

ERASMUS JAMES
AND THE
GRAT SIEGE

Teacher Notes & Student Activities

BY TEACHER AND AUTHOR,
MATT PORTER

www.barrelbooks.com

Erasmus James and the Grac Siege

I'm Erasmus James, the boy who doomed the universe!

Wow, what a killer back page blurb! Awesome authors, like DC Green, write opening sentences and blurbs that make readers want to keep reading. The sentence above makes you ask questions like 'How did Erasmus doom the entire universe?' And the only way you can get the answer is to keep reading.

Fill in the gaps in these sentences to make your own brilliant blurbs or opening sentences:

I'm Jeremiah Jones, the boy who blew up the _____.

I'm Harriet Clarke, the girl who won the _____.

I'm Jasper Milne, the boy who caught the _____.

I'm Madison Miller, the girl who grew the _____.

I'm Harley Billings, the boy who saved the _____.

I'm Grace Giles, the girl who convinced the _____.

Write two of your own opening sentences:

Choose your favourite opening sentence from this page and use it as a starter for a story.

Erasmus James and the Grat Siege

'Anyway,' I continued. 'Uponia was a blast. But I busted to explore more planets. So I zapped to a tropical world where adults were banned. There were no rules, no bed-times, unlimited dessert bar and, best of all, the other kids wanted me to be their king! I'd found Kid's Paradise!'

Erasmus describes Kid's Paradise with no rules, no bedtime and unlimited dessert bar. What a place! Imagine you could design a Kid's Paradise of your own. What would it be like? Describe your Kid's Paradise:

Draw a map of your Kid's Paradise:



Erasmus James and the Grat Siege

'Guess I've probably missed HEAPS of school back on Earth.' I tried not to facially exhibit my joy. 'By my calculations, you've actually missed ZERO school!' Dad chuckled. 'Only six Earth days have passed in the months you've... ruled here. So it's still home planet school holiday time!

Erasmus has missed six days of his school holidays. Using your knowledge of Erasmus, predict what he would have done on those six days of holidays if he had been on Earth.

Day 1

Day 2

Day 3

Day 4

Day 5

Day 6

Erasmus James and the Grat Siege

*'But we will need to find schools, and parents, for all these children,' said Dad.
'No rush. They're brainy enough already and could surely miss a little education. Plus Earth might
freakify them. They're not used to scary adults. No offence.'*

Do adults do things to freak out kids, really? I thought my kids loved it when I hug them in front of their school in my green dressing gown and slippers. List ten things adults do to freak you out:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Share each of your classmate's lists. Vote on the most annoying thing adults do to freak out kids.

The title of 'Most Annoying Thing Adults Do to Freak out Kids' is...



Erasmus James and the Grat Siege

*Clarissa's Law was simple: for every action (of mine),
there was an equal and opposite criticism (from her).*

Erasmus has different relationships with each of the characters in *Erasmus James and the Grat Siege*. Make laws (like Clarissa's) for each of the characters:

Igby's Law:

Sanders' Law:

Phooey's Law:

Dad's Law:

Franklin's Law:

Marindi's Law:

Queen Dice's Law:

Erasmus James and the Grat Siege

I removed the pillow from my face and sniffed my T-shirt. Moderately putrid = wearable. I pulled it on. 'Just checking my diary... Yeah, I'm free to tag.'

Use your knowledge of Erasmus to fill in his diary below. Include something for each date in the diary:

1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
6th	7th	8th	9th	10th
11th	12th	13th	14th	15th
16th	17th	18th	19th	20th
21st	22nd	23rd	24th	25th
26th	27th	28th	29th	30th

Erasmus James and the Grat Siege

'Another rip-snorter!' I whooped. 'Sometimes you're Erasmus-level smart!'

