



"The Message"

Respond to each statement by checking "Agree" or "Disagree." Be prepared to justify your responses.

	Agree	Disagree
1. One day, time travel will be possible.		
2. Humans should work toward colonizing other planets.		
3. You should always trust your instincts.		
4. Fitting in is overrated.		
5. Understanding something in your head is different from accepting it in your heart.		
6. Sometimes it's hard to know what the right thing to do is.		
7. "The one who follows the crowd usually gets no further than the crowd. The one who walks alone is likely to find himself in places no one has ever been."—Albert Einstein		

Name: _____ Date: _____

Close-Reading Questions

"The Message"

1. Einstein lived from 1879 to 1955. So when does this story take place? (setting, page 25)
2. Why might the author have put the first three paragraphs in italics? (text structure, page 25)
3. What do you think a holo is? (inference, page 25)
4. Explain why these lines are important. What do they help you understand?
(text structure, page 27)

5. How does Astra see herself? Use these lines and other lines in the story to support your answer. (character, page 27)

6. Why does Astra want to talk to Oma rather than to her parents? (character, page 27)

7. What does Astra realize when she opens her mom's gift? Explain. (inference, page 29)

8. Why does Astra think of Oma in this moment? (text structure, page 29)

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Critical-Thinking Questions

"The Message"

1. Do you think Astra will see herself differently after the events in the story? Will others see her differently? Explain.
2. What would be exciting or rewarding about being a colonist on the *Vida*? What would be challenging?
3. If you had the ability to send a message to yourself at a younger age, would you? What would you tell yourself?
4. *Vida* means "life" in Spanish. Why might the colonists have called the ship *Vida*?
5. Should humans work toward colonizing another planet? Why?

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Making Inferences

Making an inference means using clues from the text to figure out something the author doesn't tell you directly.

Directions: Answer the questions or follow the directions that appear in italics to fill in the chart. We completed the first row for you.

Clues	Inference
<p>1. On pages 25 and 26, Astra says:</p> <p>"When Oma got sick last year, I found it impossible to imagine living in a world without her." (p. 25)</p> <p>"The only time I felt like myself was when I was in the ag module with Oma." (p. 26)</p> <p>"But after she died, I just couldn't bring myself to go to the ag module anymore." (p. 26)</p>	<p><i>What do these lines suggest about the relationship between Astra and Oma?</i></p> <p>You can infer from these lines that Astra and Oma were very close and that Astra misses Oma a lot.</p>
<p>2. <i>Find two lines in the story that support the inference on the right.</i></p>	<p>Astra admires Rio.</p>
<p>3. On page 26, a holo drive projects an image of a mysterious woman to Astra:</p> <p>"Her eyes were red-rimmed and haunted, and her cheeks were hollow. Her hair was dirty, and there was an ugly scratch on her cheek. She wore a rumpled regulation jumpsuit."</p>	<p><i>What can you infer about the woman in the hologram from this description?</i></p>

Clues	Inference
<p>4. Find two lines in the story that support the inference on the right.</p>	<p>Astra lacks confidence.</p>
<p>5. On page 29, after Astra finds out that the seedlings she destroyed were infected and that she saved everyone on the ship, she says:</p> <p>"I wrapped the scarf around my neck and thought of Oma in her garden, of what she'd say to me if only I could tell her what I'd done."</p>	<p><i>Based on what the story reveals about Oma, what might Oma have said to Astra?</i></p>

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Character Thinking Tool

The questions in this activity are about the characters of
Astra and Rio

1. Why is Astra interested in time travel?

2. How does Astra seem to be handling
Oma's death?

3. Consider this excerpt from page 25: "Look, I know you'd rather stay in your room and read about time travel than go to some fancy dinner. But 'the Landing Day Celebration marks the end of one journey and the beginning of another. All colonists are required to attend,'" he recited. "Don't you read the morning bulletins? You read everything else."

What do these lines help you understand about Astra?

