



Walker Books Classroom Ideas



The Astronauties: Moon Mayhem

Andrew Cranna
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*Notes may be downloaded and printed for regular classroom use only.

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Outline:

You may be asking yourself, dear reader, how three naughty kids, one pet octopus and their handsome robot minder – that's me – accidentally got strapped inside a 400 megaton thermonuclear rocket on a one-way collision course to the moon? Good question!

Well, let me take you back to the beginning . . .

It's 101 years in the future and the Moon has been transformed into the ultimate super-cool intergalactic amusement park. The Astronauties, the children of some of the park's designers, get a chance to visit the Lunar Park before it officially opens. But when they arrive, they discover their parents are missing. Now their mission is to find them, defeat the baddies and free a trapped alien. Hold on tight, this is going to be one wild rocket ride!

Author/Illustrator Information:

Andrew Cranna grew up in rural NSW. After studying Primary Education at university, Andrew travelled around the world teaching and playing rugby in various places. After finishing a bicycle adventure through Asia, Andrew settled in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam to continue teaching and illustrating for travel magazines and local newspapers. Andrew later returned to Australia to complete a Masters Degree in Art Education and take up a position as Art Master at Sydney Grammar Prep School at St Ives where he continues to teach. He currently lives on the Central Coast with his wife and two sons and spends his travel time to school writing and drawing. His books include *The Bloodhound Boys: The Great Blood Bank Robbery* and *The Bloodhound Boys: The Monster Truck Tremor Dilemma*.

How to Use These Notes:

This story works on many levels. The suggested activities are therefore for a wide age and ability range. Please select accordingly.

These notes are for:

- Primary years 4-6
- Ages 9+

Key Learning Areas:

- English

Example of:

- Novel

Themes/Ideas:

- Adventure
- Humour
- Space



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Before Reading:

Before reading *The Astronauties: Moon Mayhem*, view the cover and title of the book. Identify the following:

- The title of the book
- The author
- The publisher
- The blurb

Based on the cover, what do you think this story is about? How do you think it will begin/end? Revisit your answer after reading the book – how close were your predictions to the actual novel?

Exploring the Text:

What are the themes in this novel? As a class or in small groups identify and list the themes. Individually write a statement of belief about each theme.

Identify the orientation, complication and resolution of the story. Ask students to try to identify this structure in other books or movies. As a class, discuss how these narrative features give meaning to stories.

Discuss the title of the book. Do you think this is a good title? Why or why not? If you were asked to choose an alternative title for the book, what would it be? Remember, a good title should capture the audience's attention and give them some idea of what the book is about.

The novel is set 100 years into the future! How does the time period affect the story? How are the Astronauties' daily lives (before they get sent into space) different from your own? What part of your morning routine do you wish could have a robot involved and why?

Consider the world Andrew Cranna has created in *The Astronauties: Moon Mayhem*. What elements in the world seem fantastical? Do any futuristic parts of the story seem plausible to you? Why or why not?

In small groups, choose Halley, Rocket or Ziggy and explain how they demonstrate the following character traits in the novel:

- Resourcefulness
- Courage
- Resilience

"Sorry, Butbot. We love you, but we never do the things you tell us to, so we're not going to start now, are we?" (page 119). The Astronauties often do the 'wrong' thing, even when they know there might be bad consequences. Do you agree with their behaviour? Why or why not?

The Astronauties: Moon Mayhem is highly illustrated. How did this affect your reading experience? How might it have been different without the illustrations?

Have you ever been to a theme park? If so, what was your experience like? If not, what's a theme park anywhere in the world you'd like to visit and why? Hopefully your time there will be a bit different to the Astronauties...

Keep a "Vocab Journal" while reading the novel. Make a note of any words you come across that are unfamiliar and look up their meaning. Also keep track of any words or phrases that you particularly like and write a note next to each explaining why you like that word/phrase.

Creative Responses to the Text:

Design your own cover for the book with new imagery and a new tagline that will persuade and interest people in reading the book.

When Octopug can finally communicate with the Astronauties, he has plenty to say! Do you have a pet? What do you think it might want to say to you and why?

Choose a scene in the novel and rewrite it from the perspective of Butbot. Focus particularly on Butbot's attitudes and feelings, rather than simply recounting events. How might they see and experience events very, very differently to the Astronauties?

Choose a futuristic element or invention in the world of *The Astronauties: Moon Mayhem* – there are some fun suggestions on page 11 – and write a short story set 100 years from now about your experience with it!

What's your favourite ride at a theme park? Imagine you had a job like the Astronauties' parents and were tasked with inventing a brand new theme park ride – what would it look like and what would it do? Draw a picture of your new ride and share it with your classmates – you can even make a whole theme park from all your ideas!

Imagine that a movie was being made of *The Astronauties: Moon Mayhem*. In small groups, create a soundtrack to accompany some of the key scenes, thinking particularly about the mood you want to convey. You could either make a compilation of existing songs or compose your own musical pieces. Present your soundtrack to the class, explaining why you have chosen the pieces you have. Also choose your ideal cast for the movie and create a movie poster.

The final pages hint that this might not be the last time we hear from the Astronauties... what sort of crazy antics do you think they could get up to in another book? Write and edit an outline of ideas for an Astronauties book #2 and send it to Walker Books Australia to pass on to Andrew!