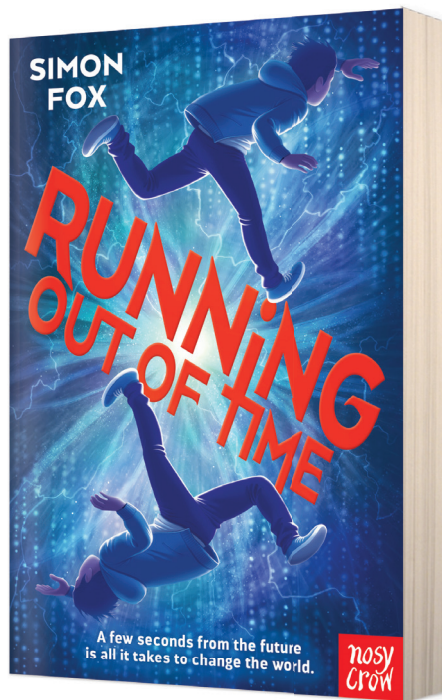


RUNNING OUT OF TIME

CHAPTER-BY-CHAPTER TEACHING RESOURCES



9781839944390
Paperback £7.99
Suitable for 9+ years

ABOUT THE BOOK

Running Out of Time is a thrilling, unputdownable debut, with extraordinary twists and amazing action, from an incredible new voice in children's fiction. Perfect for fans of Alex Rider, Artemis Fowl, and Inception, *Running Out of Time* is an ingenious, high-concept thriller with a twist that you won't believe.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

SIMON FOX lives in Sussex with his extraordinarily patient wife and two teenage children who never tidy their rooms but would take on the world for each other. *Running Out of Time* is his first novel after twenty years trapped in the dungeon of accountancy. He is determined to never go back.



“It was extraordinarily interesting right from the first page.”
Lottie, aged 12

“This book is such a thriller!”
Khadijah, aged 12

Chapter	Comprehension Questions	Writing Opportunities	Cross-Curricular Activities
1: Now (pages 2-3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why do you think the author has chosen the four words 'I can steal time' to start this story? How much time can the main character steal at the moment? Which country do they need to get to? Why? Where has the main character ended up? Why is this chapter only two pages long? 	Write a short prediction paragraph about who the protagonist of this story might be, and what has happened to them along their journey so far before reading on and finding out.	MATHS • There are several references to lengths of time during this chapter such as 'three minutes' and 'half of that'. Learn more about measuring time, using the language of time, and telling the time throughout the day.
2: After (pages 5-11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On page 5, three police cars are described as being 'parked in a line like crooked teeth'. What literary technique is used here? (<i>simile</i>) Why is it different for Ronnie if he is caught? Why are there passages of text written in <i>italics</i> during this chapter? What does this show? What does the main character mean when he says he 'feels metal round my wrists'? How is the journey over at the end of Chapter 2 according to the main character? Do you think he will get to see his dad? 	In this chapter, Ronnie gets out his mobile phone. Imagine the main character had a mobile phone. Write an email or instant message to his dad, telling him about what he had just experienced and enquiring about his dad's safety.	PSHE • How are emotions explored in this chapter? Make a note of the different emotions that the main character and Ronnie feel during this chapter such as anger, fear and nervousness, and the verbs and adverbs used to describe them.
3: Before (pages 13-22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is an 'underdog'? Define this word using a dictionary and use it in sentences of your own to show your understanding. Who is being described on page 13 when he uses the phrase 'forces of oppression'? Is this an accurate choice of words? What is the name of the main character? Why do you think we only learn it in this chapter? List three changes that Alex goes through in this chapter. What do we discover about the country that Alex is living in? 	Dad tells Aleksander that 'you can't be brave unless you are scared.' Write a paragraph explaining whether you think this is true or not, giving reasons to justify your thoughts. Consider the theme of bravery in the book as you read on.	PSHE • Bullying, prejudice and discrimination happen in this chapter. Learn more about these terms, define them as intentionally harmful and deliberate behaviour that involves the unjust treatment of different categories of people. Create an anti-bullying or anti-discrimination presentation to share with your classmates.

