

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## READER'S GUIDE – Teacher Version

for *Astrid the Astronaut #1: The Astronomically Grand Plan*  
by Rie Neal; illus. by Talitha Shipman

### Chapter 1: Free “Fireworks”

#### VOCABULARY

Draw lines to match the terms with their definitions.

black hole (p. 1)	very, very large
atmosphere (p. 6)	rocks burning up in Earth's atmosphere
astronomical (p. 7)	the layer of gases that surround a planet
meteor shower (p. 9)	an area in space with very strong gravity

#### COMPREHENSION

1) What does Astrid wear to help her hear better? (p. 3)

She wears two hearing aids.

2) Astrid is eager to start the after-school club, Shooting Stars. What is one thing she knows about it so far? (p. 7)

Shooting Stars is space-themed / for 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders / run by Ms. Ruiz / etc.

3) What does Astrid want the *most* in this chapter? (*Circle one.*)

- (a) She wants her sister to clean up her building bricks.
- (b) She wants to choose the color of her next pair of hearing aids herself.
- (c) She wants her sister to get out of bed.
- (d) She wants to go to Space Camp.

## DISCUSSION

Have you ever seen a shooting star? If you have, what was it like? If not, what things have you seen in the night sky? (Moon, stars, constellations, planets, etc.)

## Chapter 2: All Alone

### VOCABULARY

Draw lines to match the terms with their definitions.

galaxy (p. 13)	_____	said quickly without thinking
audiologist (p. 14)	_____	lines of stitches that hold fabric together
blurted (p. 15)	_____	a large group of stars, gas, and dust
seams (p. 18)	_____	a doctor who helps people hear better

### COMPREHENSION

1) What device helps Astrid hear better in class, in addition to her hearing aids? (p. 14)

a clip-on microphone

Who wears it?

her teacher / Mr. Klein / Ms. Ruiz

How does it help Astrid?

The clip-on mic sends the teacher's voice right into her hearing aids, making it sound like the teacher is right next to her.

2) Astrid feels awful when she finds out her friend Hallie isn't coming with her to Shooting Stars. Why is this news hard for Astrid? (p. 17)

Astrid is afraid to join a new club alone.

3) What does Astrid add to her Astronomically Grand Plan? (p. 20) (*Circle one.*)

- (a) She adds going to a planetarium.
- (b) She adds getting a new galaxy-print backpack.
- (c) She adds convincing Hallie to join Shooting Stars.
- (d) She adds cleaning the STEM lab.

## DISCUSSION

When was the last time you were new to a group or a school? What do you think is the hardest thing about being new?

## Chapter 3: Shooting Stars

### VOCABULARY

Draw lines to match the terms with their definitions.

scholarship (p. 25) — wiggled up and down  
 waggled (p. 27) — money given to support a student's education

### COMPREHENSION

- 1) When Astrid hears “Errbod ava ee,” why does she hear it this way? (p. 21) (*Circle one.*)
  - (a) Her hearing aids aren't turned on.
  - (b) She forgot to give the teacher her clip-on mic.
  - (c) The teacher is hard for everyone to understand.
  - (d) The boy next to Astrid is distracting her.
- 2) Ms. Ruiz tells Astrid she's a “brain at math.” What does she mean? (p. 22)

She means that Astrid \_\_\_\_\_

is smart / is good at math



- 3) In this chapter, Astrid thinks she's found a way to go to Space Camp. What is it?  
(p. 25)

She hopes to win the full scholarship by getting the highest score on the Astro Board in Shooting Stars.

## DISCUSSION

Getting a scholarship often means hard work, as Astrid soon discovers. If you could earn a scholarship to go somewhere educational for free, where would you want to go and why? What would you be willing to do to earn it?

