

Outer Space Outlaws

by Lorenzo Van Der Lingen



Book Summary

Millie finds it hard being a younger sister, so when the opportunity to be a hero arrives, she doesn't think about the possible consequences. Her adventures take her to planet Kalguri on the trail of a monster. Her journey gives her the excitement she wants and she learns some valuable lessons along the way.

Features of the Book

- Comic strip format
- Text features – labels, speech bubbles, capital letters, enlarged typeface for effect
- Onomatopoeia – *Choof! Oof! Schoonk! Sproing!*
- Sci-fi vocabulary – *vidcast, light year, hyperthrust*
- The use of humour
- The use of linking text – *And so ...; Meanwhile ...; An hour later ...*
- The speech of Jeeves the help-bot
- The language of the aliens

Purpose

Outer Space Outlaws can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- S** drawing on students' prior knowledge;
- S** exploring the structure of the comic book genre;
- S** expressing and supporting a response to a particular genre;
- S** exploring specialised vocabulary;
- S** viewing situations from different perspectives.

The Guided Reading Lesson

- S** Drawing on students' prior knowledge
- S** Exploring the structure of the comic book genre
- S** Expressing and supporting a response to a particular genre
- S** Exploring specialised vocabulary

Introducing the text

Before the students see the book, ask them to describe their view of an outlaw.

- *What is an outlaw?*
- *What kinds of stories usually feature outlaws?*
- *What kinds of events would you find in a story about outlaws?*
- *Now think about superheroes. Can you name some?*
- *How are superheroes the same as outlaws? How are they different?*

Introduce the cover of the book to the students and discuss where and when the story might be set.

- *When is the story set? What things tell you this? (the title, the characters' clothing, the planet behind them)*
- *What kind of illustration is on the cover?*

Read the blurb on the back cover together.

- *Which words in the blurb confirm the idea that this is a science fiction story? (spaceship, monster hunter, Kalguri, non-human empire planet)*

Ask the students to look quickly through the book to see that it is written as a comic book. Look at the format – the illustrations, the speech bubbles, and the linking text such as “Meanwhile ...”.

- *How is this different to other ways of telling a story?*
- *How do you follow the sequence of actions on the page?*

Reading and discussing the text

Look at the first chapter heading.

- What does the chapter heading tell you? What do you think is going to happen?
- What can you tell about the character in the foreground of this first illustration?

Ask the students to read chapter 1 independently. As they read, they could think about the following questions:

- What new vocabulary are we introduced to? Make a note of these words. (space dock, x-class hyperthrust silver starstreaker; vidcast, hyperthrust fuel)
- How do the illustrations help us with the text? Is it easier or harder to read than the usual kind of chapter book?
- How does the news reporter help us to understand the storyline?

Ask the students to read chapters 2 and 3 independently.

- As you read, think about how Millie and Nash's relationship develops.

When they have finished reading, discuss the differences between the characters of Millie and Nash.

- How would you describe each of the girls?
- What speech or actions support your views?
- When do Nash's feelings about the adventure begin to change?

The students could now read the rest of the story. As they read, they could think about one or more of the following questions:

- Who are the real outlaws in the story?
- Who are the heroes? Why?



Revisiting the Text

The suggested activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson if appropriate or could be taken as a mini-lesson at a later time.

S Exploring the structure of the comic book genre

Ask the students to find a page in the book that combines text and illustration to create an exciting effect.

- How has the author done this?
- How do you know which order to follow when you read the page?
- How does the author show you where to look next?

Discuss the use of small and large illustrations and the way they are placed so that they flow in the correct sequence. The students could use the blackline master on page 67 to create a page of their own in comic book format. They need to:

- write a short science fiction story in narrative form
- choose a section of this to illustrate
- highlight which events can be illustrated
- decide on the text for speech and thought bubbles
- think about linking text for the illustration boxes.

When they have finished, they could share and discuss their work.

S Viewing situations from different perspectives

Discuss the way Saratoga Mantu's rocket blasts off unexpectedly.

- Who was responsible for this?

Look at the event from three different points of view – those of Nash, Saratoga Mantu, and Millie and Nash's parents.

- How does each of these characters feel about the launch?
- Who do they blame? Which words or phrases in the story tell you how they feel?

Ask the students to write a short account of the event from the perspective of one of these characters. They could imagine they are presenting their point of view to a judge. When they have finished, ask them to read their work aloud.

- Which account is more believable?
- Which parts of the account can you be sure of and which are really only opinion?