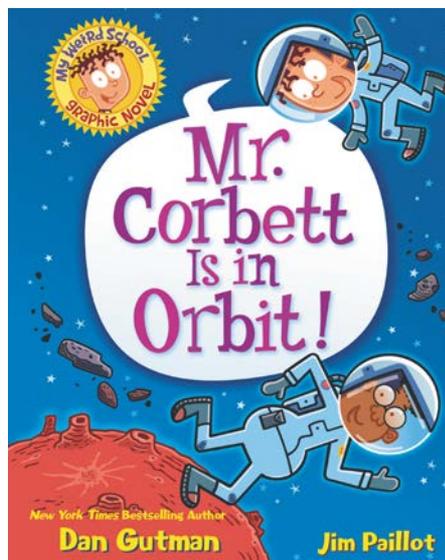


Classroom Resources



ISBN:
9780062947611

NOTES BY:
Mandy Newman

PUBLICATION DATE:
April 2021

My Weird School Graphic Novel #1: Mr. Corbett is in Orbit!

Dan Gutman and Jim Paillot

BOOK SUMMARY

A.J. and his friends at Ella Mentry School are headed on a field trip to NASA headquarters. But their tour guide, Mr. Corbett, is a total space cadet! And what happens when A.J. accidentally launches the whole class into outer space!

Full of visual gags, space aliens, and hilarious full-color illustrations, this is the weirdest graphic novel in the history of the world!

KEY LEARNING OUTCOMES

ACELA1518
ACELT1524
ACELT1613
ACELT1617
ACELT1618
ACELT1711

THEMES

- Environment
- Sustainability
- Identity
- Resilience
- Belonging
- Multi-modal texts
- Humour

Recommended Ages: 8+

These resources may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.

Classroom Resources

Before Reading

Environmental Issues and Activism

Research NASA and identify what it does and some of the inventions it has been responsible for. Ask students to find out:

- Who are Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin?
- How are space and the environment connected?

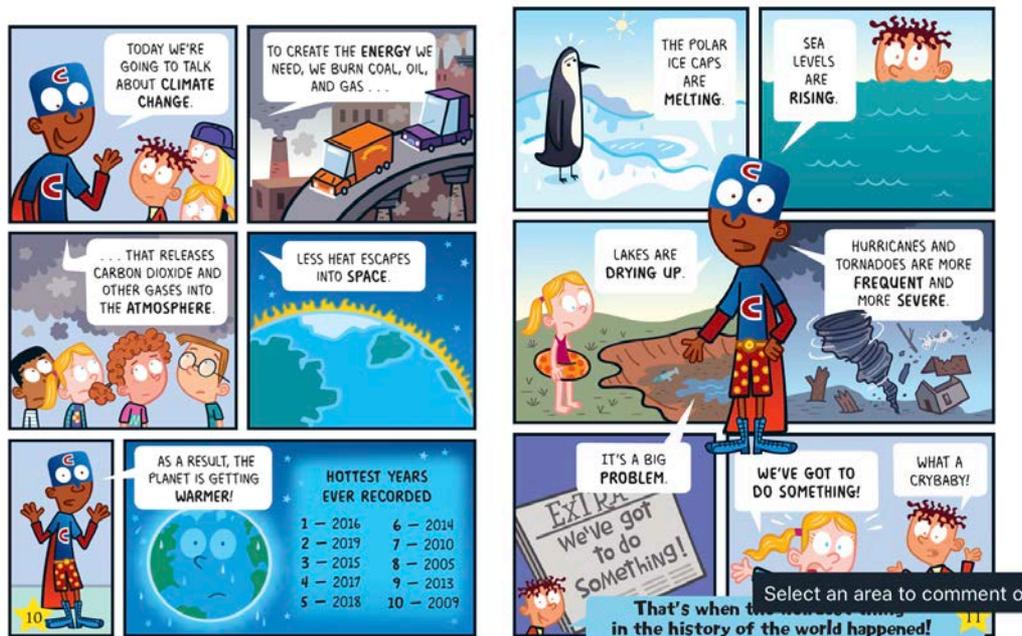
Log into the NASA website and choose some experiments you could run in class to examine the impact of climate change: https://gpm.nasa.gov/education/browse?type=lesson_plan

In the following lesson, students can examine what effect carbon dioxide will have on temperature and how melting sea ice affects the Earth System: <https://myNASAdata.larc.nasa.gov/lesson-plans/climate-change-inquiry-lab>

Log into ABC TV's website <https://www.abc.net.au/your-planet/> to explore lessons and activities which cover the environment, solutions to the climate challenge and actions that young people can take.

Read the pages linked below from Dan Gutman's website and then read the below extracts from the first pages of *Mr. Corbett is in Orbit!*:

<https://dangutman.com/really-important/the-problem/>



Invite students to research current solutions for one of the problems Dan Gutman identifies in the above links and extracts and create a video about the problem and how to combat the issue. Encourage students to share this information with their families.

These resources may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.

Classroom Resources

During Reading

Using Humour as a Persuasive Technique

- In *Mr. Corbett is in Orbit!*, cartoon techniques, size and framing devices enhance the humour and in turn effectively engage the reader with the information offered. Examine the below spread (page 23).
- What is funny on this page? Why?
- How does the author create humour?



