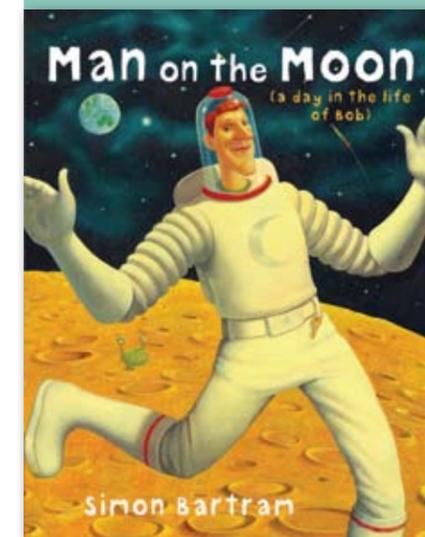




Adam Stower
Children's illustrator. His latest book, *Bottoms Up!* is out now (Puffin, ISBN 9780141502137)

Online exclusive

We have ten copies of *Man on the Moon (a day in the life of Bob)* (Templar Publishing, ISBN 9781840113693) to give away. Visit www.scholastic.co.uk/childedplus to find out more...



Bob is just an ordinary man – with an extraordinary job. But why is he in denial about aliens, asks Adam Stower

What first attracted me to *Man on the Moon (a day in the life of Bob)* by Simon Bartram (Templar, ISBN 9781840113693) were the beautiful, lavish and detailed illustrations. Simon Bartram has created a wonderful retro world in which he mixes the ordinary and extraordinary with great warmth and humour. At first glance the story describes a routine day in the life of Bob. The fact that

Bob is no less than the Man on the Moon is beautifully understated.

The fun of the book is in the way Bob's extraordinary job is described in such a matter of fact manner. The story is a great way to introduce children to the notion of jobs and what it is exactly that we adults do. Running through the main narrative is Bob's denial of the existence of aliens. It is all too clear to the reader, however, that they do exist – and in abundance! Aliens are always a popular subject for children, and it is here that Bartram's illustrations come into their own. Children will have great fun poring over the detailed pictures to spot the aliens, and will take much pleasure in the pantomime nature of the scenes.

Synopsis

Man on the Moon (a day in the life of Bob) is just that. The book describes Bob's routine during a day at his job. We start with his breakfast and his trip to work. But Bob has no ordinary job – he is the Man on the Moon! He is responsible for keeping the Moon tidy, clean and litter free. He entertains tourists, gives talks, sells souvenirs, and at the end of the day he makes sure he switches on the Moon's nightlight before flying his rocket ship back home to Earth.

Tourists often ask him about aliens. He politely replies that there aren't any. But I'll leave it to the reader to discover the truth for themselves.

Blast off!

Bob travels to work in a rocket ship. The tourists visit the Moon in rocket ships too. Make wonderful, colourful rockets with the children from recycled materials. They can be nice and straightforward to build, with cardboard tubes or plastic bottles for the body of the rocket and card shapes for the nose cone, fins and other details. Look at the illustrations in *Man on the Moon* for inspiration, and make rockets of different shapes and sizes. You could even cut out head-and-shoulder photographs of the children and have them peering out of the portholes! Finally, use thread to suspend the rockets from the ceiling. If you'd like to expand the scene, you could always add stars and planets too.

Peek-a-boo!

Children will love studying the detailed illustrations in *Man on the Moon* and discovering the aliens within. (Note the ones in the background of the illustration, left!) Can the children count how many are hiding in the book? (Hint: there are more than 50!)

Create your own alien peek-a-boo scene. Ask the children to design and draw their own aliens. Find pictures of crowded scenes from magazines; these could be landscapes, cityscapes or interiors. Now cut out the children's alien pictures. (It may be better to photocopy them as you can reduce their size and avoid cutting up original artwork). Stick the aliens into the scenes and hide them around the scene, just peeping out here and there. Try to have the background scene as big as possible to get the best effect from your alien collage.

Fantasy job

Talk to the children about jobs. What is Bob's job? Why do people have jobs? What jobs do the children's parents have? If the children could have any fantasy job, then what would it be? Where would it be? On the Moon, like Bob? Or in space? Or under the sea? Or how about at a circus, in a zoo or in a haunted house?

Ask the children to think about and describe their day at their fantasy job. How would they travel there? Would they need to wear special clothing? What would they have for lunch? What would be the best and worst things about their fantasy job?

Peculiar postcard

In *Man on the Moon*, Bob entertains tourists who spend a day visiting the Moon. Ask the children where they would choose to go for a day trip if they could go anywhere they might imagine. Then use blank postcards (or make your own) to design a picture postcard from their fantasy destination. On one side the children should draw a picture of the place they visited, or of something they saw there. On the other side they can write the postcard to their friends or family describing their visit, what they saw, who they met or even the weird weather. And I wonder what strange stamps they might use there?

The truth is out there

Man on the Moon is full of aliens, but Bob doesn't believe they exist. Discuss this with the children. What do they believe? If aliens do exist, what would they be like? What would they make of us? Would we seem very alien to them?

Let the children make and paint alien masks/faces. Use paper plates, string, card, paints and glitter. Cut up egg boxes or use small yoghurt pots for googly eyes, and glue on corks for noses. Let your children's imaginations run wild! ■



Man on the MOON

ILLUSTRATIONS © SIMON BARTRAM, TAKEN FROM MAN ON THE MOON (A DAY IN THE LIFE OF BOB), PUBLISHED BY TEMPLAR (£6.99)