Make Your Own Popcorn Astronauts

Read: Arrival of the Popcorn Astronauts (the title poem from THE POPCORN ASTRONAUTS)

When my son was a very little boy, we were making popcorn together. When he heard the first sounds of the popcorn kernels heating up, and he said, “They’re putting on their popcorn suits.”

I loved that observation, and I wanted to turn it into a poem. Since the “popcorn suits” are WHITE and PUFFY, they reminded me of the suits that astronauts wear, and that’s how this poem got its start.

To make your own popcorn astronauts, pop some popcorn (with the help of a grown-up) and watch the little kernels turn into popcorn astronauts. Since you have read the poem, you will know exactly what to do next:

And when they land, we say hooray
and crowd around the spot
to salt the little astronauts
and eat them while they’re hot.

Create a Persnickety* Character
*persnickety means fussy, demanding, or picky

Read: The Picky Ogre

In my poem, Bob is an ogre who only eats corn on the cob. Try making up your own character who is a picky eater. Your character could be a teacher, a chef, a queen, an artist, a soccer player, or a baby … whatever you want!

Give your character a name.

Then, decide what your character’s food will be. What is the ONLY food he or she will eat?

Draw a picture of your character eating that food.

At the bottom, label your picture. Example: Hilda, the Queen, Who Only Eats Hot Dogs
Take a Trip to The Cocoa Cabana

Read: The Cocoa Cabana and take a good look at the illustration

To make your own Marshmallow-Peppermint-Cocoa, use your favorite cocoa or hot chocolate mix; pop in a few marshmallows; add a candy cane or a few sprinkles of crushed peppermint candy. (Ask a grown-up to help.)

As someone reads the poem aloud, pretend you are enjoying your marshmallow-peppermint-cocoa at Diana-Suzanna’s little red tent in Montana. Everyone joins in on the chorus:

**Calling all skaters, the big and the small!**
**Marshmallow-Peppermint-Cocoa for all!**

Write a Sentence that Smells Delicious!

Read: The Strawberry Queen

When I wrote “The Strawberry Queen,” I was thinking of that wonderful strawberry scent that ONLY strawberries have. The minute you smell it, you know: That’s a STRAWBERRY!

Can you think of some other foods with their own special scents ... like oranges or chocolate chip cookies? Or apple cider with cinnamon? Or popcorn? See how many delicious-smelling foods you can think of.

Now choose one food, close your eyes and brainstorm about how you feel when you smell that food. (It really helps if you can smell the actual food, so do that if you can!) Do you picture yourself in a certain place? Or in a certain season of the year? Or with certain people? Does the smell remind you of a fun time?

Write one sentence about the special smell of that food. Be as specific as you can.

Example: “When I smell chocolate chip cookies, I think about the time my sister and I baked them and ate them while they were warm and gooey.”

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