4. On page 26, Astra says, "One of my favorite things about Rio is that even though he's known me my entire life, he still asks me whether I want to play soccer. He's a true optimist." What does Astra mean? Why do you think Rio keeps asking her to play soccer?

5. Oma said to Astra's dad, "Astra marches to the beat of her own drum." What did she mean? Does Astra view herself in the same way that Oma viewed her?

6. Place a check next to the character traits you think apply to Astra.

- ☐ confident
- ☐ curious
- ☐ social
- ☐ brave
- ☐ shy
- ☐ determined
- ☐ intelligent
- ☐ popular
- ☐ studious
- ☐ unique

7. **A.** How difficult was the decision to destroy the ag module for Astra? What caused her to make the decision that she did?

B. Do you think the decision Astra made will change her in any way?

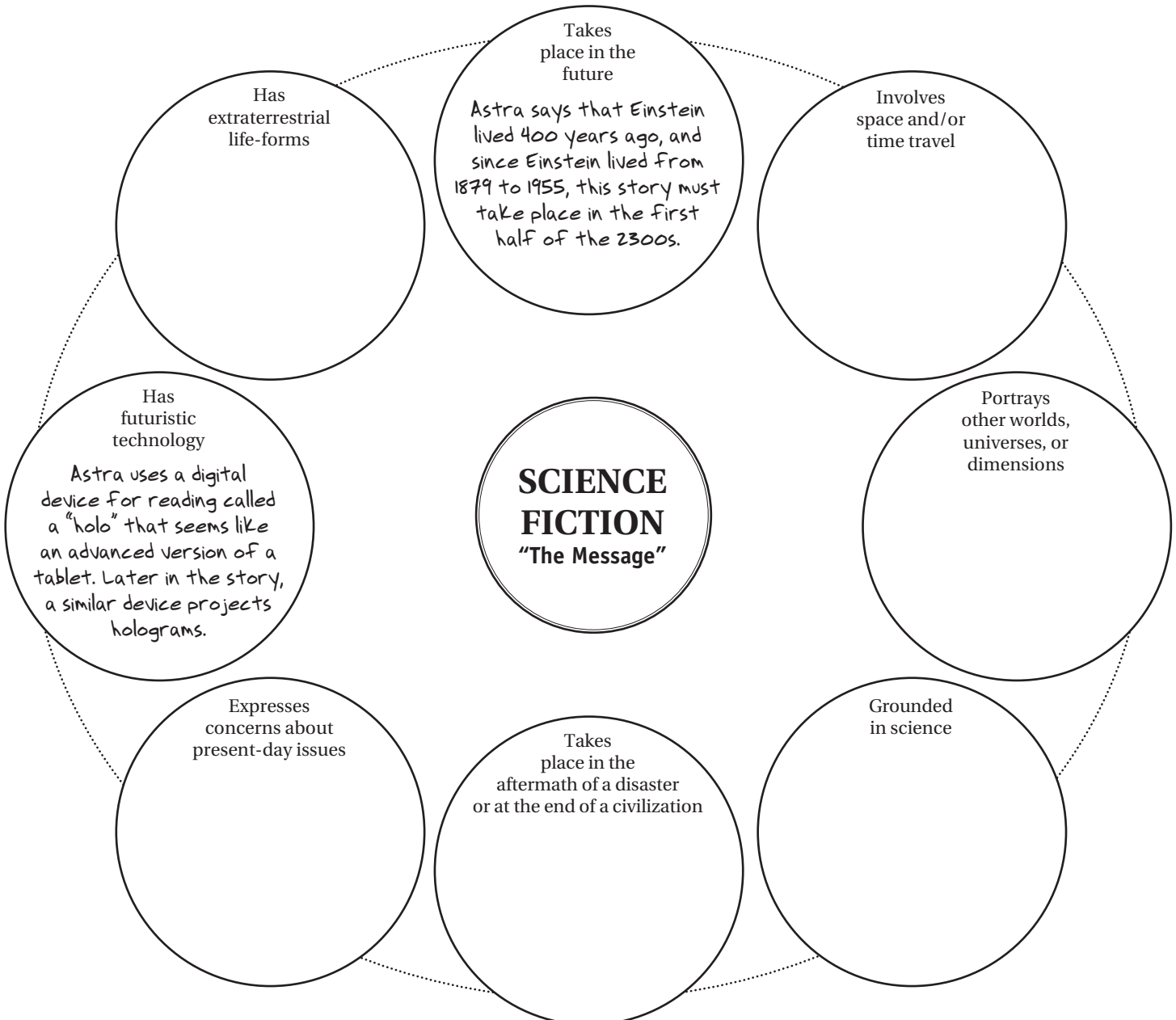
Name: _____ Date: _____

Genre Exploration: "The Message"

A **genre** is a category of literature or art. Mystery, myth, historical fiction, and biography are all genres of literature.

"The Message" belongs to the genre of science fiction (often shortened to sci-fi). In this activity, you will explore what makes it a science fiction story.

Directions: The graphic organizer below gives some common characteristics of sci-fi. "The Message" does not have all of these characteristics, but it has many of them. We've explained how the story shows two of these characteristics. Choose **THREE** other characteristics and briefly explain how the story shows those characteristics.



Directions: Answer the questions below.

1. What other stories, plays, or movies have you read or seen that belong to the genre of science fiction?

2. Can you think of other stories, plays, or movies that contain time travel? Why do you think time travel is such a fascinating idea to humans?

3. Are there aspects of the future Sarah McCarry portrays in "The Message" that you think are possible or probable? Explain.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Preparing to Write: What Happened?

The writing prompt on page 29 says:

**Who was the woman in the message? What clues does the author give you?
Answer both questions in an essay. Use text evidence.**

Follow the directions below to help you organize the ideas you will use in your response.

Who was the woman in the message?

