Escape from Planet Milkshake

AUTHOR
KATE AND JOL TEMPLE

ILLUSTRATOR
BRIONY STEWART

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RECOMMENDED FOR: Lower-Mid Primary

SYNOPSIS

Freddy is having a normal day until a spaceship crashes in his backyard. A cranky robot called Bob insists that the snails from Freddy's backyard are actually evil slime wizards. Freddy and Bob fly into space in a recycling bin so they can take the evil slime wizards to the Crystal Prison. But when they stop on an asteroid for a milkshake, the evil slime wizards sabotage the recycling bin. Freddy and Bob are stuck! And thanks to a very interesting milkshake, Freddy is half invisible. Luckily, a giant flying cupcake stops by and offers them a lift. But the cupcake actually wants to feed them to its friend, the blueberry! Freddy and Bob have to defeat the cupcake, the blueberry and the evil slime wizards so they can take over the spaceship and fly to the Crystal Prison. There, they have to trick a prison guard who is also a corn chip into taking the evil slime wizards. With the evil slime wizards finally in prison, Freddy and Bob return to Earth ... and start planning their next adventure.

THEMES

- Friendship - Building and maintaining positive relationships. Freddy and Bob form an unlikely friendship and learn to rely on one another.
- Teamwork - Working together to achieve a common goal. Challenges are overcome when characters work together and combine their strengths.
- Courage - Facing challenges and unfamiliar situations with confidence. Freddy faces unfamiliar and sometimes frightening situations with bravery.
- Problem-solving - Using creativity and critical thinking to overcome obstacles. Creative thinking helps the characters escape from danger and achieve their goals.
- Kindness - Freddy consistently treats others with patience and compassion, even when they are difficult.
- Responsibility - Taking ownership of actions and their consequences. Freddy takes responsibility for helping solve the problems caused by the escaped snails.
- Perseverance - The characters continue searching for solutions despite setbacks and obstacles.
- Imagination and Creativity - The story celebrates imaginative thinking, absurd humour and inventive solutions.
- Perspective - Recognising that different characters see situations in different ways.

CURRICULUM LINKS

Australian Curriculum v9

- Learning areas:
  - English
  - HASS
  - Science
  - The Arts
  - Technologies
- General capabilities:
  - Literacy
  - Critical and creative thinking
  - Personal and social capability
  - Ethical understanding
- Cross-curriculum priorities:
  - Sustainability

International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP)

- Transdiciplinary theme:
  - How We Express Ourselves – An inquiry into the ways in which we discover and express ideas, feelings, nature, culture, beliefs and values; the ways in which we reflect on, extend and enjoy our creativity; and our appreciation of the aesthetic.
- Key concepts:
  - Perspective: Characters view situations differently and often misunderstand one another.
  - Responsibility: Freddy takes responsibility for helping solve problems throughout the adventure.
  - Connection: Friendships and teamwork help the characters achieve their goals.
  - Causation: Actions lead to consequences, both expected and unexpected.
- Approaches to Learning (ATL) skills:
  - Self-management skills – Demonstrating perseverance when faced with challenges. Managing emotions and responding positively to setbacks
  - Social skills – Developing positive relationships. Working co-operatively to achieve shared goals
  - Communication skills – Listening to others and expressing ideas clearly. Participating in discussions and collaborative learning tasks.
  - Thinking skills – Analysing problems and generating solutions. Applying prior knowledge to new situations
- Learner Profile Attributes:
  - Thinker – Freddy uses creativity and critical thinking to solve problems.
  - Caring – Freddy demonstrates kindness and concern for others.
  - Risk-Taker – Freddy embraces new experiences and faces challenges with courage.
  - Communicator – Characters share ideas, ask questions and work together throughout the story.

WRITING STYLE (FROM THE AUTHOR)

Escape From Planet Milkshake is designed to build a love of reading through a fast-paced super silly adventure comedy. We also loved setting it in space – which was a first for us! This backdrop provided a great opportunity to include some fun elements like asteroids and comets to play with in this absurd comedy. We also hope kids enjoy the off-the-wall characters in this book and the use of dialogue to convey the action and personality.

