

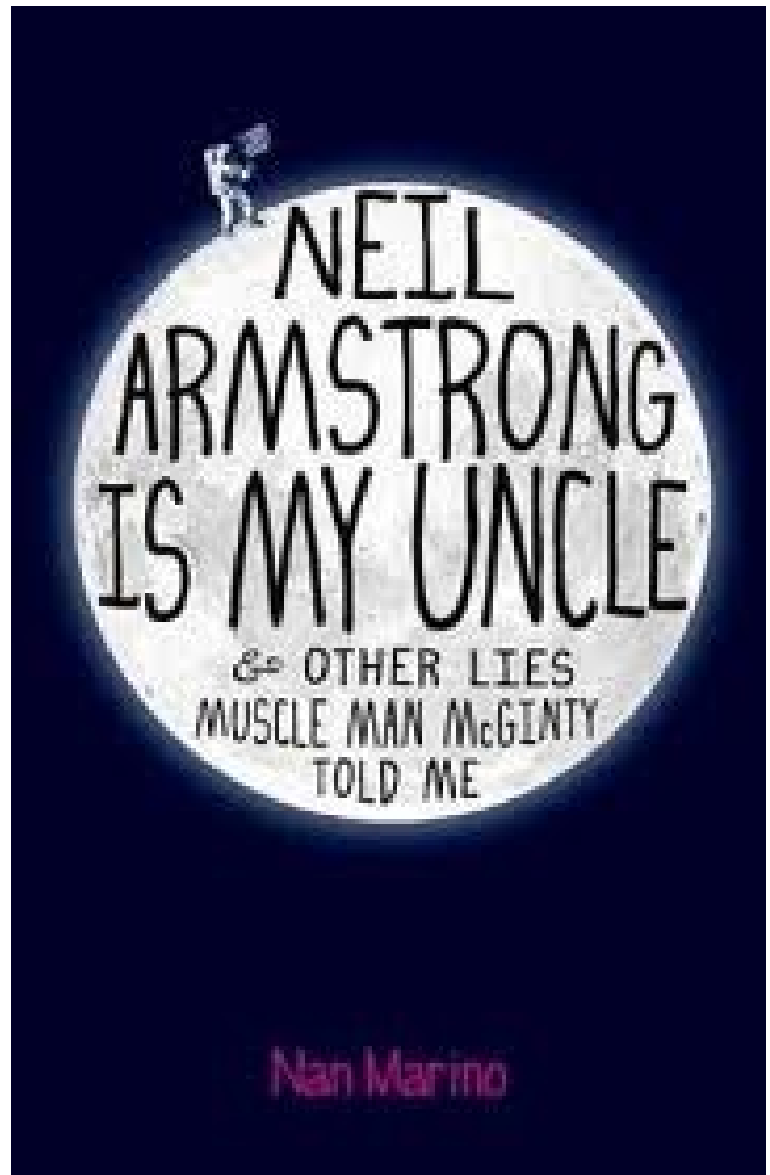
Neil Armstrong is My Uncle and Other Lies Muscle Man McGinty Told Me

By Nan Marino

Literature Unit
Resources

Created by:

