

## Chasing Space

By Leland Melvin

### Before Reading

Preview the book by looking at the cover, then reading the back-cover copy. As you get ready to read, think about what motivated Leland Melvin to chase his dreams. How do you think Melvin's story might inspire you to "shoot for the stars"?

### While Reading

As you read, pause to think, talk, or write about the following questions:

Explain the "bread truck" lesson, and how it taught Melvin the importance of having a vision. How did this lead him to engineering?

How did the cheating scandal come about, and how was Melvin treated as a result? What role did Dr. Meyers play, and why? How did the scandal turn into a "blessing"?

What event caused Melvin to lose his sense of purpose, and what tragedy helped him renew it? Analyze how these experiences changed him.

What did Melvin do to prepare for attaching the Columbus lab to the ISS? What simulators did he use? Appraise his skill set, and explain why he was the right person for the job.

### After Reading

Review the requirements for becoming an astronaut. What qualities does NASA look for in a candidate, and what tests do they administer to assess those qualities? What are candidates required to do to qualify for the space program? What do you think—do you have what it takes to become an astronaut?

### Literacy Tip

Be sure to check out the experiments listed in the back of the book. They're pretty serious—one of them is "Build a Rocket"! There are blank pages so you can take notes on your work, something all good scientists do in order to repeat experiments with an eye toward perfecting outcomes as well as explaining findings.

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### Think About It!

Explain the phenomenon astronauts call the “orbital shift.” What was Melvin’s personal experience of this, and how did it affect the way he sees the world? Have you ever experienced an “orbital shift” here on Earth? What happened? How did it change you?