

ALIEN INVASION *in my* BACKYARD



RUBEN BOLLING

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Curriculum Connections and Activity/Discussion Guide

The activities in this guide align with Common Core State Standards for grades 3–5.



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Reading With Pictures



Andrews McMeel
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ALIEN INVASION IN MY BACKYARD: AN EMU CLUB ADVENTURE!

RUBEN BOLLING

AMP! Comics for Kids
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GRADE LEVEL: 3–5

Curriculum Connections

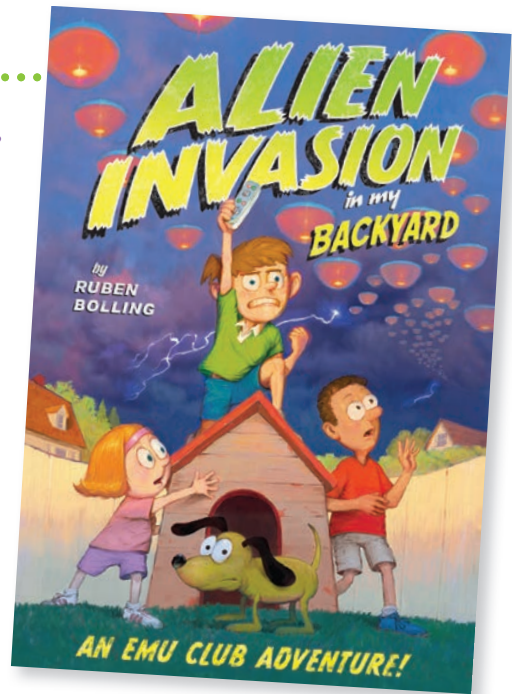
Language Arts—Reading
Genre Study
Writing

Content Standards

Language Arts
Common Core State Standards: www.corestandards.org

Overview

Students identify and discuss the genre elements in *Alien Invasion in My Backyard: An EMU Club Adventure!* Then they write an original mixed-genre story using elements of mystery and science fiction.



Grade 3

Reading

- * Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1]

Writing

- * Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3]
- * With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4]

Speaking and Listening

- * Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 3 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1]

Grade 4

Reading

- * Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1]

Writing

- * Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3]
- * Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.4]
- * With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.5]

Speaking and Listening

- * Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one on one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 4 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.1]
- * Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.2]

Grade 5

Reading

- * Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.1]

Writing

- * Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.3]
- * Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.4]
- * With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.5]

Speaking and Listening

- * Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 5 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.5.1]

Time Frame

3 to 5 class periods.

Objectives

- * Students will identify and discuss elements of the mystery and science fiction genres in *Alien Invasion in My Backyard: An EMU Club Adventure!* and cite text evidence to support their findings.
- * Students will write narratives that mix elements of the mystery and science fiction genres.

Materials

- * Copies of *Alien Invasion in My Backyard: An EMU Club Adventure!*
- * Copies of the Genre Evidence worksheet
- * Chart paper, whiteboard, or other display



Vocabulary

- * *Spelunking*: exploring underground caves (page 11)
- * *Toupee*: a small wig worn by a man to cover a bald spot (page 25)
- * *Didgeridoo*: a wind instrument played by the Aboriginal people of Australia (page 39)
- * *Immobilized*: unable to move (page 50)
- * *Enormity*: the seriousness of a problem (page 52)
- * *Ironic*: something that is funny because it's the opposite of what is expected (page 56)
- * *Colonize*: take over a place and send people to live there (page 63)
- * *Sarcastic*: saying the opposite of what you really mean in order to insult someone or show that you're annoyed (page 69)
- * *Feline*: having to do with cats (page 81)
- * *Sophisticated*: highly developed, advanced, and complicated (page 81)
- * *Evolutionary*: changing over time (page 83)
- * *Promotion*: a move to a higher rank or position (page 95)



