



Northern Ireland
Curriculum



Novel Quests **Cosmic**

Key Stage 3 English with Media Education

Based on the Novel *Cosmic* by Frank Cottrell Boyce

Please read this novel in advance to make sure that the themes suit your learners before presenting it to your class.

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Using this Booklet

We have divided this booklet into the following sections:

- **Key Elements;**
- **Pre-Reading;**
- **Chapter by Chapter** (including opportunities for Ongoing Reflection, activities that incorporate Media and Moving Image and exercises based on the novel's bonus material);
- **Post-Reading** (including some Media and Moving Image-based activities);
- **Opportunities for Connected Learning;** and
- **Resources.**

When planning your unit of work, please read through this booklet before deciding which activities to focus on. We suggest that you:

- choose suitable Opportunities for Connected Learning with other departments in your school;
- decide which Post-Reading tasks you are going to set; and then
- incorporate activities from the Chapter by Chapter section that relate directly to these tasks.

(For example, if you intend to set an essay on humour as a Post-Reading activity, you could include the humour log as one of your Chapter by Chapter activities.)

Some of the activities are structured in step-by-step detail; others outline a general approach and give you freedom to choose your own learning and teaching methodologies.

The following symbols highlight activities that you could use for the development and assessment of the Cross-Curricular Skill of Communication:

These activities are suggestions only. It would not be possible to complete them all; instead, they provide you with a broad overview of ideas that you can adapt according to your pupils' abilities, needs and prior learning.

	Talking and Listening
	Reading
	Writing
	This symbol highlights opportunities for Ongoing Reflection . In planning your unit of work, you may decide to incorporate these into your teaching at various points.
	This symbol highlights the main opportunities for incorporating a Media and Moving Image dimension.

Key Elements

This unit provides many opportunities to address the Curriculum Objectives for Key Stage 3 English with Media Education and the Key Elements within them. Below are some examples of these opportunities. Many of these ideas are explored further through the activities in this booklet.

Developing Pupils as Individuals

Personal Understanding

- Engage with the situations of Liam, Florida, Hasan, Samson Two and Max, and discuss how the pupils would have felt in their shoes.
- Discuss whether they would like to be in Liam's position (looking so grown-up aged 12) and whether they would have made the same decisions if they had been in Liam's position.
- Discuss how the pupils would feel if they were taunted and bullied by their peers about their appearance as Liam is.
- Discuss how the pupils would feel if their dad behaved as Liam does and the qualities they think a good dad should have.

Mutual Understanding

- Explore and respond to Liam's emotions in key chapters of the novel.
- Explore whether the fathers in the novel always recognise their children's true qualities.

Moral Character

- Explore what Liam means when he describes the other children as 'not like kids'. Discuss whether they agree with Liam and how they feel children should be.
- Express personal insights and viewpoints evoked by the novel.
- Discuss how Frank Cottrell Boyce has presented the difficulties and pressures that having 'pushy' parents can bring to children.

Spiritual Awareness

- Discuss – and explore views on – the uniqueness of each individual.

Developing Pupils as Contributors to Society

Citizenship

- Use key episodes from the novel to explore the treatment that Liam receives as a 'father' and the levels of responsibility he is given.

Mutual Understanding

- Explore and respond to Liam's emotions in key chapters of the novel.
- Explore whether the fathers in the novel always recognise their children's true qualities.

Ethical Awareness

- Explore ethical issues raised in *Cosmic* that relate to 21st century society, for example celebrity culture and views of what it means to be successful.
- Using Dr Drax as an example of a manipulative, self-interested entrepreneur, discuss her exploitation of the prize winners.

Media Awareness

- Study how space exploration has been portrayed in the media, using newspapers and television news reports.

Pre-Reading

Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

These activities introduce pupils to the novel and encourage them to think about genre, writers' choices and presentational devices.

Introducing *Cosmic*

Working in groups, ask the pupils to brainstorm and jot down ideas about why the author might have chosen the word 'cosmic' as the title of the novel. Ask them what genre they expect the story to be and why (this might be an introduction to the word for some pupils). Develop this into a discussion of the novel's cover.

Next, ask: *How does the publisher make the novel appealing to the readers before they begin reading it?* This could be a group discussion exercise or an individual written exercise. You could direct the pupils towards the following details:

- reference to the age or gender of the target readership;
- the blurb (on the inside of the front cover);
- the layout of the front cover (colour, font, illustrations);
- the information on the back cover; and
- anything else they think is important.

Space Travel

Inspired by the cover of the novel, explore together the question: *What do we know about space travel?* Include discussion about:

- the moon landings;
- astronauts and NASA; and
- any films about space that the pupils have seen.

New vocabulary

Genre
Publisher
Blurb



Chapter by Chapter

Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

In this section, we have suggested activities that would be appropriate at specific points in your pupils' reading. However, this can be flexible; you may wish to change the order to suit your scheme of work.

'i am not exactly in the lake district' (page 3)

Starting with Structure

Ask the pupils, in pairs or small groups, to write bullet points about why the writer might have chosen to begin his story halfway through the plotline. As a starting point, you could refer to the flashback technique often used in films (allowing the pupils to suggest examples of this).

Introduce the pupils to the literary term '*in media res*' for the technique of starting in the middle of the action. Ask them to suggest why this technique makes the opening chapter more effective. (For example, it might inspire curiosity and help us to concentrate on **how** and **why** Liam gets lost in space.) You could also introduce the pupils to the term 'structure' and why it can be just as important as content.

New vocabulary

in media res
structure

Lost in Space

Introduce the pupils to a 1960s television series based around a similar premise to that of this opening chapter: *Lost in Space* (remade as a film in 1998). For example, you could search for clips of the original series online. Focus on how this idea was developed at a time when people predicted that in the 21st century space travel would be a common pastime.