<p>4: After (pages 24-31)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are the ‘authorities’ that Ronnie talks about at the beginning of this chapter? Why would Dad be with them? • Why have Aleksander and his dad journeyed to England? • Do you believe that his dad is safe? • What first impressions do you have of Ronnie? Who is he? Is he a good or bad character? Use evidence from the text to support your opinion. • What ‘gift’ does Aleksander seem to possess? 	<p>Write a character profile for Ronnie including all the information you know about him already and anything you can infer about him so far.</p>	<p>SPEAKING AND LISTENING • Play a game of ‘two lies and a truth’ with a partner to see if you have a similar ‘gift’ to Aleksander.</p>
<p>5: Before (pages 33-36)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you notice a change in Grandmother in this chapter? • How does the author show that she is growing older? Why does she get angry when Alex asks her if she is ‘unwell’? • Do you agree that Alex is emotionally distant with people based on his reactions to his grandmother’s hug and his teacher when she said she was leaving? • Why doesn’t Grandmother wish to go to the hospital? • What advice does Grandmother give to Aleksander? 	<p>In this chapter, Ronnie gets out his mobile phone. Imagine the main character had a mobile phone. Write an email or instant message to his dad, telling him about what they had just experienced and enquiring about his dad’s safety.</p>	<p>PHILOSOPHY/SCIENCE • Grandmother tells Aleksander that ‘there is no such thing as magic’, and that ‘everything can be predicted because everything in the world has to obey the laws of science’. Discuss this as a class to share your beliefs and thoughts.</p>
<p>6: After (pages 38-49)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does Alex feel fearful that he won’t be able to do what Ronnie wants? What verb is used to describe this? (gnaw) • Does Ronnie really mean that Alex is ‘family’ when he uses this word? • How is Ronnie’s rising anxiety repeatedly shown throughout this chapter? • Summarise in one word how Alex feels after having been caught up in this situation with Ronnie and the crew. • What item of jewellery does Alex recognise and who did it originally belong to? 	<p>In this chapter, Ronnie compares Alex’s gift to ‘Baba Yaga mind-reading’. Learn about the legendary traditional tale from Russian folklore about Baba Yaga by reading books like The House with Chicken Legs by Sophie Anderson and write your own witchy retellings.</p>	<p>DRAMA • In small groups, re-enact the chaotic scenes of this chapter. Freeze-frame at different points to reflect on what each character is thinking and feeling.</p>

<p>7: Before (pages 51-62)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the author create a sense of urgency in this chapter? • What does it show about Grandmother when she calls Aleksander a 'good boy'? • What has Alex's dad been doing with documents? Why does this mean that they have to leave? • Who is shown as being stronger when they have an argument: Grandmother or Dad? • Why do they decide to drive a different car like the neighbour's old blue Skoda from next door? 	<p>How do you pack just one bag of your things? Write down a list of items that you would take with you from your home if you were in Aleksander's situation and that was all you could carry.</p>	<p>HISTORY/GEOGRAPHY • We learn in this chapter that Aleksander and his dad are escaping as a result of an aggressive and authoritarian government. Find out about different regimes across the world where this happens today, and how restrictive the rules are in these places.</p>
<p>8: After (pages 64-71)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it mean when Aleksander says that the look that Rachel gave him sent a chill through him? • Do Rachel and Alex have something in common with each other? • Why does Ronnie only pay Alex with a twenty-pound note? • What dreams did Ronnie have? Do you feel any sympathy for him? • Do you believe that there is a 'way of the world'? 	<p>Write a diary entry from the perspective of Aleksander about his day out with Ronnie and the crew, detailing the highlights and lowlights of the day.</p>	<p>PSHE • When Ronnie describes his dreams, he speaks about having a gift, luck, or money to have achieved them. Discuss your dreams and if you think you need a gift, luck, money, or something else to achieve your dreams.</p>
<p>9: Before (pages 73-85)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did the journey between Aleksander and his dad start off like an adventure? How has it now become more real? • What is Dad's plan of action if they are caught? What does he tell Alex that he must say? • Find a word on page 74 that means the same as 'a feeling of deep seriousness and sadness'. (sombre) • Where do Alex and his dad hide on the bus? • What do they do whilst they wait in line? Why does Alex suggest talking about football and the Champions League? 	<p>Create an emotions graph to plot Alex's changing thoughts and feelings in the last chapters. Refer to key events like: being forced to flee their home; leaving Grandmother; hiding in the bus; and making it through the border checks.</p>	<p>GEOGRAPHY • Aleksander and his dad are refugees because they have been forced to flee their home and country due to brutality, violence and persecution against them. Research about refugees in the world right now, their rights, and the global responses to helping them.</p>

