



EK BOOKS TEACHER NOTES & RESOURCES

Title: Game On: Shrinkle

Author: Emily Snape

Illustrator: Emily Snape

Price: ANZ \$16.99 | USA \$12.99 | CA \$14.99 | UK £10.99

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Audience age: 8-12 years

Key Curriculum Areas: English, The Arts, Digital Technologies



SYNOPSIS:

Everyday objects will never seem the same again for Max and Liam as they try to beat the game, and each other.

Gaming-obsessed Max and his infuriating younger brother, Liam, are forced to work together to survive epic adventures on a miniscule scale. When rebellious Liam starts playing 'Shrinkle' on his babysitter's phone, he has no idea what he's letting himself in for. The app shrinks the brothers to the size of a minifigure! Their safe home has suddenly become a treacherous landscape. Can they scale sofa mountain, escape Miss McBoob's snoring mouth and outsmart the now-enormous pet cat? And will they stay tiny forever? Author and illustrator Emily Snape's sons were both reluctant readers, which made her want to write books that they wouldn't be able to resist reading! Reading should be a pleasure and it was Emily's aim to write books that pull you in and hook you from the start. 'Hopefully, then you can't help being moved by the characters as they grow and develop. I love comedy in books, but funny books also have to have heart, believable characters, and a great plot that keeps you reading till the very end.' With a clever mix of realism and fantasy and packed with exciting gaming strategies, crazy scenarios and gross facts, Game On: Shrinkle is perfect for reluctant readers, particularly boys.

THEMES:

Fantasy. Comedy. Teamwork. Adventure. Self-belief. Forgiveness. Sibling Relationships.

SELLING POINTS:

- The first book in a brilliant new series perfect for reluctant readers, particularly boys. Sensitive depicts sibling relationships and the themes of self-belief and forgiveness.
- Aimed at 8–12-year-olds who love adventure, comedy, fantasy and a twisting plot.
- Delightful illustrations by the author add to the fun.

AUTHOR MOTIVATION:

My sons were both reluctant readers and that made me want to write books that they wouldn't be able to resist reading! Reading should be a pleasure and my aim is to write books that pull you in and hook you from the start. Hopefully, then you can't help being moved by the characters as they grow and develop. I love comedy in books, but funny books also have to have heart, believable characters, and a great plot that keeps you reading till the very end.

AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR BACKGROUND:

Emily Snape is a children's author and illustrator living in London. Her work has appeared online, on television (for Nickelodeon and the BBC), in shops and even on buses! She loves coffee and notebooks, and has three cheeky children, Leo, Fin and Flo who keep her on her toes and give her lots of inspiration for stories.

Emily loves to mix real life with a twist of fantasy, throwing everyday emotions and events up in the air and allowing us to consider them from another angle. Her previous books include *Fergus the Furball*, a funny tale for independent readers, and board books for younger readers. These include *An Alphabet of Hugs*, and *Hey! Look at you...On the Move* and *Hey! Look at you...In the Jungle*.

INTERVIEW:

AUTHOR

What is the inspiration for this story?

I have two sons that constantly go from being best friends to sworn enemies, but I'm sure that if they were really in trouble, they would be there for each other. Their complicated relationship gave me the starting point to develop Max and Liam's characters. They also love video games and riddles, and so do I, and I wanted to mix puzzles and challenges into a real world setting. I was intrigued by the idea of how different your safe, cosy home would feel if you were suddenly tiny, and *Shrinkle* grew from there.

What was the most rewarding part of this project?

Hearing that people enjoyed reading it!

What was the most challenging part of this project?

There were a lot of drawings to create for the book, and although I love illustrating, I had to work hard to complete them all for the deadline.

TEACHER ACTIVITIES/NOTES:

N.B. These questions and activities can be adapted to suit the experience and ability of students.

DISCUSSION:

Before Reading

- Let's talk about computer games! Students might like to turn and talk to a friend about their favourite computer / internet game. What is the aim / purpose of the game? What kinds of skills / trophies / objects / levels have they achieved?
- Now, imagine you were in that game. Think about what you would do? How would you feel?
- Look at the cover of *Game On: Shrinkle*. What do you notice? What does it make you wonder? How do you think the characters are feeling? What do you think this story is about?
- Read the blurb. Discuss.
- What strategies can you think of that might help the boys return to normal size and reality?

CHAPTER 1:

Plot tension:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELT1605](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1505](#)) ([ACELA1512](#))

Opening line – “Spider breath smells worse than rotten eggs.” (p.2)

Closing line – “Hang on, I thought, spinning my head around again. Where is Liam?” (p.23)

- How does the opening line hook you in? Why does it pique your interest? What question/s does it bring about? How does it implore you to find out more?
- What impression does the closing paragraph leave the reader? In what ways does it encourage the reader to keep reading?

Vocabulary:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1493](#)) ([ACELA1498](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1508](#)) ([ACELA1512](#))

‘Evolution’, ‘immersive’, ‘jeering’, ‘glitching’, ‘comatose’

- Discuss and write down the meanings of the vocabulary terms. Write them in your own sentences.

