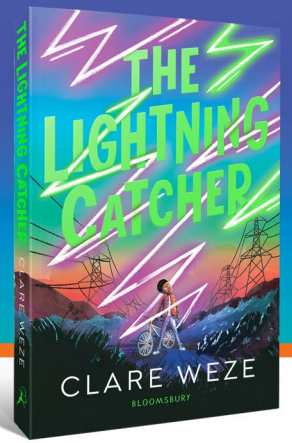


THE LIGHTNING CATCHER

CLARE WEZE

Educational resource pack



Dear reader,

This educational resource pack is based on Clare Weze's electrifying debut novel *The Lightning Catcher* and is the perfect learning resource for children in Key Stage 2 or 3. These notes work as an introduction to the themes within the book, giving suggestions for classroom activities to enjoy across different subjects including literacy, geography, science and drama.

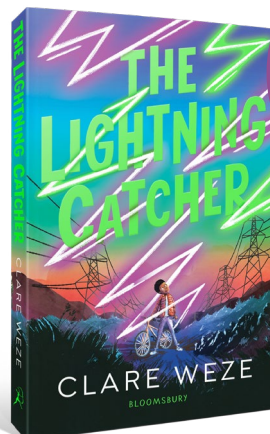
The reading questions encourage discussions around themes of moving to a new place, weird weather and incredible creatures. The activities included range from writing journal entries and creating comic strips to performing weather reports – there's something for everyone.

We hope you enjoy reading this brilliant book and working your way through the pack.

ABOUT THE BOOK

Alfie has noticed a few things since his family moved to Folding Ford. 1) He really misses life in the city. 2) He and his sister don't exactly fit in here. But the most interesting one is the weather is BONKERS. One frost-covered branch on one tree in the middle of summer? A tiny whirlwind in a bucket in the garden? Only in Folding Ford.

Armed with his bike, a notepad and his new best mate Sam, Alfie is going to investigate. His best clue is Nathaniel Clemm ... the only thing in town weirder than the weather. When Alfie 'investigates' Mr Clemm's garden, only SLIGHTLY illegally, he finds a strange box that freezes his trainers and makes his teeth tingle. And when he opens it, only SLIGHTLY deliberately, SOMETHING gets out. Something fast, fizzing and sparking with electricity ... and very, very much alive. But the creature from the box brings trouble of its own, and as barometers and tempers go haywire in Folding Ford, Alfie finds himself at the centre of a perfect storm.



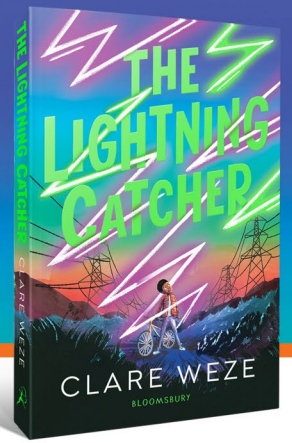
Clare Weze © Benham Irving
Bulbaw



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EXTRACTS AND NOTES FOR **KS2/3 TEACHERS & LIBRARIANS**

Suitable for: Ages 9+

Explore themes of: ✓ Home ✓ Weird Weather ✓ Incredible Creatures ✓ Adventure Writing

Subject Checklist: ✓ Literacy ✓ Art, Design & Technology ✓ Geography ✓ Science ✓ Drama

CONTENTS

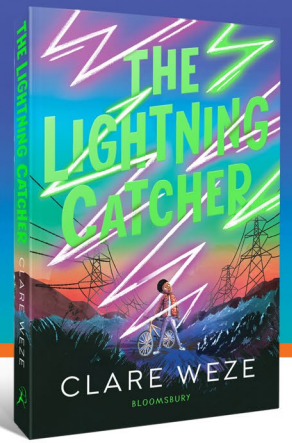
- **EXTRACT ONE: A New Home (taken from Chapter One – Moth Man)**
Objectives: Identify sensory differences between life in a village and the city; write a journal entry about a strange occurrence.
- **EXTRACT TWO: Wonderfully Weird Weather (taken from Chapter One – Moth Man)**
Objectives: Design a Weekly Weird Weather Report; write and perform the script for a Weird Weather Report.
- **EXTRACT THREE: Incredible Creatures (taken from Chapter Fourteen – The Wasteland)**
Objectives: Create a Fact File for your own incredible creature; illustrate a ‘full-on amazing’ comic strip.



