



Chapter 1 · Find That Moon!

As three astronauts prepare to blast off from Earth, King Crackon blasts off from Zarg. They are heading to the same place – the Moon. But where in space is King Crackon's crazy driving taking him?

THE GREAT SPACE RACE

Jan Burchett and Sara Vogler

CONTENT



READ!

- **Reading comprehension questions:** 10 multiple choice questions to test text retrieval and reading comprehension. These questions may also be completed online at www.fictionexpress.co.uk
- **Guided reading:** teacher's notes and a written response worksheet comprising 6 questions which allow for deeper response to the story, looking at personal response, inference and prediction



WRITE!

- **"Inspire!" words** to encourage children to include them in their own writing
- **Writing worksheet:** Dear Jan and Sara – ask the authors about the setting
- **Spelling worksheet:** common exception words



TALK!

- **Voting options:** discussion points for each voting option
- **Discussion activity:** asking questions about the book's setting (link to writing)



EXPLORE!

- **Space vocabulary crossword**



Name: _____

1

Who is the king of the planet Zarg?

- A. King Crackon
- B. King Zarg
- C. King Dibble

2

Why does the king want the Moon?

- A. To put in his museum
- B. To use as a lamp
- C. To set up a new home

3

Why is the king in a rush?

- A. He is very busy
- B. The Moon is disappearing
- C. He wants to reach the Moon

4

What colour do the king's servants go when they are frightened?

- A. Green
- B. Orange
- C. White

5

How many feet does the king have?

- A. Ten
- B. Five
- C. One



Name: _____

6

What does the king wear?

- A. A gold crown
- B. A gold cape
- C. A gold spacesuit

7

What happened on 16th July 1969?

- A. American astronauts got ready to go to the Moon
- B. American astronauts came back from the Moon
- C. American astronauts landed on the Moon

8

What happens when the king starts to drive the spaceship?

- A. They start to go backwards
- B. He crashes into a star
- C. The spaceship starts to spin

9

What does Dibble see on the map of the solar system?

- A. Lots of moons
- B. Lots of stars
- C. Hundreds of planets

10

Which of these features does the king not have?

- A. Claws
- B. Red scales
- C. A spiky tail



1

Read up to *All the world was watching*. Look at pre-launch pictures of Buzz Aldrin, Neil Armstrong and Michael Collins. Discuss how long ago 1969 was. Ask: Why was the world watching? Read up to *And he wanted their moon for himself*. Discuss which parts of this story are based on fact (the astronauts) and which are completely made up (planet Zarg). Ask: Who do you think the main characters in this story are going to be? (King Crackon, Dibble and Mag)

2

Read up to *"Carry me to the royal spaceship!"* Ask: What makes the Earth's moon valuable in King Crackon's eyes? (It has never been walked on.) Why is King Crackon in such a hurry to collect Earth's moon? (Astronauts are on their way to the Moon to walk on it.) Ask a volunteer to explain *A day on Zarg is only ten minutes long*. (Planet Zarg only takes ten minutes to go around its sun.) Enjoy King Crackon's insults: 'cosmic clots', 'glob-brains'.

3

Ask: Who are Mag and Dibble? (servants of King Crackon.) Ask: Why are they frightened? (King Crackon will lead them into danger.) Ask: What do we know about them? (They are scared of the king, they turn orange, Dibble has antennae which show his feelings.) Discuss the meaning of 'squillions'. (an informal word for 'too many billions to count') Challenge the children to find words in this section that explain how the characters talk, for example: *grumbled, panted, snapped, gulped*. Discuss - or model - what each means.

4

Read up to *"Found it," he announced*. Ask a volunteer to describe King Crackon. (cross, bossy and greedy; wears a gold spacesuit; has five feet, and a spiky tail) Ask the children to speculate whether Mag and Dibble look the same. Ask: What impression does the phrase, *"Are we there yet?" he whined*, give of King Crackon? (That he is like a child, moaning on a long car journey.) Ask: What solar system does Dibble mean by *"This solar system..."* (our solar system)

5

Explain that many of the planets in our solar system have moons orbiting them - Jupiter has over 60 moons. Ask: How does Dibble's head become sore? (King Crackon hits him with his tail.) Read to the end of the story. Ask the children to locate further examples of King Crackon behaving like a spoilt child in this section and the last, for example: *"I want the Earthling's moon!", thundered, "GO! GO! GO!", "I want to drive.", "my clever driving"*. Discuss the meaning of 'slouched'.

6

Ask: How long does it take them to get to Earth in minutes? (twenty minutes) How long is this in Zarg days? (two days) Agree that they really have been travelling 'superfast'. Point out that the word 'superfast' is another made up word to give the story a comic feel. Ask: How do we know that King Crackon is not good at driving the spaceship? (He presses all the buttons, he makes the spaceship spin, he doesn't know where they are, Mag's story.)



Name: _____

1

Which characters in this story are real?

2

Why is King Crackon in such a hurry to get to the Moon?

3

Find and copy three words that are used instead of 'said'?



Name: _____

4 _____

What does King Crackon look like? How does King Crackon behave?

5 _____

Dibble rubbed his sore head.

Why does Dibble have a sore head?

