



W H A L E C L A S S

Circle Time Guide

Blast Off! Rockets, Astronauts and the Moon

Week of May 17–21 • 13 minutes a day • ages 2.5–6

rocket • astronaut • up • down • blast off

Everything you need, one page per day

Week Overview

 Print · laminate · ring-bind · hold this all week. One page per day, in your hand, at the circle. Every script here is word-for-word the same as the teachers' page.

Five words they'll own by Friday

rocket

astronaut

up

down

blast off

Littles (2.5–3)

One word + a gesture is a win: **“Up!”** arms high, **“Down!”** crouch small, **“BLAST OFF!”** jump.

Bigs (4–6)

Sentence frames: **“I am an astronaut.”** · **“My rocket goes up.”** · **“I can see the moon.”** · **“Five, four, three, two, one — blast off!”**

Never ask a little for a sentence. They will get there by watching the bigs.

The week at a glance

- Mon** **My Rocket** — Magic Box: a cardboard-tube rocket. Game: rocket launch (crouch, countdown, JUMP). Shelf: Tray 1 · Countdown rockets.
- Tue** **Astronauts** — Magic Box: a box helmet you can really wear. Game: dress the astronaut (helmet, suit, gloves, boots). Shelf: Tray 2 · Astronaut dressing.
- Wed** **Up to the Moon** — Magic Box: a moon rock (a stone in foil). Game: slow-motion moon walk with Up!/Down! freezes. Shelf: Tray 3 · Moon surface.
- Thu** **Plant the Flag** — Magic Box: a little flag. Game: the obstacle path to the moon. Shelf: Tray 4 · Space 3-part cards.
- Fri** **My Space Book** — everything back in the box + the number cards 5 4 3 2 1. Game: countdown relay. Full song, top to bottom.

The 13 minutes, every day

- 2 min** **Magic Box hook** — chant, shake, sniff, dramatic peek.
- 4 min** **Teach** — the day's word, dramatised with the object. Get it wrong once on purpose.
- 3 min** **Song** — chorus → today's new verse → chorus.
- 3 min** **Game.**
- 1 min** **Close** — whisper → normal → shout.

MONDAY

Day 1 • My Rocket

Today's words: **rocket** • **up** • **blast off**

Grab: a cardboard-tube rocket in the Magic Box (kitchen-roll tube, paper cone nose, two card fins); a strip of masking tape on the carpet for the launch pad; the number cards 5-1 if you have them.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Shake the box, hold it to your ear. Whole class chants:

EVERYONE "What's in the box? What's in the box?"

Peek in. Gasp. Whisper: "Something in here wants to GO somewhere." Pull out the rocket, slowly, nose first.

TEACHER "A ROCKET!" (*hold it on your flat palm on the tape line*) "Where does a rocket go? ... **UP!**"

Throw it high and catch it. "**Up!**" Everyone's arms shoot up with it.

4 MIN TEACH • ROCKET, UP, BLAST OFF

Rocket on your palm, low on the floor. Say the word, do the word, three times each, bigger every time:

This is a **rocket**. (*hands together in a point above your head*)

My rocket goes **up**! (*shoot both arms up*)

Five, four, three, two, one... (*crouch lower on every number*)

BLAST OFF! (*everyone JUMPS*)

Littles just crouch and jump and shout the one word: "**Blast off!**" Bigs say the whole frame: "**My rocket goes up.**"

Teacher fails: count "five, four, three, two, one..." and then sit down and yawn. Wait. They will scream the words at you — let them fix you twice before you finally launch.

3 MIN GAME • ROCKET LAUNCH

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" Everyone finds a space and crouches down tiny on the floor: knees in, head down, hands over your head like a nose cone. You are all rockets on the launch pad.

TEACHER "Rockets ready? ... Five!"

"Four! Three! Two! One!" (*everyone shrinks a little smaller on every number*)

EVERYONE "BLAST OFF!" (*explode upwards — jump, arms up, fly one lap of the carpet, then land back on the pad*)

Four launches. Make the countdown slower and quieter each round so the jump gets louder. Last round, a big kid is the countdown caller.

Littles will jump on the wrong number for two rounds and then get it — don't fix them, the countdown fixes itself. Bigs can count backwards on their fingers while they crouch.

1 MIN CLOSE

All crouched down small, whisper → normal → shout, jumping on the last one:

EVERYONE "Blast off... blast off... BLAST OFF!"

Got 3 spare minutes? Roaring Rockets (Tony Mitton & Ant Parker) — don't read it, **do** it. Every page gets a countdown and a jump.