Literary Technique: Similes:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELT1599](#)) ([ACELT1605](#)) ([ACELT1791](#)) ([ACELY1680](#)) ([ACELY1692](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1518](#)) ([ACELT1611](#)) ([ACELT1617](#))

“Unable to contain my anger, I launched myself at Liam like a tornado.” (p.17)

- Considering the what you know about Max’s feelings towards his brother, Liam, write your own similes to show Max’s anger, frustration and embarrassment. For example, ‘... like a red rag to a bull’, ‘... like a raging fire’.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- Max likes facts. What are some of the facts mentioned in this chapter?
- What did Liam do to Max to embarrass him?
- Why would Max prefer to have the apartment to himself? What is his favourite thing to do?
- What is Liam’s biggest fear?
- Who is Miss McBoob and why did Mum need to call her to come over?
- What do you think Liam will do next?

CHAPTER 2:

Vocabulary:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1493](#)) ([ACELA1498](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1508](#)) ([ACELA1512](#))

‘guiltily’, ‘painfully’, ‘anxiously’, ‘energetically’

- Write down the definitions of these adverbs (describing an action). Write each term in a sentence that relates to the behaviours and feelings of the boys. Can you find other adverbs in this chapter?

Literary Technique: Visual literacy:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELT1594](#)) ([ACELT1599](#)) ([ACELT1605](#)) ([ACELY1680](#)) ([ACELY1692](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELT1611](#)) ([ACELT1617](#)) ([ACELY1699](#))

"Somehow the walls were now huge slabs of red, yellow and blue. I spun around, dazzled. What was going on? I looked down. The floor was green and bumpy. Where are the wooden floorboards? My spotty rug? I crouched down and ran my fingers over raised letter shapes. It felt ... plastic." (p.32)

- Imagine this scene in your mind. Highlight the specific parts of the language that show the reader the appearance and feeling of the setting.
- Write another scene or setting using visual literacy techniques for a partner to illustrate.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- How do Max and Liam differ when considering their Mum's rules?
- Why does Max say, *'I swear, my brother is going to end up in prison one day.'*? (p.28)
- What is the new app about? How do the brothers feel when they find out what's happening? How would you feel in the same situation?
- What do you like about the illustrations / graphics in this book? What does the perspective show you about the scene?
- What are some of the strategies Max could use to calm down? Which ones could be effective and which ones would be ineffective?
- What are some of the strategies the brothers use to try and exit the game?
- What do you think will happen next?

CHAPTER 3:

Vocabulary:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1493](#)) ([ACELA1498](#)) ([ACELT1599](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1508](#)) ([ACELA1512](#)) ([ACELA1523](#)) ([ACELT1617](#))

'hideous', 'colossal', 'nostalgic', 'illuminated', 'phlegm'

- Write down the definitions of the above terms. Use each one in a sentence to describe a particular appearance of a character or object.

Literary Technique: Metaphors:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELT1594](#)) ([ACELT1603](#)) ([ACELT1599](#)) ([ACELT1605](#)) ([ACELY1680](#)) ([ACELY1692](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1518](#)) ([ACELT1609](#)) ([ACELT1795](#)) ([ACELT1611](#)) ([ACELT1615](#)) ([ACELT1617](#))

"The spider is probably licking its fangs and laying out the cutlery for a two-course feast at this very moment." (p.50)

- The author has used the metaphor to illustrate the intentions of the spider, although we can't imagine the spider literally laying out cutlery. What does this tell you about the spider's intentions? Is there another metaphor you can think of to describe what the spider wants to do to the boys?

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

Character Analysis: Max

"My clothes hang in the wardrobe. My books are in alphabetical order. My spotty socks are all carefully matched. My pants are in ... actually you probably don't want to hear any more about my pants." (p.49)

- What does this paragraph tell you about Max's personality?

Character Analysis: Liam

"Liam (who never questions anything and just dives into disasters without a second thought) actually looked nervous. I guess he knew more than anyone what he'd crammed under his bed." (p.51)

- What kind of personality traits does Liam possess?

- Why does Max believe wasps are his sworn enemy?
- How have the brothers worked together in this chapter?
- What have you learned about Liam?
- How is Max becoming more confident in his own abilities?
- What did you understand about their Dad, and who does Max think is responsible for him leaving?
- How do you think Max feels about his Dad not being around?
- What feelings do you get from the words, 'moist', 'bulbous', 'phlegm' and 'ambergris'? What do they each mean? What do they remind you of?
- How do you think Max will escape from the spider's lair?

CHAPTER 4:

Vocabulary:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1482](#)) ([ACELA1493](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1523](#)) ([ACELA1512](#))

'panicked', 'hacking', 'groping', 'walloped', 'gloating'

- Write the definitions for the vocabulary terms. Discuss that these are verbs to describe a specific action. Brainstorm and list synonyms and shades of meaning for these verbs.