Character Log: Liam

Ask the pupils to keep a character log about Liam as they read the novel, adding to it as they find out more about him. They could use Resource 1: Analysing Character for support. The log could include:

- information about his personal qualities;
- his emotions;
- his opinions and attitudes to people and events;
- a drawing or other picture; and
- a note of quotations that support the pupils' opinions about Liam.

All this information would be useful for a final character essay about Liam (see Post-Reading activities).

completely doomed' (page 6)

Describing Space



After some analysis of Cottrell Boyce's descriptive writing in this chapter, ask the pupils to write their own description of space. Use the quotation 'The stars look different from here' as a starting point. Play the song 'From a Distance', sung by Bette Midler, and look together at the lyrics. This can inspire the pupils to think about the difference that point of view can make to how we see the world. They could also choose a photograph to use as a stimulus for their writing. (See *Using Photographs in Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3* for further suggestions.)

'my favourite gravity'

(page 8)

Rollercoaster Ride



Use Cottrell Boyce's description of the Cosmic rollercoaster ride on pages 10–11 to stimulate a class discussion on fairgrounds. Then ask the pupils to write their own description of a rollercoaster ride – preferably one that they have been on – using the same techniques (such as writing in the first person and carefully selecting suitable similes, adjectives and verbs).

Effective Advertising



Divide the pupils into groups, and distribute examples of magazine advertisements. (Alternatively, depending on how much prior learning on advertising they have, you could ask them to bring in an example that they find particularly effective.) Ask the pupils to make notes on their advertisements, in their groups, under these four headings:

- colour;
- layout;
- language; and
- unique selling point.

They should focus on how the advertisers have tried to catch people's attention and persuade them to purchase their product. Give the groups an opportunity to present their advertisements and findings to the rest of the class so that they can all gain an understanding of the advertisers' intentions.

Ask the pupils to use Liam's description of the Cosmic and their knowledge and understanding of advertising to invent their own fairground attraction and create an advertisement to promote it. If you have access to the appropriate technology, this could be a television advertisement. You could provide a name for the attraction – The Rocket – or ask them to think of their own. They could then write a commentary on their advertisement explaining their choice of language and presentational devices.

'i nearly shaved myself to death' (page 17)

Biographical Writing



Ask the pupils to make a note of the place names from around the world mentioned in this chapter. Next, ask them to do some web-based research to explore what life is like in one of these places. You could direct them to The Waterloo Partnership (www.waterloopartnership.co.uk) that Cottrell Boyce refers to in his acknowledgements (page 309).

Provide the pupils with a relevant example of biographical writing, such as the feature 'A Life in the Day...' from *The Sunday Times Magazine*. There are many examples of this article online, and the pupils could read about someone who interests them. Allow them to work in pairs to make a list of the features of the text (see Resource 2: Biographical Writing). Together explore how to structure a piece of biographical writing. Ask the pupils to write a similar piece about a young person their age in one of the places they have researched.

Alternatively, ask them to research other places around the world with the same name as their school, town or city, just as Liam does for Waterloo. They could then complete their writing exercise for a young person in one of these places.



World of Warcraft Log

Ask the pupils to keep a log tracking all the times World of Warcraft is mentioned in the novel, adding to it each time they come across a reference. This could help them to explore how Liam uses the skills he has developed in playing this game during the events in the novel.



'my visible friend' (page 29)

Formal Letters



After the pupils have read 'my visible friend', ask them to work in groups to create a template for a formal letter. As they are doing this, they should fill out a KWL (Know–Want to Know–Learned) grid in their notebooks (see *Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3*). This should outline what they already know about letter writing and what they feel they need more support with. Ensure that they know about structure, formal language and paragraphing.

Once the pupils are confident that they can format a letter appropriately, ask them to reread 'I nearly shaved myself to death' (page 17) and, in pairs, begin making notes about the assembly incident, thinking about it from Mrs Sass's point of view. Explain to them that they are going to pretend to be Mrs Sass and write a letter home to Liam's parents:

- outlining the assembly incident; and
- complaining about Liam's behaviour.

Ask them to write the letter individually, ensuring that they follow the guidelines on formal letter writing. They could then share their work with a peer-assessment partner, giving feedback using the Two Stars and a Wish technique (see *Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3*) before redrafting the letter to hand up for marking.



'my planet panda pop' (page 42)

Computer Game Cover Designs



After reading this chapter together and discussing the Draxworld game, give the pupils a selection of computer game covers. (They could bring in some of their own games for this activity.) Ask them to explore how the covers are designed, and provide copies of Resource 3: Genre Study for them to note their findings. They should fill in the table for three computer game covers to establish how they can best categorise the games into genres.

As an extension activity, you could allow the pupils to design their own computer game cover and write a commentary on their design choices.

'i am on hold' (page 56)

Humour Focus

Ask the pupils to read this chapter individually, making a note of any incidents that they find humorous. Then, in pairs, have them choose three of these incidents and write an explanation of why they are funny, exploring how Cottrell Boyce creates humour through his use of:

- character;
- language;
- syntax;
- punctuation; and
- any other techniques that the pupils can suggest.

Follow up by leading a class discussion on the use of humour in the novel.



Humour and Tension Logs



Ask the pupils to keep a note of examples of humour and tension from the novel as they read and study it in class. This should include a note of quotations and chapter titles and build up a list of the different techniques that Cottrell Boyce uses to create humour and tension.

'fathers have children' (page 65)

The Solar System

Follow the link to 'Solar System' at www.kidsastronomy.com, a website designed to teach children about astronomy in an interesting and fun way, for background information. See also *Opportunities for Connected Learning 2: Solar System Mobile* in this resource.

'you'll like it when you get there' (page 71)

Persuasive Techniques



Ask the pupils to write a list of the persuasive techniques that Liam uses when trying to talk Florida into going to China. Have them feed their findings back to the rest of the class, and write their ideas on the board for everyone to take down in their notebooks.

