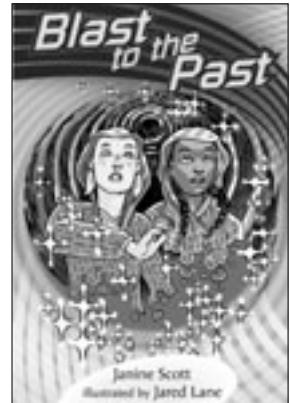


Blast to the Past

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illustrated by Jared Lane



Book Summary

Omega and Zip's class is investigating accidental discoveries. The two girls use the class time travel pod to go back in time to witness the discovery of vulcanized rubber. While they're there, they almost change the future.

Features of the Book

- Science fiction
- Specialized vocabulary – *time travel pod, Milliseconds, vulcanization, chemicals, sulfur*
- Invented names and objects – *Ms. Umax, Zip, Omega, buzz-bike, quotch, robo-cook, proton brain*

Purpose

Blast to the Past can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills and understandings:

- discussing the plot and setting of a story;
- considering the consequences of characters' actions;
- exploring the language specific to science fiction texts;
- innovating on a text;
- locating and using sources of information for research;
- gaining an understanding of what scientists do.

Investigation Tools

- Step-by-step – The Rubber Tree, page 29
- Digging Deeper – Charles Goodyear, pages 30–31
- Making Connections – More Accidental Discoveries, page 32

The Guided Reading Lesson

S Discussing the plot and setting
S Considering the consequences of characters' actions

Introducing the text

Write the heading “Life in the Year 2100” on the board. Have the students discuss, in pairs, what life might be like in the Year 2100.

- *What will school be like?*
- *What will people wear? What will they eat?*
- *How will people travel?*

Allow the students to share their ideas with the group.

Explain to the students that they are going to be reading a science fiction book. Parts of the book are true and other parts have been made up by the author.

Read the title and the blurb on the back of the book together.

Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read chapter 1 independently. As they read, have them think about the things that are different when comparing Zip and Omega's time with life in the present day.

When everyone has finished reading, write the following text on the board:

"Without this discovery, the world would be a very different place."

- *What discovery could Omega be thinking of?*

Ask the students to share their ideas, and encourage them to think about whether those ideas would still be used in Zip and Omega's time.

Ask the students to read chapter 2. While they read, the students can think about the differences between Zip and Omega's time and 1839. Tell them to use the illustrations for clues. When they have finished reading, allow them to share their ideas with the group.

- *Why is it important that the children don't touch anything or talk to anyone?*
- *What are the green leaves?*
- *What do you think will happen next?*

The students can now read the rest of the story independently, thinking about the consequences of Zip and Omega's actions.

- *What would you have done differently if you were Zip or Omega?*
- *What do you think they will do when they go back to 1839?*

The last four pages contain nonfiction information related to the story. The students can read this now, or they can read it later as part of their independent reading.

Revisiting the Text

The activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson, during later reading sessions as mini-lessons, or as independent activities.

S Exploring the language specific to science fiction texts

Explain to the students that because the story is set in the future, the author has imagined what life could be like and has invented words to describe it. Ask the students to skim through the text looking for names and objects that might exist in the future. Write these words on the board. Brainstorm names for other things that might exist in Zip and Omega's time. The students can use some of these words when they are completing the blackline master.

S Innovating on a text

 The students can complete the blackline master on page 63 to innovate on the text by writing another chapter for the story.

S Locating and using sources of information for research

Read pages 31 and 32 together.

- *Do you know how other things were discovered?*
- *How could we find out more about them?*

Guide the students toward using books, magazines, the Internet, or CD-ROMs to research information. Help them to devise "What if ..." questions about discoveries. For example, "What if Charles Goodyear hadn't noticed that he'd spilled rubber on the stove?"

S Gaining an understanding of what scientists do

Explain to the students that many people choose science as a career and devote their lives to scientific exploration. Ask the students to name famous scientists that they know of (Albert Einstein, Thomas Edison, Galileo). Encourage the students to explore the life and work of one scientist using a variety of resources, such as libraries and the Internet.