Today's song moment (3 min): chorus twice with the actions, then Monday's verse — "My rocket is red, my rocket is tall, / up, up, up — I'm not going to fall!" — then the chorus again. Full song on page 8.

TUESDAY

Day 2 · Astronauts

Today's words: **astronaut** · **helmet** · **up**

Grab: a box helmet in the Magic Box (a cardboard box with a big round hole cut in the front, big enough to really wear); a jacket, a pair of oven gloves and wellington boots for the dressing game.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Box chant. This time the box is *heavy* — stagger under it.

EVERYONE “What's in the box? What's in the box?”

Pull out the helmet. Put it on backwards. Walk into something gently. Take it off, look at it, put it on the right way round.

TEACHER “A HELMET! Who wears a helmet up in space? ... An **astronaut!**” (*slow-motion astronaut wave*)

Everyone waves back in slow motion. **“Astronaut!”**

4 MIN TEACH · I AM AN ASTRONAUT

Helmet on. Say it, then pass the helmet round the circle — every child who wears it says the line:

Helmet **on!** (*both hands lower it over your head*)

Boots **on!** (*stamp, stamp*)

Gloves **on!** (*pull each one on*)

I am an **astronaut!** (*arms out, float*)

Littles say the one word with the helmet on: **“Astronaut!”** Bigs say the frame: **“I am an astronaut.”**

Then the big idea, told in ten seconds: **China sends astronauts up too** — our 航天员 live and work in the space station, way above Beijing, and they wave down at us. Point at the ceiling. Everyone waves up.

Teacher fails: *try to put the boots on your hands. Look pleased with yourself. Wait for the shouting, then let a big kid come and show you where boots go.*

3 MIN GAME · DRESS THE ASTRONAUT

“One, two, three — eyes on me!” One child stands in the middle. The class dresses them, in the real order, calling each piece out loud:

EVERYONE “Helmet! ... Suit! ... Gloves! ... Boots!” (*one piece at a time, class chanting each one*)

Then the finished astronaut takes one enormous slow-motion step and everybody cheers.

Three or four children get a turn. Bigs call the order themselves; littles hand over the next piece.

Slow is the whole game. Buttons, zips and pulling on a boot are Montessori practical-life dressing work hiding inside a space game — this is why Tray 2 goes on the shelf today.

1 MIN CLOSE

Everyone standing, helmets on (mimed), whisper → normal → shout:

EVERYONE “I am an astronaut... I am an astronaut... I AM AN ASTRONAUT!”

Got 3 spare minutes? *Mousetronaut (Mark Kelly) — a very small mouse does the job nobody else can. Show the pictures, do the floating.*

Today's song moment (3 min): chorus twice, then Tuesday's verse — “Helmet on! Big boots too! / I'm an astronaut — how about you?” — then the chorus. Sing Monday's verse first if they shout for it.

WEDNESDAY

Day 3 • Up to the Moon

Today's words: **up** • **down** • **moon**

Grab: a moon rock in the Magic Box (any stone wrapped in kitchen foil); a picture of the moon for the wall; a clear space on the carpet for slow-motion walking.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Box chant. Open the box like it might be hot. Lift the foil rock out with two hands and pass it round the circle — every child holds it for two seconds.

TEACHER “This is a **moon rock**. It came from up THERE.” (*point at the ceiling*) “How did it get down here?”

Let them guess. Then: “A rocket went **up**, picked it up, and came **down** again.”

“Up!” (*arms high*) **“Down!”** (*crouch*)

4 MIN TEACH • UP AND DOWN

The two words are the whole lesson. Nothing else. Your hand is the rocket:

Up, up, up — to the moon! (*hand climbs above your head, everyone stands tall*)

Down, down, down — to the ground! (*hand drops, everyone crouches*)

Up! (*stand*) Down! (*crouch*) Up! Down! (*faster and faster until they collapse laughing*)

Littles do the body and the one word. Bigs get the frame: **“My rocket goes up.” “My rocket comes down.”**

Now the story, short and true: 嫦娥 **Chang'e** is the lady who flies up to the moon in the old Chinese story — and China named its real moon rockets after her. Chang'e went up to the moon, scooped up moon rocks, and brought them **down** to Beijing. Hold up the foil rock again. Everyone: **“Up... and down!”**

Teacher fails: shout “UP!” and crouch right down. Freeze. Look around innocently. They will haul you upright.