Next, in pairs or small groups, ask the pupils to role play a situation where they are trying to persuade their parents of something. You could provide these suggestions:

- that they should be able to go to a concert with their friends;
- that they should get a rise in their pocket money; or
- that they should be allowed to go to a sleepover at their friend's house.

Encourage them to use the knowledge of persuasive techniques that they have gained to make their pleas as persuasive as possible.

Dreams and Ambitions Collage



Encourage the pupils to share their dreams and ambitions with the class, inspired by how Liam really wants to go on the trip to see the new theme park. Ask them each to create a collage (see *Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3*) representing their dreams, ambitions and what they would like to achieve in life. They could use

images, words or phrases, symbols, pictures and colours etc. to get their message across. Give the pupils an opportunity to present their collage to the class as a Talking and Listening activity, explaining their choices of words and images and how these reflect their hopes and dreams.

'hello, lucky winners' (page 81)

Exploring Fame



As a class or in smaller groups, ask the pupils to discuss:

- why our society is so obsessed with celebrities; and
- why it does not adequately celebrate inventors or people who deserve credit for other reasons.

Give the pupils a list of people who are famous for various reasons, for example:

- Seamus Heaney;
- Katie Price;
- Wayne Rooney;
- Cheryl Cole;
- George Clooney;
- Russell Brand;
- David Cameron; and
- JK Rowling.

Ask them to discuss what each person is known for and whether they deserve the recognition, respect and money they are awarded.

Next, each pupil could take on the role of one of these people, research their new persona, and defend the fame, money and admiration they receive.

Recognition Where It's Due



Explain that you are going to focus together on jobs and positions that the pupils think really deserve reward, and elicit some suggestions. They could think in terms of people's hard work, the impact they have on others, and the lack of recognition they generally receive or expect. Ask the pupils to choose someone from the school or the local community that they think is of genuine interest but does not receive fame and recognition.

Set the pupils the task of interviewing their chosen person, with a view to writing an article about them in a local newspaper or a school magazine. You might want to show them examples of articles based on interviews. Give them time to discuss in pairs the things they might want to find out about their chosen person. Individually, they should then write a list of questions that they want to ask this person. Ask them to carry out the interview for homework before writing the article.

‘competitive dadliness’ (page 87)



Fatherhood Log



Ask the pupils (working individually, in pairs or in small groups) to look at the four ‘fathers’ in this chapter, including Liam, and note the comments they make about their children. They should then write a paragraph about each father and his relationship with his child, using quotations from the chapter to support their points. Encourage them to keep this information in a log on fatherhood and add to it as they read on through the novel.

‘thrill ride of the century’ (page 104)

Log Update: Humour

Ask the pupils to note some examples of how Cottrell Boyce creates humour in this chapter and, after a feedback session in class, to add these to their humour log. The incident in the car is particularly effective here.



Links to Saint-Exupéry

You could make links between the references to space from this point in the novel and the writing of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, for example *Wind, Sand and Stars* (1939) or *The Little Prince* (1943). The pupils could read extracts from one or both of these to look at much earlier writing on space and the planets. You could also make links to the theme of growing up and putting childhood away as the pupils read on.

‘I am the space daddy’ (page 115)

Gaming Skills for Life



Ask the pupils, working individually, to make a list of all the board games, computer games and sports that they like to play. Based on how Liam learns from *World of Warcraft*, encourage them to begin thinking about some benefits that the games they play might have for children. Divide them into pairs or small groups to:

- share their ideas;
- choose several of the games or sports to focus on;
- analyse how useful these are in equipping them with skills for life; and
- create a chart or diagram matching the skills they develop while playing their chosen games/sports with those skills that they need to develop while growing up.

This reflection can act as preparation for the Post-Reading essay on computer games.



'the ice-cream man of the gobi desert' (page 126)

Language Analysis



Provide copies of Resource 4: Authorial Intention to enable the pupils to analyse the first paragraph of this chapter. They should focus on language and techniques, developing their understanding of authorial intention, and could use this information to write a critical analysis of the chapter. This is also a good opportunity to work on structuring an essay using the Point–Evidence–Explanation structure.

'I can't work my trousers' (page 147)

Describing Fatherhood



Based on pages 146–160, ask the pupils to discuss in small groups the responsibilities involved in being a father and why it can be such a difficult job. Ask them to make a list of adjectives describing their idea of the perfect father and explain why each one is important.

'the vomit comet' (page 161)

Character Focus: Dr Drax



Introduce the activity by highlighting that there are four main ways to find out about a character in literature. Ask if the pupils can suggest what these are before you give out copies of Resource 1: Analysing Character. Explain that they are going to do some detective work into Dr Drax's character, beginning with this chapter. They should track her character back to 'competitive dadliness' (page 78), where she first appears, choosing adjectives to describe her and finding quotations to support their opinions. You could create a class wall display on her character, including a picture.

'astrogossip' (page 173)

Talk to Your Teen



Ask the pupils to look over the extracts from *Talk to Your Teen* that have appeared in italics throughout the novel so far and make notes on the typical features of advice writing. You could also provide appropriate examples from teenage problem pages. Common features of advice writing include:

- an informal tone;
- personal pronouns (you, yourself, we);
- short, simple words and sentences;
- rhetorical questions;
- friendly suggestions; and
- a balanced, non-judgemental tone.

Ask the pupils to use what they have learned to write a letter of advice to Liam (based on pages 146–173) suggesting what he should do in order to win enough votes to go into space.

Adult/Teen Role Play



Ask the pupils, in pairs, to share with each other details of a successful conversation they have had with an adult. They should analyse what made the conversation successful: did they go away feeling that they had been understood or supported in some way? Each pair should then choose one of their conversations and perform it for the rest of the class. The others could comment afterwards, analysing what each speaker did to make the interaction successful. Alternatively, the pupils could base the activity on a conversation that did not go so well.

