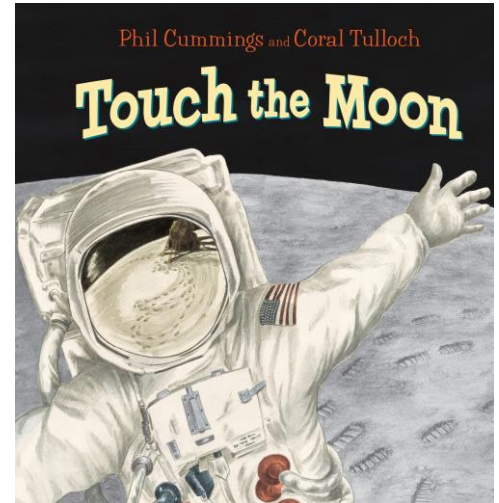


Touch the Moon

By Phil Cummings
Illustrated by Coral Tulloch



May 2019 ISBN 9781760523657
Hardback picture book
Recommended for 6-8-year-olds

Summary

*Neil stepped out of the module.
He moved carefully down the small ladder.
He reached the last step and stopped.
Slowly, he placed his foot on the moon.
'That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.'*

It's a cold day in July and a boy is watching television – a man is going to walk on the moon! At the same time, outside his window another kind of miracle is unfolding. It's one of the coldest days on record and by the time Neil Armstrong steps on the moon, the streets and gardens of Peterborough might be covered in a thick blanket of snow.

A personal and local story, *Touch the Moon* is an ideal way to introduce students to the story of humankind's first successful moon landing. It was first published to commemorate the 50th anniversary of that landing.



Touch the Moon is a beautifully-written story about what it was like that cold day in July. Phil takes us from the incredible images flickering on his television screen to the landscape that was being transformed outside. The parallel works beautifully and we are left with the sense of wonder and excitement that filled the heads and hearts of people, especially children, all around the world that day in July 1969.

Use in the curriculum

Foundation to Year 4

Science: Science as a human endeavour; natural cycles (Earth's seasons and the moon's orbit of Earth); properties of snow.

Arts & Technology: Design and build an astronaut snowman; make a model of the Lunar Module.

English: visual literacy; simile and metaphor; memoir writing; interviewing people who watched the moon landing in 1969.

Visit <https://www.allenandunwin.com/resources/for-teachers> for free down-loadable teachers notes, reviews by teachers, extracts and more. And sign up to the Allen & Unwin e-newsletter to receive monthly updates on new resources!

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Themes

- moon walk
- modern history
- seasons
- space race
- family
- important events

Discussion questions

1. Before opening *Touch the Moon*, hold the cover up to your students and ask them what they think this story will be about. After they answer, ask them if the illustration and title helped them work this out. Ask some background questions to gauge how much your class knows about the space exploration in general, and the moon landing in particular.
 - What do we call men and women who travel to the moon or space in general? (A: Astronauts)
 - What country first landed a human on the Moon? (Hint: look at the flag on the astronaut's sleeve. A: United States of America)
 - When did the first human land on the Moon? (Hint: the book was published for the 50th anniversary. A: July 21, 1969)
 - What is being reflected in the astronaut's face mask? (A: a lunar module)
 - How is the Moon different to the Earth? (Hint: think about gravity, oxygen, the surface is rocky and barren.)
2. Read the story once and ask the following comprehension questions:
 - What big event are the boy and his mother waiting to watch on TV?
 - Do you think the boy in the story is very interested in space and astronauts? What clues in the story's pictures and words tell you that?
 - Is this story set in winter or summer? List three things from the story that told you which season it is?
 - Why is the boy as excited by what is happening outside his window as what is happening on his TV?
 - What was the name of the first man to 'touch the moon'?
 - Why did Neil Armstrong hop 'like a kangaroo' on the moon?
3. Ask students why they think the artist chose to show the actual moon-landing in black and white? How does this contrast with the colours chosen to show the outside scenes in the story and why?
4. Ask students to describe in their own words the images on the front and back endpapers and why they think the artist wanted to show these images.
5. Use Google Images to view snowflakes. Which is more amazing: humans walking on the moon or snowflakes?
6. Explore the everyday and scientific products that were developed as spin-offs from research into space exploration.
7. Invite students to ask older family members about their memories of the day Neil Armstrong landed on the Moon. Transcribe these memories onto a large, decorated sheet of cardboard and place it on a wall in your classroom.

For older students

8. Note that most pages feature an extended frame over the double-page spread. Find at least two examples where the framing changes and explain why you think the artist chose to do so on those pages.
9. Discuss with students the meaning of, 'But the footprints Neil Armstrong left on the moon...will never fade.' Words can have a literal meaning and a metaphorical meaning: encourage students to explain the story's final words in both contexts.
10. Develop a timeline of terrestrial and space rocket development. Focus on German and Soviet work as well as that of USA.
11. Study of the moon provides an opportunity for study of the United Nations and multilateral agreements about the moon (and Antarctica). Australia has acceded to the Agreement Governing the Activities of States on the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, commonly known as 'The Moon Treaty'. This is similar to ratifying the agreement.