ILLUSTRATION STYLE (FROM THE ILLUSTRATOR)

To create the illustrations for this book, I worked digitally to create the drawings in Procreate on my iPad. I drew inspiration from Bill Watterson's inky cartoon style, specifically the 'Spaceman Spiff' sections of his Calvin and Hobbes

comics, as well as other mid-century space comics.
I tried to focus on boosting the humour in the story through lively caricatures and hold a young reader's attention by varying the visual perspectives or 'camera angles' of the scenes as much as possible. Working with a black-and white palette, I also tried to create as much visual variety between the images as I could and be playful with how the images might sit within the text to help keep the reading experience fun for newer independent readers.
The design of the characters was influenced by the tastes of my eight-year-old son, who read the early draft of the story and thought it was amazing. The mixture of cartoonish-silliness and gender-neutral cutesiness was very much intended to appeal to his age group.

STUDY NOTES

PRE-READING

- Looking at the title, *Escape From Planet Milkshake*, what do you think this story might be about?
- What kinds of characters do you think we might meet in a book called *Escape From Planet Milkshake*?
- If you could visit a planet made of one food, what would it be and why?
- What do you think might happen on a planet called Milkshake?
- Why might someone need to escape from a planet?
- Do you think this story will be realistic of imaginative? What makes you think that?
- Have you ever read a book that takes place in space? What happened in that story?
- What clues on the cover help you predict what the story will be about?
- What challenges do you think the main character might face?
- What qualities would someone need to go on an adventure through space?
- Do you think friends are important during an adventure? Why or why not?
- What questions do you have about the story before you begin reading?
- Think-Pair-Share: If you were about to go on an adventure through space, what three things would you take with you and why?

POST-READING

Recall and literal understanding

- What was your favourite part of the story? Why?
- Which character did you like the most? What made them memorable?
- How did Freddy change throughout the adventure?
- What qualities helped Freddy solve problems and overcome challenges?
- Why do you think Freddy and Bob became good friends despite being so different?
- Which challenge was the most difficult for Freddy and Bob to overcome? Explain your thinking.
- What role did teamwork play in helping the characters achieve their goal?
- How did Freddy show courage during the story?
- What lessons do you think Freddy learnt from his adventure?
- Were the snails really evil or were they simply misunderstood? Explain your opinion using evidence from the text.
- How did humour make the story more enjoyable to read?
- If you could add one more chapter to the book, what would happen next?
- Think-Pair-Share: If you were Freddy, would you join Bob on another space adventure? Why or why not?

Vocabulary (Tier 2 language)

- Pulling out rich vocabulary words from *Escape From Planet Milkshake* gives students the opportunity to notice, discuss and use new words in meaningful contexts. The following words from *Escape From Planet Milkshake* can be used for word walls, oral language discussions, writing prompts or vocabulary notebooks, helping children deepen comprehension and transfer new vocabulary into their own speaking and writing notebooks, helping children deepen their comprehension and transfer new vocabulary into their own speaking and writing:
  - trudged p.13

- jolted (p 22)
- asteroid (p 23)
- alarmed (p 27)
- billowing (p 30)
- oozing (p 30)
- despair (p 31)
- distress (p 38)
- gasped (p 54)
- dodged (p 76)
- muffled (p 84)
- hovered (p 114)

LEARNING ACTIVITY PROMPTS

Design a new space character

Skills: Characterisation, creativity, descriptive writing

- The galaxy is full of unusual creatures. Create a brand-new character that Freddy and Bob might meet on their next adventure.
- Include:
  - A detailed illustration
  - The character's name
  - Where they live
  - Their special powers or abilities
  - Whether they help or hinder Freddy and Bob
  - A short description of their personality
- Extension: Write a short scene introducing the character.

Build a better prison

Skills: Problem-solving, design thinking, critical thinking

- The Crystal Prison was full and unable to accept any more prisoners. Design a new prison for dangerous creatures and villains from around the galaxy.
- Consider:
  - Security features
  - Rules for prisoners
  - How prisoners are transported there
  - How escapes are prevented
  - What makes your prison different from the Crystal Prison
- Present your design with labelled diagrams.

Invent a new milkshake asteroid

Skills: Creative writing, persuasive writing, design

- Create a brand-new milkshake asteroid that visitors could explore.
- Include:
  - A name
  - Special flavours
  - Interesting creatures
  - Attractions
  - Potential dangers
- Present your asteroid as a travel brochure.

Problem-solving activity

- Skills: Problem-solving, reflection, critical thinking
- Throughout the story, Freddy faces many challenges. Choose one problem from the story and:
  - Describe the problem
  - Explain how Freddy solved it
  - Suggest another possible solution
  - Decide which solution would work best and explain why
- Present your problem as a piece of writing or as a voice recording.