## Chapter 4: Gumdrops and Toothpicks

### VOCABULARY

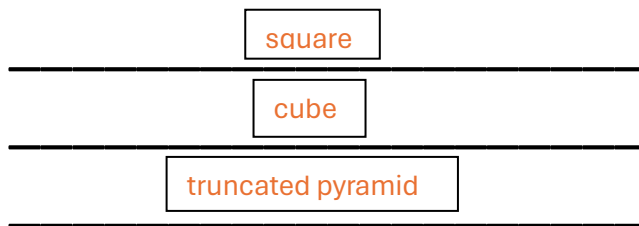
Draw lines to match the terms with their definitions.

truncated (p. 32) ————— shortened  
stashed (p. 34) ————— stuffed; hid



### COMPREHENSION

- 1) What three shapes is Astrid supposed to build with gumdrops and toothpicks?  
(p. 30-32)



- 2) What problem does Astrid's sister Stella have in this chapter? (*Circle one.*)

- (a) She needs more parts for her robot arm but has no money.  
(b) She can't figure out how to build her robot arm.  
(c) The robot arm keeps getting caught in her hair.  
(d) The robot arm has no instructions online.

3) How does Astrid feel at the end of the chapter, and why does she feel that way?

	<p>She feels frustrated because she can't figure out the truncated pyramid. / She feels afraid of failing at Shooting Stars because she can't figure out the truncated pyramid. / She feels worried that she won't be able to convince Hallie to join Shooting Stars after all.</p>	
--	---	--

## DISCUSSION

Who do you think had the right idea for the assignment in this chapter, Astrid or Stella? Why do you think their idea was better?

## Chapter 5: A Giant Mess

### VOCABULARY

Draw lines to match the terms with their definitions.

angle (p. 36)	<del>imaginary, invisible barriers</del>
force fields (p. 37)	excellent; well done
Morse code (p. 39)	type of strategy or approach
smirked (p. 45)	smiled in a smug and annoying way
stellar (p. 45)	a code made up of dots and dashes

### COMPREHENSION

1) On page 39, what does Ms. Ruiz mean when she reminds her students to 'think outside the box'? (Circle one.)

- (a) Feel free to come up with creative answers.
- (b) Take your box outside to work on your project.
- (c) Don't do your thinking while sitting inside a cardboard box.
- (d) Take all your supplies out of their box before you start your project.



2) Who tells Astrid that third graders never get the high scores on the Astro Board?  
(p. 40-41)

Veejay

3) What is one example from this chapter that demonstrates 'outside the box' thinking?

Some kids used two toothpicks on the bottom segments of the truncated pyramid. / Veejay cut the toothpicks. / etc.

## DISCUSSION

How do you think this Astro Mission would have gone for Astrid if she had been partnered with Hallie, like she wanted? How would it have gone if she'd been working with her sister Stella?

## Chapter 6: Friends for Never

### VOCABULARY

*Draw lines to match the terms with their definitions.*

eager (p. 50) — said in a fast way, often with accidental spit  
 petite (p. 51) — impatient; wanting something a lot  
 sputtered (p. 52) — little

### COMPREHENSION

1) Astrid is upset at the beginning of the chapter because she and Veejay had trouble with the Astro Mission. Does she feel better or worse by the end of this chapter?

worse

## 2) Why isn't Hallie doing Shooting Stars? (p. 52)

It's at the same time as Petite Picassos. / She doesn't actually like space as much as Astrid thought. / etc.

## 3) Why does Astrid say that art is boring? (p.54)

She says it because ... (Circle one.)

- (a) ... that's how she feels.
- (b)** ... she feels hurt by Hallie.
- (c) ... she always falls asleep in art class.
- (d) ... it will make Hallie feel better.

**DISCUSSION**

At the end of this chapter, Astrid states that she's lost her best friend. Is this a fact or an opinion? Explain your answer.