Literary Technique - Idioms:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELT1599](#)) ([ACELY1680](#)) ([ACELY1692](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1518](#)) ([ACELT1611](#)) ([ACELT1617](#)) ([ACELY1698](#))

"... about to blow their top." (p.68)

- What is an idiom? What does the 'blow your top' idiom mean? (ie. Lose one's temper). Brainstorm other ways to describe this idiom.

Literary Technique: Hyperbole:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELT1599](#)) ([ACELT1605](#)) ([ACELY1680](#)) ([ACELY1692](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1508](#)) ([ACELA1518](#)) ([ACELA1523](#)) ([ACELT1611](#)) ([ACELT1617](#))

"Whoooooosshhhh! I sped forward at what felt like one thousand miles per hour. My knuckles went white with the effort of holding on tight as I swerved round the door frame and shot like a bullet into Mum's room." (p.75).

- Hyperbole is an exaggerated statement, not meant to be literal, and used in emotive / emphasised situations or dialogue. Highlight the parts of the statement that are not meant to be taken literally.
- How does this language create a greater impact on the reader? Re-write this sentence using more literal terms and compare the 'emotive' effectiveness. For example, 'I moved forward at what felt very fast.'

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- What facts did Max explain about spiders? What do you know about spiders?
- What are the different feelings Max has for Liam in this chapter?
- Why do the brothers want to stick the phone down, and what do they use to do so?
- What was the LEVEL TEN disaster, and what does this mean?
- How do you think Max will save Liam from the monster?



CHAPTER 5:

Vocabulary:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1493](#)) ([ACELA1498](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1508](#)) ([ACELA1512](#))

'authority', 'vulnerable', 'preposterous', 'anguish'

- Find and write the definitions of these terms and use them all in one or two related sentences.

Literary Technique - Show, Don't Tell:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1482](#)) ([ACELA1493](#)) ([ACELT1594](#)) ([ACELT1596](#)) ([ACELT1599](#)) ([ACELT1605](#)) ([ACELT1791](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1508](#)) ([ACELA1523](#)) ([ACELA1525](#)) ([ACELT1617](#))

"A cold, clammy sweat sprang up all over my body and my heart began to pump at turbo speed." (p.90)
How does the language used 'show' the reader how the character is feeling? How is this more effective than writing, 'I felt nervous.'? Write another sentence 'showing' a nervous character.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- What does Max compare Clio to, and why?
- How does the author use language to show the abnormal size comparison between the tiny brothers and everything around them?
- "Concentrate on the riddle," Liam said, sitting in a yoga position with a constipated look on his face.*" (p.90) – How does this language paint an image in your mind? Why would Liam be making this face?
- What are the challenges of the Shrinkle game the boys need to overcome?
- Write your own riddles for a friend to solve.
- What did Max and Liam do well as a team in this chapter?
- Why does Max think that Liam is putting on an 'excellent poker face'? What does this mean?

CHAPTER 6:

Vocabulary:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1493](#)) ([ACELA1498](#)) ([ACELT1596](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1512](#)) ([ACELA1523](#))

'strength', 'endurance', 'agility', 'intelligence'

- Discuss the definitions of the terms above. Find more in the chapter or add your own vocabulary terms that relate to gaming or competition.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- What were the scores for each of the skills listed in the vocabulary terms? How did Max feel? Did he feel these scores were fair? Why or why not? What do you think?
- How does Max use his previous knowledge of gaming to strategise a plan to get to Miss McBoob?
"Nothing I did was ever good enough for my dad. Just once, I wish he could have said he was proud of me." (p.107) – How is this part of the text significant to the way Max feels about his Dad, his brother Liam, and about himself?

CHAPTER 7:

Vocabulary:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1485](#)) ([ACELA1826](#)) ([ACELA1779](#)) ([ACELA1828](#)) ([ACELT1791](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1513](#)) ([ACELA1829](#)) ([ACELA1830](#))

‘disbelievably’, ‘impatiently’, ‘relief’, ‘anxiety’

- Identify the common spelling pattern (‘ie’) and particular phonemes in the words (eg. impatiently, anxiety). Break down the words into sounds or syllables. List other words with similar spelling or phoneme patterns.

Literary Technique - Metaphors:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELT1594](#)) ([ACELT1596](#)) ([ACELT1603](#)) ([ACELY1680](#)) ([ACELY1692](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELT1609](#)) ([ACELT1795](#)) ([ACELT1611](#)) ([ACELT1615](#)) ([ACELT1617](#)) ([ACELY1699](#))

“I felt a huge surge of relief overtake me, like I’d had a tight ball of anxiety in my tummy that I’d now pooped out.” (p.121).

- A metaphor is a figure of speech to represent an object or action symbolic of something else. How does this metaphorical line symbolise how Max is feeling when he realises he doesn’t have to be mad with Liam anymore?
- Turn to a friend and replicate the kind of expression that might be on his face, both during the ‘ball of anxiety’ and after. Think about a time you may have felt this emotion, and write a metaphorical sentence to express the relief of overcoming the difficult feeling. Decide whether you will include humour or not.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- Compare the similarities and differences between the way Max felt about Liam at the beginning of the book, and how he feels about him now? What has changed? How has being in the Shrinkle app helped the brothers to sort out their differences?
- What is an ‘impenetrable fridge’ and why does Max feel ‘despondent’ about getting into it? What ideas does Liam have? Do you have any other creative ideas?
- Why doesn’t Max tell Liam about losing another life in the game?
- Do you think the boys have the correct answer to the riddle? (What can’t be used until it’s broken? An egg?)
- What do you think will happen in the next chapter?