Procedure

Before Reading

1. Ask students to name some literary genres with which they are familiar (e.g., fantasy, comedy, mystery, science fiction). Tell students that sometimes stories don't fit neatly into just one genre. Explain to students that the book they will be reading in this lesson includes elements of two different literary genres: mystery and science fiction. On chart paper or a whiteboard, create a two-column chart and label the columns *Mystery* and *Science Fiction*. Activate students' prior knowledge by having them share what they know about the characters and plot elements that are usually included in mystery and science fiction stories. Record their observations on the chart. (Save this chart for later in the lesson.)
2. Take students on a quick book walk through *Alien Invasion in My Backyard: An EMU Club Adventure!* without reading the text. Ask students what they think the book is about. Have students point out elements of mystery or science fiction that they see in the illustrations.
3. Share with students the *Genre Evidence* worksheet. Review the major elements of the mystery and science fiction genres as shown in the charts. If students missed any elements of the genres in their earlier brainstorming, add them to the class chart.
4. Tell students that as they read *Alien Invasion in My Backyard*, they should look for elements of the mystery and science fiction genres and write evidence from the text in the charts. Let students know that their charts will not be completely filled, as the story does not have all the elements of both genres. Depending on the developmental level of your students, you could ask them to jot notes about the characters and events in the story, or you could require them to write quotes directly from the text and record page numbers.
5. Before students read the book, you may want to teach the vocabulary words that they are not familiar with. (See *Vocabulary*, above.)

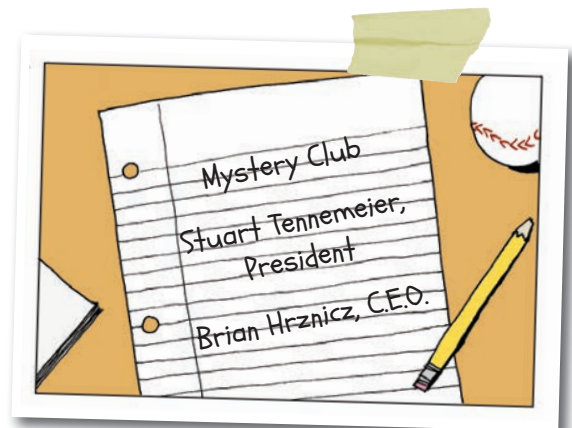
During Reading

6. Divide students into small groups and distribute a copy of the *Genre Evidence* worksheet to each group. Direct students to read through the book together and record the evidence they find in the text and write it in the chart. *Note:* To shorten this activity, you could assign a different chapter of the book to each group.

After Reading

7. Bring the class together to review the story using the following questions.
 - * Who are the main characters in this story? (*Stuart, Brian, Violet, Ferdinand, cat-alien*)
 - * Who is the narrator of the story? (*Stuart*) What is the point of view? (*first person*)

- * What is the setting of the story? (*Stuart's house and yard, Ferdinand's doghouse, and the secret underground room*)
 - * What was the problem in the story? (*The cat-aliens wanted to take over the Earth.*)
 - * How was the problem resolved? (*The EMU Club scared the cat-aliens off with water guns.*)
 - * How did the illustrations help you understand the story? What was your favorite illustration and why?
 - * What did you like about the story? Was there anything you didn't like?
 - * Did you read anything that reminded you of something in your life? Something in another book?
 - * Was there anything in the book that surprised you?
8. Have each group share the mystery and science fiction genre evidence they found in the book. On the class chart created in Step 1, record the characters and plot elements students found for each genre. If students have recorded direct quotes from the text on their worksheets, have them read the quotes aloud.
 9. Tell students that they will now write their own mixed-genre short story. Direct students to choose at least one element from the mystery genre and at least one element from science fiction and write a new short story using these elements. Students can create their own characters and settings. For example, a student could write a story about a detective (mystery) who is chased by robots (science fiction), or a story about a time traveler (science fiction) who must follow clues to find out a secret (mystery) about a dangerous new technology (science fiction). They will need to plan their stories carefully so that the genre elements make sense together in a cohesive narrative.
 10. Have students work through the writing process established in your classroom (prewriting, drafting, revising/editing, rewriting, publishing, etc.) to write their narratives. If you will be using the assessment checklist (below) along with your established assessments, share it with students at this time so they will know what is expected.
 11. Once students' short stories have been published, have them trade stories with a partner. Each student should use the *Genre Evidence* worksheet to look for elements of mystery and science fiction in his or her partner's story and record the text evidence.



Assessment

Assess students' final stories using the following checklist, along with whatever formative and summative assessments you use for the writing process in your classroom. Be sure to share this checklist with students at the beginning of the assignment so they will understand what is expected.