'gravity is not a trivial monster' (page 174)

War and Conflict

This chapter provides the opportunity to explore issues surrounding war and conflict. Our *Textplorations* resource has a unit on this theme; it allows pupils to create a film to act as a backdrop to Ciaran Carson's poem *Belfast Confetti* about conflict in Northern Ireland. You could use this activity as a stimulus for discussion about:

- how life for children in Northern Ireland has changed over the past twenty years; and
- what life is like for children in areas of conflict like where Hasan lives.

Hasan's Diary



Ask your pupils to write a diary entry for Hasan around the time the soldiers came to his village in Bosnia and he hid behind a water tank for three days (see pages 188 and 270).

Exploring Space v Feeding the Hungry



Allow the pupils to listen to the inaugural speech by John F Kennedy (delivered on 20 January 1961, available at www.americanrhetoric.com). Ask them to explore the facts and research on two aims of Kennedy's presidency: to land a man on the moon (to 'explore the stars') and to eradicate inequality in the world (and 'struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself'). They should try to understand how so many people have so little while others spend so much money and time on space exploration. Highlight that although Kennedy's first ambition was achieved, more people go hungry in the world than ever before. Researching the Waterloo Partnership mentioned on page 309 (www.waterloopartnership.co.uk) might be useful here.

You could have the pupils use the information that they gather in a discursive essay on the merits of a space programme while many in the world starve. Alternatively, they could take part in a role-play discussion or class debate (see below), using the skills of persuasion that they studied earlier in the unit.

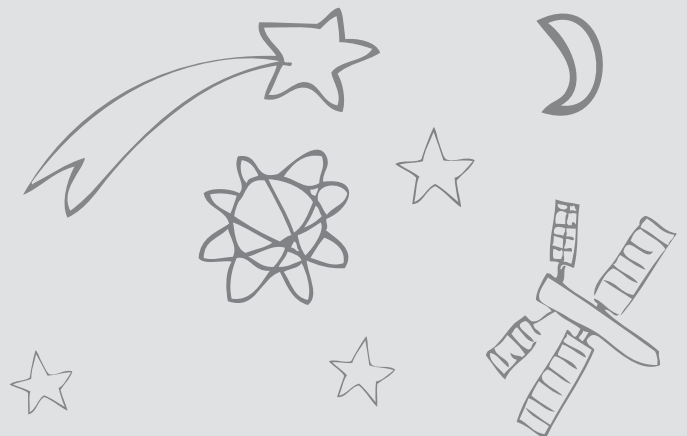
Role-Play Discussion



Explain to the pupils that they are going to take part in a group discussion about whether the government should prioritise eradicating world hunger or extending our knowledge of space when allocating this year's budget. Give each pupil the role of someone who might have a strong opinion on the topic. Possible roles include:

- a director of a Third World charity;
- an astronaut who has been to the moon;
- a scientist who is trying to secure funding for space travel research;
- a mother of three from a village affected by serious famine;
- a member of government responsible for allocating government funds; and
- a Prime Minister who must get re-elected and justify his decisions to the public.

Ask the pupils to mind map (see *Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3*) ideas for points they might mention in their role. They could then carry out relevant research, using the mind map to inform their approach. Next, divide the pupils into groups of 4–6, ensuring that there is a selection of different roles in each group, for the discussion.





Class Debate

At this point, or after they finish the novel, the pupils could use mind mapping and research to prepare for a class debate. Possible topics that arise from issues in the novel include:

- The money spent on space exploration should be used to help the world's poor.
- Space exploration should be encouraged, not condemned.
- Computer games teach children nothing positive or useful for real life.
- Children nowadays have to grow up too quickly.



'last chance to vote'

(page 190)

Don't Go!



Ask the pupils to read through this chapter, focusing on the simulation ride, and make a note of all the worrying things that happen along the way. When they have done this individually, ask them to write a persuasive speech in pairs advising Liam not to go through with the space travel. Remind them of the persuasive techniques they learned earlier in the unit. Each pair should deliver their speech to the class as persuasively as possible. Alternatively, they could role play a discussion, with Liam as one of the two characters.

'i am half a world away'

(page 199)

No Adults Allowed

In groups, ask the pupils to explore the advantages and disadvantages of living with their friends and not having an adult with them. Provide copies of Resource 5: Pros and Cons of Living Alone. Using the topics listed as a starting point, encourage the pupils to add their own ideas.

'if anything goes wrong...'

(page 204)

Undadly Qualities?



Ask the pupils, in pairs, to draw up a list of qualities that Liam shows which may seem 'undadly' but actually contribute to him being a good father. They should use 'if anything goes wrong' and 'you don't get extra lives in space' (pages 204–215) as a springboard. Examples include:

- Liam's lack of regard for what others think when ordering the drink he wants (he is not influenced by peer pressure and knows his own mind); and
- his lack of ambition for Florida making him stand up to Dr Drax (he thinks about her safety, puts his concern for his 'daughter' above what appears to be a great opportunity and questions authority).

When the pupils understand these, ask them to find other examples, from throughout the novel, of incidents where Liam's 'undadly' qualities ironically make him seem like a better father than the real fathers in the novel. This information will prove useful if the pupils are doing the Post-Reading essay on fatherhood.



'you don't get extra lives in space' (page 210)

Space Travel Tragedy



In this chapter, Mr Bean mentions the Columbia shuttle tragedy. Allow your pupils to listen to President Reagan's Space Shuttle 'Challenger' Tragedy address (delivered on 28 January 1986, available at www.americanrhetoric.com). Facilitate a class discussion about the purposes of the address and what attitude the President has to space travel after this tragedy. You could use Think, Pair and Share (see *Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3*) to encourage the pupils to think about and understand:

- how President Reagan shows his sympathy with those involved in the tragedy; and
- how he also encourages the American people to continue to support space travel despite its dangers.

'the real thing' (page 216)

Florida's Diary



Ask the pupils to write a diary entry for Florida after she admits to Liam in this chapter that her dad has left home.