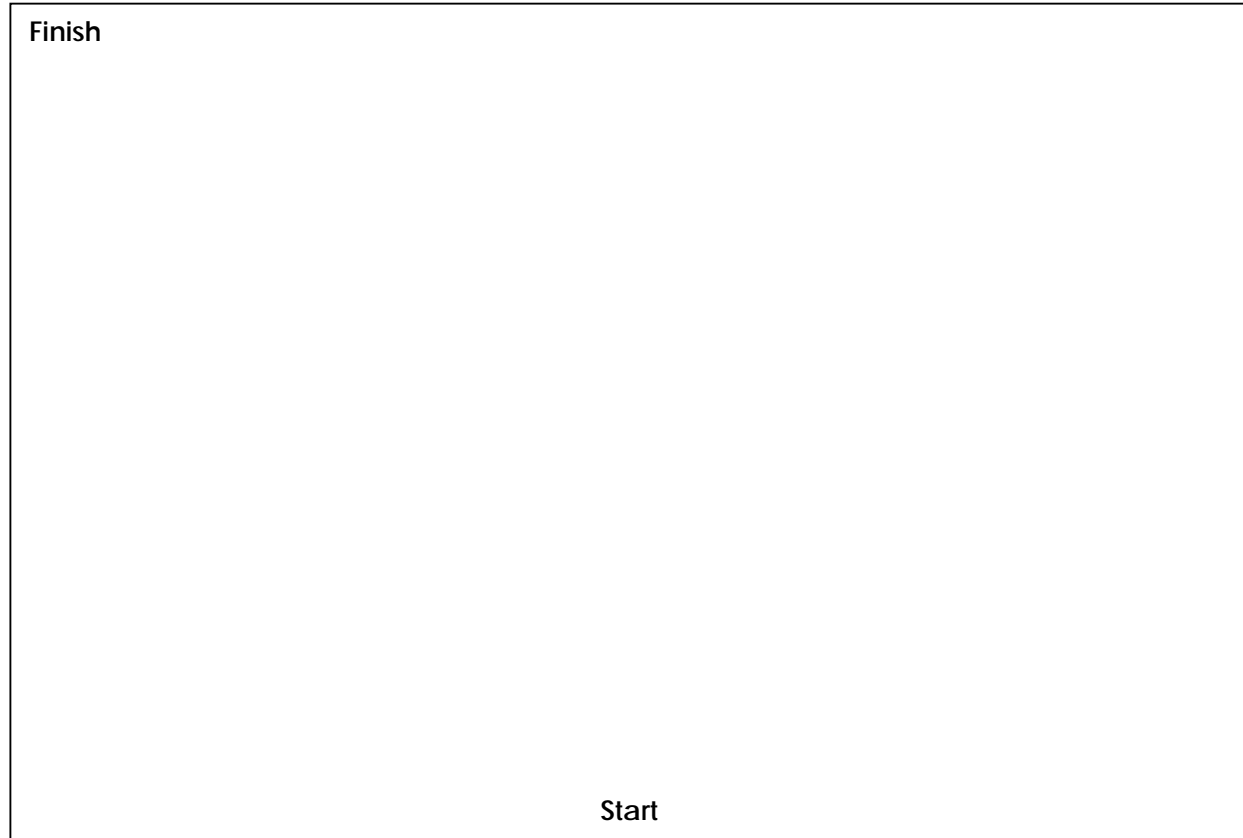
How intelligent do you think each of the characters in *Erasmus James and the Grat Siege* is? Rank each character in terms of smartness from 0 (braindead) to 100 (genius). Make sure you include justifications from the text to support your rankings.

100
50
0

Erasmus James and the Grac Siege

Bleakheart snorted. An arrow pocked the dirt at his hooves. It wasn't one of ours. 'Save this nauseating reunion for when we're not about to become pin-cushions.'
Nodding, I led the way across the maze. Arrows jabbed the land around us. One struck a hidden explosive trap. BOOOM!

Erasmus leads the bloodhorses through the minefield outside the castle walls. Draw your own minefield in the square below:



Ask a classmate to hold a pencil on the 'start' position and close their eyes. See if you can guide them through your minefield, by drawing a line, to the 'finish' position.

Erasmus James and the Grat Siege

Sanders often sat beside Phooey in a yoga pose (the crouching ironing board, I reckon). They talked through their minds in the ancient clucking of chickens.