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EXTRACT ONE

A NEW HOME *(Taken from pages 1-2)*

I'm not sure how you're meant to start journals, but here goes: We moved to Folding Ford in April and now it's July, and maybe it's because we're new here, but to me it's completely obvious that this village is cracked. Today the weirdness got major, which is why I'm going to start writing it all down. If something happens to me, everyone will know the facts, because of this journal.

Here's what happened today:

Only little kids believe in giants, but that's exactly what pounded down the hill, right at me. I was standing on the bridge at the edge of the village. It was dusk and I should have been home already. He closed in fast, crazy white hair flying out, long string of a body, big coat swinging with every step, like a cloak. And, OK, so up close I could see he wasn't a giant, but he was a ginormously tall man with a creepy face from a nightmare ... and butterflies flapping around his shoulders.

The road was empty, the houses quiet and still.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

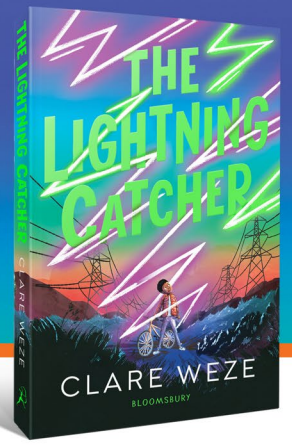
- Have you ever moved home before? What are the pros and cons of moving to a new place?
- What do you think the narrator means by the words, 'this village is cracked'?
- Do you like the 'journal' style of the extract? Why? What is the effect of this style of writing on the reader?
- How do you feel when you read the final line? Why?
- How does the writer make Folding Ford seem like a strange place? Give examples.



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ACTIVITY ONE: A VILLAGE VS THE CITY

- Spend a few minutes discussing the village, town, or city that you live in. What words would you use to describe it and why? What other places have you been to, seen pictures of, or read about? How do these places compare?
- Then, on the table below, note down how your senses might experience a small village and a big city differently. Try to include as much detail as you can and give examples. Discuss the ideas you have come up with together.

SEE

SMELL

TOUCH

HEAR

TASTE

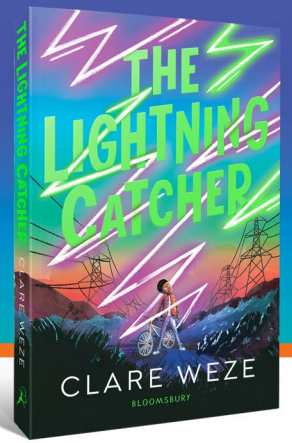
A VILLAGE	THE CITY



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ACTIVITY TWO: THE STRANGEST THING

- The story of *The Lightning Catcher* is told through a series of Alfie's journal entries. With a partner, have a chat about why you think the writer has chosen to do this. How does this give extra insight into Alfie's investigations and his thoughts? Underline or highlight words and phrases the writer has used to make the opening of the story interesting and engaging.
- You are now going to write your own journal entry about moving to a new strange place. Your teacher will go around and allocate you either 'A VILLAGE' or 'THE CITY'. Use your table from Activity One and the Ideas Bank below to help you write your journal entry, using the sentence starter 'The strangest thing happened today' to get you going.
- Once you have written your journal entry, swap your work with a partner. Give them feedback on how they made their writing engaging and have left you wanting to find out more. Discuss the possibilities for your next journal entry!

IDEAS BANK

YOU ENCOUNTER A STRANGE PERSON

A FRIEND/FAMILY MEMBER STARTS BEHAVING STRANGELY

YOU FIND OUT ABOUT A STRANGE MYSTERY

YOU STUMBLE UPON A STRANGE PLACE

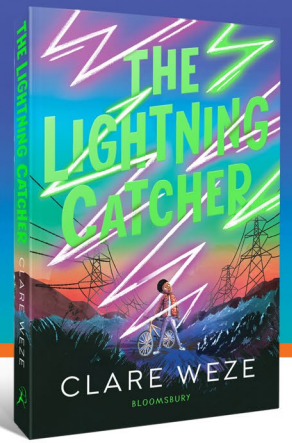
YOU NOTICE A STRANGE INCIDENT



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EXTRACT TWO

WONDERFULLY WEIRD WEATHER (Taken from pages 2-3)

