

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO RULING THE GALAXY

Resources for schools and libraries

About the book

A brilliantly funny story of what happens when a galactic princess moves in next door and almost brings about the end of the world. Exciting new fiction from David Solomons, the bestselling, award-winning author of *My Brother is a Superhero!*

Gavin's got a new neighbour and she's really annoying. Niki follows him everywhere, bosses him about, and doesn't care that her parents will obliterate Earth with their galactic warships if she doesn't stop running away from them. Can Niki and Gavin sort out the alien despots (aka Mum and Dad) and save the planet? Possibly. Will they become friends along the way? Doubtful ...

About the resource

The activities in this pack can take place during literacy lessons, be used as extra-curricular activities or form library activity sessions. They are aimed at children aged 9-11 and have a mainly literacy-based focus. The activities take approximately one hour each, but production of the final Galactic Guidebook can take place over several sessions, depending on the level of detail children want to include.

Through these activities children will:

- Discover and explore features of comedic writing
- Understand how different forms of writing work
- Generate their own creative ideas and writing

The final objective of the pack is for children to create their own Galactic Guidebook.



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DAVID SOLOMONS

9+ READERS

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A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO RULING THE GALAXY

Galactic mission

Aliens! Your mission is to help extra-terrestrial beings understand life on Earth. Your report will take the form of a Galactic Guidebook for all alien species who wish to visit Earth without being detected.

Introduction

To carry out your mission you must first of all organise yourselves into small groups. This will be your galactic unit, and you will work together to produce the Galactic Guidebook for your fellow aliens. You can choose a name, or use one of these suggestions based on the book characters:

The Gavins

The Gastronites

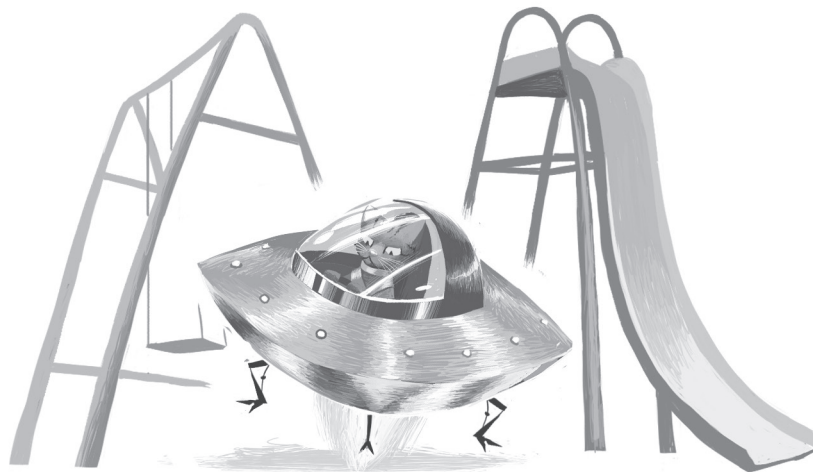
The Skerlons

The Zenobians

The Sunshine Starbursts

The Cupcakes

As you go through the activities, look out for the tips to help you use your unit's work and ideas when you put your Galactic Guidebook together.



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Activities

Create your alien profile

Objective: to name each member of the unit and describe what kind of alien you are

Outcome: an alien character information sheet

1. Here are the real names of some of the characters in the story:

- **Niki:** Dread Princess Xyllara, Spawn of D'Rek the Destroyer, Firelord of Trilia Zed Zed 6, Inheritor of the Haunted Stars, First Hatchling of Pamnatakrocula the Pitiless, Sovereign of Shadows, heir apparent to the throne of the Dark Galaxy.
- **Pam:** Pamnatakrocula the Pitiless
- **Derek:** D'Rek the Destroyer
- **Cupcake:** Void Darkclaw of the Thirteenth Storm Litter, Grey Mouse of Y'arn, Protector of the Sacred Furball, Felis Domesticus Maximus

Invent a name for each person in your galactic unit.

Here's one way to do it, with an example:

- a) Write your normal, human name
- b) Make a list of things about you, such as your hair and eye-colour, favourite hobbies, where you come in your family and foods you like the best.
- c) Play with the words in your list to make them into adjectives – so 'dark hair' becomes 'dark-haired'; 'eldest in family' becomes 'Firstborn'; 'likes ice-cream' becomes 'Guardian of the Sacred Magnum'

Human name: Lily Jackson

List: dark hair, likes ice cream, eldest in family, laughs a lot, favourite colour is green

Alien name: Lilerana the Dark-Haired, Mighty Green-Clad Firstborn of the Jackson League, Mirth-maker the Magnificent, Guardian of the Sacred Magnum



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Alternatively, you can take your normal, human name, add some letters to make it sound more alien-like, then add a description of your character using the same first letter. Here are some examples:

Human name

Ahmed

Theo

Mina

Alien name

Ahmedina the Awesome

Theobold the Terrific

Minama the Merciful

2. The aliens in the story have particular characteristics, or aspects which are particular to them:

Niki: hair sets on fire

Derek: has a flaming sword

Pam: wears earrings made from shrunken planets that she has conquered

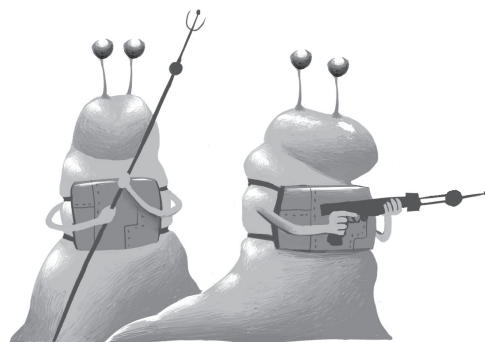
Cupcake: wears gauntlets which have powers when licked

Choose your own alien characteristic. This should be something which is part of you, or something you wear or carry, that people associate with you.

3. Create your alien profile (you can use the template provided if that helps). Draw a picture of your alien self, write your alien and human names, and describe your special alien characteristic. Don't forget to include the name of your galactic unit.

Galactic Guidebook tip:

Include your own alien profiles at the front of the Galactic Guidebook so you get credit from your fellow aliens for providing all the useful information for them.



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Through the eyes of an alien

Objective: exploring creative ways to describe and use everyday objects

Outcome: an alien's glossary of earthling objects

1. In the book, the aliens use their own ways to describe everyday earthling words or objects in their own way. Here are some examples:

Personal designation: name

Directly struck idiophone percussion instrument: bell

Hatchling: child (daughter or son)

Ice-prison: fridge

A parabolic antenna for the purposes of receiving and transmitting radio waves: satellite dish

“...Gavin's primitive brain will experience a catastrophic reaction to learning the reality of the situation.”

Niki's eyes lit up. “You mean his head might explode?!” (p.45)

Have a go at making up your own alien names for the ordinary things listed below. Then try to think of some examples of your own. When you've got a list of words, swap them with another galactic unit and see if you can guess the earthling objects from the alien names.

- Mobile phone
- Bed
- Washing machine
- Bicycle
- Teacher



2. The aliens on Earth have essential equipment that look like everyday objects. For example:
 - A memory obliterator disguised as an electric toothbrush
 - A spaceship disguised as a full car park level
 - An alien bounty hunter disguised as a cat

Think of some everyday things from home or school which could disguise essential alien equipment while you are on Earth.

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Galactic Guidebook tips:

- Draw a picture of some everyday objects that an alien on Earth might encounter. Label it with its alien description, then write the earthling name alongside.
- Draw or cut out pictures of everyday objects that you could use to disguise essential alien equipment. Explain how aliens could use them.
- Create a glossary for your Guidebook of earthling words and their alien translations.

Comedic wordplay

Objective: to understand different forms of wordplay

Outcome: a literal image of different idioms

[The boy] raised his hand in greeting. "I'm Bart," he mumbled, and then added, "I come in peace."

"Good for you," said Gavin. "I came on my bike."

The boy frowned. "That is an example of comedic wordplay, correct?" (p.4)

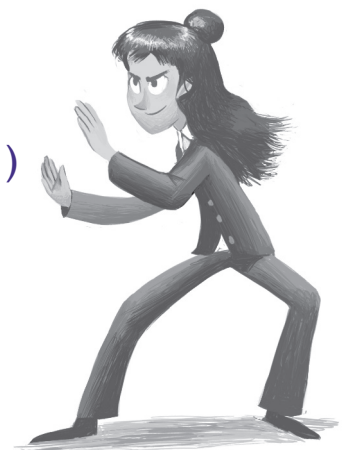
You might have noticed that *A Beginner's Guide to Ruling the Galaxy* is a very funny book! One way to make writing funny is to play with words. There's a lot of wordplay in the story, but here's two examples that have special names:

There was just one thing Earth had to offer that Niki had found favour with during her time on the planet: a bag of hot chips from Act of Cod, the fish and chip shop on the high street. (p.22)

Gavin held Niki back on the doorstep. "Ok, spill."

"Oil spill, chemical spill? Be specific."

"The beans," he added [...] "It means tell the truth." (p.191)



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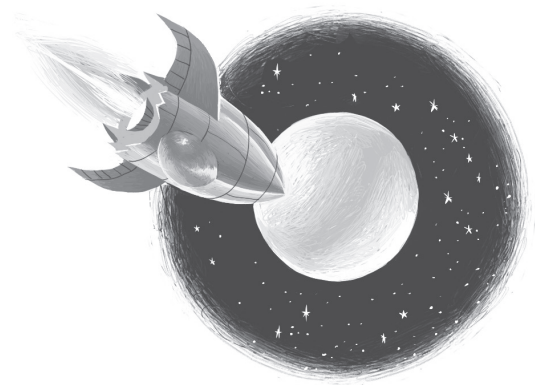
“Act of Cod” is an example of pun (when you change a word to make an ordinary phrase sound funny). “Spill the beans” is an idiom (a common phrase which has a figurative, rather than a literal meaning).