'launch minus 48' (page 225)

Space Food

There are various websites that sell real space food cheaply. You could buy some of these foods for your pupils to taste. For example, see the Kennedy Space Centre Shop website at www.thespacestore.com/spacefood.html

Rocket Discs



Allow the pupils to listen to an episode of Desert Island Discs. (Programmes from the past seven days are available online on the BBC iPlayer (see www.bbc.co.uk.) Ask them to role play a similar programme, called Rocket Discs, in which they interview each other about which five items (music, films or books) they would take into space and why. You could link this to the Personal Inflight Packs that the children are allowed to take to space with them in this chapter.

'some kind of lovely' (page 230)

Man on the Moon

Cottrell Boyce mentions Alan Bean in his acknowledgements; the pupils may be interested to know that he is a real person and was the fourth man ever to walk on the moon. You could allow them to carry out some research on Alan Bean and the Apollo missions to build up a picture of real-life space travel and the astronauts involved.

'themoonyouidiot' (page 239)

A Fresh Look at Earth

Ask the pupils to read over the description of earth on page 241. Frank Cottrell Boyce writes in his letter to the reader on page 314 'we flew all the way to the Moon, but what we really discovered was the Earth.' The pupils could reflect on this line and its meaning by searching online for the famous Earthrise photograph taken on the Apollo 8 mission in 1968.

‘Remember, a teenager...’ (page 255)

Tension and Suspense



Ask the pupils, in pairs, to look at the conclusion to this section (pages 260–261) and discuss how Cottrell Boyce creates tension and suspense, making the reader want to read on. They should choose three quotations to share with the class, explaining why and how they create such an effect. This may be a good time to introduce the term ‘cliffhanger’ if the pupils have not yet come across it in their study of literature. Other ideas they may come up with, based on their previous analysis of language in this unit, are:

- short sentences;
- punctuation; and
- similes.

New vocabulary

Cliffhanger

‘The worst thing...’ (page 262)



Storyboarding *Cosmic*

Give the pupils an opportunity to recap, in pairs, on pages 262–273 and choose a selection of incidents or events that are particularly tense or exciting. Next, ask them to individually choose one of these to storyboard as a sequence of drawings with directions and dialogue to represent the shots they would include in a film of *Cosmic*.

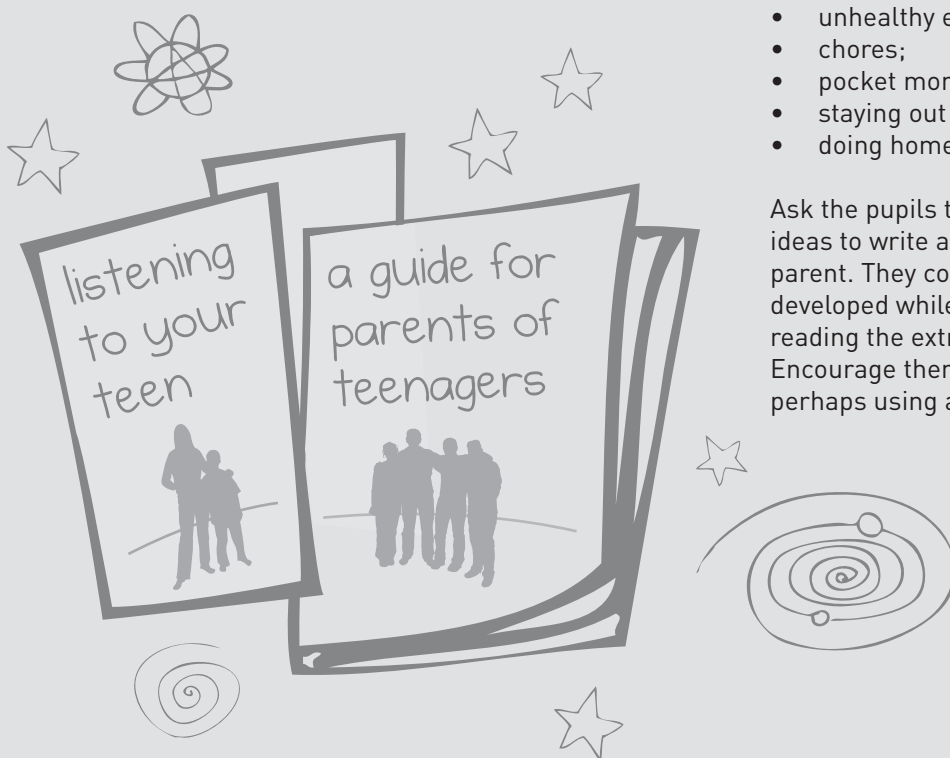
Talk to Your Teen



Set your pupils the task of designing and writing a guide for parents of teenagers, offering advice on how to relate to their teen. Use the Post-it Collection technique (see *Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3*) to encourage the pupils to generate ideas about what types of things cause conflict between parents and teenagers, for example:

- untidy bedrooms;
- unhealthy eating;
- chores;
- pocket money;
- staying out late; and
- doing homework.

Ask the pupils to select and use some of these ideas to write a leaflet about how to be a good parent. They could use the skills they have developed while looking at advice writing and reading the extracts from Liam’s *Talk to Your Teen*. Encourage them to give their leaflet a catchy title, perhaps using alliteration or a play on words.



'dark side of the moon' (page 274)

Care for the Earth



Refer back to the pupils' reflections on 'themoonyouidiot' (page 239), the Earthrise picture and Cottrell Boyce's opinion that this photograph makes us see the earth in a different way: as something fragile and precious that we must protect. Suggest that they use both the photograph and Liam's descriptions and reflections about earth as inspiration as they plan and write:

- a letter to world leaders about environmental concerns; or
- a speech, which they then deliver in class, persuading the audience that everyone must take responsibility for protecting our earth.

'doing the dadly thing' (page 277)

Log Update: Fatherhood

Ask the pupils to make notes on the theme of fatherhood from pages 277–297. They should look particularly at:

- Liam's conversation with his own father in space;
- Liam's thoughts and comments about his father; and
- how Liam's character is changing to become more like a father in the way that he thinks and behaves.

