



Spaceship Earth

by Joshua Young

- 1 John put the last bit of paint on his model spaceship. He'd painted it silver and blue. He held it up to show dad.
- 2 "It looks great," said dad. "Let me help you hang it."
- 3 They hung the model from the ceiling with thin black thread. John watched the spaceship swing back and forth. He began to think about journeying all alone out into space.

4 "Suppose a man is all alone in a spaceship," John said.
"Could he run out of water to drink?"

5 "Yes," said dad.

6 "And could he run out of air to breathe?"

7 "Of course."

8 "Then what would happen to him?" John asked.

9 "I don't think he'd live long," dad said. "Do you?"

10 John shook his head. "No," he said. "And I don't think I'd
like to be out in a spaceship."

11 "Well," said dad, "you're on a kind of spaceship now."

12 John laughed. Dad must be joking.

13 "I mean it," said dad. "The earth we live on is like a space-
ship. It's a huge ball journeying through space. If we use up
all our water and air, there won't be any more. There's no
magic pipeline that brings them to us."

14 John thought of all the water in the world. Then he thought
of all the air. "We can't run out of air and water," he said.

15 "Maybe not," said dad. "But we can make them very dirty.
Then we won't be able to use them."

16 John had seen dirty water. He'd seen it in rivers and
streams. He wouldn't want to drink that dirty water. He'd
seen dirty air, too. Smoke from factories and cars caused it.

17 So now John understood what dad meant. He knew why dad
had said the earth was like a spaceship. And he knew, too,
that he and everyone else must learn to take care of the air
and water on spaceship *Earth*.

How Well Did You Understand?

- A** Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write *a* or *b*.
- Another good name for this story is
 - "Take Care of the World"
 - "The Magic Pipeline"
 - John did not want to go on a spaceship when he learned
 - that he might not be able to live long on it
 - that he might be all alone on it
 - A good way to take care of the earth's air and water is
 - to keep them clean
 - to use more of them
 - If people don't take care of the earth's air and water,
 - people will have to bring in more from outer space
 - people and other living things won't be able to use them
 - The earth is like a spaceship because
 - it will always have enough air and water for living things
 - it journeys through space carrying air, water, and people

Learn about Words

- B** Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in a story. The other words in the story give you clues.

Directions: Which word in the story best fits each meaning below. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.) Write the word.

- small amount; dab (1)
 - taking a trip; traveling (3)
 - teasing; kidding; fooling (12)
 - creeks; small rivers; moving water (16)
 - buildings where people make things (16)
- C** A good way to learn words is to use them in sentences.
- Directions:* Read each sentence. Choose a word you found in *B* that makes sense in the blank. Write the word.
- Dad was not ____ when he said that the earth is like a spaceship.
 - John would not like to be ____ to the moon.
 - The air gets dirty when ____ make too much smoke.
 - Water in some rivers and ____ is very dirty.
 - Every person can help a little ____ to take care of the earth.

Think about It

D Words change when they mean more than one. Some words add *s* to mean more than one.

one model → two models

Some words add *es* to mean more than one.

one watch → two watches

Directions: Choose the word that finishes the sentence. Write the word.

- 1 John's model hung by several thin black _____.
(thread, threads)
- 2 John painted his spaceship two _____. (color, colors)
- 3 Dad said the earth was like a _____. (spaceship, spaceships)
- 4 People can take _____ to learn about the earth. (class, classes)
- 5 Even driving a _____ harms the earth. (car, cars)

E Read each set of words. Choose the word from the box that best fits in the blank. Write the word.

drink	air	car
stream	factory	

6 river _____ pond lake

7 _____ store bank school

8 train plane _____ bus

9 eat _____ breathe sleep

10 food water sunshine _____

What Do You Think?

John learned that taking care of the earth's air and water is important. Think of some ways that you and your family can help take care of the earth. One way is to drive cars less. Tell your family your ideas, and ask them to think of other ideas. Make a list of things you all agree to do.