6 _____

How does King Crackon drive the spaceship badly?



Here is some of the challenging or potentially unfamiliar vocabulary used in Chapter 1 of *The Great Space Race*.

You may wish to explore this vocabulary, to improve children's understanding of the chapter, and inspire and enhance the quality of their own writing. You might like to display the words in the classroom, and encourage children to use new vocabulary as part of the Write! worksheet tasks.

dizzily

gulped

screeched

squealed

thundered

whined



Name: _____

Post a message to Jan and Sara on the book forum for *The Great Space Race* to ask them about the setting. Use these questions to help you plan your message.

1. Why did you choose to write a story set in the time of the Moon landings?

2. Think about the different settings of the planet Earth and the planet Zarg. Which is your favourite so far?

Explain why _____

3. What would you like to ask Jan and Sara? Perhaps you could ask whether they remember the Moon landings, or whether they enjoy writing science fiction stories.



Name: _____

Underline the correct spelling of the words in the sentences below.

1

After / Aftur they got on, the door / dor of the rocket closed behinde / behind them.

2

They bowth / both tried to zip up the gold / golde spacesuit of King Crackon.

3

Evrybody / Everybody liked to fly farst / fast though the starry sky.

4

Harf / Half an hour / our on Earth is like free / three days on the planet Zarg.

5

The hole / whole trip went by the in the blink of an eye / iye.

6

"We should / shud steal the Moon. It's the ownly / only one I want!"
said Crackon.



What has Dibble spotted?

A

A twisting, twirling wormhole about to suck them in

Do you know what a wormhole is? It is supposed to be a place in space which can take you to a different part of the universe, or even to a different time. If this is the winning option, where do you think Crackon and the crew will end up?

B

A comet speeding straight for them

We know that the royal spaceship is superfast, but if this is a comet, they might not have very much time before it hits them and blasts them out of the universe completely! Unless the spaceship is also superstrong and could perhaps ride along with the comet?

C

A space junk collector about to gobble them up

How do you imagine a space junk collector to be? Is it like a giant rubbish truck? What kind of things might be in such a machine? And where might King Crackon and his crew end up if they are gobbled up by this?

→ Which option do you think would be the most exciting one for the next chapter of *The Great Space Race*?

Discussion Activity

In pairs or a small group, discuss the book's setting. How much do you know about the Moon landings that happened 50 years ago this summer? Do you know about life at this time? Do you think you would like to have lived then, before many people had a television and no homes had a computer? Use your Write! questions for Jan and Sara to help you think about the setting, and ask relatives who might have been children at the time whether they watched the Moon landings on television.



Name: _____

CLUES Across

- 1. The sun is at the centre of the _____ . (5, 6)
- 4. King Crackon comes from _____ Zarg. (6)
- 5. What does Crackon want for his museum? _____ (4)
- 6. What planet do we live on? _____ (5)
- 7. You need a _____ to blast off into space. (6)

CLUES Down

- 2. What do you call someone who travels into space? _____ (9)
- 3. What do you need to wear to travel into space? _____ (9)

ANSWERS

READ! Comprehension Questions

- 1. Who is the king of the planet Zarg?
A. King Crackon
- 2. Why does the king want the Moon?
A. To put in his museum
- 3. Why is the king in a rush?
C. He wants to reach the Moon first
- 4. What colour do the king's servants go when they are frightened?
B. Orange
- 5. How many feet does the king have?
B. Five
- 6. What does the king wear?
C. A gold spacesuit
- 7. What happened on 16th July 1969?
A. American astronauts got ready to go to the Moon
- 8. What happens when the king starts to drive the spaceship?
C. The spaceship starts to spin
- 9. What does Dibble see on the map of the solar system?
A. Lots of moons
- 10. Which of these features does the king not have?
B. Red scales

READ! Written Response Worksheet

- 1. The three American astronauts.
- 2. He needs to get to the moon before the American astronauts walk on it.
- 3. For example: grumbled, panted, snapped, gulped, whined, thundered, screeched, squealed, announced, snorted
- 4. He has five feet, a spiky tail and claws; he wears a gold spacesuit. He is bad tempered, childish, bossy and greedy.
- 5. King Crackon has hit him on the head with his tail.
- 6. He presses all the buttons, he makes it spin out of control, he loses where they are.

WRITE! Worksheet: Tricky words

- 1. After / Aftur they got on, the door / dor of the rocket closed behinde / behind them.
- 2. They bowth / both tried to zip up the gold / golde spacesuit of King Crackon.
- 3. Evrybody / Everybody liked to fly farst / fast though the starry sky.
- 4. Harf / Half an hour / our on Earth is like free / three days on the planet Zarg.
- 5. The hole / whole trip went by the in the blink of an eye / iye.
- 6. "We should / shud steal the Moon. It's the ownly / only one I want!" said Crackon.

EXPLORE! Space vocabulary crossword

				2				3					
1	S	O	L	A	R	S	Y	S	T	E	M		
				S				P					
				T	4	P	L	A	N	E	T		
				R				C					
		5	M	O	O	N		6	E	A	R	T	H
				N				S					
				A				U					
				U				I					
								T					
7	R	O	C	K	E	T							