DC Green has used his imagination to come up with a hilarious yoga pose titled the crouching iron board. Come up with your own yoga poses and draw what they look like.

<p>Name _____</p>	<p>Name _____</p>	<p>Name _____</p>
<p>Name _____</p>	<p>Name _____</p>	<p>Name _____</p>
<p>Name _____</p>	<p>Name _____</p>	<p>Name _____</p>
<p>Name _____</p>	<p>Name _____</p>	<p>Name _____</p>

Erasmus James and the Grat Siege

My skin goose-bumped. Have I mentioned my ratophobia?

DC Green has invented the word 'ratophobia' yet you instantly know what it means when you read it. Make up some words to describe the fear of...

CHICKENS _____

HORSES _____

WATER _____

ROCKS _____

AIR _____

FLYING _____

List some other things people may be scared of and make up a name for each phobia.

Erasmus James and the Grat Siege

'Franklin would've been the greatest Uponian king ever. He was already the last Horse King (a title he never used himself), a Horse Manchu master, super brave, ultra humble and 10,000 other glowing adjectives. He never strayed from the Equine Path, never stopped being so wonderfully... Franklin.'

Erasmus thinks very highly of Franklin, stating that's he's 'super brave, ultra humble and 10,000 other glowing adjectives.' An adjective is a describing word. List 10 adjectives for each of these characters:

Erasmus:

Sanders:

Dad:

Bleakheart:

Franklin:

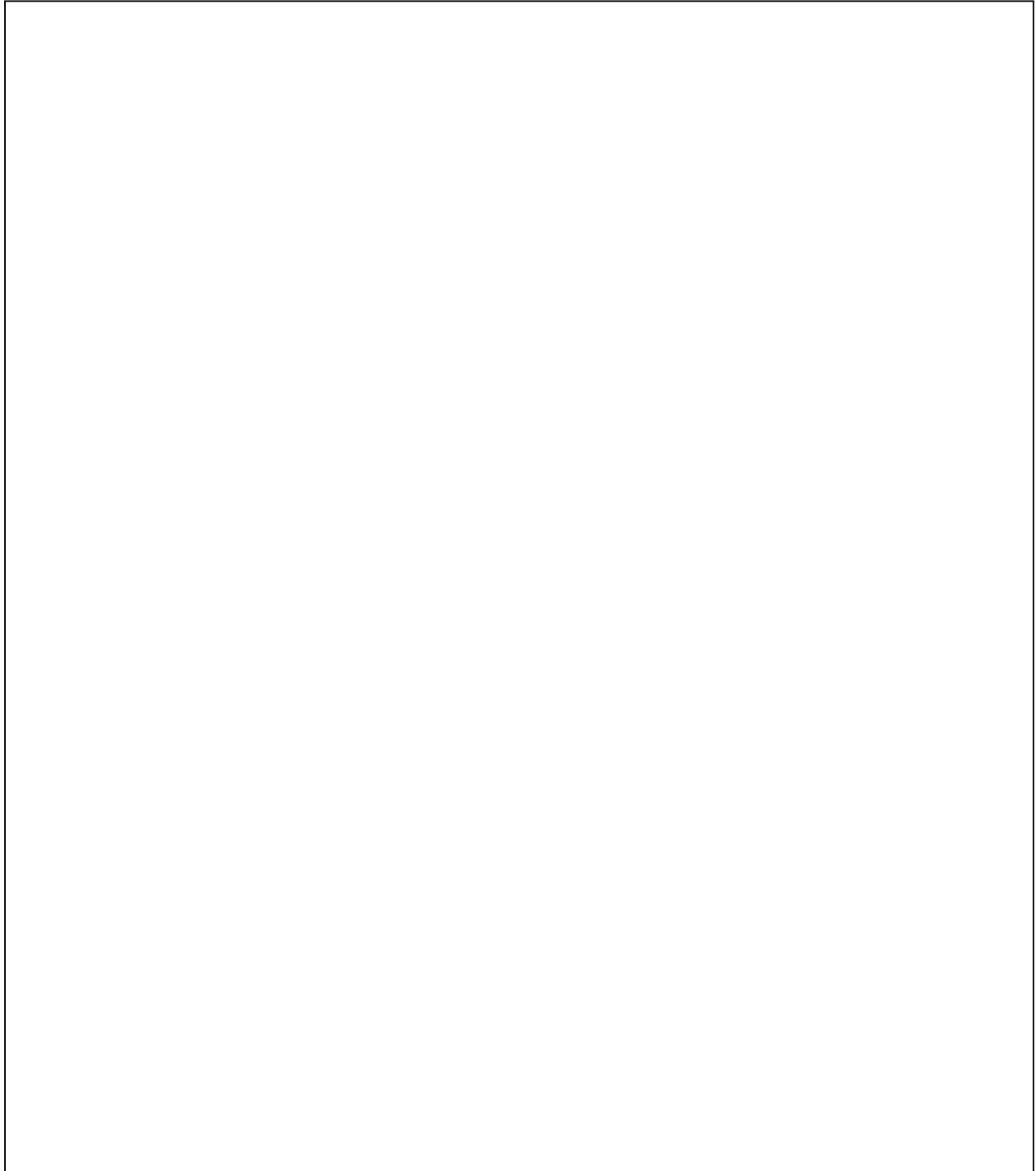
Jessie:

Queen Dice:

Erasmus James and the Grat Siege

As for the view? It'd make clowns weep. Uponia's farmers burned their crops at my order; not an easy order to observe. The grats marched through next, torching villages and forests to fire-flush enemy soldiers (though we'd left no one beyond the Golden Castle walls). The result? Uponia scraped bare of humans, horses and chooks. Not to mention, hills carpeted in ancient trees and pumpkins. I cheered (silently) when we flew over a valley or mountain-side where forest remnants clung.

Erasmus had an excellent view, of a not very excellent scene, when flying on Vahalia's back. Draw what Erasmus could see:



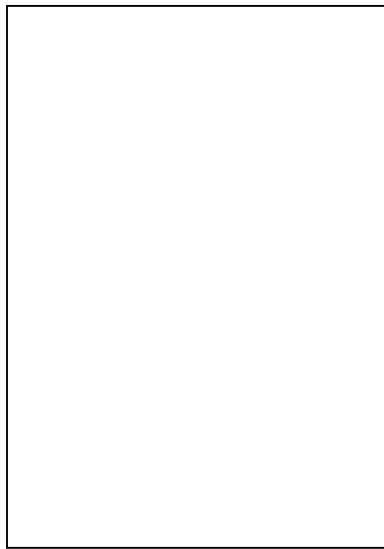
Erasmus James and the Grat Siege

Dice stood almost four metres tall, eyes blazing crimson, royal cape billowing, crown dazzling, massive arms folded. Ugly enough to burst Frankenstein's stitches, she was the cause of zapp universal war. The reason I'd flapped and crawled across half a planet. To stop her, however possible.

What a baddie Queen Dice is! Authors like DC Green create interesting characters by planning each character in detail and knowing them inside out. When writing, you should make a profile of each of your main characters. Today you're going to make up a character, a baddie like Queen Dice, and fill in their details.

Name: _____

A picture of my character:



Age: _____

Height: _____

Weight: _____

Hair colour: _____

Eye colour: _____

Distinguishing features: _____

Hobbies: _____

Favourite Sayings: _____

Pets: _____

Family: _____

Other interesting information: _____

Erasmus James and the Grat Siege

Her psychic surge snapped my connection to the grats.

Dice's rage followed the surge, blasting deep into my brain. I screamed. She shredded memories that had nourished me these past months: my first pet, Captain Chook, pecking grain from my ticklish palm; Dad telling me bullies are jerks; Mum, her laughter sun-showering; my buzz when Franklin first galloped; my attraction towards Dinah and... Clarissa!

Dice shreds some of Erasmus's happiest memories. Luckily she hasn't shredded any of yours as are going to use your memories as ideas for stories. List or draw some of your favourite memories in the space below.

Develop one of your memories into a story. For example, if your dad has taken you out for ice cream and you ate so much you thought your belly would explode, you could write a story where someone's belly really does burst!