<p>10: After (pages 87-95)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What news does Alex see on his phone? • Who arrives in the car and tells Alex to get in? • Why is Alex scared when Rachel mentions the immigration department? • Why does Rachel show some concern for Aleksander and how does she try to help him? Do you think their relationship will grow to become friends throughout the book? • What option does she give Alex at the end of this chapter? Should he go with her to her home? 	<p>Alex sees news about border patrols intercepting boatloads of immigrants off the UK coast on his phone. Discuss the headlines that are often seen online and in newspapers about refugees and write alternative, kinder headlines.</p>	<p>GEOGRAPHY • Rachel talks to Aleksander about claiming asylum in this chapter. Understand more about the term 'asylum seeker' in that it means a person seeking protection from persecution, but who hasn't yet been legally recognized as a refugee and how seeking asylum is a human right.</p>
<p>11: Before (pages 97-102)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some of the sights and sounds that Alex experiences when first encountering the continent of Europe? • Why does Alex say that he already feels that they do not belong here? • How many kilometres do they have to travel to get to France? • What nickname does Aleksander have? (little bear) • What memories does Aleksander have of his mother before he never saw her again? 	<p>Write a reflection from Alex's perspective about the events in this chapter. Focus particularly on his complicated feelings surrounding his mum, dad, grandmother, and his gift.</p>	<p>ART • Sketch out what is on the photographs that Aleksander finds.</p>
<p>12: After (pages 104-115)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the reason why Alex agreed to go with Rachel? • What do we learn about Rachel from her home? Who is Hayley? • Why doesn't Alex seem to get Rachel's jokes? • What is Ronnie's full name, and why does Rachel share it with Alex? What else do we learn about him and the gang? • Why does Alex admit that they're not his 'friends'? 	<p>Write a letter from Aleksander to his dad, detailing all the things he wishes he could say to him.</p>	<p>PSHE • Explain the concepts of people smuggling and human trafficking after they have been mentioned in this chapter. Discuss the reasons why this happens and its links to modern slavery, and how to report it to supportive organisations such as the NSPCC.</p>

<p>13: Before (pages 117-125)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What has Dad done with the documents to stop the government from getting their hands on them? • Why do Aleksander and his dad need to cross over to England so urgently? • In which countries would you find Krakow, Prague and Dresden? • How did Alex save him and his dad from being killed in the car? • What does Alex learn about his mother and his family at the end of this chapter? 	<p>Write a balanced argument about whether Alex or Dad is right about changing the future and the decisions that are made due to the 'gift'.</p>	<p>DRAMA • Create a 'Conscience Corridor'; half of the class stand on one side of the room, persuading Alex that he is right to change the future. The other half stand on the other side, persuading Alex to think about the consequences of his decisions. Take turns walking down the middle through the corridor in-role as Alex. How does it feel?</p>
<p>14: After (pages 127-140)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mimic the way that Rachel and Hayley enter the living room 'in a way that's trying not to look too planned'. • Why does Rachel say that Alex can't stay at her house? • Read up to page 130. How would you describe the relationship between Alex and Hayley in three words? • What does Alex do to successfully retrieve the parcel from the post office? • Who appears to try to take the package away from Alex? What happens to him at the end of this chapter? 	<p>Write the next part of the story, predicting what you think happens to Alex, and Captain Ivanov.</p>	<p>MUSIC • In groups, use different instruments and sound effects to create a dramatic and atmospheric soundtrack as you re-read this scene between Alex and Captain Ivanov to add tension and suspense.</p>
<p>15: Before (pages 142-143)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where is Amsterdam? Where is Calais? • How is the condition of the car shown to be deteriorating? • Why does Dad snap at Alex about the car? • Why does he choose to head to the port of Calais rather than Ostend? • Do you think they will get there without anything bad happening? 	<p>Create a fact file or report about the port city of Calais. Learn about its history, its geography including how it is the nearest French town to England, and the refugee camps that have been situated there.</p>	<p>GEOGRAPHY • Using online mapping software and the place names mentioned in the book so far, work out how far Aleksander has travelled in kilometres across Europe to get to England.</p>

