1. Focus

Introduce the Mentor Science Fiction Story

Say: Today I’m going to read you a science fiction story. The author is Joanna Korba, a writer who works in many genres, including realistic fiction, nonfiction, and drama, as well as science fiction.

Ask: What does the title “Earth Is All the Home We Have” make you think of? What can you predict about the setting, the themes, and the scientific elements that might be part of this story? Allow students to share their predictions.

If your class includes English learners or other students who would benefit from vocabulary and oral language development to comprehend the narrative, use “Make the Mentor Text Comprehensible for ELs.”

Read Aloud the Mentor Scientific Fiction Story

Read aloud the text, stopping at some or all of the places indicated (or at other points you choose) to highlight key features of this science fiction story:

1. The setting of science fiction stories can be futuristic.
2. Science fiction stories often include elements based on scientific facts.
3. Authors of science fiction often make a point about how people should live their lives.
4. Science fiction stories have a variety of themes, including parallel universes, space and time travel, aliens, and technology that has gone wrong.

Setting

After reading page 19. Say: Science fiction stories can have different types of settings, including realistic and futuristic. In the heading at the very beginning of this story, the author tells us this story is set far in the future: New Year’s Day, 3012. In these first two pages, the author gives details that develop the futuristic setting. Jim, the narrator, tells us about technology that exists in 3012. He says his Pioneers in Space family will be “leaving everything behind—this town, this country, this world.” Right now, humans don’t know how to leave Earth to live on another planet, but in this story, that technology exists.

Elements Based on Scientific Fact

Page 20, after third paragraph. Say: Jim tells about cutting down trees and making the world unhealthy. Here I understand clearly how science is connected to the story. The result of all that pollution and misuse of natural resources is that Jim and the other space pioneers have to leave the planet. The issue of pollution is something that scientists today are concerned about. The writer takes an issue that is realistic and develops it into something futuristic.
Details That Make a Point About How We Live Today
After reading page 25. Say: The writer is making a point about how important it is for us to take care of our planet. In the third paragraph, Dad says, “This old world doesn’t have much longer to live . . . . We stand a better chance on this new planet.” The writer is telling readers that if we want to go on living on Earth, we need to keep our environment clean.

Variety of Themes
After reading page 27. Say: The author introduces a surprise twist at the end of the story and a new science fiction theme: parallel universes. All along I thought Jim lived on Earth. It turns out he has been living in a parallel universe, a place on the other side of the galaxy that has some of the same features and problems as Earth. Jim and the other Pioneers in Space are traveling to Earth. Besides parallel universes, science fiction stories can include themes about space or time travel, aliens, and inventions that go out of control.

2. Rehearse

Respond Orally to the Mentor Science Fiction Story
After reading, invite students to discuss their own ideas and reactions to the story by asking such questions as:
• What did you see in your mind, or visualize, as you listened to the part of the story that describes where Jim lives now?
• Did you like this story? Why or why not?

If necessary, model these sentence frames to support ELs and struggling students:
• I visualized ______.
• I liked this story because ______.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

Say: Today we read a science fiction story and we focused on some important features of science fiction. As you work on your own science fiction story, you need to decide on a setting. You need to decide on a theme. Remember that a good science fiction story is based on scientific fact and often includes a message about how we live our lives today.

Encourage students to write down possible messages about how we live today for their science fiction stories. During student conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring students together. Invite volunteers to share the points they want to make in their science fiction stories about how we live our lives today.