CHAPTER 8:

Vocabulary:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1482](#)) ([ACELA1484](#)) ([ACELA1493](#)) ([ACELA1495](#)) ([ACELA1498](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1512](#)) ([ACELA1523](#))

‘stiffly’, ‘frantically’, ‘limply’, ‘genuinely’, ‘seriously’

- These terms are adverbs (describing an action). Use these in your own sentences. Make a list of more adverbs or find some in the text.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- Does the countdown timer description at the start of the chapter match the time the boys estimate is left? What do you think might happen to them if they don’t reach their target?

- How does Max feel about climbing into the bin for the eggshells? Why is he doing it, regardless of how he feels? What does he silently wish?
- What do the terms 'hodgepodge' and 'putrid' mean?
- What did Max teach you about maggots?
- How did Clio help Max? How does Liam show his care for Max?

CHAPTER 9:

Vocabulary:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1486](#)) ([ACELA1780](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1512](#)) ([ACELA1523](#))

'interface', as in "Switching from the user control interface to lines and lines of data..." (p.150)

'density', as in "We might end up the right height, but lose our density?" (p.152)

'hack', as in "How dare you hack into my code." (p.153)

- These terms are all homonyms (words that share the same spelling and pronunciation but have different meanings), and computer-related terms. Use these words in your own sentences to show two meanings for each word. Can you find more homonyms in the text, or add your own to a list?
- Create a graphic showing the differences between homonyms, homophones and homographs, and students provide examples of each.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- What is the question and answer to the third riddle?
- What is meant by the phrase, "Liam's cup is not just half full, it's overflowing" (p.147)?
- What is software hacking? Why did Liam hack into the game? Do you think this was a wise / moral decision? Why or why not? What are the risks? How can we be careful of hackers with our own devices?
- How does the illustration and the language in the text portray Declan the cat? Write down some adjectives to describe him.

CHAPTER 10:

Vocabulary:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1482](#)) ([ACELA1493](#)) ([ACELA1498](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1512](#)) ([ACELA1523](#)) ([ACELA1525](#))

'sniggered', 'snorted', 'trembling', 'erupted'

- Discuss the meanings of these emotive verbs. Write all of these in a sentence or short story, and illustrate. Find more emotive verbs in the text.

Literary Technique: Onomatopoeia:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELT1600](#)) ([ACELT1606](#)) ([ACELT1791](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1512](#)) ([ACELT1611](#)) ([ACELT1617](#))

"The microwave door suddenly sprang open, shoving the blender off the shelf so that it toppled to the ground with an almighty smash." (p.163).

"An electric cackle erupted and a slice of toast blasted out, flying through the air and crash-landing centimetres from where we were crouching."(p.163).

- Onomatopoeia are words that represent, and imitate a sound. Highlight the onomatopoeia in the above lines. How does the author use this device to add an impact to the story?
- Make a list of onomatopoeia from this chapter. Some include, smash, cackle, blast, crash, whirl, rip, gush, suck, howl, poof, growl, etc.
- Draw a scene or a series of scenes including word sounds to represent the action.

Discussion Questions and Comprehension:

- What were some of the emotions you felt during this chapter? In which parts? How does the author use language and pace to keep with the action and emotion?
- How did Max show bravery? How would his 'old self' have reacted?
- How did Max and Liam achieve their goal in winning the game? What did they have to do? What was the end result?
- For what reasons would Max be feeling more confident in himself?
- Why does Mum have an interview at the school?
- Do you think Max will go for a milkshake with his Dad? What are the most important things Max has come to realise about his Dad and his brother?
- Do you think Miss McBoob knew about the boys' adventures and what happened to her phone?

Further Discussion Questions:

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELT1596](#)) ([ACELT1603](#)) ([ACELT1599](#)) ([ACELT1605](#)) ([ACELY1680](#)) ([ACELY1692](#))

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELT1608](#)) ([ACELT1613](#)) ([ACELT1609](#)) ([ACELT1610](#)) ([ACELY1699](#)) ([ACELY1703](#)) ([ACELY1713](#)) ([ACELY1801](#))

