

Chapter 4 · Crackon's Evil Plan

The lunar zapper is having a strange effect on Mag, and Neil Armstrong isn't sure what he's seeing. But Crackon has not given up his plans for the Moon, and is determined to beat the Earthlings to it!

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:** create a cartoon strip
- **Spelling worksheet:** tricky words – using common exception words



TALK!

- **Voting options:** discussion points for each voting option
- **Discussion activity:** debating and voting on the options



EXPLORE!

- **Anagrams**



Name: _____

1

What happens to Mag the first time the purple ray hits her?

- A. She grows bigger
- B. She shrinks
- C. She gets very hot

2

Why does Mag's head hit the ceiling?

- A. She has floated up to the ceiling
- B. Crackon has thrown her up there
- C. She has grown very large

3

What makes Mag change back?

- A. Astronaut Neil frightens her
- B. Dibble zaps her on a different setting
- C. Dibble sprays her with bug spray

4

What does Neil Armstrong think Mag is?

- A. A monster
- B. A space bug
- C. Buzz dressed up

5

Why does Neil leave the space shuttle?

- A. To get away from Mag
- B. To find some food
- C. To get into the lander



Name: _____

6

Why does Mag want to wobble the spaceship?

- A. So that Crackon can't aim his zapper
- B. Because it's stuck underneath the chair
- C. So that Neil can't catch them

7

How does Mag know that there is something wrong with the lander?

- A. She is watching their computer
- B. She can hear the lander's alarm
- C. She can see fire coming out of the lander

8

How does Crackon damage the lander?

- A. He takes away the brake
- B. He breaks the windows
- C. He jumps on the computer

9

Why are the aliens about to crash on to the Moon?

- A. Crackon has broken off part of their spaceship
- B. Crackon wants to land on the Moon first
- C. Crackon is showing off about how fast he can drive

10

Why are the Earth astronauts nearly out of fuel?

- A. It was further to the Moon than they thought
- B. They lent some of their fuel to Crackon
- C. Crackon let their fuel out



- 1 Recap on the events of Chapter 3. Clarify that the tiny Zargians are standing outside their spaceship which is parked under a seat in the Earth astronauts' moon module. Ask: What has just happened? (Crackon has been trying to use his moon zapper but hit Mag instead of the Moon.) Read up to "*Perhaps we can find moon bugs!*" Ask: What happens to Mag? (She stretches until her head reaches the ceiling.) Ask the children to imagine what Mag looks like. (Very tall and thin.)
- 2 How does Dibble save the situation? (He takes the zapper from Crackon and resets it.) Who sees Mag when she is large? (Neil) What does he think she is? (a space bug) Ask: Why do Mike and Buzz laugh at Neil? (By the time they look round, Mag has shrunk and they don't see her.) Ask: Who are Neil, Mike and Buzz? (The astronauts who went to the Moon.) What do we learn from Buzz at the end of this section? (They've arrived at the Moon.)
- 3 Read up to "*I have a moon to shrink.*" Challenge the children to remember the features of the Zargians as described in previous chapters. (They have spiny tails, claws and turn orange when they are frightened.) What do we learn here? (They have five legs.) Speculate on what 'fumblebeetle' means. (idiot) Make up other new funny (not rude!) insults for Crackon to use. Why does Mag sink down on to her knees? (She's upset and shocked.)
- 4 What does the launch of the moon lander mean? (Time is running out for Crackon to get the Moon.) Ask: Do you think the astronauts' feet are really 'dirty'? (No - it's a figure of speech because Crackon is cross.) Ask the children to find all the different words for 'said' in this section, for example: *moaned, snapped, shouted, whispered, bellowed*. Ask: What do these words tell us? That Mag is upset, that Crackon is bad tempered, that Mag wants to keep her ideas secret from Crackon.
- 5 Read to the end of the story. Remember together all the stupid things Crackon has done in this story. (Nearly crashed into comet, flew up to Neil Armstrong, zapped Mag and so on.) Ask a volunteer to explain what he has done this time. (Drained fuel from the lander, jumped on the computer, taken the retroblaster from his own spaceship.) Agree that Crackon's spaceship is very fast and would probably easily have beaten the lander to the Moon.
- 6 Find all the sentences ending with an exclamation mark in this section. "*I snapped off their retroblaster!*", "*It's ours!*", "*We're going to crash!*" "*But that will spoil my moon!*", "*Help!*", "*Do something!*" Ask: Why are there so many? (Everyone is stressed and things are going wrong.) Ask: What is gravity? (The force that pulls us to the ground.) Remind the children that next week's chapter is the last in the story. What would they like to happen to end the story? Discuss the children's ideas.