Lunacy and Legends

Allow your pupils to research traditions, legends and writing about the moon. You could use the legends associated with werewolves (which they may be aware of because of the later Harry Potter novels) as a lead-in to the topic. The pupils could also look at the word 'lunacy' and explore why the moon was associated with mental illness and has long been associated with moods.

'we got a bit lost' (page 299)

Log Update: Humour

Suggest that the pupils update their humour log at this point, reminding them to keep their notes in a Point–Evidence–Explanation structure.

Character Sketch



Ask the pupils to make notes in pairs about each of the children's personalities. Divide them into groups, and assign each group one of the children to track throughout the novel. They should use their prior learning on writing a character sketch (Resource 1: Analysing Character) to create a presentation which they can then present to the rest of the class or display on a class notice board. Provide the following headings for them to use to find information:

- adjectives to describe the character;
- their personality;
- their relationship with their father;
- a drawing of the character, with quotations to justify their ideas; and
- what the character learns from their experiences in the novel.

This could lead on to an individual written activity, where each pupil completes a character sketch of the character their group has been studying.

Hot Seating



Ask the pupils to prepare to be hot-seated as one of the children, based on the last few chapters of the novel (from page 277). Explain that they will be asked to talk about their thoughts and feelings during the trip in the rocket. Allow the pupils to decide which child they are going to be, or assign roles to ensure that there is a range of different characters. Support the pupils in constructing questions to ask during the hot seating process to ensure that they are giving the characters the opportunity to fully consider, describe, explain and justify their feelings and actions in the novel. For further information on hot seating, see *Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3*.

This exercise could lead to a piece of creative writing: the pupils take on the role of one of the children and recount their experience on the rocket.

Thinking about Genre



Ask the pupils to think about the genre of *Cosmic*: is it Science Fiction? Or is Space Travel now a genre of its own? Allocate different chapters to small groups of pupils, from 'themoonyouidiot' to 'wegotabitlost' (pages 239–302), and allow them to make notes about how the writer uses science to convince the readers that Liam and the others are really in space. They could put the examples that they find under the following headings:

- use of scientific facts;
- use of specialist language;
- explanations given by Dr Drax; and
- observations by Alan Bean.

This could be good preparation for the Post-Reading activity on analysing *mise-en-scène* in the film *Apollo 13*.

'special gravity' (page 303)

The End

This is a moving chapter to finish on. Tell the pupils that they deserve a rest after all their work so far, and allow them to relax as you read this chapter aloud to them.



Acknowledgements

(page 309)

Moondust

Cottrell Boyce mentions the book *Moondust* by Andrew Smith in his acknowledgements. This is a series of interviews with some of the astronauts from the Apollo moon programme. Extracts from it could be very useful in allowing the pupils to find out about space travels from the astronauts themselves.

Bonus Material

(page 311)

Map of the Moon

Re-read pages 277–297 with the class, looking at descriptions and references to the moon. Then ask the pupils to look at pages 316–317 – 'The Map of the Moon' – where Cottrell Boyce gives the reader some information about the history of moon study. He also lists the names of the different places on the moon. Discuss the names together (Cottrell Boyce has added a few comedy comments of his own!), and consider why Giovanni Riccioli may have chosen these names. What do the names suggest about these places?

Ask the pupils to use an internet search engine to research and view images of one of the other planets. They could make up an atlas of their own for that planet, giving names to the areas that they see in the images.

A Trip to the Moon?



After reading the Bonus Material, ask the pupils for their opinions about space holidays. You could use the Plus – Minus – Interesting technique (see *Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3*) to generate discussion about whether it would be a good idea to have travelling to the moon as a holiday option. The pupils could think about issues such as:

- *Might this become a reality?*
- *What scientific developments do you think will change the world over the next few decades?*
- *What have been the most important developments in the world in the past few decades?*
- *What do you know about recent developments in the field of space exploration?*

Travel Brochure/Website



Ask your pupils to bring in a travel brochure or look at websites promoting holidays and make a note of techniques that travel agents use to encourage holidaymakers to choose their destination. Set them the task of creating a travel brochure or website for a holiday to the moon. They could use the information in the Bonus Material to get ideas about names for hotels, activities, restaurants, walking tours etc. that tourists might find there. As a shorter extension activity, the pupils could design a poster advertising the holiday in a travel agent's window.

Television Advertisement



If the pupils have access to the appropriate technology, skills and support, they could create a television advertisement for 'The Moon Tourist Board' advertising the holiday they developed in the previous activity. You could show advertisements for places in Northern Ireland in class for inspiration. The pupils could use relevant editing software and incorporate images from the internet. They could also use imagery, music, language, voiceover etc. to create atmosphere and persuade tourists to go on this holiday.



An Extract from *Millions*

There is an extract from Frank Cottrell Boyce's novel *Millions* at the end of *Cosmic*. After reading through it with the pupils, show them the film version of *Millions* (2004) directed by Danny Boyle. Set the question: *Damian says in the film 'Money is just a thing, and things change'; how does Danny Boyle show in Millions that money does not always bring happiness and can sometimes just make things worse?*

Post-Reading

Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

We suggest that you ask your pupils to complete one or more of these activities after they have read the novel.

Preparation work could begin while they read.

Cosmic Review



Ask the pupils to write a review of the novel 'selling' it to a future class. In the success criteria, you could mention that they should comment on:

- what was engaging about the plot;
- the characters;
- the writing style; and
- the ultimate message of the novel.

Suggested Essay Titles



This is an opportunity to assess the pupils' progression in the reading and writing skills they have been acquiring and developing as they have been studying the novel. Below are some suggestions for essay titles that you can adapt to suit the pupils in your class.