- What are the main themes of the story? What important messages does the author intend to portray?
- What did you learn about the main characters, Max and Liam? What are their individual personality traits? How did their thoughts and feelings about each other change from the beginning to the end of the story?
- What did you learn about teamwork? What were the best examples of teamwork in the story? How did the brothers build their relationship and achieve their goals by working together?
- Why do you think Miss McBoob developed the Shrinkle app? Do you think she had a plan for the boys all along?
- How do you think the game was created? What do you know about programming or writing data? What did you learn about gaming and/or computers?
- How did the game help Max overcome his doubt about himself and his strained relationship with his Dad?
- What do you like about the illustrations and graphics throughout the book? How do they portray the world the boys found themselves in? How do they convey humour and emotions? What kind of style or artistic media do you think the author-illustrator has used, and is this suitable for the nature of this story?
- Were there any particular formatting techniques used that helped you follow the story effectively? For example, the date and timer at each chapter introduction, the fact dot points, bold and italicised lettering?
- Did you find the dialogue between the characters realistic? Why or why not?
- Do you have a favourite scene from the story? Why this one?
- Would you play Shrinkle if it were based on your house? Do you like to solve riddles? Do you like the challenge of beating the clock? Brainstorm some ideas for your own version of Shrinkle.
- What do you think will happen after this story ends? Will the boys play this game again, or will there be another?
- How important is screen time to you? Discuss why screen time should be limited or not, and what would be a reasonable amount of time on devices in your household.

AFTER READING

Characters:

Max

Liam, younger brother

Mum

Clio, baby sister

Miss McBoob, neighbour and babysitter

Declan, next door's cat

Min

- Who is your favourite character? Why?
- Who is your least favourite character? Why?

Character Analysis

Years 3 & 4 English: [\(ACELA1493\)](#) [\(ACELA1498\)](#) [\(ACELT1594\)](#) [\(ACELT1604\)](#) [\(ACELT1605\)](#) [\(ACELT1791\)](#) [\(ACELT1794\)](#) [\(ACELY1680\)](#) [\(ACELY1692\)](#)

Years 5 & 6 English: [\(ACELA1508\)](#) [\(ACELA1524\)](#) [\(ACELA1525\)](#) [\(ACELT1611\)](#) [\(ACELT1612\)](#) [\(ACELT1800\)](#) [\(ACELY1703\)](#) [\(ACELY1713\)](#) [\(ACELY1704\)](#) [\(ACELY1714\)](#)

Use the following acronym (STEAL) to identify features of Max or another chosen character from *Game On: Shrinkle*. Find parts of the text to show the way they **S**peak, **T**hink, **E**ffect on others, **A**ct and **L**ook.

Speech – what does the character say? How do they speak?

Thought – what are the character's thoughts and feelings?

Effect on others – how do people react to the character?

Actions – what does the character do?

Looks – what does the character look like?

- Choose a character to create a character profile page, including a name, picture, adjectives / descriptive language to describe their appearance, personality traits, interests, dislikes, and so on.
- Use the STEAL method to develop your own character when writing a narrative.

Structure Format / Writing Style:

Writing style: Fantasy genre

The fantasy genre is revealed in the second chapter, where the brothers are fighting over Miss McBoob's phone and they are suddenly thrust into the game.

"All I can really remember of what happened next was:

- *a blinding rainbow light bursting out of the screen*
- *slamming my eyes shut and feeling a totally weird sensation all over, like I was somehow compacting into myself*
- *crash landing onto the floor."* (p.31).

- Is virtual reality possible? Yes. Is changing your state of being to be inside a game possible? No. Discuss how games, books and movies use elements of 'reality' to create 'fantasy' worlds.
- What other imaginative, and unrealistic, elements can you recall from *Game On: Shrinkle*? For example, when Declan was controlled by the Shrinkle cat.
- What part of this fantasy concept do you enjoy the most?

Structure Format

The beginning and ending of each chapter keep the reader engaged throughout, with rising action and emotive language.

For example:

Beginning: *“At that moment, I understood why Liam was scared of spiders. Spiders are TOTALLY terrifying close up (and magnified about ten thousand times).” (Ch.3, p.45).*

Ending: *“I didn’t want to say it out loud, but I was pretty sure that THIS was the spider’s lair and I had been captured in its web,” (Ch.3, p.61).*

- How does the ‘hook’ of the opening and closing lines of a chapter assist in structuring a narrative?

The author has included dot points at various intervals for easy navigation throughout the text and to give reference to Max’s interest in facts.

For example:

“Wasps are my sworn enemy. And here’s why:

- *They ruin picnics.*
- *Unlike bees, who sacrifice their life for an attack, wasps sting as many times as they want.*
- *Some wasps actually cram their eggs into their victims (okay, not humans, but cute insects like caterpillars). When the baby wasps hatch, they eat their way out. My baby sister can be pretty disgusting and I’ve seen her try to eat most things but she’s definitely never done that.*
- *Once, when I was about six, a wasp actually flew into my mouth and I accidentally swallowed it. I was terrified that my own poo might sting me for weeks afterwards.” (p.45-46)*
- In what types of texts have you seen dot points used? (Lists, planning documents, information texts, procedural texts, advert copy, etc)
- What is the purpose of utilising dot points in these texts? (They help keep the information clear and straight forward)

ACTIVITIES:

THEMES

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Chapter 1

“All I wanted to do this afternoon was relax, eat my snacks, play my game and forget all about having the WWB: World’s Worst Brother.” (p.13)

- What does this opening chapter tell us about Max’s family dynamics and how he feels about his younger brother, Liam? What language and metaphorical references are used to show Max’s feelings towards Liam? Can you relate to this sibling relationship in your family?

