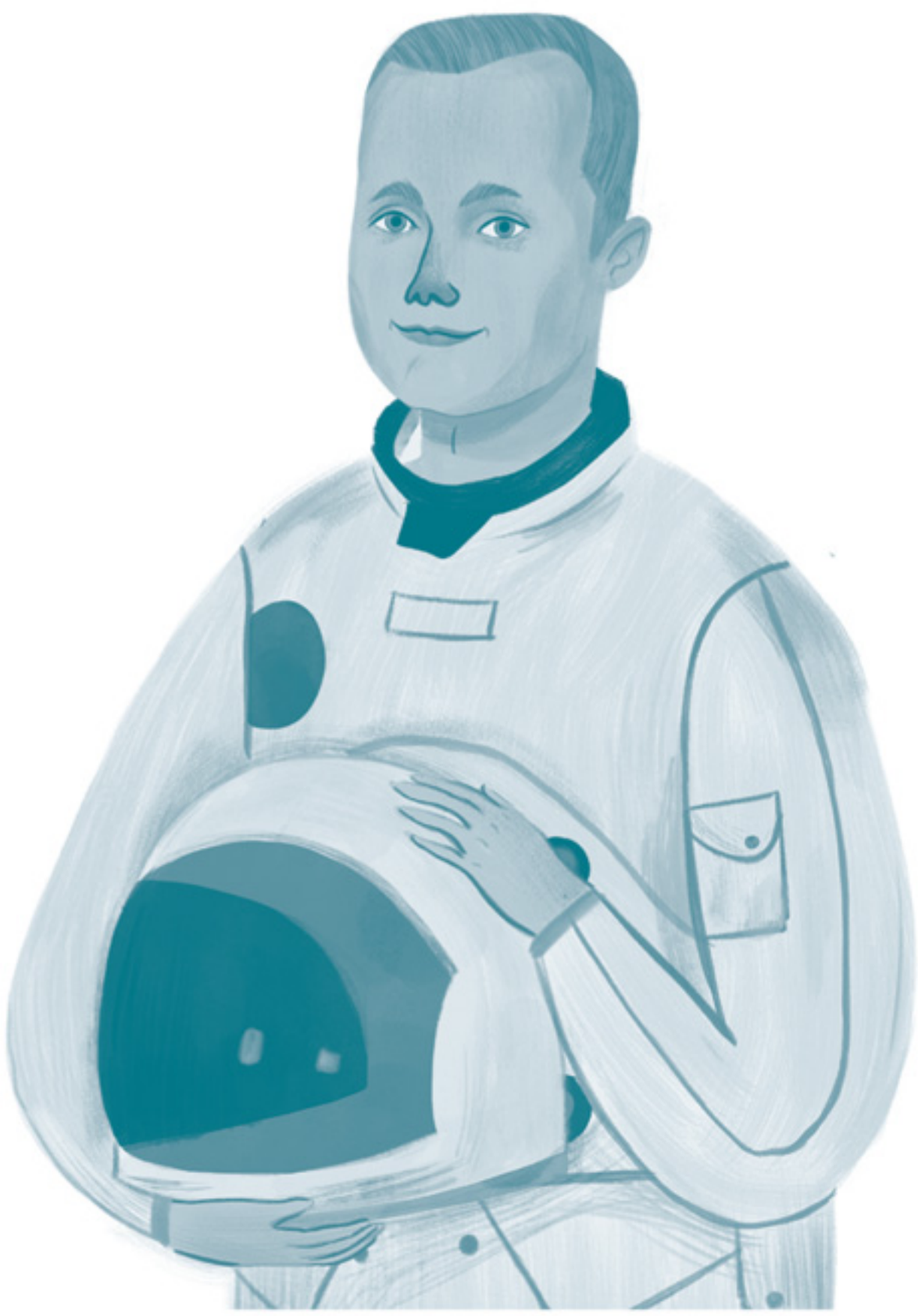

THE EXTRAORDINARY LIFE OF

NEIL ARMSTRONG

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Who was Neil Armstrong?

On 21 July 1969, at just before four minutes to three in the morning, a man stepped off a *ladder*. Around the world 530 million people held their breath and watched a black-and-white image on boxy, old-fashioned televisions. The man was *Neil Armstrong*, commander of the Apollo 11 space mission, and at the bottom of the ladder was the *surface* of the *moon*.

When he first set foot on the moon Neil Armstrong was thirty-eight years old. He was a quiet ENGINEER and pilot who once described himself as a 'nerd'.

Neil's step was one of the most important and extraordinary in human history. With one footstep he showed that humanity's voyages of discovery could continue out into space.

ENGINEER: someone who designs and makes machinery.

MOONWALKERS:
A VERY SMALL CLUB

You could probably fit all the people who have ever walked on the moon into your bedroom. So far there have been only twelve, including Neil Armstrong.

The moon landing was not Neil's achievement alone.

Back in the landing craft – called the lunar module, or Eagle – his co-pilot, ***Buzz Aldrin***, was waiting to follow him down.

Miles above, ***Michael Collins*** was ORBITING the moon in the command module called Columbia, waiting to take them home again.