Complete the sentence below:

1. In Sarah McCarry's story "The Message," the woman in the message was _____.

What clues does the author give you?

McCarry doesn't directly state who the woman is, but instead she gives readers clues. Readers must infer who she is. Complete the sentences in numbers 2 and 3 to identify clues McCarry gives readers. Provide text evidence as well as commentary that explains how that text evidence supports your inference.

2. One way I know the woman in the message is _____ is because of the details McCarry includes about the woman's _____.

Text Evidence (be sure to include page numbers):

Commentary:

What clues does the author give you? (cont'd)

3. Another reason I know the woman in the message is _____ is because of the details McCarry includes about the woman's _____.

Text Evidence:

Commentary:

Are there any other details that helped you understand who the woman in the message was? If so, write them on the back of this page.

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“The Message” Quiz

Directions: Read “The Message.” Then answer the questions below.

1. Which detail would be LEAST important to include in a summary of the story?

- (A) Astra is passionate about Albert Einstein and time travel.
- (B) Astra lives on the *Vida*, a ship headed for the closest habitable planet to Earth.
- (C) Astra feels misunderstood by her parents.
- (D) Rio is first in his class.

2. What is the importance of time travel in the story?

- (A) It is Rio and Astra’s shared interest.
- (B) It saves the passengers aboard the *Vida*.
- (C) It makes it possible for the *Vida* to leave Earth.
- (D) It allows Oma to visit Rubin 23V.

3. On page 25, Rubin 23V is described as “the closest habitable planet to Earth.” How does the ag module help make Rubin 23V more habitable for the colonists?

- (A) It contains seedlings for their future crops.
- (B) It has flowers growing in soil from Earth.
- (C) It holds hazsuits for the colonists to wear.
- (D) It creates the ship’s artificial gravity.

4. Which statement BEST explains how Astra changes over the course of the story?

- (A) She starts to feel like she doesn’t fit in on the *Vida* anymore.
- (B) She loses her interest in space-time theories.
- (C) She is confident, then begins to question herself.
- (D) She doubts herself, then acts with conviction.