Chapter 3

“My tummy tied itself into a tight knot remembering the night Dad disappeared for good. There had been a LOT of very loud shouting from the living room and Liam had fetched Clio from her cot. We’d sat in silence, squigged together on my bed. (This was very unusual. As you know by now, Liam is NEVER silent.) It was a bit like when we were younger and we’d sit out huge thunderstorms together. Eventually, the front door had slammed and I haven’t seen Dad since.” (p.57)

- What do you think were the thoughts and feelings Max experienced when his Dad left? How do you think this event has affected the way he thinks about himself now?
- How do you think this event has affected the rest of the family?
- Reflect on a time your tummy ‘tied itself into a tight knot’. What happened? What emotion did you feel? What strategies helped you to feel better?

COMEDY

Chapter 3

"His foot squashed painfully down on my nose and I could almost taste the cheesy smell leaking from his socks." (p.47-48)

- Discuss how the author uses humour to show the characters' personalities or quirks. What kind of comedy would you describe this as? (dry). How does this keep the reader engaged?

Chapter 5

"Look Max, there's a book called Girl on a Budget and it's by someone called Penny Pincher!' Liam shouted up." (p.93)

- A pun is a kind of joke where a word or phrase can sound alike but have different possible meanings. How does the author use a pun in the above sentence?
- Come up with a list of words that have two meanings, and a list of words that sound the same as each other. For example, homophones like 'ate' and 'eight'. Now use one or more of these words to write a humorous sentence, in the form of a pun. For example, 'The shredded mozzarella cheese was grate fun to make.'
- Create a digital poster or a meme with your pun as the caption.

Chapter 7

"I'd actually thanked him. (And not in a sarcastic 'Thanks a lot for ruining my life' way, but in a 'Thank you for being there for me' kind of way.)" (p.118)

- Sarcasm is used in a humorous way to mock someone or something, usually meaning the opposite of what is said. For example, saying 'You're a great help' to someone who hasn't helped at all. In both a genuine and a sarcastic voice, say the same sentence with different intonations to show how the perceived meaning can change with the way you speak. Take turns with a partner to identify the sarcastic tone and genuine tone.

TEAMWORK

Chapter 1

"It could only have been my INFURIATING brother, Liam: self-proclaimed King of Pranks." (p.5)

- Max thinks that his brother Liam has played a prank on him when he found his bag full of underpants. What is the difference between a harmless prank and a dangerous prank? How would this affect their relationship, and their ability to work as a team when they need each other?
- How important is it to have trust in someone, especially someone who cares about you? Was Max right about Liam? Could they have resolved their differences sooner? How?

Chapter 2

"Max ...' he said again, quietly. 'Help.' 'Help YOU? You're wasting time and energy ...' I replied, looking at him." (p.41)

- Do you think Max and Liam are working well as a team in the beginning? What are the benefits to working or playing in a team?

Chapter 10

"We can do this,' I said. 'I need you. Shrinkle's just a game and we're great at games. Remember that time last summer when we beat Dad at penalty shoot-out?" (p.165)

- How did Max and Liam improve their teamwork skills by the end of the story? How do they show a positive attitude towards working together now?

- Type and print some dot points about the kinds of behaviours that make a good team. For example, listening to each other's ideas, sharing the responsibilities, taking turns, saying encouraging words, and so on. Use a Y-Chart (Looks Like, Feels Like, Sounds Like) to express the above dot points.

SELF-BELIEF

Chapter 3

"We need go under your bed,' I said. 'Right now, before the spider finds us.' (I'm not normally this decisive. Last week I spent so long in a sandwich shop trying to choose a filling, the shop closed for the day before I'd made up my mind.) I felt a little bit of proud of myself. I'd got us away from the spider and now I was going to get us out of this nightmare." (p.50)

- How has Max demonstrated that he has doubted himself in the past? How does he show that he can have confidence and belief in himself to overcome challenges? Why is this important?

FORGIVENESS

Chapter 7

"Somehow, knowing he would risk everything for me, even after I'd totally deserted him, made me realize Liam wasn't my enemy. He was my brother. And we were in this together." (p.118)

"I must have taken Mum's identical backpack into school ... full of her dirty washing loaded for the laundrette. (Our washing machine's been broken for three weeks.) So Liam hadn't pranked me ... He had nothing to do with the pants!" (p.120)

- How has Max demonstrated that he has reflected on his previous thoughts and feelings about his brother, particularly after Liam saved his life?
- How did Max realise that he had incorrectly judged Liam for the prank? How would it have helped to have open communication from the beginning?
- How important is forgiveness? Do you believe the brothers have shown forgiveness for their anger towards each other? Do you believe their relationship will be different from now on? In what ways, and what kinds of things will most likely stay the same?