Name: _____

1

Why does Crackon make Mag so big?

2

Why do Mike and Buzz laugh at Neil?

3

Why does Mag sink down on to her knees?



Name: _____

4 What do the words 'shouted' and 'snapped' and 'bellowed' tell us about Crackon?

5 What has Crackon been doing whilst the others are in the spaceship?

6 Why can't Mag and Dribble make the Zargian spaceship go slower?



Here is some of the challenging or potentially unfamiliar vocabulary used in Chapter 4 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.

alarm

cackled

collapsed

pride

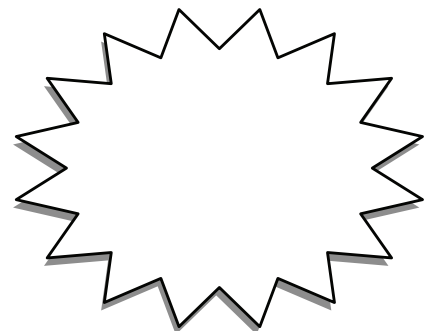
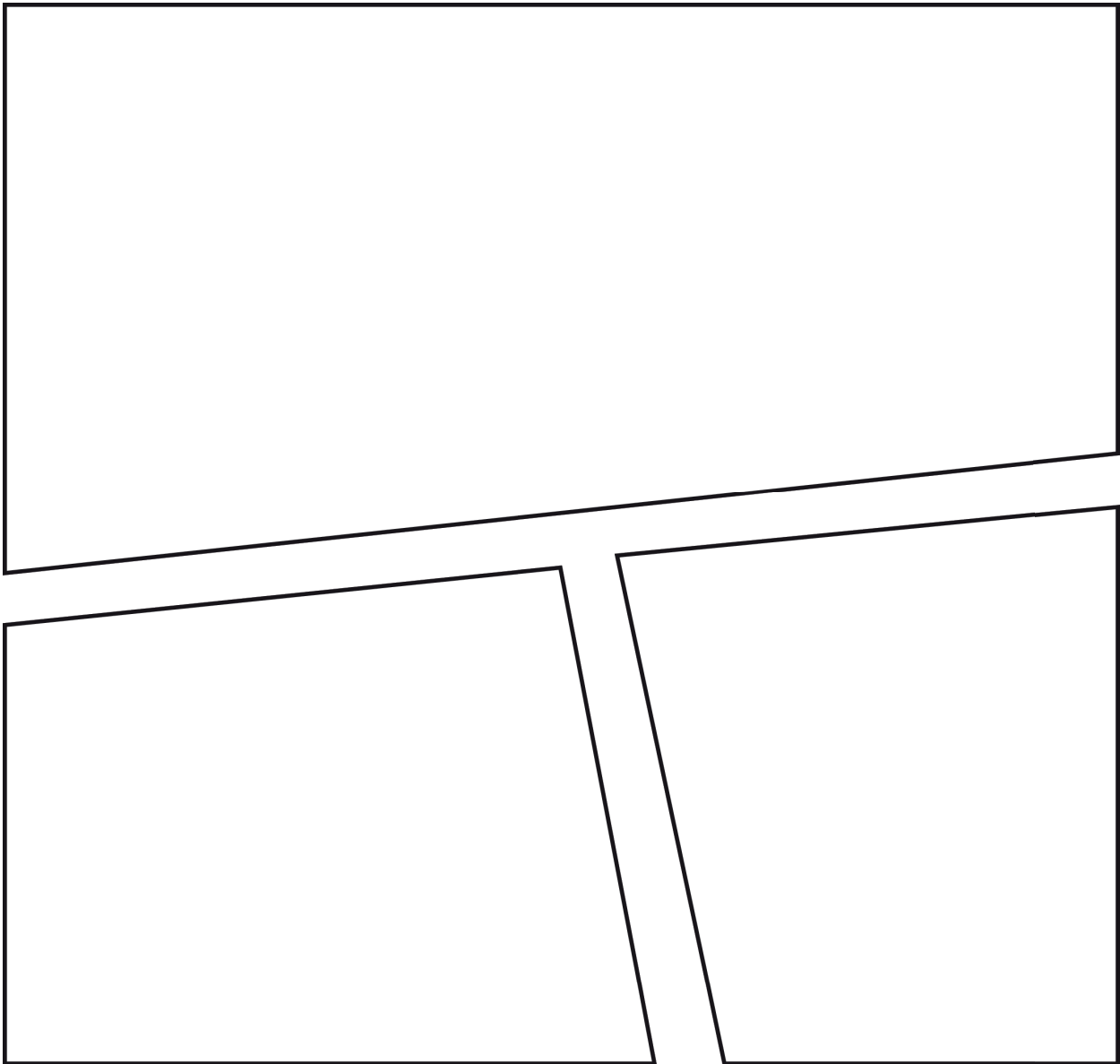
rummaged