3 MIN GAME • MOON WALK

“One, two, three — eyes on me!” On the moon everything is light and floaty — so we walk in slow motion, big bouncy steps, arms drifting.

TEACHER “Astronauts... we are walking on the MOON. Slooooow. Booooouncy.”

Walk one lap of the carpet together. Then freeze the game with a word: shout **“Up!”** and everyone bounces as high as they can; shout **“Down!”** and everyone melts to the floor. Alternate, faster, six or seven times.

Finish by “collecting moon rocks”: each child picks up one imaginary rock, holds it up, and says **“I have a moon rock!”** Littles just say **“Rock!”**

Slow motion is enormously calming for a class that has been jumping since Monday. Keep your own voice slow — they copy the tempo, not the instruction.

1 MIN CLOSE

Arms up on the first, crouch on the second, jump on the last — whisper → normal → shout:

EVERYONE “Up... down... BLAST OFF!”

Got 3 spare minutes? *Papa, Please Get the Moon for Me (Eric Carle) — the fold-out ladder page gets a gasp every single time.*

Today's song moment (3 min): chorus twice, then Wednesday's verse — “Up, up, up — we go so high! / Down, down, down — good-bye, good-bye!” Sing it slowly the first time so the bodies match the words.

THURSDAY

Day 4 • Plant the Flag

Today's words: **flag** • **moon** • **down**

Grab: a little flag in the Magic Box (paper triangle taped to a chopstick) plus a second one with a red Chinese flag on it; a pot of sand, rice or play-dough as the “moon”; three cushions and a chair to make the obstacle path.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Box chant. Rattle it — this one sounds nearly empty.

TEACHER “It’s so light! Is it empty? ... No!” (*pull the flag out and wave it*) “A **flag**! What do astronauts do with a flag on the moon?”

Push it firmly into the pot of sand. Everybody claps.

EVERYONE “Plant the flag!”

Then hold up the red flag: “Chang’e planted THIS one on the moon. It’s still up there.” “**Flag!**”

4 MIN TEACH • WE WENT THERE

Three pictures, three sentences, told with your whole body — up, over, down:

The rocket goes **up**. (*arms shoot up*)

The astronaut walks on the **moon**. (*two slow bouncy steps*)

She plants the **flag**. (*push an invisible flag into the floor, twice*)

And she comes **down**, down, down — home. (*float down and sit*)

Littles do the four actions and shout “**Flag!**” Bigs tell it back to you in order. “**The rocket goes up. I plant the flag. I come down.**”

Teacher fails: *plant the flag on your own head. Wait. Then let two children come and plant it properly in the sand.*

3 MIN GAME • THE PATH TO THE MOON

“One, two, three — eyes on me!” Lay a path across the room: step over the cushion, crawl under the chair, three bouncy moon steps, then the sand pot at the end. One child at a time, flag in hand, while the class counts them down:

EVERYONE “Five, four, three, two, one — GO!”

At the pot the traveller plants the flag and shouts their line; the class cheers and the flag comes back for the next astronaut.

TRAVELLER “I planted the flag!” (*littles: “Flag!”*)

Every child goes once, so keep the path to four obstacles. The countdown gives the waiting children a job — nobody queues in silence.

1 MIN CLOSE

Flag held high in one hand, whisper → normal → shout, planting it on the last one:

EVERYONE “On the moon... on the moon... WE PLANT THE FLAG!”

Got 3 spare minutes? *The Darkest Dark (Chris Hadfield) — a boy who is afraid of the dark watches a moon landing. Show the last three pages.*

Today's song moment (3 min): chorus twice, then Thursday's verse — “Bouncy, bouncy on the moon, / slow, slow, slow — like a big balloon!” Four verses now: ask which one they want first.

FRIDAY

Day 5 • My Space Book

Today's words: **rocket** • **astronaut** • **up** • **down** • **blast off**

Grab: everything back in the Magic Box — rocket, helmet, moon rock, flag — plus the number cards **5 4 3 2 1**; the printed rocket-window sheets (page 16) and crayons for after circle.

2 MIN MAGIC BOX HOOK

Box chant, one last time — and today the box is **full**. Pull each thing out and hold it up; don't name it, they do.

TEACHER (*holds up the tube rocket, says nothing, raises an eyebrow*)

"Rocket!" Helmet → **"Astronaut!"** Foil stone → **"Moon rock!"** Flag → **"Flag!"**

Line all four up in front of you. That's the whole week sitting on the carpet.