Tracey K. Graham

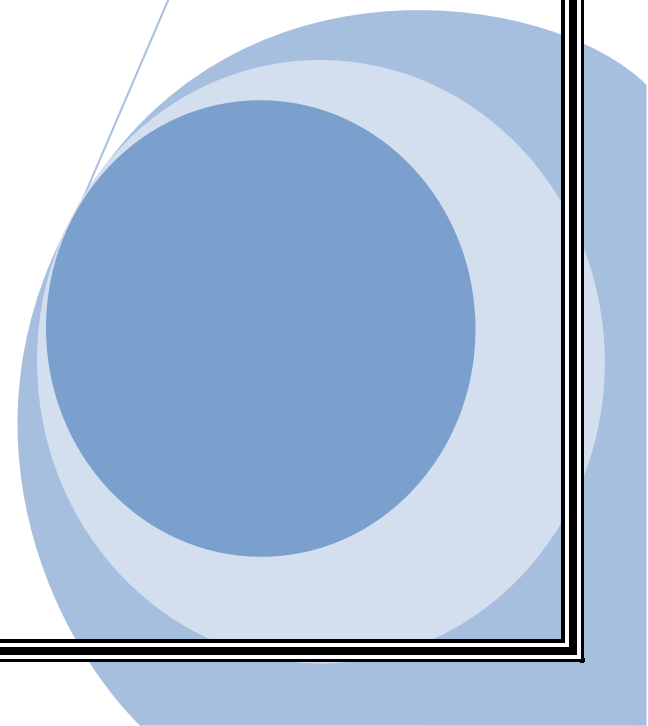
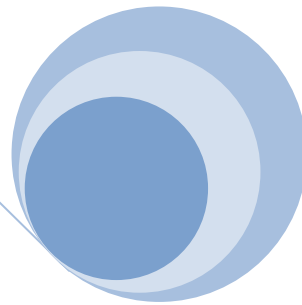
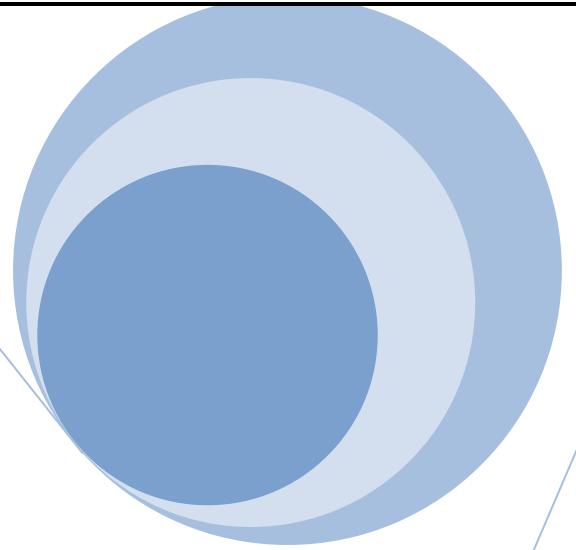


For additional Literature units, please visit:

<http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Smart-Chick>

Items in the unit:

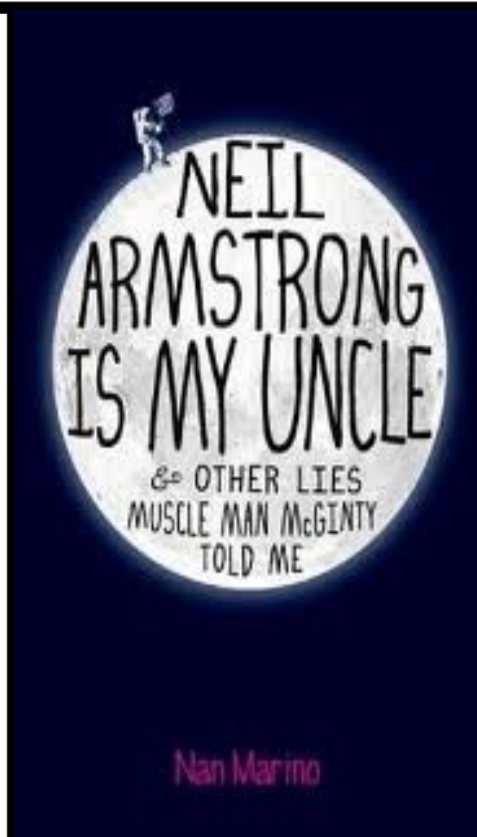
Cover Analysis
Bookmarks for Recording Story Elements
Short Answer Comprehension Questions
10 Project Challenges
Chapter Title Connection Chart
Ice Cream Truck Activity
What is Onomatopoeia?
Onomatopoeia Poetry
What is a Synonym?
What is a Hyperbole?
Coin Flipping Activity
Symbols of Loneliness
Evolution of TV Dinners
Character Chart
Figurative Language Sheets
Vocabulary Words