The giant with the moths is just the latest in a whole load of very strange things. Just in case anyone finds this notebook when I'm dead, here's a list of all the weird stuff that's happened since we moved here:

1. *A frozen puddle all by itself on a hot day in June. (Mum thought someone had emptied out their ice box on the pavement, but that was partly my fault. I shouldn't have prodded it before showing her.)*
2. *Thick frost on one branch of one tree near the primary school. Brilliant white, totally arctic and completely impressive (especially for June).*
3. *A whirlwind in one of Dad's beaten-up buckets, bubbling the water into demented spirals, and no wind anywhere else. (A salty smell came off it.)*
4. *A type of cloud I haven't seen in any other place. It's like a stack of pancakes with gaps in between.*
5. *My new best friend Sam's trainers iced up right in front of his eyes. He's been helping me look for clues ever since.*

All those weather freak-outs have got to be connected, so Sam and I are on high alert for clues about this weird overload. My new Moth Man discovery is completely different, but he's linked – I'm sure of it. Sam and I will figure it all out and maybe get famous from it, and then this journal will be the official record of how we solved the mystery of Folding Ford.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

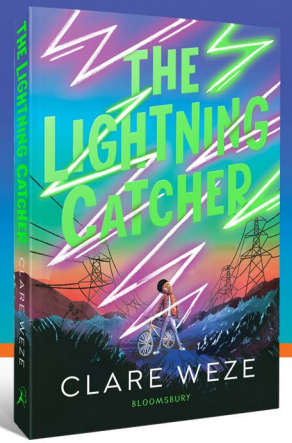
- What is your favourite kind of weather and why? What is your least favourite?
- What is unusual about the title of the book?
- Can you make up some of your own interesting book titles about the weather?
- Have you ever experienced what you might call 'weird weather'? Discuss your experiences.
- What is 'weird' about each of the bullet points in Alfie's journal? Explain your ideas.



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ACTIVITY THREE: WEIRD WEATHER REPORT

- On your tables, discuss as a group which is your favourite example of weird weather from the extract and the text as a whole. Can you think of more examples of strange and funny weather? What is the weirdest weather you can think of?
- Then, independently fill in your Weekly Weird Weather Report. Instead of the typical images of sun, rain, and wind that you usually see, draw pictures of weird weather for each day. For example, for one of the days, Alfie might draw Sam's frozen trainers.
- Be inventive with your weather reports and remember, the weirder the better!

WEEKLY WEIRD WEATHER REPORT

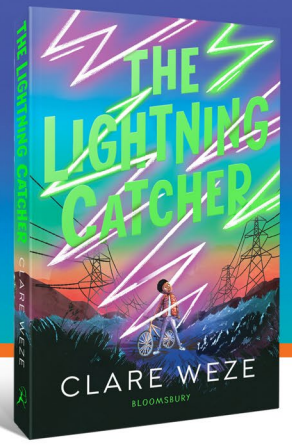
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY



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ACTIVITY FOUR: LIVE FROM THE STUDIO

It's now time to report to the nation that weird weather is sweeping across the country!

- Write the script to accompany your Weird Weather Report that you will read and perform on live television. Make sure that your script includes the weather for each day of the week and emphasises how weird it is. You might also like to speculate on the strange science and geography behind the weather forecast and include weather warnings about the dangers it might involve. Note down any stage directions in the margin.
- Once you have checked over your script carefully, perform your weather report holding up your images so that it is like a live real broadcast from the studio.

WEIRD WEATHER REPORT SCRIPT

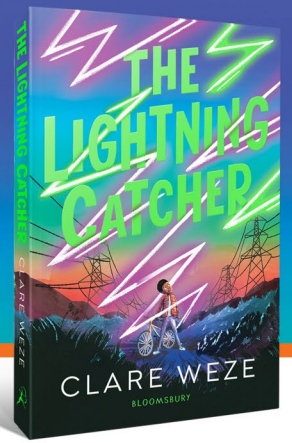
STAGE DIRECTIONS / BODY LANGUAGE	SCRIPT
MON	
TUES	
WED	
THURS	
FRI	



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EXTRACT THREE

INCREDIBLE CREATURES *(Taken from pages 78-79)*

Whizzy shimmered and twisted silently. Whizzy was ripples and curves of light, in no definite shape at first. My hair lifted. My scalp tingled. A scorched smell rose from the ground. Whizzy pushed through the air, as if the air was as thick as water, and in just another second, Whizzy was closer and much bigger. My heart beat hard.