4 MIN TEACH • THE COUNTDOWN REVIEW

Hand out the five number cards to five children. They stand in a line, holding **5 4 3 2 1**. Point at each card; the whole class shouts the number and everybody crouches one notch lower.

EVERYONE "Five! Four! Three! Two! One! — BLAST OFF!" (*everyone jumps; the cardholders wave their cards*)

Run it twice, then swap the cards to five new children and run it twice more. Bigs put the cards back in order themselves; littles just hold a number and jump.

Quick-fire finish, one prop at a time: **"Rocket!"** • **"Astronaut!"** • **"Up!"** • **"Down!"** • **"Blast off!"** Bigs answer in a whole sentence — **"I am an astronaut."**

Teacher fails: *hold the cards up as 1 2 3 4 5 and start counting. They will re-order you, loudly. That correction is the assessment — you can hear exactly who has the countdown.*

3 MIN GAME • COUNTDOWN RELAY

"One, two, three — eyes on me!" Two teams, sitting in lines. At the far end, five paper rockets (or the number cards) face-down on a chair.

Each child runs up, brings back **one** rocket, and the team lays them out counting **backwards** — 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. When a team has all five in order they crouch, count together and launch:

TEAM "Five, four, three, two, one — BLAST OFF!" (*the whole team jumps*)

Nobody wins. Both teams jump; both teams cheer. Run it a second time with the teams mixed up.

Pair a little with a big for the run — the big carries the counting, the little carries the rocket. This is exactly Tray 1 on the shelf, played with feet instead of fingers.

1 MIN CLOSE

Whole class crouched on the carpet, hands over heads like nose cones, whisper → normal → shout:

EVERYONE "Up... up... BLAST OFF!"

Then: *the rocket-window sheets and crayons come out (page 16). Each child draws themselves in the window; you scribe their line, "My rocket goes ___", and staple the sheets into a little space book that goes home with their award (page 17).*

Today's song moment (3 min): the finale — chorus → Monday's verse → Tuesday's → Wednesday's → Thursday's → Friday's ("Five, four, three, two, one — blast off, everyone!") → chorus, loud. Record it for the parents.

★ Theme Song · “Blast Off!”

The one song of the week — sung at every circle. Same chorus daily, one new verse each morning, full song on Friday.

C (0003)

F (2010)

G7 (0212)

Strum: Down · Down · Down-Up (“boom — boom — boom-chick”). Can't manage it yet? Four slow downs per bar works fine — the kids only hear the fun.

Tempo: start the countdown line slow and quiet, then hit the chorus at full marching pace — the song has a launch built into it. Chant it without the uke first; add chords once they know the words.

CHORUS — SING IT EVERY SINGLE DAY

C Five, four, three, two, **F** ONE — (crouch lower on each number)

F BLAST OFF! Here we **G7** come! (everyone JUMPS)

C Up, up, up to the **F** moon we fly, (arms up, sway)

F Wave to the Earth — **G7** good-**C** bye! (big slow wave)

Sing the chorus twice each time. On “BLAST OFF!” everyone jumps — that jump is why they will sing this in the car on Saturday.

ONE VERSE A DAY — VERSES USE ONLY C AND G7

Monday · My Rocket

C My rocket is red, my rocket is tall, (hands up in a tall point)

G7 Up, up, up — I'm **C** not going to fall! (tiptoe, wobble, steady)

Tuesday · Astronauts

C Helmet on! Big boots too! (lower the helmet, stamp twice)

G7 I'm an astronaut — **C** how about you? (point at yourself, then at the circle)

Wednesday · Up to the Moon

C Up, up, up — we go so high! (rise onto tiptoes, arms up)

G7 Down, down, down — **C** good-bye, good-bye! (sink to the floor, waving)

Thursday · Plant the Flag

C Bouncy, bouncy on the moon, (two big slow bounces)

G7 Slow, slow, slow — **C** like a big balloon! (arms wide, float)

Friday · My Space Book

C Five, four, three, two, one — (crouch on every number)

G7 Blast off, **C** everyone! (the whole class jumps)

The build: each day sing chorus → today's verse → chorus. By Friday they know five verses without ever “learning” the song — Friday's finale is the whole thing top to bottom, and it doubles as your review of the entire week.

IF YOU'RE BRAND NEW TO UKULELE

Practice this loop for five minutes tonight: **C** (4 strums) → **F** (4 strums) → **C** → **G7** → **C**. That's the entire song — the same three shapes as the other May weeks, so if you played “Round and Round” you can already play this one. C is one finger, and the verses are just C and G7.