Educator Bookmark - Front

Note to educators: this bookmark is designed to be used as a quick prompt card for you or an adult helper. Consider it a summary of much of the content of these teaching notes to have beside you while reading.

This educator bookmark could also be sent home with a copy of *Escape From Planet Milkshake* as a homework task and as a guide to parents/caregivers as to how to extend the book reading experience.

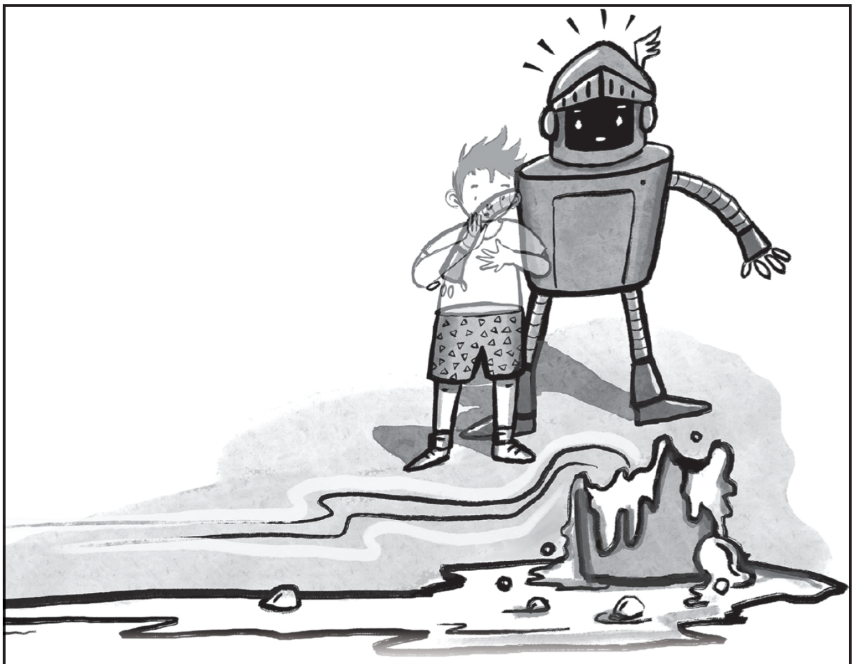
Before Reading

- Looking at the title *Escape From Planet Milkshake*, what predictions can you make about the story?
- What do you think Planet Milkshake might be like?
- What kinds of characters might Freddy meet on his adventure?
- What qualities would someone need to survive an adventure in space?
- If you could visit any planet, what would it be like and why?

Educator Bookmark - Back

Note to educators: this bookmark is designed to be used as a quick prompt card for you or an adult helper. Consider it a summary of much of the content of these teaching notes to have beside you while reading.

This educator bookmark could also be sent home with a copy of *Escape From Planet Milkshake* as a homework task and as a guide to parents/caregivers as to how to extend the book reading experience.



After Reading

- What problems did Freddy and Bob need to solve throughout the story?
- How did Freddy show courage during his adventure?
- Which character did you trust the most? Why?
- How did Freddy and Bob work together to overcome challenges?
- How did humour make the story more enjoyable to read?
- What lesson or message do you think the author wanted readers to learn?
- If Freddy and Bob went on another adventure, where do you think they would go next?

Student Bookmark

Note to educators: this bookmark is designed to be photocopied (2 to an A4 page) and placed inside the front cover of *Escape From Planet Milkshake* and is for independent use by a student or reading group.

If you have class sets or multiple copies of *Escape From Planet Milkshake* , a laminated bookmark could be added to each copy for use in small group sessions. Laminated bookmarks can be sent home with a copy of *Escape From Planet Milkshake*as a homework task.

Keep this card alongside you as you read

ESCAPE FROM PLANET MILKSHAKE

Before You Start

- What do you think Planet Milkshake might be like?
- What do you think the word escape tells us about the story?
- What kinds of characters do you think Freddy will meet?
- What do you think might go wrong during Freddy's adventure?
- What are you most excited to discover in this book?

After Reading

- What was your favourite part of the story? Why?
- Which character did you like the most? Why?
- How did Freddy show courage during his adventure?
- What problem did Freddy and Bob solve together?
- If you could write a sequel (the next book), what adventure would happen next?

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