Cover Analysis

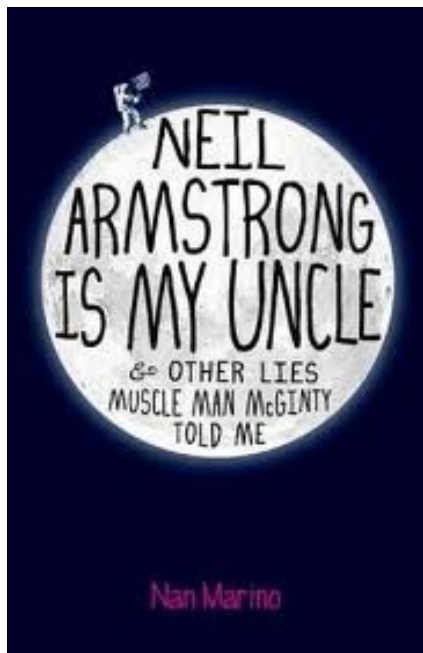
What color scheme is used in the cover art? Why do you think the publisher chose this color scheme?

What items are included on the cover? Why do you think these items were chosen?



Where is the title located? What size, font, and color are used for the title? Why do you think the title was done in this way?

Do you think this cover fits the story? Why or why not? If you could change anything about the cover art, what would it be? Why? Create a new cover design on a separate sheet of paper.



Neil Armstrong is My Uncle
and Other Lies Muscle Man
McGinty Told Me
by Nan Marino

Protagonists:

Antagonist:

Setting:

Initiating Conflict:

Climax:

Resolution:

Themes:

Genre:

Directions for Bookmark:

- 1. Copy onto cardstock or copy paper, one per student.**

- 2. Students need to fill in the information on the bookmark after they have read the book.**
 - Protagonist: The main character the story is about.**
 - Antagonist: The characters or forces acting against the protagonist.**
 - Setting: The where and when the story takes place.**
 - Initiating Conflict: The event that sets the story in motion.**
 - Climax: Critical moment in the story, usually a turning point for the protagonist.**
 - Resolution: The end of the story, most problems are resolved by this time.**
 - Themes: Lessons learned or what the story is generally about: family, friendship, adventure, etc.**
 - Genre: The type of book and why it is in this genre.**

- 3. Glue the two sides together with a glue stick. You can laminate the bookmarks if you want to make them last.**

- 4. A great way to check overall comprehension of the book!**

ENJOY!

"Neil Armstrong is My Uncle..." by Nan Marino
Ch. 5-8

Name _____

1. Why did Tamara feel silly writing a letter to Keesie? What would she rather do? Why?

2. What did Tamara do with the letter? Why?

3. Why doesn't anyone know where Keesie and her mother are now? Is this a good reason? Why or why not?

4. How does Muscle Man help Tamara in Ch. 6? Why do you think he offers to do this for her?

5. What is a "gripe"? How do the kids of Ramble Street deal with a gripe?

6. What gripe does MaryBeth have against Tamara? Who is right, in your opinion? Why?

7. What punishment did Tamara have to serve? How did she feel about it? Why?

8. Why did Tamara give Douglas the nickname, "Muscle Man"? Is it a good one, in your opinion? Why or why not?

"Neil Armstrong is My Uncle..." by Nan Marino
Ch. 17-20

Name _____

1. Why does Tammy wait so long before she reads Keesie's letter? Why is she so surprised when she finally reads it?

2. How does Tammy feel about Keesie after she reads the letter? Why have her feelings changed?

3. What does the team ask Tammy to do in Ch. 18? Why do you think they do this? How does she react? Why?

4. Why is Ch. 18 called, "The War Comes Home to Ramble Street"? What happened?

5. Why do you think Tammy wrote to Keesie again, even though she said she wouldn't? What type of response do you think she'll get? Why?

