics made Mae Jemison curious? (Students may need to look back in the story.)
- How does Mae’s curiosity help her become an astronaut?
- What topics make you curious?

As students are answering the questions, remind them to answer in complete sentences so that their classmates fully understand their ideas.

2. ASK QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION (30 MINUTES)

Remind students that the book provides facts about Mae’s life as a child, a teen, and an adult. It cannot give all of the information, though, so they may still be curious about how Mae reached her goals. Ask students to write three questions they have about Mae’s accomplishments. Have students share their questions aloud, and choose 5–7 as topics for further exploration. Ensure that these questions are ones that can be answered through research. Write these questions on a class chart or display board.



*Use the bilingual book **Desafiando la gravedad** to help support Spanish-speaking ELL students with the activities.*

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3. COLLABORATE TO ANSWER A QUESTION (45 MINUTES)

Tell students that they are going to find the answers to the questions generated in the previous activity. Form as many groups as there are questions (5–7). Assign each group a question, and provide them with the resources listed below as sources for their research. Give the groups time to find the answer to their question. Then have groups share their answer aloud and add to the class chart or board.

VIDEO Who is Mae Jemison For Kids <http://bit.ly/3HHj81Q>

WEBSITES

- Britannica Kids—Mae Jemison <http://bit.ly/3Hl8AE2>
- Kiddle—Mae Jemison facts for kids <http://bit.ly/3HLVocQ>



Mae Jemison in July 1992

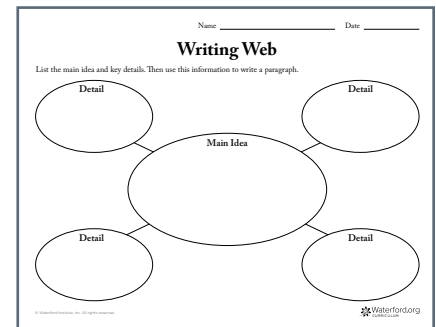
4. RESEARCH A FAMOUS PERSON (2–3 CLASS PERIODS)

Have students choose another person in history who achieved a dream. For ideas, the Britannica website gives brief biographies of many people in different areas who, like Mae Jemison, followed curiosity to achieve a dream. Inform students that they will be researching information about how the person they selected reached a goal. Give students time to research using books from the library or kid-safe search engines like the two listed below. They can use the Writing Web organizer to gather information.

WEBSITES

- Britannica Curious People <http://bit.ly/3Y9xtt8>
- Kiddle Search Engine <https://www.kiddle.co/>
- Google Kids <https://www.safesearchkids.com>

PRINTABLE Writing Web <https://resources.waterford.org/teacher-resources/3546/3546.pdf>



Writing Web

5. CREATE A POSTER (60 MINUTES)

Instruct students to use the information gathered in their research to create a poster about the famous person they learned about. The poster should include the person's name, the dream that the person achieved, details about how they achieved their dream, and drawn or printed pictures. Remind students to be creative and make their posters colorful.

6. PRESENT INFORMATION (3–5 MINUTES PER STUDENT)

Give students the opportunity to present their poster to the class. Presenters should be able to talk about how the person they researched achieved their dream. Allow each presenter time to answer two or three questions from their classmates about the research.