- *How does Cottrell Boyce present the character of Liam? How does he show that Liam learns a lot about life from his experiences in the novel?*
- *How does Cottrell Boyce show that playing computer games can be beneficial for young people and that the skills acquired and developed while playing them can be useful in real life?*
- *What qualities does Liam show in his relationships with others that make him a good 'father' despite his youth and inexperience?*
- *How does Cottrell Boyce create humour in Cosmic?*
- *How does Cottrell Boyce create tension and suspense in Cosmic? How does he encourage readers to continue reading?*
- *How does Cottrell Boyce use his experience of fatherhood in this novel? What do you find out about his beliefs about being a father from reading the novel?*

You may wish to add to and adapt these essay titles with bullet points outlining specific success criteria.

Reflection on Themes



In groups, have the pupils use the Ideas Funnel technique (see *Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3*) to generate ideas about what the main themes of the novel are. They should eventually come to some agreement about one main theme. (Cottrell Boyce himself says that it is fatherhood, but they can choose whatever they want as long as they can justify it.) After they have presented and justified their choices to the rest of the class, draw a 'theme chart' on the board including the main themes that the groups have come up with. This may include some from this list:

- fatherhood;
- growing up;
- friendship;
- learning;
- ambition; and
- adventure.

Next, ask the pupils to collect key quotations for each theme and then share their quotations and analysis with the rest of the class. They could keep individual logs, or you could give each group responsibility for one theme.

Design a Novel Cover



Ask the pupils to create a cover (back and front) for a new Science Fiction/Space Travel novel. They should use the knowledge and skills they have gained from *Cosmic* to decide on an appropriate plot. The cover that they design should reflect this plot and include appropriate details such as title, illustrations/images, colours, tagline and blurb.

Design a DVD Cover



Divide the pupils into small groups, and give each group a small selection of DVD covers to look at. Ideally, these should include a variety of different genres. Ask each group to make a note of the target audience, genre and appealing features of each DVD cover, explaining their reasoning. Each group should negotiate roles and responsibilities, which might include chairperson, scribe, spokesperson and time-manager. Elicit feedback, and make a note on the board of the ideas generated.

Tell the pupils that they are going to use the knowledge and skills they have developed during this activity to complete the following task:

Using some of the ideas from your initial study of DVD covers, design your own DVD cover for a film version of Cosmic. Remember to think carefully about your target audience when you are creating your DVD cover. You could provide the following success criteria:

I will make sure my DVD cover:

- gives the viewer an idea of the film's genre;
- makes the viewer want to watch the film;
- has an exciting blurb and a catchy tagline; and
- uses accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar.

What Makes a Genre?



Divide the class into groups, giving each group a different genre to think about (examples could be Horror, Science Fiction, Romance, Thriller and Fantasy). Ask the pupils to conduct a study into the 'ingredients' of the genre they have been allocated. Encourage them to use their experience of books, film and music to inform their understanding.

Each group should then feed back to the rest of the class so that everyone has a clear understanding of genre and generic conventions (the 'ingredients'). They could produce a tableau (see *Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3*) of a typical scene from a film/novel of their genre, allowing the rest of the class to guess what genre it is.



Film Analysis: *Apollo 13*

Focus on the children's discussions about the Apollo 13 mission and Ron Howard's film *Apollo 13* in 'an unscheduled diversion' (page 249). Discuss the plot synopsis briefly together. Next, set one of the two film analysis activities detailed below (or you could allow the pupils to negotiate which activity they prefer) so that they can be thinking about it as they watch the film.

Activity 1: Mise-en-Scène

How does Ron Howard's Apollo 13 use setting, costume and dialogue to convince the audience that the action they are watching takes place in space?

Activity 2: Camera and Editing

How does Ron Howard create suspense and tension in Apollo 13 using different shot types and editing techniques?

Divide the pupils into groups of five and give each group an aspect of filming to make notes on as they watch, for example:

- for mise-en-scène:
 - setting;
 - language;
 - costume;
 - colours;
 - character positions; and
- for camera and editing:
 - types of shot;
 - number of different frames (pace); and
 - number of cuts/pans/zooms.

Using the information in Resource 6: Film Language and the Film Education website (www.filmeducation.org.uk), ensure that each group understands what they need to look for and what to do. Then show the film.

Each group should feed back their findings to the class showing the film to demonstrate the examples that they have found. Pupils can then use their notes on the film to complete the essay individually.



Charlie and the Chocolate Factory

Alternatively, you could show the pupils the film *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (1971) or *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005) – or both, for comparative purposes – asking them to focus on the similarities between Roald Dahl’s story and *Cosmic*. They could also read relevant extracts of the novel and look at:

- the competition plot;
- diversity among the children; and
- what the characters learn from their experiences.



Newspaper Front Pages

Ask your pupils to bring in a selection of different types of newspaper front pages. Divide the pupils into small groups, and ensure that each group has a tabloid front page and a broadsheet front page. Give them an opportunity to compare the language and presentational devices used on each front cover, noting their findings on Resource 7: Read All About It!, and feed back to the class using presentation software. They should include the techniques used and examples from their newspapers. Have all the pupils make notes individually on the variety of language and presentational devices used.

Next, ask the pupils to create a front page story on the Apollo 13 failure or on Liam being interviewed about his experiences in space. They should choose whether to present their story in the style of a tabloid or a broadsheet newspaper and use appropriate language and presentational devices.



Radio Interview Script

Alternatively, the pupils could write a script for a radio interview:

- with Jim Lovell, commander of the Apollo 13 mission, a week after the rocket returns to earth; or
- with Liam in the week after he returns home to Waterloo.



Cosmic Film Trailer

Facilitate a class discussion about the purposes of film trailers. Using open questions, ask the pupils to come up with the main purposes of film trailers: to showcase a film and encourage cinema goers to see it. Distribute blank post-its to every pupil, and show a selection of film trailers. (You can access these and more information on the Film Education website, on other websites, or watch trailers from the beginning of a DVD.)