6. What lie did Tammy tell to her brother, Tim? Why? Should she have told the truth? Why or why not?

7. Why is Tammy upset there is laughter at Vinnie's funeral? Do you think it is ok to laugh at a funeral? Why or why not?

8. Why is Tammy the only one not crying at the end of Ch. 20? What is she waiting for?

Challenge #1

(Neil Armstrong is My Uncle...)

Write a RAFT:

Role: You

Audience: Potential Best Friends

Format: Job Application

Topic: Create an application for potential best friends to fill out. Think carefully about the qualities you want in a best friend as you create the application.

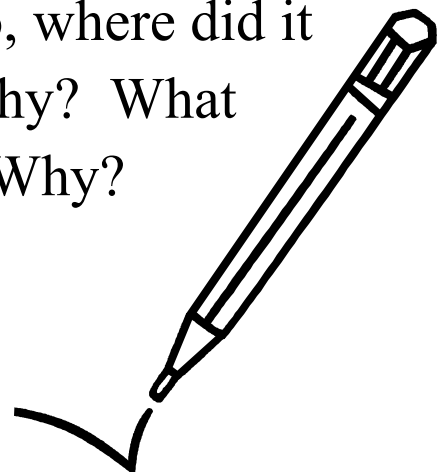


Challenge #2

(Neil Armstrong is My Uncle...)

Reading Response:

Do you have a nickname? If you do, where did it originate, who gave it to you, and why? What nickname would you like to have? Why?



Challenge #3

(Neil Armstrong is My Uncle...)

Create your own kickball rule book. You should include information about positions, game rules, equipment, etc. Make sure you also include a section for unusual circumstances (like in the book). Add illustrations to make your rule book more eye-catching to readers.

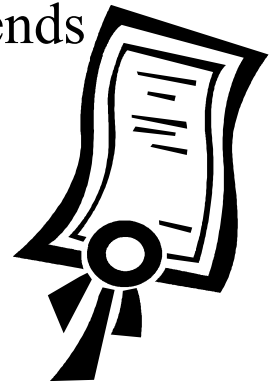


Challenge #4

(Neil Armstrong is My Uncle...)

Reading Response:

What do you personally think of Muscle Man McGinty? Why? Would you want to be friends with him? Why or why not?



Challenge #5

(Neil Armstrong is My Uncle...)

Write an obituary for Vinnie Pizzarelli based on the information you know about him and his family and friends from the book. Be sure to include as many details as you can about him. You may want to consult a newspaper for real obituaries to use as a guide.



Challenge #6

(Neil Armstrong is My Uncle...)

Create a present day advertisement for the drink, Tang. You will need to look up this product on the Internet to find out more about it. It was sold as a drink for astronauts that regular people could buy. You must use this information in your advertisement. You can make up your own slogan, or use theirs.



Challenge #7

(Neil Armstrong is My Uncle...)

Write a RAFT:

Role: MaryBeth Grabowsky

Audience: Invitees to her Moonwalk Party

Format: Party Invitation

Topic: You are invited to our Moonwalk Party



Use the information from the book so you can use the correct date, time, and location. You may also want to include some of the dishes that will be served during the party.

Challenge #8

(Neil Armstrong is My Uncle...)

Create a Biography Board about an Astronaut! This poster should contain information about their life from birth to present day. Add photographs to fill space and to create a well-balanced layout.

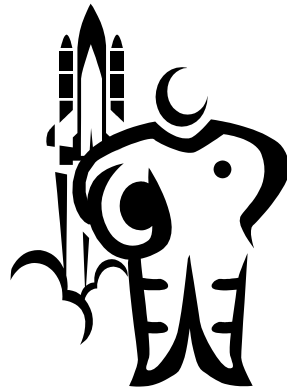


Armstrong

Challenge #9

(Neil Armstrong is My Uncle...)