ORBIT:

to go round and round something. All the planets in the solar system orbit the sun.

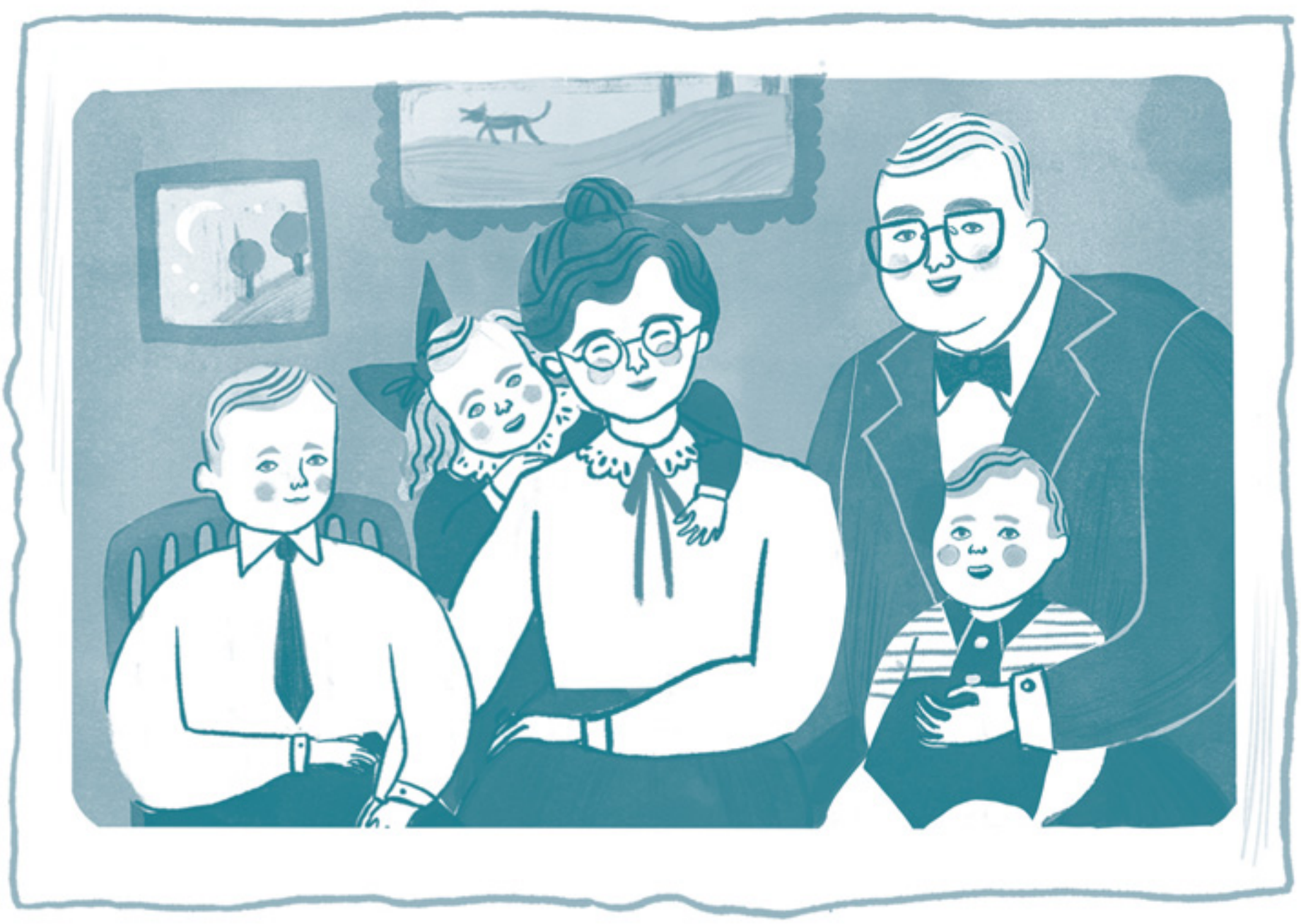
The moon is a ***satellite*** (something that travels round the Earth), or a 'celestial body', or an 'astronomical body'.

Back on Earth thousands of people, from presidents to engineers, had made incredible ***efforts*** to prepare for the journey. It had cost the American people ***billions*** of dollars to get all three men to the moon. But this was Neil Armstrong's moment, a moment that made him one of the most ***famous*** people on Earth, and a moment that would be ***remembered*** for all time.

'I think we're going to the moon because it's in the nature of the human being to face challenges.'

Small steps

The boy who would one day walk on the moon was born near a small town called **Wapakoneta** in the American state of Ohio on 5 August 1930. The **oldest** of three children, Neil had a happy childhood.



His father, Stephen, moved around a lot for his work as an AUDITOR. By the time Neil was fourteen the family had moved sixteen times, ending up back in Wapakoneta.

AUDITOR:
a person who does an audit, checking a company's accounts.

Everywhere the family went, Neil made friends easily. People liked him. He read a lot, and was a ***quiet*** kid who didn't much enjoy being the centre of ***attention***, but he was clever, honest, often funny and easy to get along with.