Mixed-genre story assignment checklist:

_____ The narrative has elements of a mystery.

_____ The narrative has elements of science fiction.

_____ The narrative blends the two genres together and makes sense.

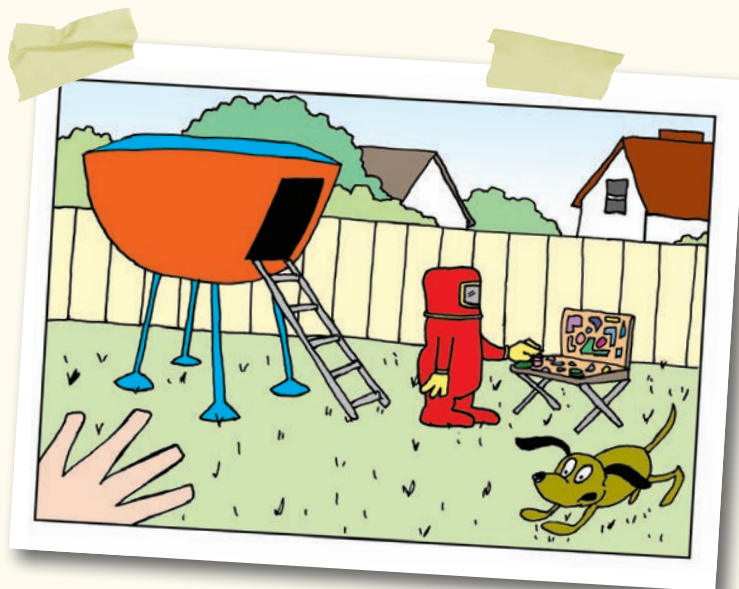
Differentiation and Extended Learning Activities

Mix It Up

- * Have students choose some other genres and mix elements together to create new stories. You can add a layer of complexity to challenge students by having them write mixed-genre stories in different formats such as drama or poetry.

Genres:

<i>Mystery</i>	<i>Realistic fiction</i>
<i>Science fiction</i>	<i>Myth, fable, or legend</i>
<i>Fantasy</i>	<i>Folktale or fairy tale</i>
<i>Horror</i>	<i>Biography or autobiography</i>
<i>Historical fiction</i>	<i>Informational text</i>



More to Explore

- * Have students use the *Protocol Report for Alien Invasion Contingency Planning Guidance* from *Alien Invasion in My Backyard* (page 100) as a model to create their own alien-animals and weapons to defeat them. Students can incorporate these characters into their mixed-genre stories.



Alien-Franksteins



Alien-Elephants



Alien-Bugs

In a World...

- * Have students create movie trailers for their new, mixed-genre stories. They can act out the trailers as skits in a live performance, or create actual film trailers using video cameras and digital editing or animation tools.

Round Robin Genres

- * Place students in small groups and have each student in a group choose a different genre. Have students create a mixed-genre story in “round robin” fashion, as follows:
 - * One student begins to tell a story using elements of his or her selected genre.
 - * After a minute or so, the first student passes the story to another student, who continues the story, adding characters or elements of his or her genre.
 - * Students pass the story around the group until all students have had a turn to add elements of their genre to the story.
 - * Once everyone has contributed to the story at least once, the group can work together to come up with a satisfying ending to their mixed-genre story.

Going Live

- * Have students turn their mixed-genre stories into short plays and perform them for invited guests. Before they perform, students should give the audience a list of the genres they used in their story. As students perform their play, the audience can call out or hold up cards naming the genres that they see being acted out.

Names _____ Date _____

Genre Evidence

Directions: As you read *Alien Invasion in My Backyard: An EMU Club Adventure!*, look for evidence of the elements of the mystery and science fiction genres. In the chart below, write the evidence you find in the story for each element.

Elements of a Mystery		Evidence From Text
Characters	Detective(s)	
	Suspect(s)	
	Villain(s)	
Plot Elements	A problem, something missing, or a secret	
	Suspense	
	Danger	
	Clues	
	Mystery is solved at the end	

Elements of a Science Fiction		Evidence From Text
Characters	Alien(s)	
	Time traveler(s)	
	Robot(s)	
Plot Elements	Set in the future or space	
	Technology that doesn't exist yet	