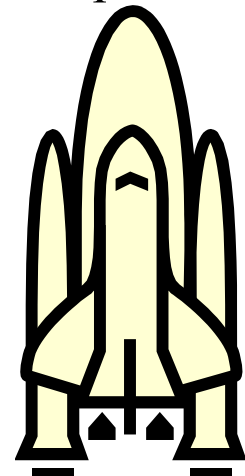
Write a newspaper article about a memorable event from space travel, space exploration, or a tragedy in space. Your article should contain the: who, what, when, where, why, and how of the event. You will need to research a topic using books or the Internet. Add a photograph, headline, etc. to your article. Be sure the date of the newspaper is accurate!



Challenge #10

(Neil Armstrong is My Uncle...)

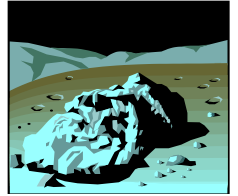
Make an interactive timeline of space exploration that contains at least 15 important dates. You must include interactive elements, like (but not limited to): flaps to lift up, 3D objects, and pop-ups.



“Neil Armstrong is My Uncle...”, by Nan Marino

Name _____

Connecting Chapter Titles to the Story



For each of the chapter titles, write a connection to the events and characters in the story. In doing this, you will be actually identifying the main idea of each chapter.

Chapter Title	Connections
1: The Blizzard of '69	
2: Just Plain Wrong	
3: Barbies Are A Girl's Best Friend	
4: Full Moons, New Moons, Waning Gibbous	
5: An In-Person Friend	
6: The Battle of Life	

7: Banned	
8: The Fourth of July	
9: When You Can't Eat Ice Cream, Eat Your Words	
10: Secret Powers	
11: Just My Luck	
12: Let the Game Begin	
13: Nothing to Smile About	

14: New Rules	
15: Like Gold	
16: Not Feeling It	
17: Keesie's Letter	
18: The War Comes Home to Ramble Street	
19: Shink. Shink. Shink.	
20: Vinnie Pizza	

21: One Single Word	
22: Who Says You Can't Learn from Television	
23: When You Can't Stomach the Truth, Try Some Cheese Fondue	
24: I Never Asked	
25: The Last Note	
26: Tang	
27: Almost Reached the Moon by Myself	

28: One Small Step	
29: One Giant Leap	

Which was your most favorite chapter of the book? Why?

Which was your least favorite chapter of the book? Why?

In which chapter do you think the climax of the story is located? Why?

Why do you think this author chose to use actual chapter titles, instead of just numbering the chapters?

What do the chapter titles add to the story, in your opinion?

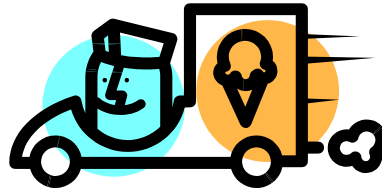
Why do you think the author chose to use so many short chapters? Do you prefer shorter or longer chapters in books? Why?

***BONUS*:** Add a quick sketch or picture to as many of the chapter title boxes as possible. These pics should reflect the specific content of the chapter.

17: Keesie's Letter



Design Your Own Ice Cream Truck



Name _____

Why was the ice cream truck so important to the kids in the story?

Design your own ice cream truck below.

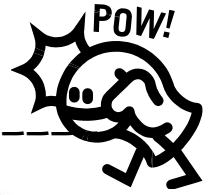


Why did you decide to design your ice cream truck in this way?

What is Onomatopoeia?

"Neil Armstrong is my Uncle..." Ch. 1

Name _____



Onomatopoeia is the use of words to imitate sounds.



On page 1, the word *Shink* is used to show the sound a Slinky toy makes as well as a sound the main character hears "creeping around inside my brain".

Create your own word list with as many examples of onomatopoeia as you can find.

Why would the author use onomatopoeia in their writing, in your opinion?

What is a synonym?

Name _____

"Neil Armstrong is My Uncle..."

A synonym is a word that has the same meaning as another word.

Write a list of synonyms for the word LIES. There are several given throughout the book (look on page 3).

Write a list of synonyms for the word LITTLE.

Write a poem using either lies or little and the synonyms that you found.