It was rubbish at staying balanced. Every time the top moved, the rest made a little ripple to get steady again, but when it did, when I finally got a clear look at it, my heart stopped racing quite so fast. My lips curled into a smile and my mouth opened wide in a silent gasp at the total, magnificent, extreme brilliance of it: my wonderful, impossible electrical creature.

Looks like it's mostly made of white light. Its head curves over in an S-shape like a horse's, but kind of not. And it has eyes! Shiny discs of the darkest silver anywhere, ever.

A row of quivery semicircular things down its sides ripple like gills the whole time, and there are no arms or legs, just like a seahorse. It's a bendy, wavy stalk of light with glowing, golden insides that look like they're silently crackling with electricity—

And it looked at me like I was just as full-on amazing.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

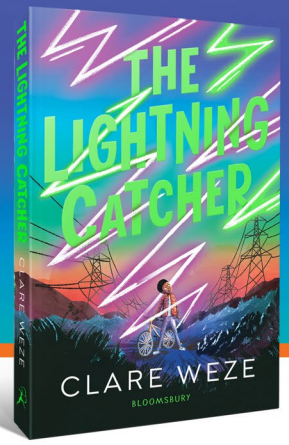
- Which interesting adjectives and verbs does the writer use to describe Whizzy? Underline or highlight them.
- What else does the writer do to help you to picture Whizzy in your mind?
- What are Alfie's feelings towards Whizzy in the extract? Can you pinpoint a moment where they change?
- How does the writer create pace and tension in the extract?
- Can you think of any other incredible creatures you have read about in other stories?



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ACTIVITY FIVE: MY INCREDIBLE CREATURE

- You are now going to imagine your own incredible creature! Spend a few minutes mind-mapping some ideas using the questions below to help you:
 - *What makes your creature so incredible?*
 - *How did you find it or come across it?*
 - *How might your creature affect the weather of where you live?*
 - *How might your creature get you into trouble?*
 - *What words would you use to describe your creature?*
- Use these ideas to create a Fact File for your incredible creature. Discuss your Fact Files together and talk about the adventures and mischief you might get into with your creature.

MY INCREDIBLE CREATURE FACT FILE BY

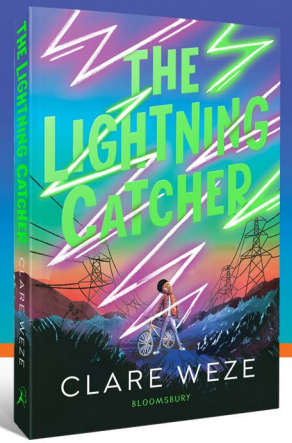
Name of creature:	Description:	
Personality:		
Habitat:		Sleep pattern:
Diet:		Other amazing facts:
Afraid of:		