WRITING ACTIVITIES

Narrative writing

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1491](#)) ([ACELA1492](#)) ([ACELA1498](#)) ([ACELT1601](#)) ([ACELT1791](#)) ([ACELT1607](#)) ([ACELT1794](#)) ([ACELY1682](#)) ([ACELY1683](#)) ([ACELY1694](#)) ([ACELY1695](#)). Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1505](#)) ([ACELA1522](#)) ([ACELA1523](#)) ([ACELA1525](#)) ([ACELT1611](#)) ([ACELT1612](#)) ([ACELT1798](#)) ([ACELT1618](#)) ([ACELT1800](#)) ([ACELY1701](#)) ([ACELY1704](#)) ([ACELY1705](#)) ([ACELY1714](#)) ([ACELY1715](#))

Use the building blocks of writing to create great pieces of writing.

Reference: www.sevenstepswriting.com/what-are-the-seven-steps

Step 1: Plan for Success – brainstorm ideas, concepts, themes and plotlines.

Step 2: Sizzling Starts – start at an exciting moment to grab the reader's attention.

Step 3: Tightening Tension – create tension and drama with a problem, build up momentum so the strongest challenge comes last, then the character can triumph in the end.

Step 4: Dynamic Dialogue – get to know your characters as they talk, walk and even stalk. Quotes from experts or celebrities can be powerful.

Step 5: Show, Don't Tell – use the characters actions to show the reader their personality and feelings.

Step 6: Ban the Boring – ban boring events like bed, breakfast, bus trips. Make sure each sentence is engaging and important to the story.

Step 7: Exciting Endings – the end should have a punchline, like a joke. It could be a call to action, plot twist or leave the reader with a question and a lasting impression.



TEACHER NOTES: Game On - Shrinkle

- **Idea 1:** Write a narrative with yourself in Max and Liam's place, where you have shrunk and transported into a virtual reality gaming app reflective of your own house. What would be your mission? Who would be in the game with you? How would you work together? Who and what challenges would you face? How would you tighten the plot tension? What exciting ending occurs? Make sure to include a range of literary devices, humour and figurative / descriptive language. Re-read, edit and share.
- **Idea 2:** Write a new sequel for *Shrinkle*. Perhaps you are transported into another world, or a popular game from many years ago, like Pac Man or Super Mario World. Are there new riddles to solve? What happens in this adventure?

Gaming App Development: Creative Writing

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1478](#)) ([ACELA1479](#)) ([ACELA1490](#)) ([ACELA1491](#)) ([ACELA1492](#)) ([ACELA1793](#)) ([ACELA1494](#)) ([ACELA1496](#)) ([ACELA1498](#)) ([ACELT1596](#)) ([ACELT1603](#)) ([ACELT1604](#)) ([ACELT1601](#)) ([ACELT1791](#)) ([ACELT1607](#)) ([ACELY1675](#)) ([ACELY1676](#)) ([ACELY1688](#)) ([ACELY1678](#)) ([ACELY1690](#)) ([ACELY1691](#)) ([ACELY1682](#)) ([ACELY1694](#)).

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1504](#)) ([ACELA1505](#)) ([ACELA1518](#)) ([ACELA1522](#)) ([ACELA1523](#)) ([ACELA1524](#)) ([ACELA1525](#)) ([ACELT1608](#)) ([ACELT1613](#)) ([ACELT1609](#)) ([ACELT1610](#)) ([ACELT1611](#)) ([ACELT1612](#)) ([ACELT1798](#)) ([ACELT1618](#)) ([ACELT1800](#)) ([ACELY1699](#)) ([ACELY1709](#)) ([ACELY1704](#)) ([ACELY1707](#)) ([ACELY1714](#)) ([ACELY1717](#)).

- Students can brainstorm different ideas for a new gaming app. Students can work in small groups to plan each part of the game, including characters, obstacles, prizes, scenery, goals, and so on.
- The completed article should include the 5W+H (who, what, when, where, why, how), an enticing introduction about the features and purpose of the game, dot points to clarify rules and guidelines, and a conclusion to sum it up and what the players will get out of the game. Students should use interesting language (maybe even some jokes and riddles), and drawings or graphics to support the text.

Persuasive Text

Years 3 & 4 English: ([ACELA1478](#)) ([ACELA1490](#)) ([ACELA1793](#)) ([ACELT1596](#)) ([ACELT1603](#)) ([ACELT1791](#)) ([ACELT1607](#)) ([ACELY1675](#)) ([ACELY1678](#)) ([ACELY1680](#)) ([ACELY1690](#)) ([ACELY1692](#)) ([ACELY1682](#)) ([ACELY1685](#)) ([ACELY1694](#)) ([ACELY1697](#)).

Years 5 & 6 English: ([ACELA1504](#)) ([ACELA1518](#)) ([ACELA1522](#)) ([ACELA1524](#)) ([ACELA1525](#)) ([ACELT1613](#)) ([ACELT1609](#)) ([ACELT1795](#)) ([ACELT1615](#)) ([ACELT1610](#)) ([ACELT1612](#)) ([ACELT1798](#)) ([ACELT1618](#)) ([ACELT1800](#)) ([ACELY1698](#)) ([ACELY1701](#)) ([ACELY1703](#)) ([ACELY1711](#)) ([ACELY1713](#)) ([ACELY1801](#)) ([ACELY1704](#)) ([ACELY1714](#)).

