

The Astro Outlaw
By David A. Kelly

The Astro Outlaw Teacher's Guide
By Kate Narita

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David A. Kelly lives near Boston. He used to play baseball when he was little, but he wasn't very good. That's why he became a writer. He has two sons (who are good baseball players), a nice wife who's also a writer, and dog named Samantha. She's a little crazy, but she loves to play with stuffed animals.

Mr. Kelly's written about a lot of different subjects, like places to travel to and cool new gadgets. But he's also interested in baseball. In fact, he even wrote a book about the greatest hitter of all time, Babe Ruth! His book, *Babe Ruth and the Baseball Curse* (Random House) tells all about Babe Ruth, the Boston Red Sox, and how some people think the Red Sox were cursed after they sold Babe to their arch rivals, the New York Yankees! It's a pretty neat book even if you aren't a Red Sox fan!

If you want to know where to travel, you can read Mr. Kelly's travel articles in publications such as the New York Times, Boston Globe, New York Post, Chicago Sun-Times, Miami Herald, multiple AAA publications and many more newspapers and magazines. He is also the Business Travel Guide for About.com.

CONTACT THE AUTHOR

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You can find out more about Ballpark Mysteries at <http://ballparkmysteries.com/>

CHILDREN'S BOOKS BY DAVID A. KELLY

- *Babe Ruth and the Baseball Curse*
- *The Fenway Foul-Up*
- *The Pinstripe Ghost*
- *The L.A. Dodger*
- *The Astro Outlaw*
- *The All-Star Joker*

The Astro Outlaw Comprehension Questions

CHAPTERS 1-3

Name: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Directions: Use a complete sentence to answer each question.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Why doesn't Commander Rice show the tour group a real space rock?

2. Why do you think Commander Rice doesn't show up to throw the first pitch?

CHAPTER TWO

1. Do Kate and Mike find any clues inside Commander Rice's party room?

2. What does Kate hear at the top of the stairs?

CHAPTER THREE

1. Where do the thieves plan to meet?

2. What important item was inside Commander Rice's briefcase?

SEQUENCING

Directions: Please read through the six events below. Then, write a number one next to the first event that happened, a two next to the second event that occurred and so on.

- _____ Bixby Noomi hits a home run, and it lands near the gas pump in left field.
- _____ Mike and Kate find Commander Rice tied up in a small room.
- _____ Kate and Mike meet Commander Rice, Sam Shine, Tex Rayburn, and Manuel Lopez.
- _____ Commander Rice realizes the thieves stole his moon rock.
- _____ Kate and Mike look for clues in Commander Rice's party room.
- _____ Commander Rice doesn't show up to throw out the first pitch.

VOCABULARY

Directions: Write the letter of the correct definition next to each word.

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------|
| _____ exhibit | A. an uneven edge |
| _____ huddle | B. to shrink back or flinch |
| _____ jagged | C. an object on display |
| _____ mission | D. a copy |
| _____ replica | E. to crowd together |
| _____ wince | F. a task someone needs to do |

PREDICTION

Who do you think took the moon rock?

Why do you think this?

The Astro Outlaw Comprehension Questions

CHAPTERS 4-6

Name: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Directions: Use a complete sentence to answer each question.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Could the thieves have ridden the train out of the stadium?

2. What important clue does Mike spot on the ground, near the train tracks?

CHAPTER FIVE

1. What unusual features are in the middle of the Astro's center field?

2. Why does Kate think Commander Rice smelled straw when he was mugged?

CHAPTER SIX

1. How do Kate and Mike know Tex Rayburn helped steal Commander Rice's moon rock?

2. Was it a good idea for Mike and Kate to ask Commander Rice for help? Why or why not?

TRUE OR FALSE

Directions: Please read each statement. If it is a true statement, write “true” next to the statement. If it is a false statement, write “false” next to the statement.

- _____ The stadium’s train takes fans to their seats.
- _____ Many of the fans have cowboy hats with colored feathers.
- _____ A moon rock is worth about one-hundred dollars.
- _____ There is a flagpole in the middle of center field.
- _____ The gas pump shows how many home runs the Astros have hit since they built their new stadium.
- _____ The thieves are going to leave the stadium and meet in the middle of Texas.