What were your results?

of heads _____

of tails _____

% of heads _____

% of tails _____



Were you surprised by your results? Why or why not?

Did your classmates get similar results?

Based on your results, guess what you will get (heads or tails) if you flip the coin one more time.

Guess _____

Actual Result _____

Did you guess correctly?

Is the probability of flipping a coin predictable, in your opinion? Why or why not?

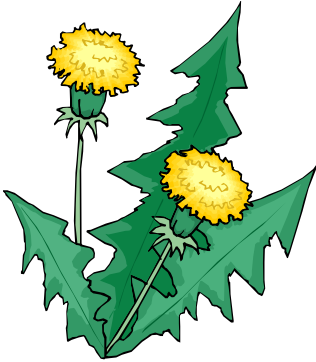
On page 70 in the book, the kids decide not to flip the coin. Why do they make this decision? Do you agree with their decision? Why or why not?

Symbols of Loneliness

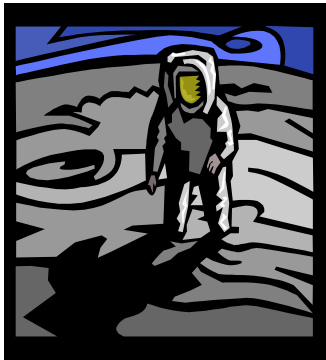
Name _____

“Neil Armstrong is My Uncle...”

The author uses many symbols to represent the feelings of loneliness. Here are examples of three of them. Write about each symbol and its role in the story. Choose one to write a poem about, be sure to convey the proper mood in your poem.



The lone dandelion in the lawn of the Grabowsky family.



The two men standing on the moon so far from earth.



Tamara standing alone in the rain on the kickball field.

*Don't forget to write a poem about one of these scenes or another scene that depicts loneliness.

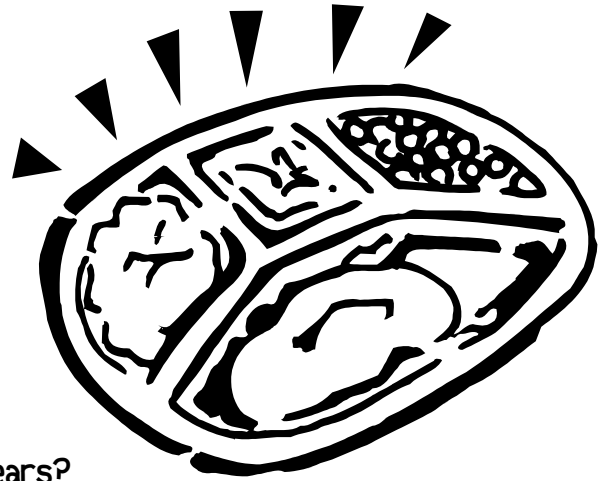
The Evolution of TV Dinners

Name _____

“Neil Armstrong is My Uncle...”

The TV Dinner has been around for a long time. When, where, and how did this iconic item from the 1950's and 1960's originate? Research the history of the TV dinner and create an informational poster that displays your information. Include the following information on your poster:

- When were TV dinners invented?
- Why were TV dinners invented?
- Who invented TV dinners?
- What is the most popular TV dinner?
- How have TV dinners changed over the years?
- What are some of your favorite TV dinners?
- When were TV dinners at the height of their popularity? Why?
- Are TV dinners healthy to eat? Why or why not?



Try to include some interactive elements in your poster display. These interaction elements could include: flaps, clay models, etc. You should also include eye catching titles! Be sure to cite your sources!

Due Date: _____



"Neil Armstrong is My Uncle...", by Nan Marino

Name _____

Character Motivations/Roles

There were many characters in the book who impacted the main characters, Tamara and Muscle Man McGinty, during the story. Fill in the chart for each of these characters, as well as the main characters, based on the context of the book as well as your own inferences.

Role: What was their role in the story? Why did the author include them in the story, in your opinion?

Motivation: What was each of the character's actions motivated by?

Impact: What impact did he/she have on the story and on the main character?