<p>16: After (pages 145-151)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why doesn't Alex want to open the envelope in public? • Act out Hayley's expression of sitting 'stern-faced' to show how she feels. • What does Alex find when he opens the envelope? • Why is Hayley quick to apologise to Alex when she sees the contents of the envelope? • Why does Alex say that he feels normal in the company of Rachel and Hayley? 	<p>Write a short summary of the events in this chapter and why they are important.</p>	<p>LITERACY • Consider the important themes in the novel so far, e.g. freedom, hope, home, family, friendship, journeys. Can you add any more? Create a 'Theme Sheet' to record any ideas as you read.</p>
<p>17: Before (pages 153-161)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who does Alex find in the old shower block? • Why does the man think that Alex and his dad could be the police? • What causes the man to stop threatening Alex's dad with a knife? • According to Alex, why do people-smugglers use refrigerated lorries to transport people across the border? • How does this chapter explain how Alex and his dad have come to meet Ronnie later on? 	<p>(If appropriate for the class and with sensitivity and awareness of children's own backgrounds.) Research and share real first-hand accounts of refugees' experiences. Discuss each account together in small groups.</p>	<p>LITERACY/PSHE/GEOGRAPHY • Consider how the themes of differences, racism and nationality are explored in this story as a whole. How are Alex and Dad treated on their journey? Why?</p>
<p>18: After (pages 163-176)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does Hayley say that Alex can't call Rachel? • How does Hayley feel about her mum going undercover? • What plan of action do they come up with to see Stripes? • What reason does Hayley give for her super strength? • What do you think will happen to Alex? Will he jump? 	<p>Write a character profile for Hayley. What are her personality traits, her strengths and her weaknesses? Include key quotes and descriptions from the text.</p>	<p>ART • Imagine you are recreating the events of this chapter for a film. Create a storyboard of images or drawings to show how the action unfolds.</p> <p>ART • Draw what you imagine Hayley to look like.</p>

<p>19: Before (pages 178-181)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is Dad actually angry with Alex when he uses the curse or is it a feeling of something else? • At what age did Dad learn to practise the gift? • What caused Dad to stop using the gift? How has this left its legacy upon him? • Why does Dad find it hard to trust Alex? • How does the author help the reader to feel hopeful for Alex and Dad at the end of this chapter? 	<p>Write about a time when you have had to trust someone or yourself to take a leap into the unknown.</p>	<p>LITERACY/PSHE • How is the theme of resilience explored in the story? Give five examples of times when Alex, Dad or other characters have shown resilience. Think about why resilience is an important quality and how you can show it in your own life.</p>
<p>20: After (pages 183-195)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who does Alex find in the old shower block? • Why does the man think that Alex and his dad could be the police? • What causes the man to stop threatening Alex's dad with a knife? • According to Alex, why do people-smugglers use refrigerated lorries to transport people across the border? • How does this chapter explain how Alex and his dad have come to meet Ronnie later on? 	<p>Imagine you are a refugee or asylum seeker who is being transported across the border in the back of a lorry. Write a reflection about what it might feel like to be in this dangerous and desperate situation. Use books like <i>The Journey</i> by Francesca Sanna to help with this.</p>	<p>LITERACY/PSHE/GEOGRAPHY • Consider how the themes of differences, racism and nationality are explored in this story as a whole. How are Alex and Dad treated on their journey? Why?</p>
<p>21: Before (pages 197-204)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do Alex and Dad do with the dying car? What mode of transport do they now take to Calais? • What does the word 'makeshift' mean on page 197? • Who has Ronnie sent to meet Alex and Dad? • How much does Dad give to Ronnie to get them across the border? What unit of currency did Ronnie say he wanted? • Why did Alex give Grandmother's jewellery to Ronnie? 	<p>Recreate the flyer that is being given out by Corporal Tritzin with Dad's face on it. What would it have said? How much would the reward be?</p>	<p>PSHE • Learn all about organisations and charities that help people in crisis, wherever and wherever they are. Design a poster for your chosen charity that includes their goals and principles.</p>

