

‘THE COUNTDOWN’

YEARS 3/4

INTRODUCTION:

In this lesson, children will create poems based on **The Countdown**.

CURRICULUM MAPPING:

Reading:

- Drawing inferences such as inferring characters’ feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence

Plan their writing by:

- Discussing and recording ideas

Draft and write by:

- Composing and rehearsing sentences orally (including dialogue), progressively building a varied and rich vocabulary and an increasing range of sentence structures
- Organising paragraphs around a theme
- In narratives, creating settings, characters and plot

STARTER:

Read/watch Taz in the countdown scene in [Vlog Ready to Launch](#). You could if you want also use [This video](#) as it is shorter and may be more accessible for some learners.

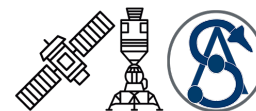
Discuss, how does Taz feel about her mission?

MAIN LESSON:

You are in a rocket about to take off. Write the ten things you are thinking about before take-off happens. They might be small things you forgot to do, things you are looking forward to or things that are happening around you on the ship.

Next, with a partner, try performing your lines as a countdown, one saying the number from 10 down to one and the other reading a line. It might sound a bit like this:

10.....The engines roar below me



9.....Smoke billows around the sides of my rocket

8.....I wish I could hug my dog tight, or he could sit beside my feet.

Continue your Countdown down to 1.

Perform your Countdown poems to your class. You could try acting these out, making a movement to go with each line.

IDEAS FOR INCLUSION:

- Use an Emotions Scale to consider how the astronaut is feeling at this part of the mission and during different points of the countdown. (see Inclusion resource bank for an example you could use)
- Use Widgit Symbols: Preparing for Launch to help scaffold the countdown and prompt the ideas linked at each number. (see resource bank for an example you could use)
- Make a soundscape or a visual landscape. You could use the audio clips found in Space Adventures, you could also search the BBC Sound Effects and Audio Network on the LGFL website or visit the NASA website for more audio clips.
- Get your students to create a small tunnel and small space (the cockpit) so the students can have a multisensory experience of what it feels like to take off.
- Use instruments or drum on the table or stamp on the floor to create a rhythmic crescendo for the countdown to create a sense of excitement.
- Students can experiment with ear defenders to notice the change in sound and experience for the astronaut.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

- Write the poem so the rhythm speeds up like the astronaut's heartbeat might.
- Write a second poem about the countdown from another person's perspective e.g. a family member; a mission controller or a journalist.

WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN USE ADDITIONAL LGFL RESOURCES:

Create an animation of the rocket launching using **jit** or **J2spotlight** within the **j2e Toolkit** and then perform your countdown poem add this to your animation by using the microphone function.

Explore what a healthy breakfast is, create a healthy breakfast menu for Taz. Research recipes within **Cookit** to get ideas.