

# How to Eat in Space

Written by Helen Taylor  
Illustrated by Stevie Lewis



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## LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

After reading *How to Eat in Space*, have students extend their learning using the resources shared in the “Keep Exploring” and “Selected Sources” sections of the backmatter as well as the NASA website. Kid-friendly favorites include a tour of the International Space Station (ISS), astronaut meal prep, and how to spot the ISS in the sky.

## TRYING OUT “HOW TO” WRITING

As the title suggests, *How to Eat in Space* is structured as a “how to” book. Either before or after reading the book, read aloud the headings that introduce most two-page spreads (ex: “Stick to the Menu” and “Keep it Tidy”).

- ◆ Ask students to describe how the book signals that the headings are important (ex: they are written in green font, in all capital letters, and appear most frequently at the top of the page).
- ◆ With students, co-create an anchor chart listing the headings. Ask students whether or not they need to go in a specific order. What would you call them? Steps, lessons, or something else?
- ◆ Put students in pairs to explore a two-page spread more closely. How are the words and images connected to the heading? What is the reader learning how to do within that spread? Have students share their thinking with the class.
- ◆ Brainstorm topics about which the class could create its own “how to” book. Ask students whether their topic would be best presented step-by-step, or as a series of tips/lessons.
- ◆ Once a topic is selected, map out the various steps as a class, and then have pairs of students create two-page spreads using *How to Eat in Space* as a mentor text.



## EXPLORING SHELF STABLE FOODS

The packaged food available to the astronauts may seem exotic to students—like the lasagna or almond tart with caramelized pears mentioned in the book. But what are some of the ways in which shelf stable food is commonplace here on Earth? What technology is at work that keeps food safe on land and in space?



- ◆ After reading *How to Eat in Space*, bring in a range of shelf-stable foods, packaged in cans, jars, pouches, and packets.
- ◆ Have students explore the items in small groups. What is similar about them? Different? What is familiar to them? Unfamiliar? What steps must be followed to eat the food? Which type of storage do they think works best in space and why? What new questions do they have about food storage?
- ◆ Together, read the backmatter, which discusses the food production and storage process for the ISS in greater detail. If students have unanswered questions, reach out to staff at a local grocery store and invite a store manager to speak to your class over video conference.

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## DESIGNING A MENU FOR ASTRONAUTS

After reading *How to Eat in Space*, along with its backmatter, ask your students to design a menu for astronauts. Depending on their age, students could plan a day or two or even a week's worth of menus. Working in pairs or small groups, have students design daily menus that include three meals plus snacks and beverages. If students need information on what constitutes a healthy meal, share the resources from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's MyPlate website (<https://www.myplate.gov/eat-healthy/what-is-myplate>). As students plan, have them consider:

- ◆ What variety of foods do we include?
- ◆ How nutritious are our meals?
- ◆ Is a range of cultures represented in the food choices?
- ◆ Would all food items be available on the ISS?

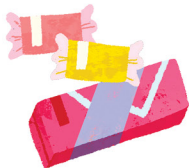
## INVESTIGATING THE WATER CYCLE

When reading *How to Eat in Space*, students may have paused and pondered—or shouted—when they realized where astronauts' drinking water comes from. As the backmatter states, “all water on the ISS is recycled again and again.” All moisture from human bodies—sweat, droplets from speaking, and yes, even pee—gets cleaned and reused. This may seem gross to your students, but scientists have a sophisticated system for keeping everyone safe. Leverage these fascinating details as an opportunity to confirm or extend student understanding of the water cycle here on Earth, where all the water that we have right now is all the water that has ever existed.



## WRITING WITH ELLIPSES

Ellipses, those three periods in a row that reflect an incomplete thought, are used strategically by the author at the bottom of each two-page spread in *How to Eat in Space*. Why? What is the author's goal in doing so?



- ◆ While reading aloud *How to Eat in Space*, pause after the second or third time that an ellipse appears and ask your students what they know about them and what they signal to a reader. It's okay if students don't know what the ellipsis does.
- ◆ As you continue reading aloud, ask students to note when they see/hear the use of the ellipsis for the rest of the reading (including the backmatter!).
- ◆ When the book is complete, ask students what new thinking they have about ellipses and why the author used them as part of the book's structure (ex: the focus on “how to” and the interconnectedness of the lessons presented).
- ◆ Invite students to try out ellipses in whatever they are currently writing. Discuss when and why they may and may not work within a piece of writing.

These Teaching Tips were created by Dr. Mary Ann Cappiello.