

AMULET BOOKS GRAPHIC NOVEL TEACHING GUIDE



ABOUT THE BOOK

Red's Planet, an intergalactic graphic novel fantasy series from award-winning cartoonist Eddie Pittman (writer/story artist for Disney's hit TV series *Phineas and Ferb*), is a nonstop adventure with a unique cast of characters unlike any you've ever seen before.

Meet Red, a quirky, headstrong ten-year-old who longs to live in her own perfect paradise far away from her annoying foster family. But when a UFO mistakenly kidnaps her, Red finds herself farther away than she could have possibly imagined—across the galaxy and aboard an enormous spaceship owned by the Aquilari, an ancient creature with a taste for rare and unusual treasures. Before Red can be discovered as a stowaway, the great ship crashes on a small deserted planet, leaving her marooned with a menagerie of misfit aliens. With her newfound friend, a small gray alien named Tawee, Red must find a way to survive the hostile castaways, evade the ravenous wildlife, and contend with Goose, the planet's grumpy, feline custodian. Surely this can't be the paradise she's been hoping for.

Fans of Mike Maimack's *Cleopatra in Space* and Ben Hatke's *Zita the Spacegirl* will embrace *Red's Planet*, a boldly illustrated and imaginative new series for readers of all ages.

Author

Eddie Pittman is an award-winning cartoonist working in animation, comics, and illustration for over 20 years. He grew up in Atlanta and attended Georgia State University before beginning his career with Walt Disney Feature Animation, working on films such as *Mulan*, *The Emperor's New Groove*, and *Lilo & Stitch*. Most recently, Pittman was a writer/story artist for Disney's hit TV series *Phineas and Ferb*. He lives in Florida. Visit redsplanet.com.



Ages 8 to 12

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

- This guide consists of vocabulary words, activities, and discussion questions that can be used cross-curricularly when teaching or discussing *Red's Planet*. These ideas are jumping off points for the discussions that could be had while reading this graphic novel. Each discussion question/activity is written as if a student is being questioned.
- At the end of the guide, Common Core State Standards' Anchor Standards are listed that can be met when the books are extended using the activities and discussion questions.
 - Because the book is appropriate for a wide range of grades, reading anchor standards are shared to allow teachers at each level to match with their grade level.
 - For math and science standards, the specific standards that relate to the activity are listed.

CLASSROOM RATIONALE

Graphic novels are one of the most popular formats (**Fletcher-Spear**) of texts right now because students find them so much fun to read! But they aren't only entertainment, they are complex texts that challenge their readers to expand how they read. Middle grade graphic novels, such as *Red's Planet*, cover a wide spectrum of themes and topics. Some common themes that are found in graphic novels for this age include the hero's journey, overcoming hardship, and finding one's identity. Additionally, just as with traditional novels, graphic novels allow for opportunities to extend students' thinking in all subject areas. *Red's Planet*, for example, includes mathematical equations and science concepts such as gravity. Finally, graphic novels help with reading comprehension at many different levels.

- Graphic novels can make a difficult subject interesting and relatable (**Cohen**).
- Students are visual learners and have a much wider visual vocabulary than students in the past (**Karp**).
- Graphic novels can help build complex reading skills by building a bridge from what students know to what they still have to learn (**NCTE**).
- Graphic novels can help with scaffolding when trying to teach a higher order thinking skill or other complex idea.
- For students who do struggle to visualize while they read, graphic novels provide graphics that show what good readers do (**NCTE**).
- Many graphic novels rely on symbol, allusion, satire, parody, irony, and characters/plot and can be used to teach these, and other, literary terms (**Miller; NCTE**).
- Often, in between panels, the reader must make inferences to understand how the events in one panel led to the events in the next (**McCloud**).
- Graphic novels can make differentiating easier (**Miller**).
- Graphic novels can help ELL and reluctant and struggling readers since they divide the text into manageable chunks, use images to help which will help students understand unknown vocabulary, and are far less daunting than prose text (**Haines**).
- Graphic novels do not reduce the vocabulary demand; they instead provide picture support, quick and appealing story lines, and less text which allows the reader to understand the vocabulary easier (**Haines**).
- Research shows that comic books are linguistically appropriate reading material, bearing no negative impact on school achievement or language acquisition (**Krashen, 1993**).
- Graphic novels can not only interest your most reluctant and struggling readers, but also engage all of your readers, including your most gifted.
- Students love them.

All in all, the benefits of having graphic novels accessible for students and for using graphic novels within the classroom truly show why this format is here to stay.

RESOURCES

- Cohen, Lisa S. "But This Book Has Pictures! The Case for Graphic Novels in an AP Classroom." *AP Central*. CollegeBoard.
- Fletcher-Spear, Kristin, Merideth Jenson-Benjamin, and Teresa Copeland. "The Truth About Graphic Novels: A Format, Not a Genre." *The ALAN Review*. Winter (2005): 37-44.
- Haines, Jennifer. "Why Use Comics In The Classroom?" *Comic Book Daily*. N.p., 20 Mar. 2012.
- Karp, Jesse. "The Case for Graphic Novels in Education." *American Libraries*. N.p., 1 Aug. 2011.
- Krashen, Stephen. *The Power of Reading*. Englewood: Libraries Unlimited, Inc. 1993.
- McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics*. Northampton, MA: Kitchen Sink, 1993.



Miller, Andrew. "Using Graphic Novels and Comics in the Classroom." *Edutopia*. N.p., 11 Jan. 2012.

NCTE, comp. "Using Comics and Graphic Novels in the Classroom." *The Council Chronicle*. September (2005)
<http://www.ncte.org/magazine/archives/122031>.