Be sure to use the book in order to complete the chart. You may need to reread some sections. Examine each character carefully in order to decide what you should write in each of these sections.

Name	Role	Motivation	Impact
Tamara			
Muscle Man McGinty			
Kebsie Grobser			

Mary Beth
Grabowsky

Big Danny

Shirley

Tim

Mr. Pizzarelli

Mrs. Kutchner			
John Marcos			
Billy Rattle			

Which character played the most pivotal role in the story, in your opinion? Why?

Which character(s) had the greatest impact on the events in the story, in your opinion? Why?

Why do you think Tamara and Muscle Man were able to finally become friends? What obstacles did they have to overcome to do this?

Which of these characters was your most favorite? Why?

Which of these characters was your least favorite? Why?

Was the antagonist in the story a person or a force acting against the main character, in your opinion? Why?

Character Descriptions

Name _____

"Neil Armstrong is My Uncle..."

The author describes Muscle Man McGinty throughout the book, both through the eyes of Tamara and the eyes of others in their neighborhood.

On page 1, Tamara describes him as "a squirrely runt, a lying snake, and a pitiful excuse for a ten-year-old." She also refers to him as "a slippery, slimy, lying weasel of a boy", on page 33.

Why does Tamara feel this way about Muscle Man McGinty? Are her feelings towards him justified, in your opinion? Why or why not?

Find some additional descriptions of Muscle Man and write them below as you read the book.

How does the rest of the neighborhood feel about Muscle Man? Why are their opinions of him so different from Tamara's?

What do you think of him? Why?

“Neil Armstrong is My Uncle...” Figurative Language Analysis #1

Name _____

Read each of the examples. Explain what type of figurative language is being used in each example and then explain the meaning of the sentence and its place in the story. You can also tell why you think the author chose to write each one.

pg. 1 That’s because the truth has a way of seeping under your skin and wrapping itself around you, like a coiled-up Slinky.

Type: _____

pg. 5 Like snowflakes, the seeds twist and tumble before they find their way onto the lawns of Ramble Street.

Type: _____

pg. 8 Mr. Grabowsky grabs onto each girl’s hand, holding them tight, like they’re precious butterflies about to fly away.

Type: _____

pg. 8 He glances nervously at his front lawn, where perfect blades of grass stand like soldiers in formation.

Type: _____

*Choose one of these to illustrate on the back of this page.

“Neil Armstrong is My Uncle...” Figurative Language Analysis #2

Name _____

Read each of the examples. Explain what type of figurative language is being used in each example and then explain the meaning of the sentence and its place in the story. You can also tell why you think the author chose to write each one.

pg. 10 I shrug like I don’t care, but my shoulders feel heavy from the weight of all those stares.

Type: _____

pg. 14 “How many do you have, Tamara?” she asks in a voice sweeter than hot fudge.

Type: _____

pg. 18 I hold back about a million tears, making sure that not a single one escapes and runs across my face.

Type: _____

pg. 20 My first try sounds like a squeaky sneeze.

Type: _____

*Choose one of these to illustrate on the back of this page.

“Neil Armstrong is My Uncle...” Figurative Language Analysis #3

Name _____

Read each of the examples. Explain what type of figurative language is being used in each example and then explain the meaning of the sentence and its place in the story. You can also tell why you think the author chose to write each one.

pg. 27 I seal up my misery the same way that I seal the envelope.

Type: _____

pg. 40 The way everyone is staring, you’d think the hole was as big as the Grand Canyon.

Type: _____

pg. 49 The other kids don’t notice the two of us staring at their cones like they’re worth a million bucks.

Type: _____

pg. 49 “The surface of the moon could be as mushy as ice cream.”

Type: _____

*Choose one of these to illustrate on the back of this page.

“Neil Armstrong is My Uncle...” Figurative Language Analysis #4

Name _____

Read each of the examples. Explain what type of figurative language is being used in each example and then explain the meaning of the sentence and its place in the story. You can also tell why you think the author chose to write each one.

pg. 53 A delicious feeling creeps into me, like I’m suddenly filled with dozens of Mr. Softee’s swirly cones.

