

An extract from Jazz Harper: Space Explorer

MARS YEAR 84

Nearly twenty Mars years ago, the extraordinary story of two children who discovered life on Mars heralded the beginning of a new era for the Marineris Colony and all humans living and working on the Red Planet.

Now, after many years, researchers have uncovered documents from the Marineris archives which shed new light on the discovery and the events that led to it.

Those documents are published here together for the first time. What follows is a story like no other...

Reading Task

28th May 2060

Dear Brand-New Diary of Adventure,

Today was our very last visit to Gran before our epic mission to Mars. Mum and I travelled there on the air tram, like usual. Did you know that air trams travel really, really fast? I looked it up on the map app on my webspectacles as we sped over the tall tower blocks and green parks. At one point, we got up to 147mph!

I asked Mum if that's how fast we'll be travelling through space. She said that the rocket will be much faster – over twenty thousand miles per hour!

Twenty thousand! That's mega-fast. That's stomach-churning, brain-melting fast. Sometimes, when we're on the air tram, I play games to make the journey more fun. Today, I imagined that I was a space pilot, speeding through the galaxy. Outside the windows, stars and planets zoomed past, blurring into streaks of light. An alien spaceship approached with lasers beaming but I was ready to zap it into another dimension as soon as it got into range.

"Pow! Pow-pow-pow! Pow!"

"Oh Jazz, you're not shooting aliens again," said Mum as the other people on the tram stared. "We like aliens!"

I explained that they had us cornered in the outer spiral arm of a distant galaxy and that I had no choice.

Mum said that I should at least try to bring one back alive so that she could study it. That's what Mum does for a living. She's an extraterrestrial-life researcher — an alien scientist.

I performed a lightspeed U-turn to capture an alien fleeing the shattered spaceship in a life raft.

"Hmmm," Mum said, pretending to investigate my captured alien. "It has bug eyes, seven legs, a spiky exoskeleton and liquid brains. This is like nothing I've ever seen before, Jazz. We could win the Galactic Discovery Prize for this."

"Do you think that's what the alien life on Mars will look like?" I asked.

Mum laughed. "I doubt that they'll have seven legs. In fact, I

doubt that they'll have any legs at all."

I spent the rest of the journey thinking about Martians with tentacles and suckers, and some that crawled over the ground like slugs. When the air tram finally got to Sunset Heights, we released our seven-legged alien back into the wild and hopped onto the platform.

Gran lives in one of those old-fashioned retirement villages from the 2020s: all glass and steel and curving walls. When she isn't racing her friends around the courtyard on her hover scooter or throwing street parties on weeknights, she's in her top-floor flat, gazing through her binoculars at the happenings down below or inviting people over for curry so hot that it blows your head off.

I could smell Gran's curry as soon as we got upstairs. Even before the front door opened, my eyes watered.

Questions

1. In what year is the first section of the story set?

2. Find and copy a phrase or sentence in the first section that builds anticipation of the story that comes next and entices the reader to find out more.

3. What transport does Jazz use to visit Gran?

spaceship

car

air tram

hover scooter

4. How do you know that this is the typical way in which Jazz travels to visit her Gran?

5. Find and copy a phrase which reveals that Jazz is not actually capturing aliens in this extract.

6. In what kind of accommodation does Gran live?

7. Look at the line: "I could smell Gran's curry as soon as we got upstairs. Even before the front door opened, my eyes watered." What does this suggest about Gran's curry?

8. Mum and Jazz appear to have a fun relationship and get along well. What evidence is there to support this?

Remember to use your reading skills including:

- + Re-reading the text to locate your answers
- + Think about what type of question it is e.g. retrieval, inference, find and copy...
- + Check over your answer before you finish

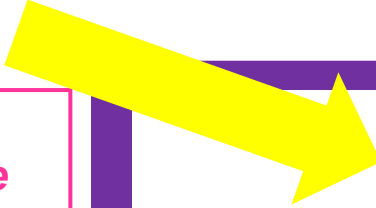
Have a read of this example diary entry to help you with the structure and flow.

You are pretending to be a piece of graffiti so here are some prompts for you.

- Describe where you are building/ area/city...
- Explain what or who you see each morning/evening...
- Describe anything you can smell or taste if it's in the air e.g smoke, bacon butty from the sandwich shop round the corner, freshly cut grass
- What can you hear? Birds, vehicles
- How do you feel and why?

Remember to use diary writing features as you can see opposite.

Friday May 5th



We've finally got one! My mum has been trying to persuade my dad for ages to get a dog and he has always thought of a hundred reasons why we shouldn't get one. I think my mum had almost given up. Well today after we had all got home and were having a snack, there was a knock at the door. I opened it and there was a big box on the door step. I was a bit worried at first because there was no one there but mum and dad came towards the door too and dad was at the back telling me to open it. So then I opened the box and there inside, looking quite confused and shy was a gorgeous black puppy with a red bow around her neck! I picked her up and brought her into the house. Our house is quite small and not really set up for dogs! There are lots of ornaments everywhere. She scurried around our living room knocking a few things over and then we gave her some food. I felt so happy because I haven't got any brothers and sisters and I have wanted to get a dog for a long time. We decided to call her 'Surprise'.

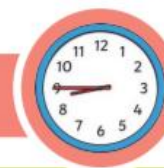
Features of a Diary Entry

Uses the past tense	
Uses first person pronouns (I, we, my, etc.)	
Describes the writer's point of view, thoughts and feelings	
Includes opinions as well as facts	
Uses ambitious words to describe people and places	
Is written in an informal style, as though speaking to someone	
Uses time conjunctions to link events	
Organises events into paragraphs	
Uses inverted commas to show direct speech	

Diary Writing Helpful Hints



Include the date and/or time.



Write in the past tense.

Use the words 'I', 'we', 'my' and 'our'.



Write about the most important events.

Tell the events in order.

Talk about where events happened.



Describe your feelings.



Use time words (first, next, before).

Homophones and Near-Homophones

s d i u p u n f a r t h e r
j x a y x a l l o w e d w d
p z l c o z r d e v i c e e
k z o p r a c t i c e c d e
p g u z r c c g h v n g e g
w r d m b v r b u e h e v u
x q a f b e w s c e c k i e
d o v c h y y i q v s v s s
d y n t t i l i c e n s e t
l k a x y i a d v i c e e e
p f e n a n s f l h e a r d
z y m j j a r e x u k g v g
w w p z b m s b i e h e r d
q a d v i s e q j z o u o a

advice
advise
father
farther

licence
license
practise
practice

device
devise
herd
heard

guest
guessed
aloud
allowed

Homophones and near homophones are quite tricky.

Are there are any others that you can think of?

there

their

they're