VOCABULARY WORDS

These vocabulary words are just some of the precise word choice used throughout *Red's Planet*. Use these words as a starting point for a vocabulary study. Research shows that reading and discussing vocabulary within the context of reading is one of the most effective ways to learn vocabulary.

<i>rambled</i> 5	<i>restored</i> 26	<i>authoritarian</i> 51	<i>marooned</i> 92	<i>precision</i> 164
<i>slathered</i> 14	<i>facility</i> 27	<i>acquired</i> 53	<i>interplanetary</i> 94	<i>detained</i> 186
<i>regulation</i> 19	<i>cliché</i> 34	<i>capacity</i> 74	<i>babbling</i> 148	
<i>aforementioned</i> 19	<i>mundane</i> 44	<i>prosper</i> 75	<i>coordinates</i> 151	
<i>misfits</i> 24	<i>excellencies</i> 45	<i>relative</i> 90	<i>eyesore</i> 159	

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why does Effie talk for the Aquilari? (p. 46)
- Why did the author make it so we can read the dialogue but Red cannot understand it? (p. 50)
- Why do you think Tawee caught the egg before it fell? (p. 57)
- If you had a Gibbervox which allowed you to understand any language, would you share it with all people? How do you think that would affect our world? (p. 74)
- When Red can communicate with the aliens, she greets them using sayings and hand gestures from sci-fi movies and TV shows. What does she reference? (p. 75)
- On pp. 96-97, some of the aliens share their abduction story. How are they all similar? Are they like Red's?
- Extension question: Using some of the clues in their stories as well as the conversation between Gene, Stu, and Dell on pp. 94-95, what do their stories tell you about each of these species?
- Why won't Effie leave the spaceship or let the other stranded aliens into the spaceship? (p. 92)
- Why does Red leave the aliens? Why are they treating her the way they are? (p. 104)
- What do you think the mysterious egg is? (p. 143)
- What do you think happened to Tawee? (p. 143)
- If aliens came to Earth looking for the most amazing things to put in their collection, what would you recommend they take for their collection? (p. 162)
- What do you think Red's real name is?
- Why do you think the author included Red's backstory before she was abducted instead of starting with her on the spaceship?



CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

- Take the wordless panels on **pp. 6-7** and write a narrative stating what is going on in the comic. Use dialogue and imagery to describe what is going on in the story.
 - Extension activity: Read a short story and create a wordless comic of the story like **pp. 6-7**.
- In the beginning of *Red's Planet* we see the foster children reading an old magazine about UFO sightings and the Sheriff mention how no one would believe that they saw a UFO. Use the Wikipedia article about Unidentified Flying Objects (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unidentified_flying_object) to learn about the history of UFOs, conspiracies, and sightings, then state a claim about if you believe UFOs exist or not (of if you aren't sure), then use evidence from your research to support your claim.
 - Discussion questions: Do you think the military would believe the police if they had called about their sighting? Would anyone believe them?
- There are many different alien species mentioned and shown in *Red's Planet*. Create a classification chart of the different species, their names, their physical description, and their behaviors.
 - Some examples of species: Blovishian (**p. 43**), Cawaweeans (**p. 44**), Aquilari (**p. 45**), Gorg (**p. 46**), Uskog (**p. 53**), and Bobalunx (**p. 118**)
 - Some of the alien species are not given names, but their personal names were shared or they can be described instead. Some examples of species that were not given names (all introduced **pp. 71-81**): Herb and Kale, the giant plants, a pink jelly-like glob, Bazil, the small lizard with feathers on his head, a raccoon-ish creature with flip-flops, Maxx, the big-eared alien with octopus legs, Dardon and Lovelle, the blue-haired cyclops, Gene and Stu, the bipedal wombat-like aliens, and Dell, a lady reptilian in a robe.
- Pretend you are stuck on the alien planet with Red. Use the 6-step creative problem solving process to determine the best thing to do.
 1. Define what the biggest problem is.
 2. Determine the main cause of the problem.
 3. Come up with solutions for the problem.
 4. Select a solution.
 5. Implement a solution.
 6. Evaluate the outcome.

After completing steps 1 through 3, complete cause and effect maps with your solutions to determine which would be the best way to survive on an alien planet. Then for steps 5-6, write a narrative as if you are on the planet and implementing the solution. Include how you overcome the problem, how you implement the solution, and how you deal with any obstacles.



Crosscurricular Activities: Math

- Convert 20 KMs to miles. How close were they to the launch zone? (**p. 58**)
- Compare the days in a year on the new planet to Earth. What is the ratio between the two? However, Effie mentions the days are shorter. How short would the days have to be to make the years equal? (**p. 90**)

Crosscurricular Activities: Science

- How does gravity work? What is a planet's gravitational pull? Use <http://idahoptv.org/sciencetrek/topics/gravity/facts.cfm> and http://www.physics4kids.com/files/motion_gravity.html or other resources to learn about gravity.
 - Discussion question: Why would the ship need to be abandoned if it was caught in the gravitational pull of the planet? Why couldn't they stop it?

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

Key Ideas and Details

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4 Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5 Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g. a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

Text Types and Purposes

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS: MATHEMATICS

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.5.MD.A.1 Convert like measurement units within a given measurement system.

Note: The activity is actually converting between two measurement systems.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.6.RP.A.1-3 Understand ratio concepts and use ratio reasoning to solve problems.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.6.EE.C.9 Represent and analyze quantitative relationships between dependent and independent variables.

NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS

MS-ESS1-2 Develop and use a model to describe the role of gravity in the motions within galaxies and the solar system.

Note: The activity does not include a model, but an extension of the activity could meet this standard.