VOCABULARY

Directions: Write the letter of the correct definition next to each word.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| _____ band | A. to rob someone |
| _____ bumble | B. a triangular piece on the front of an engine |
| _____ cowcatcher | C. to disappear |
| _____ mug | D. to stumble |
| _____ pillar | E. to crowd together |
| _____ vanish | F. column |

PREDICTION

Do you think Tex Rayburn will get away with his crime? Explain why or why not.

The Astro Outlaw Comprehension Questions

CHAPTERS 7-9

Name: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

Directions: Use a complete sentence to answer each question.

CHAPTER SEVEN

1. Why are Kate and Mike surprised that Tex Rayburn is the Astro Outlaw?

2. Is there something else Mike and Kate could do to find the moon rock? Explain your answer.

CHAPTER EIGHT

1. What trick does the Astro's second baseman use in the ninth inning?

2. Where did Tex Rayburn hide the moon rock?

CHAPTER NINE

1. How do Commander Rice and Mr. Ryan get Tex Rayburn to confess to the theft?

2. Have you ever ridden on a "nineteenth-century rocket"?

MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS

CHAPTERS 7-9

Directions: Read each question and circle the best answer. You may only circle one answer.

1. Where does the beginning of the book occur?
 - A. The Astro's Ballpark
 - B. NASA's Johnson Space Center
 - C. San Jacinto Monument
 - D. Houston City Hall

2. The Astro Ballpark was built on which of the following sites?
 - A. The old Houston train yards
 - B. The old NASA Space Center
 - C. The old San Jacinto Monument
 - D. The old Houston City Hall

3. Why did Tex Rayburn steal the moon rock?
 - A. He wanted to give it to his daughter.
 - B. He wanted to put it on his dresser.
 - C. He wanted to sell it and use the money to pay his bills.
 - D. He wanted to sell it and use the money to become an astronaut.

VOCABULARY

Directions: Write the letter of the correct definition next to each word.

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| _____ corridor | A. to move quickly |
| _____ custody | B. a safe |
| _____ hoist | C. a hallway |
| _____ hunk | D. to lift |
| _____ scurry | E. a large piece |
| _____ vault | F. imprisonment |

Answers for Chapters 1-3

Comprehension Questions

1. Moon rocks are too valuable to leave out in the open.
2. Answers will vary.
3. No, they did not. All they found were business cards and stickers.
4. Kate hears something scratching on the other side of the door.
5. The thieves plan to meet at a gas station near the hill, deep in the heart of Texas.
6. The moon rock was inside Commander Rice's briefcase.

Sequencing

3. Bixby Noomi hits a home run, and it lands near the gas pump in left field.
5. Mike and Kate find Commander Rice tied up in a small room.
1. Kate and Mike meet Commander Rice, Sam Shine, Tex Rayburn, and Manuel Lopez.
6. Commander Rice realizes the thieves stole his moon rock.
4. Kate and Mike look for clues in Commander Rice's party room.
2. Commander Rice doesn't show up to throw out the first pitch.

Vocabulary

- | | |
|------------|-------------------------------|
| C. exhibit | A. an uneven edge |
| E. huddle | B. to shrink back or flinch |
| A. jagged | C. an object on display |
| F. mission | D. a copy |
| D. replica | E. to crowd together |
| B. wince | F. a task someone needs to do |

Predictions

Answers will vary.

Answers for Chapters 4-6

Comprehension Questions

1. No, the thieves couldn't have ridden the train out of the stadium because the tracks do not exit the stadium.
2. Mike finds half of a broken green feather near the train tracks.
3. There is a hill and a flagpole in the middle of center field.
4. Kate thinks the Outlaw put a straw hat over Commander Rice's face.
5. Mr. Rayburn's hatband has three green feathers, and one of them is broken in half.
6. Answers will vary.