"...your screen ban is over." (p.176).

- Students write a persuasive article to argue, for or against, parents banning screen time when children disobey the rules. They need to include an introductory paragraph with their opinion, supporting arguments and a conclusion to sum up their reasoning.
- Students should consider the benefits and disadvantages of screen time, particularly with reference to our social, emotional and physical health.

DRAMA ACTIVITIES

Exploring Tone in Dialogues / Script Writing

Years 3 & 4 Drama: ([ACADRM031](#)) ([ACADRM032](#)) ([ACADRM033](#))

Years 5 & 6 Drama: ([ACADRM035](#)) ([ACADRM036](#)) ([ACADRM037](#)) ([ACADRR038](#))

Choose a scene of dialogue between Max and Liam from *Game On: Shrinkle*.

1. Read the speech with a partner, making sure to use an expressive tone of voice.
2. Read the speech again, this time change the tone in your voice (eg. from upbeat to dramatic, or from genuine to sarcastic). How does this change the 'feel' of the story?
3. Re-write the dialogue with a different tone. How will you re-phrase their words?

Game On: Shrinkle Theatre Show

Years 3 & 4 Drama: ([ACADRM031](#)) ([ACADRM032](#)) ([ACADRM033](#)) ([ACADRR04](#))

Years 5 & 6 Drama: ([ACADRM035](#)) ([ACADRM036](#)) ([ACADRM037](#)) ([ACADRR038](#))

- In groups, students create a 5 – 10 minute ‘re-telling’ or theatre show of their favourite / most significant parts of the book. They can wear or produce their own props and costumes. Focus on demonstrating emotion. Will they use any special effects, music, imagery, etc to accompany their performance?

Stand Up Comedy Show

Years 3 & 4 Drama: ([ACADRM031](#)) ([ACADRM032](#)) ([ACADRM033](#)) ([ACADRR04](#))

Years 5 & 6 Drama: ([ACADRM035](#)) ([ACADRM036](#)) ([ACADRM037](#)) ([ACADRR038](#))

- Students might like to write and perform a comedy act, referencing a similar humour as in the book, or involving the audience with riddles to solve.

VISUAL ARTS / DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES ACTIVITY

Digital Graphics

Years 3 & 4 Art: ([ACAVAM110](#)) ([ACAVAM111](#)) ([ACAVAM112](#)) ([ACAVAR113](#))

Years 5 & 6 Art: ([ACAVAM114](#)) ([ACAVAM115](#)) ([ACAVAM116](#)) ([ACAVAR117](#))

Years 3 & 4 Digital Technologies: ([ACTDIK007](#)) ([ACTDIP009](#)) ([ACTDIP010](#)) ([ACTDIP011](#)) ([ACTDIP013](#))

Years 5 & 6 Digital Technologies: ([ACTDIK014](#)) ([ACTDIP018](#)) ([ACTDIP019](#)) ([ACTDIP020](#)) ([ACTDIP022](#))

- Experiment with digital technologies, such as Paint, Photoshop, Sketchbook, Procreate, etc, to create a visual virtual reality scene, or user interface, either from the book or your own design.
- Explore the use of light and shade, and perspective. What art techniques and small details will add interest and variety to your image? Explore other artworks and graphics for inspiration.

Computer Science

Years 3 & 4 Digital Technologies: ([ACTDIK007](#)) ([ACTDIK008](#)) ([ACTDIP009](#)) ([ACTDIP010](#)) ([ACTDIP011](#)) ([ACTDIP012](#)) ([ACTDIP013](#))

Years 5 & 6 Digital Technologies: ([ACTDIK014](#)) ([ACTDIK015](#)) ([ACTDIP016](#)) ([ACTDIP017](#)) ([ACTDIP018](#)) ([ACTDIP019](#)) ([ACTDIP020](#)) ([ACTDIP022](#))

- Coding tells a computer program how to function. Programming languages like JavaScript, Python, C++, and HTML, are used by computer scientists to build games and websites.
- Information about the benefits of learning to code and links to various programs can be found here: [Basic Coding & Computer Programming for Kids | ComputerScience.org](#)
- A popular coding app for children in the primary years is Scratch.
- Coding is explained in this video: [\(9\) Coding for Kids Explained | What is Coding | Why is Coding Important - YouTube](#)

Comparison Texts

Diary of a Roblox Pro (series), Scholastic. Similar theme: Computer game adventures.

Deltora Quest (series) by Emily Rodda, Scholastic. Similar theme: Brainteasers, puzzles, clues and mysteries must be solved by the adventurers to fulfil the quest

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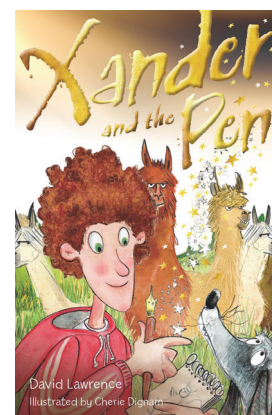
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