THE LIGHTNING CATCHER

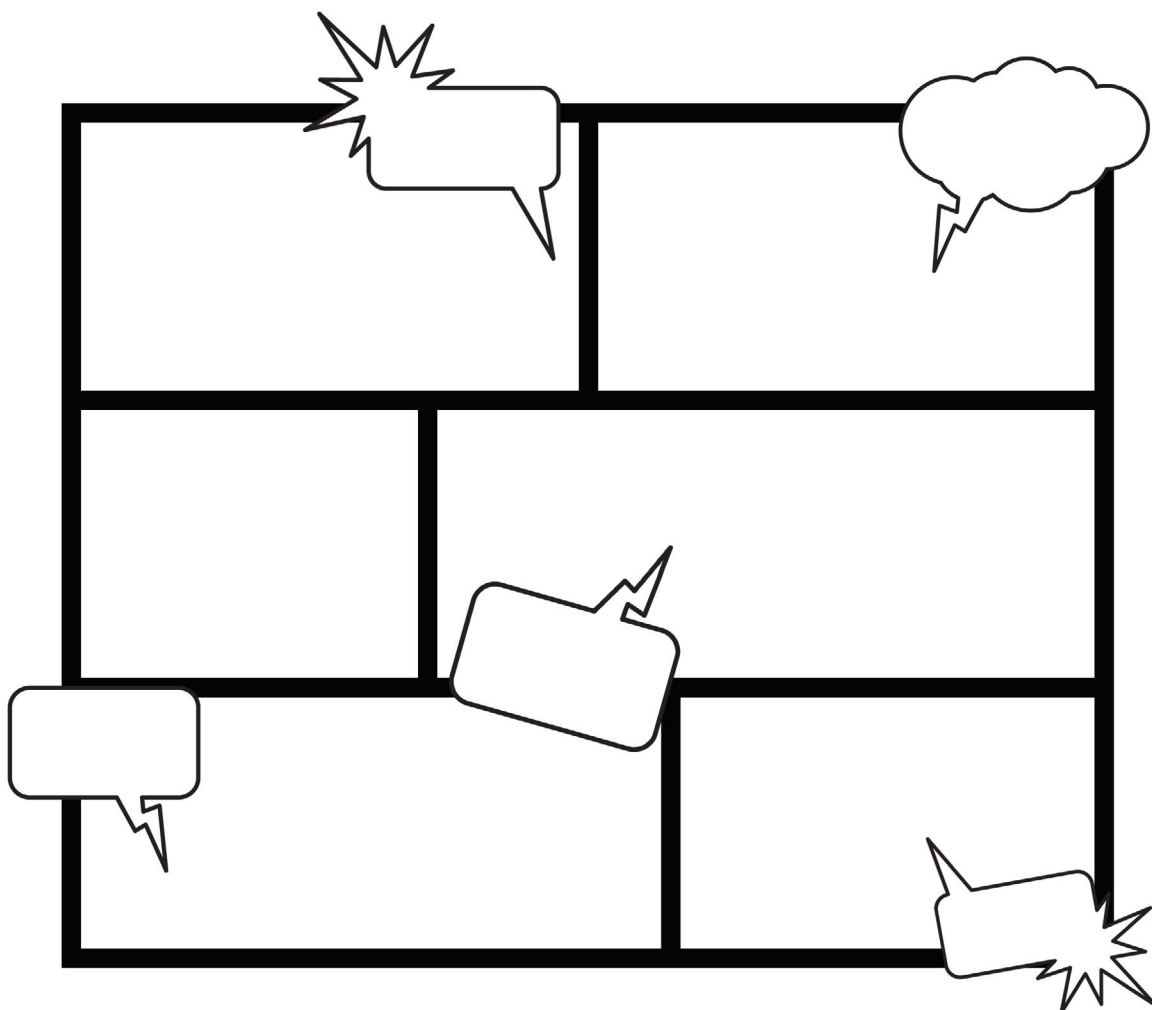
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ACTIVITY SIX: 'FULL-ON AMAZING' COMIC STRIP

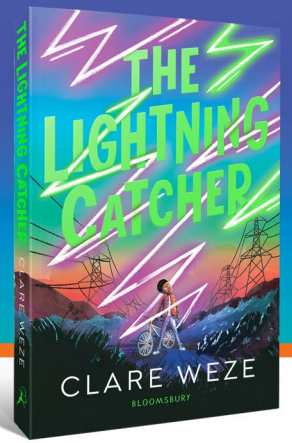
- Bring your incredible creature to life by creating your own comic strip, detailing an adventure you have with them. Perhaps you show how you came to find your creature? Or maybe they get you into trouble?
- Use the small comic strip template below to plan your comic strip. Think about what you will include in each box and any dialogue that might create humour or help to explain what is happening. Then use the large template on the next page to create your final comic strip.
- Just like Alfie's adventures with Whizzy in *The Lightning Catcher*, do your best to make your comic strip 'full-on amazing'!