True or False

- | | |
|-------|--|
| False | The stadium's train takes fans to their seats.
Explanation: The train runs along the top of the stadium and whistles when the Astros score runs. It does not run inside the stadium |
| True | Many of the fans have cowboy hats with colored feathers. |
| False | A moon rock is worth about one-hundred dollars.
Explanation: A thief once tried to sell a moon rock for five-million dollars. |
| True | There is a flagpole in the middle of center field. |
| True | The gas pump shows how many home runs the Astros have hit since they built their new stadium. |
| False | The thieves are going to leave the stadium and meet in the middle of Texas.
Explanation: That's the code the thieves use to confirm that they'll meet near the gas pump inside the stadium during the seventh-inning stretch. |

Vocabulary

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| E. band | A. to rob someone |
| D. bumble | B. a triangular piece on the front of an engine |
| B. cowcatcher | C. to disappear |
| A. mug | D. to stumble |
| F. pillar | E. to crowd together |
| C. vanish | F. column |

Prediction Answers will vary

Answers for Chapters 7-9

Comprehension Questions

1. They are surprised because Tex Rayburn had seemed nice and they had liked him.
2. Answers will vary.
3. The Astros' second baseman uses the hidden-ball trick in the ninth inning.
4. Tex Rayburn hid the moon rock in the coal box.
5. They show Tex the recording of him hiding the moon rock in the coal box.
6. Answers will vary

Multiple Choice Questions

Directions: Read each question and circle the best answer. You may only circle one answer.

1. Where does the beginning of the book occur?
B. NASA's Johnson Space Center
2. The Astro Ballpark was built on which of the following sites?
A. The old Houston train yards
3. Why did Tex Rayburn steal the moon rock?
B. He wanted to sell it and use the money to pay his bills.

Vocabulary

- | | |
|-------------|--------------------|
| C. corridor | A. to move quickly |
| F. custody | B. a safe |
| D. hoist | C. a hallway |
| E. hunk | D. to lift |
| A. scurry | E. a large piece |
| B. vault | F. imprisonment |

SUGGESTED BOOK PROJECTS

All Aboard

Hang a steam engine up at the front of the room. Make box cars out of construction paper. Each time a student finishes a book during reader's workshop, he or she can write the title and the author on the box car and the teacher can add it to the train. Challenge your class to make a long enough train to wrap around the room.

Awesome Averages

The Astro's Ballpark has a gas pump that keeps track of all the homeruns that the Astros have hit in their new park. There are 30 MLB teams. Have each student in your class pick a MLB team. Then, have them find out how many homeruns that team has hit in the past five seasons. Ask students to calculate the maximum, minimum, range, mean, median and mode for his or her data set. Then rank the teams from the least number of homeruns hit in the past five years to the greatest number of homeruns hit.

Rock Sort

Ask each student to bring a rock into class. Then, for one of your stations, have students work together to classify the rocks into three different groups: igneous, metamorphic, and sedimentary. When lava cools quickly, it forms igneous rocks. It can have holes or a smooth, shiny surface. Obsidian and basalt are igneous rocks. When pressure builds inside the earth, metamorphic rocks form. They have flat surfaces and tiny crystals that sparkle like mirrors or wavy stripes of different colors. Sedimentary rock is soft, it breaks apart easily, it's formed from tiny pebbles and sand, and it's the only kind of rock that has fossils. If you find a moon rock, be sure to let Mr. Kelly in on the cash.

Rocket Rides

Ask students to imagine that they wake up one morning and find a rocket launch in their backyard. Where would they go? What would they do? Ask them to write a fantasy about their adventures in their rockets.

Solar System Riddles

In *Astro Outlaw*, Kate solves a baseball riddle. Have each student write a riddle about space or space exploration. Topics could include our solar system, astronauts, rockets and more. After each student has written his or her riddle, he or she can read it out loud to the class and the students can solve the riddles.

Train Timelines

Pair up your students. Then, give each pair of students a twenty-five year time period, starting in 1750 to the present. Ask them to make a timeline on an 11 by 18-inch piece of construction paper of important events in train history. In the end, combine the timelines.