

# City of Light

AUTHOR

**JULIA LAWRIKSON**

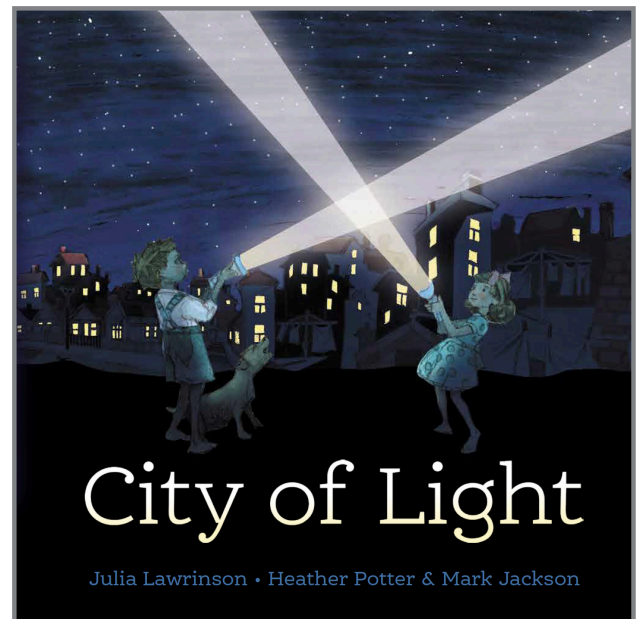
ILLUSTRATORS

**MARK JACKSON AND HEATHER POTTER**

SCIS: 5433640

ISBN: 9781742036304

**RECOMMENDED FOR:** Lower Primary



## SYNOPSIS

On Monday 20 February 1962, the people of Perth lit up their city overnight to acknowledge the special mission of American astronaut John Glenn—the first American to orbit the Earth. Glenn, in turn, observed that the city was clearly visible from space, and Perth became known worldwide as ‘The City of Light’.

This true story is a snapshot in time that captures the excitement of human’s first forays into outer space. It is a time of Hills Hoists, friendly neighbours and small TVs in the family lounge room. It’s a time when we received our news through newspapers, radio and television . . . or shared it with a neighbour over a cuppa or the back fence.

This is a story of two small children with one big idea: an idea that captured the imagination of a city. It is also a story about connection—the connection of a community that came together to achieve a goal, and their connection with John Glenn who was travelling far from home.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Julia Lawrinson has written more than a dozen books for children and teenagers, many of them award-winning. She grew up in the outer suburbs of Perth, Western Australia, not long after the first moon landing. She loves dogs, oceans and sunsets, and still likes to gaze at the night sky, just in case.

## ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATORS

Mark Jackson and Heather Potter are illustrators and frequent collaborators whose works have been featured in several exhibitions. They are the recipients of many awards, including the CBCA Book of the Year Award, the Wilderness Society Environment Award for Children’s Literature, the Speech Pathology Australia Book of the Year Awards and Indie Book of the Year Awards.

## STUDY NOTES

### BEFORE READING

- Introduce the idea of space travel. Ask children to share what they know about space and space travel. As a class, discuss the following questions:
  - What is space?
  - What is in space?
  - How do you travel in space?

- What do you call the people who go to space?
- When do you think people first started to travel in space?
- What might the astronauts be able to see from their spaceships?

Note any questions for further investigation sparked by the discussion.

- Examine the cover. What clues does the cover give about the book?
  - Why might the cover be dark?
  - Why are the children holding torches?
  - Can you guess the setting?
  - When and where might the story be set?
  - What clues does the cover give to support your ideas?
- Discuss the clues about the book. Ask students to share their reasoning.
  - Is this a picture book or a nonfiction book?
  - What genre might it be?
  - Where might students find this book in the library?
- Help students identify the title of the book, author, illustrators and publisher. Discuss each person's role in creating a book. Which of these roles would students prefer?
- Discuss the book's title, *City of Light*. What clues does it offer readers? What questions does the title prompt?
- Read the blurb. Does the blurb change students' ideas about the book or confirm them? Do the blurb and the cover change the children's idea about the book?
- After examining the cover and reading the blurb, ask students who they think the book is written for and why they came to that opinion.

### AFTER READING

- Discuss the students' reactions to the book. What did they discover?
  - How accurate were their guesses about setting and the plot?
  - What did they enjoy about the book?
  - What surprised them?
  - What would they like to learn more about?
- Ask students to share what they think of the book's title, now that they have read the story. What else could the book have been called?
- After reading *City of Light*, ask students if they think the cover suits the book. Would they change any aspects of the cover? If so, what would they change and why?
- List the words and phrases highlighted in the end papers. Discuss the words meaning and how they are used. Once they have a list of words, create either a class or individual newspaper article using the words from the endpapers.
- Break students into groups of three and allocate each group a topic about Glenn's life. Groups research that topic and select a suitable photo of Glenn that relates to their topic. Then, collate the class's images and information to create a report for display in the classroom.
- Imagine you are John Glenn, orbiting the earth three times in nearly five hours. Write about your experiences. Remember to include what you might see and what you might feel.
- Imagine a space craft will fly over your town or city at 9.30pm at night in a month's time. In groups of three or pairs, decide the best way to light up the area. Write a script for an advertisement encouraging the community to be involved in lighting up the city or town. Once you have written the script, create a video to encourage people to turn on their lights. Be as creative as you like.
- Create a piece of art similar to pp 22 and 23. As a class, examine pp 22 and 23. Discuss how the illustrators might have created that image. Allow students to use a variety of techniques, including paint washes and collage, to create an image of their street or home at night.

### Pages 8 & 9, 12 & 13 and 20 & 21

- Examine the illustrations on these pages. How are the places depicted (loungeroom, park, city) in *City of Lights* similar to and different from today? List differences and similarities and discuss. How might the images look if it was

representing modern Australia?

**Pages 10 & 11**

- Discuss the 'huge things, giant things' listed—the Pyramids, Amazon River, Grand Canyon. Where on earth is each feature found? Visit Google Earth to locate each geographical location. Visit and explore each of the places listed.
- Using Google Earth, view Australia from above and answer the following questions:
  - What Australian sights might be visible from space?
  - What features stand out in your school's state?
  - Find Perth on Google Earth and compare the illustration on p 27 with Perth today. Does it seem different? How?

**Pages 16 & 17 and 18 & 19**

- Revisit both of these spreads. Discuss with students how the two children spread the news about turning on the lights.
- How might the children spread the news today? What problems might they face? How would the sharing of news be easier and harder in today's world?
- In *City of Light*, the community uses torches, lanterns and turn on their lights at home. What might you use today to light up your city or town?

**Page 34 & 35**

- Compare this illustration with the images of John Glenn featured in this online article: [www.vox.com/2016/12/8/13893058/john-glenn-space-sunsets](http://www.vox.com/2016/12/8/13893058/john-glenn-space-sunsets). The final image at the end of the article depicts Glenn with mirrors on his chest and wrists. Discuss with children the reasons why he might have had to wear the mirrors. Watch the following video from 5.45 where John Glenn explains why he wore mirrors. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QGA16MczCrw> How does his explanation compare to the children's speculations?