swelling



Name: _____

Draw a cartoon strip of this chapter. Use captions, and sound effects, thought bubbles and speech bubbles like the ones at the bottom of the page to help you tell the story of what happened.





Name: _____

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

1

Their / They're very **busy / bisy** trying to stop Crackon's plan.

2

Mag **blew / blue** up to the size of **their / they're** boots.

3

Arfter / After a while, Mag fell to the **flaw / floor**.

4

The spaceship can **moove / move** very **fast / farst**.

5

Buzz followed **behind / behinde** Neil, through the **dorr / door**.

6

Everybody / Evrybody said that the Moon looked **beatiful / beautiful**.



What happens next?

A

Dibble does a dangerous spacewalk to repair their spaceship

Do you think that Dibble will have time to repair their spaceship and replace the retroblaster brake that Crackon has snapped off? Does this option sound the most fun for the final chapter? What could Crackon get up to while Dibble is outside?

B

Mag makes a jetpack out of Crackon's favourite rucksack and they abandon the spaceship

We know that Mag is brilliant at making fast spacecraft – do you think she can also make a jetpack, perhaps also using the part that Crackon has snapped off? Would it be safer to keep Crackon with both of them?

C

They send the rock grabbing grappler up to anchor themselves to the Earthlings' lander

If the Zargians could attach themselves on to the Earthlings' lander, could this make for a very funny ending? What would happen if the zapper hit the lander? What if they ended up returning to Earth?

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

Discussion Activity

Divide the class into three groups, and give each group one of the three different voting options for this week. Each group should discuss their option, considering how the story might finish if their option wins. A representative of each group should present their group's discussion about why their option is the best for an exciting final chapter. The whole class should then vote for their favourite option.



Name: _____

The letters in these nouns from the story have been mixed up.
Can you unscramble them?

E C A P S

--	--	--	--	--

O N O M

--	--	--	--

P E Z R A P

--	--	--	--	--	--

R E A L D N

--	--	--	--	--	--

R U N T O S A T A

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

ANSWERS

READ! Comprehension Questions

1. What happens to Mag the first time the purple ray hits her?
A. She grows bigger
2. Why does Mag's head hit the ceiling?
C. She has grown very large
3. What makes Mag change back?
B. Dibble zaps her on a different setting
4. What does Neil Armstrong think Mag is?
B. A space bug
5. Why does Neil leave the space shuttle?
C. To get into the lander
6. Why does Mag want to wobble the spaceship?
A. So that Crackon can't aim his zapper
7. How does Mag know that there is something wrong with the lander?
B. She can hear the lander's alarm
8. How does Crackon damage the lander?
C. He jumps on the computer
9. Why are the aliens about to crash on to the Moon?
A. Crackon has broken off part of their spaceship
10. Why are the Earth astronauts nearly out of fuel?
C. Crackon let their fuel out

READ! Written Response Worksheet

1. He accidentally zaps her with his zapper which is on the wrong setting.
2. They can't see Mag because she's shrunk so they think he's making a fuss about nothing.
3. Mag is upset and exhausted from stretching and shrinking.
4. He is very bad tempered.
5. He drained the fuel out of the moon lander, he jumped on the astronauts' computer, he snapped the retroblaster off his own spaceship.
6. Their spaceship no longer has a retroblaster which would act like a brake.

WRITE! Worksheet: Tricky words

1. Their / **They're** very **busy** / bisy trying to stop Crackon's plan.
2. Mag **blew** / blue up to the size of **their** / they're boots.
3. Arfter / **After** a while, Mag fell to the flaw / **floor**.
4. The spaceship can moove / **move** very **fast** / farst.
5. Buzz followed **behind** / behinde Neil, through the dorr / **door**.
6. **Everybody** / Evrybody said that the Moon looked beatiful / **beautiful**.

EXPLORE! Anagrams

EARTH / MOON / ZAPPER / LANDER / ASTRONAUT