Type: _____

pg. 55 Shirley waves her hand at the window, and I have to admit I can’t see a thing but gray sheets of water.

Type: _____

pg. 73 His words are like gold.

Type: _____

pg. 78 This pitch barely crawls over home plate.

Type: _____

*Choose one of these to illustrate on the back of this page.

“Neil Armstrong is My Uncle...” Figurative Language Analysis #5

Name _____

Read each of the examples. Explain what type of figurative language is being used in each example and then explain the meaning of the sentence and its place in the story. You can also tell why you think the author chose to write each one.

pg. 87 No, he is worse than that. He is burnt toast.

Type: _____

pg. 99 A ball about the size of the one I’m holding forms in the pit of my stomach.

Type: _____

pg. 100 Sometimes Billy Rattle has gravel for brains.

Type: _____

pg. 112 A hundred million bits of happiness wash over me.

Type: _____

“Neil Armstrong is My Uncle...” Figurative Language Analysis #6

Name _____

Read each of the examples. Explain what type of figurative language is being used in each example and then explain the meaning of the sentence and its place in the story. You can also tell why you think the author chose to write each one.

pg. 147 We all sit down, facing the television, in a wooden booth---one that seems as sticky as the floor.

Type: _____

pg. 147-148 As much as I want to stay awake, my head feels as heavy as a twelve-pound bowling ball.

Type: _____

pg. 151 Instead, the moon is being shy, hiding in the clouds.

Type: _____

pg. 152 Mr. Pizzarelli grabs our hands and holds us tight, like we're precious butterflies about to fly away.

Type: _____

*Choose one of these to illustrate on the back of this page.

Vocabulary Words



“Neil Armstrong is My Uncle...”

By: Nan Marino



Write a definition for each word using your own words based on the context within the book. Choose words from the text for the blank boxes and include a definition in your own words.

phony

Page _____

puny

Page _____

solemn

Page _____

ricochets

Page _____

rummage

Page _____

Interchangeable

Page _____

gripe

Page _____

coincidence

Page _____

flaunt

Page _____

gape

Page _____

ousted

Page _____

crooning

Page _____

encore

Page _____

snicker

Page _____

sacred

Page _____

bellowing

Page _____

summon

Page _____

measly

Page _____

torrential

Page _____

smirk

Page _____

trounced

Page _____

humiliation

Page _____

collide

Page _____

respectable

Page _____

strategy

Page _____

repulsive

Page _____

technique

Page _____

snivels

Page _____

exaggerated

Page _____

anxious

Page _____

amnesia

Page _____

lame

Page _____

captivated

Page _____

sanitary

Page _____

tuition

Page _____

obsessed

Page _____

regret

Page _____

pummel

Page _____

replica

Page _____

excursion

Page _____

trellis

Page _____

compulsive

Page _____

desolation

Page _____

Page _____

Page _____

Page _____

Page _____

Page _____

Page _____

Page _____

Page _____

Page _____

Page _____

Page _____

Vocabulary Word Locations in the Book
ISBN #978-0-545-23997-4

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puny	pg. 3
solemn	pg. 11
ricochets	pg. 14
rummage	pg. 25
interchangeable	pg. 33
gripe	pg. 36
coincidence	pg. 38
flaunt	pg. 39
gape	pg. 41
ousted	pg. 44
crooning	pg. 45
encore	pg. 46
snicker	pg. 50
sacred	pg. 52
bellowing	pg. 56
summon	pg. 57
measly	pg. 63
torrential	pg. 66
smirk	pg. 69
trounced	pg. 73
humiliation	pg. 74
collide	pg. 79
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repulsive	pg. 88
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exaggerated	pg. 91
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sanitary	pg. 119
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regret	pg. 127
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replica	pg. 136
excursion	pg. 137
trellis	pg. 142
compulsive	pg. 146
desolation	pg. 147