Ask the pupils to identify the aspects of the trailers that make the films stand out and encourage viewers to watch them. They should write one thing from each trailer on a post-it while they watch, then stick their post-its on a whiteboard or notice board.

Go through the post-its, reading out the pupils’ ideas, and, with class negotiation, dividing them into categories. The following categories may be helpful:

- voiceover;
- actors;
- soundtrack;
- cliffhanger;
- dialogue;
- genre;
- moving images; and
- reference to previous films by the same director or with the same actors.

Hold a class discussion on the effectiveness of the devices that the pupils have come up with. Encourage them to illustrate their views by giving examples from the trailers.

Ask the pupils to choose 8–10 relevant quotations or incidents from throughout the novel that they think would be effective if they were creating a trailer for their own film version of *Cosmic*. They can then use these to structure a trailer by using either storyboarding or, if available, relevant editing software. Negotiate success criteria; these might relate to:

- consideration of audience and purpose;
- voiceover script;
- dialogue;
- the images they will have in each frame;
- sound effects; and/or
- any soundtrack that they use.

You could ask the pupils to write a commentary of their work to explain their use of language, imagery, structure, sound, sequencing and editing.

Opportunities for Connected Learning

Suggested Learning and Teaching Activities

There are many opportunities for connected learning with the STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) through Cosmic. If possible, it would be particularly effective to synchronise teaching topics so that the pupils were learning about space in Science and rockets in Technology while reading the novel in English.

Underneath the Stars (Science, Maths, Religious Education)

Organise a visit to the Armagh Planetarium (www.armaghplanet.com) between the English and Science departments. You can also find a range of ideas for connected learning on the theme 'Underneath the Stars' on the Key Stage 3 section of www.nicurriculum.org.uk. Linked to the Key Element of Spiritual Awareness, this online resource includes units for English, Science, Maths and Religious Education.

NASA (Employability, Science, Technology)

The NASA website at www.nasa.gov is useful for pupils who are interested in space travel, rockets, astronauts and their history. There is an interesting job section, which would give them an idea of some of the jobs available in NASA for graduates with qualifications in STEM-related areas. Some of NASA's online children's activities may also be relevant (depending on the age of the pupils you are teaching).

Solar System Mobile (Science, Art or Technology)

In 'fathers have children' (page 65) Liam says that he took down his Solar System mobile when he came home from school. If the pupils are studying the Solar System in Science, they could create their own mobile. Alternatively, after they acquire the necessary knowledge and understanding in Science, they could create the mobile in Art or Technology.



Rockets in China (History, Technology)

In 'thrill ride of the century' (page 104) Dr Drax tells Liam a little bit about the history of rockets in China. The pupils could do some research on this in English or History. They may be surprised to find out how early people were making rockets in China.

The NASA website gives information on rockets, including how they work and some history, at www.nasa.gov

You could link this topic to the pupils' work in Technology; they could build their own rockets based on their study of rockets and how they work.

Principles of Physics (Science)

Some occasions in the novel require the pupils to have scientific knowledge and understanding. They could investigate these in Science. For example, in relation to 'an unscheduled diversion' (page 249) and 'this is not a simulation' (page 292), they could explore how they could use the principles of physics to:

- predict what would happen if they played Monopoly in space; and
- explain why having a water fight on the moon would be 'quite complicated'.

Resources

Resource 1

Analysing Character

Fill in some examples, under the following headings (if appropriate)

What does the author/narrator tell us?

What do the other characters tell us?

What does the character say?

How does the character behave?

Resource 2

Biographical Writing

First person narration

Structure (Chronological, Flashback etc)

Facts

Key activities

Descriptive language (e.g. adjectives, adverbs)

Tone (e.g. reflective, humorous, informal)

Anything else you think is relevant

Resource 3

Genre Study

	Computer Game 1	Computer Game 2	Computer Game 3
Title			
Layout			
Colour			
Images			
Headings/ Subheadings			
Other language (blurb/reviews)			
Target audience			
Genre			

Resource 4

Authorial Intention

How does the writer use language to engage the reader?
Use the following headings to make notes.

Sentence structure

Metaphors

Similes

Tone

Direct speech

Characterisation

Vocabulary (e.g. adjectives, adverbs, verbs)

Resource 5

Pros and Cons of Living Alone

	Pros	Cons
Chores		
Shopping		
Support		
Leadership/ Responsibility		
Rules		
Anything else you think is relevant		

Resource 6

Film Language

Mise-en-Scène

Analysing mise-en-scène involves making observations about what is in each frame of a film and why the director has chosen to present it like this. Mise-en-scène can include aspects of film such as:

- costume;
- props;
- facial expression;
- gestures and body language;
- colour;
- setting;
- characters; and
- lighting.

A combination of some or all of these things can create particular atmospheres or evoke certain emotions in the audience.

Camera and Editing

Directors can use different shot types and the editing process to create effects. For example, in an action film, shots, frames and zooms might change quickly and often to create excitement and suspense. Shot types that directors might carefully choose to create a deliberate impact on an audience include:

- high angle shot – this shot looks down on a person or thing;
- low angle shot – this shot looks up at a person or thing;
- point-of-view shot – this shows us what is happening from a character's point of view and can therefore help the audience to empathise or sympathise with them;
- long shot – this is sometimes called an 'establishing shot', as it can establish setting or location; the camera views the scene from far away;
- mid shot – this shows an actor from the waist up; and
- close-up – this is generally a shot of the head and shoulders or face; it can be used to direct our attention to a character's feelings and facial expression or to a specific object.

Resource 7

Read All About It! (1 of 2)

	Tabloid	Broadsheet
Captions		
Images		
Colour		
Headlines		
Subheadings		
Language		
Punctuation		
Layout		
Lead Article		
Cost		
Number of Stories		

Resource 7

Read All About It! (2 of 2)

How does each newspaper grab the attention of the readers?

Who do you think each newspaper would appeal to?
Why?

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