<http://disarmament.un.org/treaties/t/moon>

- When was the treaty 'opened for signature'?
 - When did Australia accede to it?
 - Why do you think this treaty is under the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs? (HINT: note the date it was opened for signature. And - what were rockets used for before space exploration?)
 - Read the text of the treaty, Articles 1 and 2, as a whole class to familiarise students with the language and concepts used in such documents.
 - In small groups, read one of the Articles 3 to 15, with a view to presenting a simple summary of it to the class.
 - Are there any aspects of future human use of the moon (other than military uses) that you can foresee problems with?
 - What do you hope is the future of the moon?
12. Should we protect the lunar sites of historic human activity for the future?
 - News report: http://www.nbcnews.com/id/48813236/ns/technology_and_space/#.XMU5COgzaUk
 - Newspaper editorial: <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-moon-nasa-russia-united-nations-world-heritage-20190222-story.html>
 - Persuasive writing: <http://theconversation.com/protecting-human-heritage-on-the-moon-dont-let-one-small-step-become-one-giant-mistake-111020> - by the man who has founded an organisation called 'For All Moonkind' <https://www.forallmoonkind.org/>
 13. The excitement and large collaborative scientific efforts of space exploration: Film to view: *Hidden Figures* 2016, dir. Theodore Melfi.
Shows a time prior to the lunar landings during the development of NASA from its predecessor, NACA. Women and African-Americans were segregated – though in historical truth, segregation ceased when NASA was born. This is the story of some of the incredibly bright African-American women working in advanced computing and engineering during this time. It is a stirring film and restores important overlooked history. Suitable for young viewers.

From the author and illustrator

'My inspiration [for the book] was a childhood memory. The day that man landed on the moon I was living in the Mid North of South Australia. I was sent home from school and whilst I was sitting watching the moon landing it began to snow!

'I had to decide where or not to watch Armstrong put his foot on the moon or go out and play in the snow.'

— Phil Cummings

[See over page for a contemporary news story about the event, saved by Phil.]

'I loved that this book is not only a personal memory of a time in the author's life but celebrates a time in the life of so many people who remember the day Man walked on the moon. To me, there was a beautiful reflection of the unknown, the foreign and the magical environment that was created that day in both an earthly weather event that turned the land white, and the moonscape, with footprints marking the presence in the grey graphite landscape. I wanted to try and show this similarity of the foreign but beautiful landscape and hope that I have helped to enhance Phil's gentle memories of this very special day.'

— Coral Tulloch

About the author and illustrator

Phil Cummings is the author of over sixty books for children, in a career that has spanned thirty years. His work has been published around the world and has received multiple awards. Most recently, *Ride, Ricardo, Ride!* was a 2016 CBCA Honour Book, and *Boy* was shortlisted for the 2018 CBCA Book of the Year Award and won the 2017 Children's Peace Literature Award. Phil's favourite pastimes are listening to music, trying to play guitar, watching the cricket, cheering for the Adelaide Crows in the AFL, working in the garden and walking Daisy, his little (but very bossy) Jack Russell terrier. He lives in South Australia.



Coral Tulloch has illustrated over sixty fiction and non-fiction books for children, in Australia and internationally. Her book *Antarctica, The Heart of the World*, which she wrote and illustrated, won the 2004 Environment Award for Children's Literature. *One Small Island*, Coral's highly-acclaimed book about Macquarie Island which she created with Alison Lester, won the 2012 CBCA Book of the Year Award, as well as the Environment Award for Children's Literature in the same year. Coral lives in Tasmania.

Neil Armstrong first stepped onto the moon at 12.56 pm on 21 July 1969 Australian Eastern Standard Time (AEST).

The author, Phil Cummings, has kept this newspaper clipping about this doubly eventful day in 1969. It is from *The Adelaide Advertiser*, 22 July 1969.

Note paragraph 9: 'Children who were let out from school early to watch the lunar walk on television built spacemen snowmen.'

Snow, Hail In Bleak Day

Snowfalls of up to 4 in. were reported in the Mid-North yesterday in a bleak day during which SA was lashed by wind gusts of up to 55 m.p.h. and driving rain and hail.

Real Snowman Weather



While SA was whipped by icy winds yesterday, Ian, Robin and Maxine Womast, of Jamestown, had a day of fun with a snowman which they built after heavy snowfalls in SA's Mid-North.

Snow fell at Clare, Terowie, Peterborough, Bamberwic, Mount Bryan, Farrell Flat, Yongala and Burra and as far north as Oodawirra in the lower Flinders Ranges and Marree in the south.

The heaviest falls were at Whyte - Peterborough (3 in.), and Peterborough, Terowie and Burra (2 in.).

The Bureau of Meteorology said the unusual widespread snow falls were caused by a very deep ocean depression which had pushed a cold air mass from the Antarctic.

The conditions would last for a few days.

It was the first snowfall since October, when a light fall was recorded at Mount Lofy.

The postmaster at Mount Bryan (Mr. G. D. Paech) said the fall began at 8.30 a.m. and by 9 a.m. the ground was covered with a thick blanket of powdery snow.

"Heaviest"

"The locals say it was the heaviest fall in memory and more extensive than in 1936," Mr. Paech said.

"Children who were let out from school early to watch the lunar walk on television built spacemen snowmen."

"Railway workers were unable to use their gangers' bikes because the snow was heaped heavily on the lines."

At 5 p.m. snow was still thick on the ridges and hills in the area.

The postmistress at Oodawirra (Mrs. E. Bennett) said that the snow fell in big flakes for about half an hour.

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