Here's some more:

Pun	Idiom
A Cut Above (a hairdresser)	She bit off more than she could chew (she tried to do too much)
Hairy Poppins (a dog grooming company)	I'm pulling your leg (I'm joking)
Surelock Homes (a locksmith)	Bite the bullet (just do it)

1. In your galactic unit, can you think of any puns or idioms that you have seen or heard? Try to spot any puns you see when you are out and about, and make a note of them to share with the rest of your galactic unit.
2. What image would an alien see if they heard the idioms listed below? Draw a picture of one of them from an alien's point of view.

It's raining cats and dogs
Butterflies in their stomach
It's a piece of cake
That will happen when pigs fly
The car costs an arm and a leg



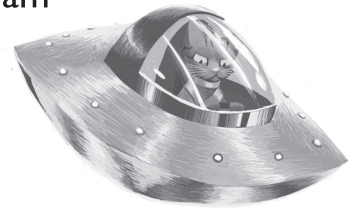
Galactic Guidebook tips:

Draw a different idiom from your alien point of view. Explain underneath it what it actually means, in case an Earthling says it to an alien while they are on Earth.

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3. Another way to write comedy is by exaggerating and subverting language (this means using words in an unexpected or daft way). Like the meals that Mercedes prepares:

- a slice of chicken squeezed between layers of strawberry jam
- vanilla ice cream topped with grated cheese
- Nutella with cucumber
- baked bean ice lollies



Follow these instructions to create your own alien lunches:

- a) Fold a piece of paper in half three times so that when you open it out you have created eight spaces (you can draw lines on the folds if that helps you see the spaces better).
- b) In each space, write a type of different food (e.g. peanut butter; pasta; honey; popcorn; gravy)
- c) Cut out the spaces so that you have a set of eight food cards.
- d) Mix up everyone's cards (e.g. if there are four people in your galactic unit you will have 32 cards) and place them face down on the table in three or four piles.
- e) Take it in turns to draw a food card from each pile. Put the cards together and see what kind of disgusting alien meal you have ended up with (e.g. pasta with peanut butter and honey, covered with popcorn gravy)!
- f) Write the name of your new meal as if you were in a fancy restaurant (e.g. Homecooked pasta smothered in peanut butter and honey, with a popcorn jus)

Creating a Galactic Guidebook

Objective: using work from the different activities to produce your Galactic Guidebook

Outcome: a Galactic Guidebook for aliens to use

“...we need a new guidebook. This one's full of terrible advice. What the galaxy needs is something that combines dazzling and marvellous insight – provided by me – with more down-to-earth, ordinary suggestions. Cosmically ordinary...” (p.325)

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Niki has set you your mission! Your galactic unit now needs to produce the guidebook for all aliens who wish to visit Earth undetected.

Here are some tips for what to include:

- Absolutely essential information aliens need to know. Such as:
 - basic information about human beings
 - names and uses of everyday objects
 - customs (e.g. birthdays, festivals, fun)
 - examples of good combinations of food and drink
 - how to behave in different situations
 - language and ways of speaking
 - the weather
 - dos and don'ts
- Plus:
 - a title
 - contents page
 - your galactic unit character profiles
 - any labelled pictures to use as examples
 - a back cover blurb to persuade aliens to buy your book



**Thank you for accepting our mission to create a Galactic Guidebook!
Please share your knowledge of Earth with us @nosycrow**

More out-of-this-world adventures by David Solomons



These resources are written by Lucy Marcovitch
www.lucyeducation.co.uk

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Curriculum links

The activities and themes in this resource can link to the following aspects of the English curriculum:

English

Reading:

Maintain positive attitudes to reading and an understanding of what they read by:

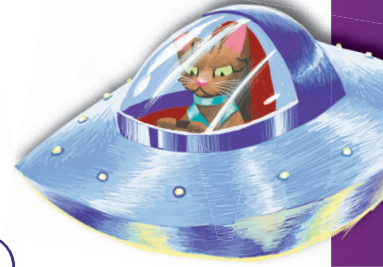
- o continuing to read and discuss an increasingly wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference books or textbooks
- o increasing their familiarity with a wide range of books
- Understand what they read by:
 - o identifying how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning
- Discuss and evaluate how authors use language, including figurative language, considering the impact on the reader

Writing - composition:

- Plan their writing by:
 - o identifying the audience for and purpose of the writing, selecting the appropriate form and using other similar writing as models for their own
 - o noting and developing initial ideas, drawing on reading and research where necessary
- Draft and write by:
 - o selecting appropriate grammar and vocabulary, understanding how such choices can change and enhance meaning



ALIEN PROFILE



Human name:

AKA (alien name):

Galactic unit:

Alien characteristic:



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