<p>22: After (pages 206-218)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which type of job did Ronnie dream of having? • What do they keep in the boathouse? How are they blackmailing Ronnie by keeping hold of his passport? • What new information does Ronnie give to Alex about his dad? • Why is Hayley immediately suspicious of Alex and accuses him of being in on it when he reveals her mum's whereabouts in the boathouse? • How does the author end this chapter on a cliffhanger? 	<p>Create a timeline of events in the story so far which you can build on as you continue to read.</p>	<p>GEOGRAPHY • Find out more about the purpose of passports. Why do we use them? Create a passport for Alex and Dad, recording information about each country they have passed through on their way to England, including the weather, transport.</p>
<p>23: Before (pages 220-225)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why are the people packed into the lorry in the order of men, women, and then children? • What advice does Dad give to Alex if they are separated? • Where do Alex and Dad hide from the smugglers? • Why does Dad encourage Alex to use his gift this time? What does this show about Dad's attitude? • What literary technique is used in the sentence '...and we perch precariously in the tiny gap...'? (alliteration) 	<p>Summarize Dad's character now in three words. Compare them with three adjectives you would have chosen to describe his character earlier on in the story.</p>	<p>DRAMA • In pairs, one child takes on the role of Alex or Dad and one child takes on the role of questioner. Hotseat the character of Alex or Dad to find out how they felt about Alex using his gift. Once complete, swap over.</p>
<p>24: After (pages 227-234)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where does Stripes recognise Alex and Hayley from? • What does it mean to 'tie up a loose end'? • How do Rachel and Hayley communicate with each other even though they are gagged? • Where does Stripes suggest that they go to the toilet when he says "You're at sea at night, use your imagination!"? • Do you think Alex and Hayley will be able to save Rachel? 	<p>Alex, Rachel and Hayley are all gagged in a scene in this chapter. Write sentences using speech marks to show the conversations they might have had, instead of just grunting at each other.</p>	<p>PSHE • Note down at least three qualities that make Hayley a good friend to Alex. Do the same for why Alex could be a good friend to Hayley.</p>

<p>25: Before (pages 236-246)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why can't Alex and Dad hold on for long? • What shows them how fast they are travelling on the lorry? • How does Dad get past Tritzin? • Is the small fishing boat actually 'safe' for the people? • Why is the observation of the beetle mentioned at the end of this chapter? What connections does it have? 	<p>Write an acrostic for the word 'TRUST'. What does this word mean to you?</p>	<p>ART • Draw what the beach and the boat looks like to Alex and Dad. Decide what features you will highlight and discuss your reasons for doing so.</p>
<p>26: After (pages 248-260)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does Alex reveal his secret to Hayley? What does this show about their relationship and how it has grown? • Act out the reaction that Hayley has upon hearing that Alex has a gift of seeing into the future. • What confirms to Hayley that she believes that Alex has a gift? • Define the word 'meekly' and use a thesaurus to generate synonyms that could replace this word in this sentence. • Why does Ronnie say that they have to keep going on towards France for help? 	<p>Retell this chapter from Hayley's perspective – consider all the emotions she experiences, particularly towards Alex.</p>	<p>PHILOSOPHY • Alex says "I can't change the future. I can only change what I do now to try and influence things. I have no control over other people." What do you think about this? Do you think we can intervene to change an outcome?</p>
<p>27: The Beach (pages 262-265)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe in your own words what a 'dune' is on a beach. • Find evidence and phrases from the text that show that Alex is starting to doubt Dad and lose hope at the beginning of this chapter. • What is a 'buoy'? • Who drags Alex up on to the boat? Why does he describe them as 'arms from every part of the world'? • What do you think will happen next to Alex, and to Dad? 	<p>Write your own ending to the story predicting what you think will happen.</p>	<p>LITERACY • Make a list of five questions that you have about the story at the end of this chapter. What are your predictions?</p>

