The Space Rock
A heartfelt story by Roland Smith about a family’s difficult decision

About the Story
Levels
Lexile Level: 500L-600L
Guided Reading Level: N
DRA Level: 28

Learning Objective
Students will identify the use of similes in this realistic story about a life-changing event in the lives of a farm family.

Content-Area Connections
Science: Astronomy
Social-emotional learning: Relationship skills (communication, teamwork); responsible decision-making (analyzing situations, ethical responsibility)

Key Skills
Similes, character, cause and effect, inference, key detail, drawing conclusions, main idea, interpreting text

Standards Correlations
This article and lesson support the following standards:
Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.5, R.6, W.3, W.4, SL.1, L.1
TEKS: 3.2, 3.4, 3.8, 3.11, 3.18, 3.29

For more standards information, check our website.

Your Teaching Support Package
Here’s your full suite of materials, all of which you’ll find at StoryworksJr.scholastic.com:

Activities to print or project
- Pause and Think Questions
- Vocabulary
- Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions
- Quiz

Audio
- Hear the story read aloud.

Fiction Reading Kit: This will help build key reading skills, including setting and our featured skill, similes.
1. Preparing to Read

Preview Text Features
(10 minutes)
- Ask students to look at pages 14 and 15. Direct their attention to the title, subtitle, and illustration. Ask how the picture connects to the title and subtitle of the story. What might a giant space rock landing on Earth look like and sound like?
- Have students look at the subheads that introduce each section on pages 16-19 and the pictures. Ask students to predict how the space rock might change the lives of the family that lives on the farm. Remind them to think about their predictions as they read.

Introduce Vocabulary
(15 minutes, activity sheet online)
- We have highlighted in bold six vocabulary words and phrases that may be challenging and defined them on the page. Discuss the meanings of the terms, focusing on how they are used in the story.
- Preview these words by projecting or distributing our vocabulary activity and completing it as a class. You may also play our Vocabulary Slideshow.
- Highlighted words: ghost town, gash, meteorite, meteor, atmosphere, meteor shower

Set a Purpose for Reading
(5 minutes)
- Call on volunteers to read aloud the Think and Read and Think and Write boxes on pages 14 and 19. These features and the fiction package support the story’s featured skill, similes.
- Remind students to look for the words like and as to help identify a simile.

2. Close Reading

Reading and Unpacking the Text
- First read: Read the story as a class. Ask students to identify story details or vocabulary they don’t understand in each section. Have them think about how the illustrations connect to the story.
- Second read: Distribute the Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions to the class. Preview them together. Ask students to read the story again and answer the questions as a class or in small groups. (These questions are now also available in Google Forms on our site so students can type in their answers and email them to you.)

Close-Reading Questions
(30 minutes, activity sheet online)
- Read the first section. What does Karl mean when he says “I was feelin’ sorta blue”? (character) He was feeling sad. Why was he feeling this way? (cause and effect) His parents were having money problems.
- What does Karl compare in the simile “Then whump-whump-whump like a flat tire”? (similes) He compares the loud sound he hears to the sound made by a flat tire.
- Read “The Rock Arrives.” Why does Daddy pick up Karl and hold him tight? (inference) Daddy realizes that Karl could have been killed if the huge rock had hit his son. This scares him.
- What does Karl compare in the simile “The magnet stood up like a soldier at attention”? (similes) He compares the magnet to the way a soldier stands very straight.
- What does Brother say created the meteorite? (key detail) When a meteor hits Earth’s atmosphere, it breaks up and forms meteorites. Brother said there had been a meteor shower the night before. Why does Daddy stare at Brother “as if he had lost his mind”? (drawing conclusions) He doesn’t believe the meteorite is worth a million dollars. He thinks that idea is crazy.
- Read “Daddy’s Idea.” What does Daddy’s idea to
move the meteorite to a new museum in town
show about his character? (character) Daddy
wants to help the people of Rock Creek overcome their
financial problems. This shows how thoughtful and
generous he is.
• What does Daddy mean by “I believe that getting
what you need out of something is better than
getting all that you can out of something”? (main
idea) He believes in using what you have only for what
you truly need, rather than being greedy and selfish.
• Read “The Choice Is Made.” What does Karl
mean when he writes in his poem that the space
rock “stopped the ghosts from coming around”? (interpreting text) Because so many visitors came to
Rock Creek to see the meteorite, the town was no longer
in danger of becoming a ghost town.

Critical-Thinking Question
(10 minutes, activity sheet online)
• On page 15, Karl says that something passed
overhead “like a thundercloud moving a million
miles an hour.” After the space rock lands, he says
that “it was quiet, like the Earth and everything
on it was holdin’ its breath.” What do these similes
mean? How do they help you understand what
Karl saw and heard? (similes) In the first simile,
Karl compares the speed of the space rock to a rapidly
moving thundercloud. In the second simile, he
describes the total quiet and stillness he experienced
after the space rock landed. These similes help readers
understand how fast the space rock looked to Karl and
how quiet it was after the space rock hit the ground.

3. Skill Building
• Distribute our Similes Activity. Have students work
in pairs to complete it.
• Discuss the writing assignment in the Think and
Write box with students. Have students complete
the task in class or as homework and discuss their
paragraphs in small groups.

Customize Your Class

For Small Groups
Have students take turns
reading the story aloud.
As they read, ask them to
underline the similes. Then
ask students to discuss the
meaning of each simile they
identified.

For Independent Readers
Ask students to read the story
silently. Have them write a
scene in which a reporter for
the Rock Creek newspaper
interviews visitors who have
come to the farm to see the famous
meteorite. Students can read their work aloud.

Differentiate Your Teaching

For Second-Graders
Write tryin’ and trying on the board. Explain that the apostrophe in tryin’ replaces the letter g
in trying. Have students point to tryin’ in column 1, page 15 as you read the sentence aloud.
Ask students to repeat the sentence. Explain that Karl uses this form of the word because it
sounds more natural when he talks. Help students identify other words ending in in’ in the
story and read them aloud.