

Teacher's Notes



Maymoona's Moon

Written by Razeena Omar Gutta

Illustrated by Zayneb Haleem

Teacher's Notes by Bec Kavanagh

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

RECOMMENDED FOR

Primary-aged readers (ages 3+, grades 2-3)

KEY CURRICULUM AREAS

- Learning areas: English, HASS
- General capabilities:
 - AC9HS3K02
 - AC9E2LA08
 - AC9E2LA09
 - AC9E3LA09
 - AC9E3LA10

THEMES

- Eid
- Diversity
- Anticipation
- Celebration
- Tradition
- Family

SYNOPSIS

Maymoona loves the celebrations of Eid – the feast, the family, the hullabaloo. But for Maymoona, who wants to be an astronaut, the most exciting part of Eid is sighting the first sliver of the crescent moon and announcing the start of Eid.

She gathers up her cosmic compass, tests her galactic goggles, and searches for the best vantage point to wait for the moon. She finds it at the top of the tallest tree in the garden, with her family cheering her on as she bravely makes the climb.

As the golden afternoon turns into dusk, clouds block Maymoona's view. But after some waiting, there it is, the beautiful crescent. The moment has arrived – *Eid Mubarak!*



ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ ILLUSTRATOR

As a South Asian Muslim born in Zimbabwe and now living in Brisbane, **Razeena Omar Gutta** has always had opportunities to explore different experiences and perspectives around the world. She was the founder of the blogs *Read Little Muslims* and *Razeena Reads*, where she shared her love of diverse books. Inspired by her three book-loving children and a desire to see books on shelves that she never had growing up, Razeena especially enjoys highlighting Muslim lives in the joyful stories she writes for children. Her debut picture book was released in September 2022 – *Hana's Hundreds of Hijabs* (Barefoot Books, USA). An avid reader, she enjoys historical fiction and travel writing especially. When not reading or writing, she can be found being a taxi for her children, drinking coffee to counter late-night reading and attempting to keep fit.

Zayneb Haleem is a self-taught digital illustrator based in the UK who grew up with a passion for making art. She has over 240,000 followers on her Instagram account, @idotdoodle, where she shares positive and uplifting messages through digital illustration.

THEMES

Traditions and celebrations

The main theme of the book is exploring tradition and the rituals of celebrations. Eid is celebrated by Muslims all over the world. Like many celebrations, Eid is a time of tradition, feasting, family and prayer. In the story, Maymoona watches out for the crescent moon, which marks the end of Ramadan, a holy month of fasting, and the beginning of Eid and celebrations. When Maymoona finally sees her moon she says *Eid Mubarak*, which means *blessed feast* in Arabic. There's more information on Eid in the back of the book. Read this out loud in class and invite students to reflect on anything new that they've learnt.

Discuss some of the things that you and your family celebrate, and the traditions that make up these celebrations. How are they similar and different to Maymoona's Eid celebrations?

Other themes to explore in your discussions of *Maymoona's Moon* include:

- Dreams for the future (Maymoona dreams of becoming an astronaut – what do you dream of?)
- Family (Maymoona celebrates Eid with her family, but they also support her as she climbs the enormous tree and help her to feel less nervous.)
- Difference (*Maymoona's Moon* is a good opportunity to reflect on the ways that we are similar and different to other people, and to encourage inclusion and finding joy in the things that make us unique.)

WRITING STYLE

Razeena Omar Gutta uses language to enrich and deepen the story, bringing in lively adjectives, sensory images and alliteration. Discuss the meaning of each of these literary devices and encourage the students to find examples of each in the story.



The moon draws Maymoona's personal dreams together with her love of Eid – it signifies the beginning of Eid, and it is a place that Maymoona would like to visit in the future as an astronaut. Look at the way the writer uses words associated with the moon and with outer space to tell the story. Invite students to find these words (e.g. galactic, galaxy, lunar, celestial) and discuss the meaning of each.

COMPREHENSION

- What are the sights, sounds and smells that make Maymoona think it's Eid?
- Who are the people in Maymoona's family? Who else celebrates Eid with them?
- What is the most exciting task for Eid? What does it signify?
- What is the perfect moon-sighting perch for Maymoona to attach her ladder to?
- What does a future astronaut need to overcome their nerves?
- What does Maymoona take with her on her climb? How do you think she feels as she's climbing?
- Maymoona's moon signals the beginning of Eid. What does it signal the end of?
- What happens during Eid?

WRITING EXERCISE

Maymoona uses all of her senses to describe what Eid means to her. For example, the **crinkle** (sound) of the wrapping paper is like music to her ears. What other examples can you find? Try to find one for each of the five senses.

Think of a celebration that's important to you and your family and describe it using all five senses.

EXPLORING THE STORY THROUGH PICTURES

What's the first thing you notice about the pictures in the book? Is it the colours? The pinks, purples and peaches of the book are warm and inviting. What other words would you use to describe the mood the colours evoke? Why do you think the illustrator might have chosen these colours for this story?

As the golden afternoon becomes dusk and then night, the colours get darker. Is this the way the sky looks at night-time where you live? Discuss the similarities and differences.

CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

- A **verb** is a doing word. 'Fiddling' is one of the verbs used in the book to describe something that Maymoona does to get ready for Eid. Make a list of other verbs and their meanings. Come up with five verbs to describe some of the things you do to prepare for your favourite holiday or celebration.
- What are the eight lunar phases of the moon? (You might have to do some research to find this out!) Draw a picture of the moon in each of its phases. Which phase is Maymoona's moon in?



- A feast isn't the only thing that happens on Eid, but it's definitely a part of the celebration! Look at the pictures of the food in the book – what are some of the foods that make up the feast? What foods do you eat to celebrate your traditions? Write a menu for one of your celebration feasts and draw a picture of your favourite dish.

RELATED READING

Amma's Sari

By Sandhya Parappukaran

Once Upon an Eid

By SK Ali

What Do You Do To Celebrate?

By Ashleigh Barton

Lailah's Lunchbox: A Ramadan Story

By Reem Faruqi

