

Rutherford County Schools – Individual Learning Modules

Grade	Course
High School	English I
Unit Focus	
Students will engage with an informational text discussing how astronauts deal with social distancing, as they exercise and develop their ability to analyze a text for the central idea and how it develops over the course of the text.	
Week of April 27- May 1	
Standard(s)	
RI.2 – Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development; provide an objective or critical summary.	RI.1 – Analyze what a text says explicitly and draw inferences ; cite the strongest, most compelling textual evidence to support conclusions.
Resource(s)	
<u>Washington Post Article</u> <i>NewsELA</i>	<u>Argumentative Writing Rubric</u> <i>CommonLit - The Black Death</i>
Task(s)	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What inferred comparisons in paragraphs 1-3 are made explicit in paragraphs 4-5? Look specifically at paragraph 5 and the “big parallels” Hadfield discusses. Cite specific evidence that shows the two situations are similar. 2. An inference is a conclusion based on reasoning. Draw your own inferences from the article’s comparison of society in the current COVID pandemic and astronauts in the extreme situations of space. What are the strongest, most compelling similarities between these situations? What are the limitations or weaknesses of these comparisons? Are these comparisons valid? 3. What is the central idea of the article? Use specific evidence from the text to support your answer. <p>Write a multi-paragraph essay in response to the following prompt (use the argumentative writing rubric to :</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Analyze how the article uses the comparison of two unlike situations to build its central idea. Explain what the main comparison is, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this comparison, and evaluate whether the central idea is strengthened or weakened by this comparison.</p>	

“Social distancing advice from astronauts, experts on isolation, during coronavirus”

The Washington Post 2020

Before living for months in space, Christina Koch lived at the South Pole. Chris Hadfield lived at the bottom of the ocean, in a laboratory just off the coast of Florida.

The astronauts didn't get out much, or couldn't. Koch was surrounded by frozen terrain. Hadfield was 62 feet underwater. But the experiences proved useful. When they rocketed out to the International Space Station (ISS), each on separate months-long missions in different years, their brains were well acquainted with isolation.

Koch returned to Earth from her 328-day mission on the space station in February. She broke the record for the longest spaceflight by a woman. Hadfield spent more than five months on the ISS from 2012 to 2013. The station is like a cluster of pressurized aluminum bubbles. It feels like living in the boiler room in the basement of a large building for a long period of time, Hadfield said. They work each day with the same small group of people, with no way to leave. Their workspace is their living space. They are connected to the people they love only through the power of video chat.

Now, a pandemic has sent millions of people into an oddly similar situation. The astronauts might just be some of the most qualified people on the planet to offer advice about how to live in a socially distanced world.

"The big parallels to what people are going through right now is that there is a big unspoken danger out there that is not clearly defined," said Hadfield, age 60. He is a retired Canadian astronaut who served as the commander of the space station in 2013. "It's not like a car driving down the road. It's like a big, amorphous, frightening thing, and operating a rocket ship is very much like that. There's a constant elevated level of danger, and it's sort of nameless and quiet. We are very remote, unable to return in any easy sort of way and physically separated from all 7.7 billion people.

"And then the question is, how do you deal with that?"

Hadfield and Koch spoke to The Washington Post the week of March 23. They are among several astronauts offering self-quarantine tips as at least 175 million people across the country have been urged to stay at home or shelter in place.

They know what it's like adjusting to extremes and relearning social interaction after months of isolation. But now the key is to leave behind a life ruled by "external demands," Hadfield said. It is important to trade a daily schedule built around going places for a daily life built around going almost nowhere except for a walk. Working and parenting now all happen in the same confined quarters. Koch said the way to think about "this new normal" is to look at it as if it were "a new planet to explore."

"There will be things that you can do that you've never done before. There will be things you can't do," said Koch, age 41. "But we're almost like a new group of people now, operating within a completely different set of rules and under a completely different normal. What are the new things people can do on this new planet?"

Hadfield became the first Canadian to spacewalk in 2001. He said rule No. 1 is that people should research the risks of the novel coronavirus in their immediate area. Then, they should understand how it affects and constrains them individually.

"Become experts on the thing that is threatening you," he said.

Next, is to "be your own taskmaster." Develop mini-missions for every day.

On the International Space Station, to-do lists were regimented down to five-minute intervals, for 12 hours a day, seven days a week. Missions ranged from fixing a toilet to investigating the subatomic particles of the universe. But at home on Earth, those missions can be as simple as shaving, gardening or calling a grandparent.

"You should always have objectives every single day," Hadfield said. "What do I want to get done in the next 10 minutes, and what do I want to do in the next hour? And if today goes perfectly, what will I have done by bedtime tonight?"

Then there's the issue of loneliness, the separation from friends and family. While on the space station, Koch said, she was able to video chat with family about once a week. But adapting to virtual relationships wasn't just about chatting, she said. Feeling connected meant doing fun things together while apart, and sticking to the hobbies she loved back home.

When her friends ran a 10-kilometer race one Saturday, she raced with them on her treadmill in space, punching her timer at the same time they left the starting line. She and her crew sent "battle of the bands" challenges to musically talented friends, taking turns covering rock songs with a few instruments they had on the space station. Hadfield, in fact, recorded an entire album from space on his guitar, capturing the most attention with his May 2013 cover of David Bowie's "Space Oddity."

Koch said she sang and played the maracas.

"We had to come up with creative ways to interact," Koch said. "Anything that allows you to bridge that physical gap, and make you feel like you still have shared experiences and are still relevant in each other's lives, is really important. There's something to be said for actually doing the same things at the same physical time."

Koch and Hadfield aren't alone in offering social distancing advice. In a New York Times op-ed, retired astronaut Scott Kelly encouraged journaling, going outside when possible and finding doable hobbies, like reading. Astronaut Anne McClain explained on Twitter how NASA's five "expeditionary behaviors" — the key skills for staying psychologically healthy in space — can be adapted for everyday living. Those skills include communication, knowing when to be a leader and a follower, self-care, managing team stress and cooperating as a group.

"We are all astronauts on planet Earth together," she wrote. "We'll be successful in confinement if we are intentional about our actions and deliberate about caring for our teams."

It's unclear how long the social distancing guidelines may last across the country. President Donald Trump said March 24 he would like to see the United States up and "raring to go" by Easter. However, on March 29 he said the social distancing guidelines would be in place until the end of April.

Hadfield stressed that those concerned about prolonged isolation should focus on the "power of individual action." Looking out for one other is the foremost item on the world's to-do list.

"Most of us are going to survive this, and what it means to us individually is very much a result of the choices we are making," he said. "It's an opportunity to do something different in your life, and to maybe reassess where you are. That's what we do onboard the spaceship as well. You can find your own personal space voyage right now."