Wordplay is one way an author can make texts engaging and persuasive. In *Mr. Corbett is in Orbit!* the author mixes understandings of the word 'moon' to create humour. Later, on page 77, he uses the planet Uranus as a pun and plays on the stars of the Milky Way to create another joke as well.



These resources may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.



Classroom Resources

Ask students to work in pairs and choose one set of homophones (words that sound the same but have different meanings) from the below list:

- sole/soul
- bear/bare
- ass/arse – (used by William Shakespeare in his play, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 1595–96. Please see the character of Bottom – anything associated with a bottom has been funny since humans started roaming the earth!)

Write dialogue between two characters – one calm and the other annoyed – with the words you have chosen to create a scene of misunderstanding and confusion. Don't worry if it takes a lot of drafting, rubbing out and rewriting.

Exaggeration is another technique that can be used to make an audience laugh and engage them in a story or idea. Read through *Mr. Corbett is in Orbit!* and find ten examples of exaggeration.

- Why does the author use exaggeration?
- How does it make the overall message more persuasive?

In pairs, ask students to write a story with a character breaking a rule and turning the school upside down. Make sure to use exaggeration to make it funny. Start with the student breaking the rule. Use some of the words below to help you exaggerate: blaze, inferno, charring, embers, glow, scorching, flare, crunch, explosion, thud, thump, volley, snap, splinter, split, crack, fracture, spitting, clatter, smash, crashing, splitting, shattering, paralysed, pulverise, fur and feather flying.

Exchange your story with another pair. Evaluate how effectively the other group has created humour and engaged the reader by using exaggeration and misunderstanding. What were the sections that the other group found most interesting in your piece? Using the feedback you have been provided, rewrite your story.

Graphic Novels are Multi-Modal Texts

A graphic novel is a multimodal text. In multimodal texts, composers enhance the meaning of a text because they utilise multiple modes of communication. Graphic novels focus on facial expressions, body language, body movement, eye movement, gaze and how subjects and objects are spaced, while also relying on textual techniques such as onomatopoeia, omniscient narration and dialogue to create and shape meaning.

- What do you find funny on page 83? Why?

These resources may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.

Classroom Resources

Identify all the different ways the creators use facial expressions, movement, the placement of subjects and objects, spacing and textual techniques such as onomatopoeia and repetition in the last chapter to shape meaning.

- How does the combination of words, sounds, images, facial expressions, space and body language add to the meaning of the text?

Invite students to create a one-page humorous cartoon with four frames that combines some of the techniques covered in this section such as words, sounds, images, facial expressions, space and body language.

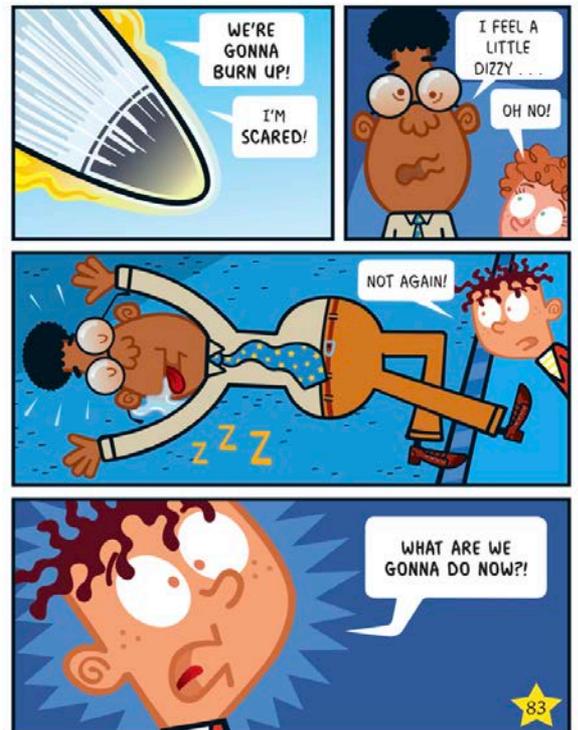
After Reading

What If...?

Ask students to consider what would happen if they went on a school excursion to space. Brainstorm from the below prompts:

- What is *likely* to happen?
- What is *unlikely* to happen, but is not totally out of the realms of possibility?
- What could go wrong?
- What would make it funny?
- How would they return to earth?

In pairs, ask students to storyboard a short graphic novel telling the story of a school trip to space.



About the Author

Dan Gutman may be weird, but he is also beloved by kids, parents, and teachers across the country. His books include the *My Weird School* series (more than 23 million copies sold), the *Baseball Card Adventures* (more than 2 million copies sold) and the *New York Times* bestselling *The Genius Files*. We also publish his spoofy picture book, *Casey Back At Bat*, and one of Dan's favorites, *Johnny Hangtime*. Dan lives in New York (a very weird place), with his weird wife, Nina.

Jim Pailot lives in Arizona (another weird place) with his weird wife and two weird children.

These resources may be reproduced free of charge for use and study within schools but they may not be reproduced (either in whole or in part) and offered for commercial sale.