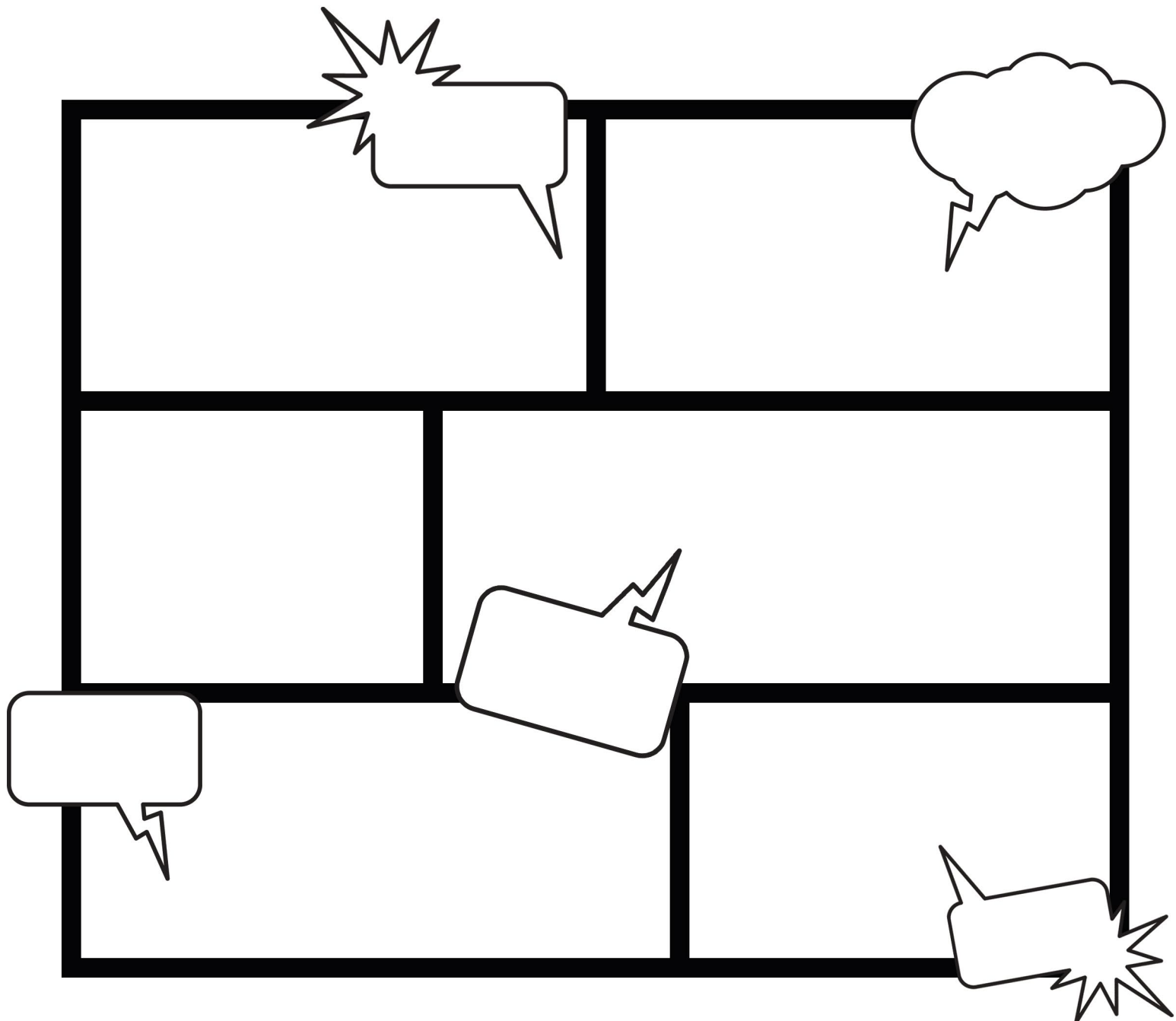
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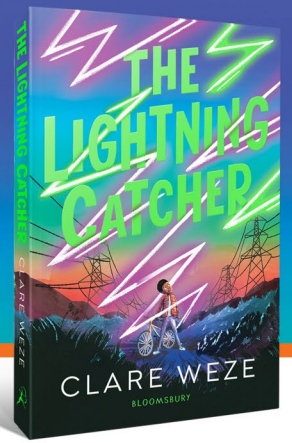
ACTIVITY SIX: 'FULL-ON AMAZING' COMIC STRIP



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You've now reached the end of this resource pack for *The Lightning Catcher*

We hope these notes have proved to be an attention-grabbing and fun introduction to the themes and ideas found within this book. We would love to see examples of any work created as a result of this pack, so please do email them over to us on:

childrensmarketing@bloomsbury.com

or share on Twitter tagging us at

[@KidsBloomsbury](https://twitter.com/KidsBloomsbury) [@ClareWeze](https://twitter.com/ClareWeze)



Artwork © Paddy Donnelly