5. Which sentence BEST expresses a theme of the story?

- (A) Good always triumphs over evil.
- (B) Hard work pays off.
- (C) Trust your instincts.
- (D) Never forget the past.

6. Which lines BEST support your answer to question 5? (Choose TWO answers.)

- (A) “All the pioneers were brilliant like my Oma.” (p. 25)
- (B) “‘Not everyone is going to understand you . . . What matters is that you understand yourself.’” (p. 27)
- (C) “Destroying the ag module was crazy.” (p. 27)
- (D) “I didn’t know why, but I was sure the woman in the message was telling the truth.” (p. 27)

Constructed-Response Questions

Directions: Write your answers in a well-organized response.

7. On page 26, Astra says, “Food is our most precious resource on the *Vida*. Wasting it is one of the worst things you can do.” Describe the event this statement foreshadows.

8. Who left the holo drive for Astra? Use two details from the story to support your answer.

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“The Message” Quiz

Directions: Read “The Message.” Then answer the questions below.

1. Which detail would be most important to include in a summary of the story?
 - (A) Astra’s dad is in charge of hab pod maintenance.
 - (B) Rio likes to wear his great-grandfather’s jersey.
 - (C) Rio is first in his class.
 - (D) Astra is passionate about time travel.
2. What is the importance of time travel in the story?
 - (A) It is Rio and Astra’s shared interest.
 - (B) It saves the passengers aboard the *Vida*.
 - (C) It makes it possible for the *Vida* to leave Earth.
 - (D) It allows Oma to visit Rubin 23V.
3. In the line “The *Vida* was headed for Rubin 23V, the closest habitable planet to Earth” on page 25, **habitable** most closely means
 - (A) suitable to live on.
 - (B) safe.
 - (C) identical.
 - (D) unpolluted.
4. How does Astra feel as she sets the ag module on fire?
 - (A) joyful
 - (B) ashamed
 - (C) grateful
 - (D) terrified
5. A theme of the story is to trust your
 - (A) elders.
 - (B) best friend.
 - (C) instincts.
 - (D) hazzsuit.
6. Which lines best support your answer to question 5? (Choose TWO answers.)
 - (A) “All the pioneers were brilliant like my Oma.” (p. 25)
 - (B) ““Not everyone is going to understand you . . . What matters is that you understand yourself.”” (p. 27)
 - (C) “Destroying the ag module was crazy.” (p. 27)
 - (D) “I didn’t know why, but I was sure the woman in the message was telling the truth.” (p. 27)

Constructed-Response Questions

Directions: Write your answers in a well-organized response.

7. Astra says, “Food is our most precious resource on the *Vida*. Wasting it is one of the worst things you can do.” What event does this statement foreshadow? (To foreshadow is to hint at what will happen later in the story.)
8. At the end of the story, you can infer that Astra realizes she traveled back in time to leave the holo drive for herself. Describe one detail from the story that supports this inference.

Note: *Scope* does not accept Google Docs. If you are e-mailing your entry, please send a .pdf or .doc file.

The Message Contest

Who was the woman in the message? What clues does the author give you? Answer both questions in an essay. Use text evidence.

Five winners will each get *The Infinite Lives of Maisie Day* by Christopher Edge.

Entries will be judged on:

- ⇒ a clearly stated central idea
- ⇒ use of supporting text evidence
- ⇒ good organization and transitions
- ⇒ grammar, spelling, and punctuation

My name: _____

My home phone number: _____ My grade: _____

My teacher's name: _____ My teacher's e-mail: _____

School name: _____

School address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

School phone number: _____

My parent or legal guardian consents
to my participation in this contest.

Parent's or legal guardian's signature: _____

Include this form with your written entry and send both to: scopemag@scholastic.com
or mail them to: The Message Contest, c/o *Scope*, P.O. Box 712, New York, NY 10013-0712

ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED BY October 15, 2019!