**Chapter 7: Robot Junkyard on the Kitchen Table****VOCABULARY**

Draw lines to match the terms with their definitions.

squinted (p. 59) ————— narrowed one's eyes in concentration

sifted (p. 59) ————— sorted through small objects

**COMPREHENSION**

## 1) What nicknames does Astrid's dad have for Astrid and her sister? (p. 56)

Astrid = \_\_\_\_\_

Astrogirl

Stella = \_\_\_\_\_

Stella Bella



2) What advice does Stella give Astrid about friendships? (p. 61) (*Circle one.*)

- (a) Be friends with both Hallie and Veejay.
- (b) Be friends with Veejay instead of Hallie.
- (c) Neither Hallie nor Veejay are trustworthy.
- (d) Make up with Hallie and be careful with Veejay.



3) Who ends up demonstrating outside-the-box thinking in this chapter, and what do they do? (p. 61)

Astrid demonstrates outside-the-box thinking when she ties two of Stella's pieces together with her hair tie and fixes Stella's robot arm.

## DISCUSSION

Does Stella give Astrid good advice in this chapter? Why or why not?

## Chapter 8: The Real Astro Mission

### VOCABULARY

Draw lines to match the terms with their definitions.

hanging out (p. 64)	people on the ground who control a flight
skidded (p. 65)	slid from trying to stop too fast
mission control (p. 67)	battery-operated boxes for communicating
walkie-talkies (p. 67)	a machine that makes a vehicle move
engine (p. 67)	spending time with



## COMPREHENSION

1) Why is Astrid worried when Ms. Ruiz first announces that partners will be communicating with walkie-talkies? (p. 69) (*Circle one.*)

- (a) Her walkie-talkie is out of batteries.
- (b) She doesn't know how to use a walkie-talkie.
- (c) She hasn't given Ms. Ruiz her clip-on mic yet.
- (d)** She needs to see a person's face to understand them.

2) What is the mystery 'engine part' made out of? (p. 72)

gumdrops and toothpicks

3) What do Astrid and Veejay discover is the "real" Astro Mission? (p. 73)

They discover that the real Astro Mission is figuring out how to communicate without the walkie-talkies.

## DISCUSSION

Do you think it's fair to have the walkie-talkies stop working and to still expect the students to continue on with the Astro Mission? Why or why not?

## Chapter 9: Right Answer

### VOCABULARY

Draw lines to match the terms with their definitions.

American Sign Language (p. 74) — a big win  
 scanned (p. 78) — a language signed with the hands  
 victory (p. 83) — looked at all parts of something carefully

## COMPREHENSION



1) How does Astrid end up solving the problem of fairness that Pearl brings up? (p. 78) (*Circle one.*)

- (a) She doesn't.
- (b) She lets Pearl take over.
- (c) She suggests that everyone work together.
- (d) She and Veejay stop using her clip-on mic to communicate.

2) What's the main difference between Astrid's clip-on mic and a walkie-talkie? (p. 79)

Astrid's clip-on mic provides one-way communication, and walkie-talkies provide two-way.

3) What shape is the 'engine part'? (p. 80)

a cube

## DISCUSSION

How do you think Ms. Ruiz will respond to most of the students working together? Is their plan breaking the rules?

## Chapter 10: My New Plan

### VOCABULARY

Draw lines to match the terms with their definitions.

exact (p. 84)

update (p. 90)

change something to keep it current

precise; perfect

## COMPREHENSION

1) In the illustration on page 88, who is celebrating together at the end of the Astro Mission? (For clues about Astrid's new friends, look back at pages 78 and 80.)

Astrid
Veejay
Ella
Dominic

2) Astrid makes bracelets for her and Hallie. How are the bracelets both art and science together? (p. 89-90)

The bracelets are art because they are colorful and creative, and they're science because they include a message in Morse code.
---

3) Why does Astrid update her Astronomically Grand Plan at the end? (p. 91-92) (*Circle one.*)

- (a) She has better handwriting now.
- (b) She wants to include her new friends.
- (c) She doesn't want to be an astronaut anymore.
- (d) She has made new friends and is no longer friends with Hallie.

## DISCUSSION

Ms. Ruiz likes to tell students that there's more than one way to solve a problem. Do you think that's always true? Why or why not?

