

## Short story assignment description and rubric for China's Space Dream: Long March to the Moon and Beyond

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Science fiction allows us to explore what could be—imagining future worlds, alternative realities, and the impact of scientific developments on human life. For this assignment, you will write an original science fiction short story that blends scientific ideas with cultural insight. This is your chance to create a compelling narrative that reflects both your creativity and your understanding of how science and culture shape the world.

Your science fiction story must:

### 1. Incorporate a Scientific Element

- Your story should be grounded in a real or speculative scientific idea or advancement. Examples might include AI, climate change, genetics, astrophysics, robotics, pandemics, space colonization, time travel, etc. The science does not have to be real, but it should be plausible and consistent within the world you create.

### 2. Explore an Aspect of Culture

- Your story should engage with culture in some way. This could include:
  - A specific cultural tradition or conflict (e.g., Chinese family dynamics in a future society)
  - Cross-cultural interactions (e.g., American astronauts encountering an alien society with Confucian principles)
  - Universal human values or struggles (e.g., loneliness, power, memory, or belonging)
- Culture can be (among many more things) represented through language, values, food, rituals, social systems, or historical references—be creative.

### 3. Have a Clear, Identifiable Topic or Theme

- Your story should explore a big question or idea. Ask yourself: *What is this story really about?* Some examples:
  - “What does it mean to be human?”
  - “How far should we go to preserve the environment?”
  - “Can technology erase cultural identity?”
  - “How does memory shape justice?”
- This theme should emerge naturally through your characters, setting, and plot—not through a lecture.

### Suggestions for Success:

- Develop compelling characters and a vivid setting.

- Consider how your imagined world reflects or critiques our current world.
- Use dialogue, sensory detail, and plot structure to draw readers in.
- Keep the pacing balanced: even a short story needs a clear beginning, middle, and end.
- Don't be afraid to take creative risks—as long as the story is thoughtful, coherent, and rooted in the three core criteria.

**You will be graded on:**

- Creative integration of science (25%)
- Cultural insight and representation (25%)
- Clarity and depth of theme/topic (25%)
- Story structure, originality, and writing quality (25%)