<p>27: The Beach (pages 262-265)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe in your own words what a 'dune' is on a beach. Find evidence and phrases from the text that show that Alex is starting to doubt Dad and lose hope at the beginning of this chapter. What is a 'buoy'? Who drags Alex up on to the boat? Why does he describe them as 'arms from every part of the world'? What do you think will happen next to Alex, and to Dad? 	<p>Write your own ending to the story predicting what you think will happen.</p>	<p>LITERACY • Make a list of five questions that you have about the story at the end of this chapter. What are your predictions?</p>
<p>28: After (pages 267-278)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does it mean if the rain turns 'torrential'? What sort of hazards are they trying to avoid on the boat? Do you think Alex's power is a gift or a curse? Explain your thinking using quotes from the book. How do they know that they have reached the French coast? What does Booker do with the email account to get rid of the evidence? 	<p>Write a diary entry from Rachel before she is dragged across the sand away from Hayley. Consider her thoughts and feelings.</p>	<p>GEOGRAPHY • The UK Border Force is mentioned in this chapter. Look at maps such as those of Europe throughout history and consider how the shape of different countries has changed over time, and investigate the reasons why country borders change.</p>
<p>29: The Boat (pages 280-281)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why is it difficult for Alex to remember that he is 'still the boy in the boat'? Pick out words and phrases that are effective in showing the emotions of those on the boat. (paralysed with fear, etc.) Why is the word 'lurch' repeated throughout the book to describe the movement of being on the boat? What does it mean when Alex says 'I am built from my memories.'? How will Alex have a 'better future' when he gets off the boat? 	<p>Write about a strong memory you have. Why is it so powerful for you? What can you remember? Try to be as detailed and descriptive as you can.</p>	<p>ART • Based on the descriptions provided, draw a person from the boat and how they are feeling.</p>

<p>30: Now (pages 283-286)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why does Alex suggest that they don't get on to the boat? • Read the first sentence on page 284. Predict who you think Alex might be calling. • Who does Alex say is the 'man on the inside'? How does he know this level of information? • How does Alex prove that Rachel can trust him? • Why does Alex wish he had said more to Rachel before he 	<p>Imagine you are Rachel. Write a paragraph explaining what you would have said in reply to Alex if the credit on his phone hadn't run out.</p>	<p>DRAMA • In pairs, dramatise and come up with voices for the scene between Alex and Rachel. Record your conversation, thinking about the tone, volume and expression used during the call.</p>
<p>31: Later (pages 288-290)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long has Paul Booker's corruption been taking place? • What evidence did they find in his car? • What are 'war crimes'? • Rachel says she has permission to take Alex and his Dad back with them but only if they do something. What is it? • Who does Alex say can help the investigation? Why is Rachel surprised to hear that it is Ronnie? 	<p>Write a summary of how Ronnie has changed from the start of the story. What has he discovered about himself?</p>	<p>LITERACY • Choose two characters from the ones we have been introduced to so far. Create 'Character Templates' by drawing an outline of two people. What words and phrases from the text can you add inside the template to describe what the character is like internally and outside the template to describe what the character is like externally. How are they different from each other?</p>
<p>32: Later (pages 292-295)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it mean to be 'fast-tracked'? • Which organisations did Alex and Dad have to speak to during the clearance process? • Where did Alex and Dad go with their first free steps into England? Why did they not speak much to each other? • Why does Alex say that Hayley doesn't know him, even though it feels very much like they met earlier on? • What do you think will happen next to Alex, Dad and the other characters? 	<p>Write a book review based on your thoughts about the story.</p> <p>Write a letter to Simon Fox telling him your thoughts and feelings about the book.</p> <p>Write a continuation story about what happens to some of the characters.</p>	<p>LITERACY • For each of the main characters in the story, write a sentence summarising how they have developed or what they have learned about themselves.</p> <p>LITERACY/PSHE • Share five ways you've been inspired by Alex, Dad, and their story.</p>

THANK YOU FOR READING

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AND USING THESE RESOURCES.

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