

**Grade 3: Unit 2, Week 4** Out in Space

Read Aloud: **Up, Up, and Away! The Mae Jemison Story** by Howard Gutner

Wonderful Words: *subject, gravity, experiment, train, endeavor*

**Up, Up, and Away The Mae Jemison Story**

It is Friday morning, September 12, 1992. Inside the space shuttle, Dr. Mae Jemison sits very still. A voice on the radio counts down the numbers.

Ten, nine, eight, seven, six . . .

Mae thinks about flying high above Earth. What will it look like from the window of the shuttle?

Five, four, three, two, one . . .

The shuttle takes off. Mae is on her way!

Soon, the shuttle begins to circle Earth. Mae gets up and goes to the window.

“The first thing I saw was Chicago,” she said later. That made her smile.

Chicago is where Mae grew up. Maybe she was smiling because she could picture her family on the ground, looking up. Or Mae might have been smiling because she had just made history. She was the first African-American woman to go into space.

Mae Carol Jemison was born on October 17, 1956. When she was still a baby, Mae’s family moved from Alabama to Chicago.

One day, a teacher asked Mae what she wanted to be. Mae said she wanted to be a scientist. “Don’t you mean a nurse?” the teacher asked. Years later, Mae said, “Now, there’s nothing wrong with being a nurse, but that’s not what I wanted to be.”

Mae's favorite subject in school was science. On Saturdays, Mae's mother and father took her to the library. She spent many hours there reading books about space. She also watched takeoffs and moon landings on television. On summer nights, she liked to lie on the grass in her yard. She would look up at the stars and dream of flying into space.

While in school, Mae often danced in school shows. In 1973, she graduated from Morgan Park High School in Chicago.

Now Mae had to decide: Should she study dance or science?

At last, Mae decided to go to medical school in California. She was going to be a doctor.

In 1981, Mae graduated from medical school. She worked as a doctor in Los Angeles. But she wanted to help people in other parts of the world. So, in 1983, Mae joined the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps helps people around the world. Mae was a doctor for Peace Corps workers in Africa.

Mae learned a lot in the Peace Corps. She was one of the youngest people there. Sometimes she had to work with people who thought she was too young to be a doctor. Mae proved that she knew what she was doing.

In 1985, Mae returned to Los Angeles. She had not forgotten her dream of going into space. She wanted to make it come true.

In June 1987, Mae Jemison's dream came true! She was one of 15 people NASA chose to become astronauts. NASA is the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. They build spacecraft and send people to explore space. Mae began to train at the Johnson Space Center in Texas.

Mae had a lot to learn. She had to find out how a space shuttle works and what to do in an emergency.

Mae learned how to move inside a space shuttle that was circling Earth. On Earth, gravity keeps us on the ground. In the moving spacecraft, astronauts float. If people and objects are not tied down, they float in the air. To keep from floating when they are asleep, astronauts get into special sleeping bags. These bags are tied to the wall of the space shuttle.

At the end of 1988, Mae finally became an astronaut. But she still had to wait four more years before she went into space. While she waited, Mae worked with other scientists. They worked on experiments that Mae would do when she went into space. She also trained with other astronauts who would be with her on the space shuttle.

On September 12, 1992, the long wait was over. The space shuttle Endeavour was ready to go! It looked like a giant white bird waiting to take off.

Mae was ready, too. She woke up early. After she got dressed, she ate breakfast with the other astronauts. Then Mae put on her orange space suit. At 10:23 in the morning, the *Endeavour* lifted off into space.

Mae had many jobs to do on the shuttle. One of her jobs was to find a way to keep people from getting sick when they are in space.

Mae was also in charge of the frog experiment. Scientists wanted to see what would happen if frog eggs were hatched in space, far from Earth's gravity. The baby frogs turned out fine.

On September 20, 1992, Mae’s trip came to an end. She had spent almost eight days in space. Mae and the other astronauts had traveled more than three million miles. They had gone around Earth more than 120 times!

A few weeks after Mae landed, the city of Chicago gave her a big party. It lasted for six days! Then Mae went back to Morgan Park High School.

“I can look at all your faces and be assured our future is in good hands,” Mae told the students. She told about the teacher who had said that Mae could be a nurse, but not a scientist. Mae told the students to go after everything they wanted.

Mae had made her dream come true. Now she was ready to do other things. In 1993, she left NASA and started her own company. Mae’s company uses science to help people in poor countries around the world.

And Mae still dreams big. “I’d go to Mars at the drop of a hat,” she says. Knowing Mae Jemison, she probably will someday!

### **subject**

**Define:** A **subject** is something that is studied.

**Example:** Reading and science are my favorite **subjects**.

**Ask:** What is your favorite **subject**?

### **gravity**

**Define:** **Gravity** is a force that pulls things toward Earth.

**Example:** Climbing upstairs is hard because we go against **gravity**.

**Ask:** How does **gravity** make hiking down a hill easier than climbing up?

### **experiment**

**Define:** An **experiment** is a test to discover or show something.

**Example:** We set up the **experiment** to show that water and oil do not mix.

**Ask:** What kind of **experiment** have you attempted?

## **train**

**Define:** When you **train**, you learn how to do something.

**Example:** The soccer team **trained** for their games by practicing every day.

**Ask:** What kind of tricks can dogs be **trained** to do?

## **endeavor**

**Define:** To **endeavor** is to try to accomplish something.

**Example:** I will **endeavor** to eat only healthy foods.

**Ask:** What is something that you will **endeavor** to do better on from now on?