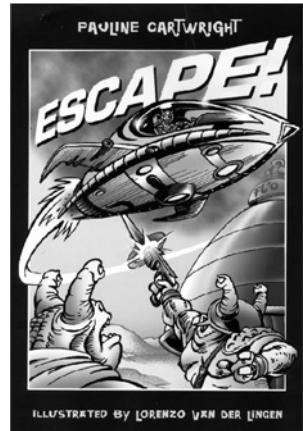


Escape!

by Pauline Cartwright

illustrated by Lorenzo Van Der Lingen



Book Summary

Zimm and Tarek, space travelers on the starship *Astra*, are carrying out an important mission on a dark, dusty planet when they realize that they are not alone and are in serious danger.

Features of the Book

- Science fiction genre
- Prologue
- A plot that is often developed through dialogue
- Different language structures used by the two main characters
- Sci-fi vocabulary – *force field, scanner, trillium, freeze-beams*
- Invented names – *Tarek, Zimm, Andral, Quod*
- Illustrations in cartoon style

Purpose

Escape! can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- recognizing the distinguishing features of science fiction narrative;
- analyzing plot structure – problem, crisis, and resolution;
- interpreting specialized vocabulary in context;
- building an awareness of the relationship between oral and written language;
- using text as a model for students' own writing;
- making judgments about characters from their actions.

The Guided Reading Lesson

- Recognizing the distinguishing features of science fiction narrative
- Analyzing plot structure – problem, crisis, and resolution
- Interpreting specialized vocabulary in context

Introducing the text

To activate the students' prior knowledge and background experience in the science fiction genre, ask:

- *What science fiction stories or films have you read or seen?*
- *How do you know that a story is science fiction?*
- *What makes science fiction different from other stories? In what ways is it similar?*

Record responses on a Venn diagram showing similarities and differences.

Show the cover of the book. To arouse the students' interest, ask:

- *What do you think is happening here?*
- *Who could be escaping? Why?*
- *When you see this title and picture, what kinds of words or phrases come to mind? (danger, fear, bravery, enemies)*

Draw the students' attention to the title, including the exclamation point.

- *Why do you think the title is written like this?*

Read the text on the first page together.

- *What else can you see on the page?*
- *Why do you think the page is set out like this?*

Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read to the end of the first chapter. To focus their attention on the setting and the theme, ask:

- How has the author set the scene?
- What special words tell us this is science fiction?

Record their responses on the board. Look at the end of the chapter on page 7.

- How has the author gained your attention so that you want to read on?

The students can now read to the end of chapter four independently. Encourage them to focus on the way that Zimm uses contractions in her sentences and Tarek doesn't with the following purpose-setting questions:

- See if you can find the ways that Zimm talks differently from Tarek.
- What do you think is the reason for these differences?

After the students have read this chapter, check on their responses to the purpose-setting questions. Then ask them to describe the crisis in the story and to predict how the author will solve it. Encourage interaction among the students – not all comments need be directed to you.

The students can now read to the end of the story. Remind them to use the illustrations as an additional source of information. When the students have finished reading, ask them to compare their predictions about how the problem in the story would be resolved.

Invite the students to look for words and expressions in the text that convey emotions, such as fear, anger, worry, or triumph. Ask them to also find examples of emotions conveyed in the illustrations. Encourage the less obvious examples:

- Why is Zimm looking over her shoulder on page twenty-five?



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 Building an awareness of the relationship between oral and written language

Ask the students to find examples of contractions in Zimm's language and write them as complete words. For example: "I'd hate to stay here forever" becomes "I would hate to stay here forever." They could then make contractions from examples of Tarek's words. For example: "There is a gap in the force field" becomes "There's a gap in the force field."

Ask the students to read their sentences aloud, with and without contractions, and discuss the difference.

S Using text as a model for students' own writing

Ask the students to work in pairs and write the chapter before chapter 1. They could do this as written text or in cartoon form, or they could retell the story from the Andrals' point of view.

S Making judgments about characters from their actions

Explore how the author has portrayed the characters of Zimm and Tarek, focusing on actions and personality traits.

– Which words or actions in chapter five tell you something about Zimm and Tarek as characters?

The students could find their own examples in the text and use the blackline master on page 72 to record these for discussion with the group.