

1

ALIEN DETECTIVE AGENCY: Renegade Robots

Summary

When TV star Jack Swift takes a day trip to Mars he has no idea that he'll bump into a renegade robot. Luckily he meets up with alien enforcer Wanda Darkstar. Now he's in more trouble than he knows!

This is the first book in the 'Alien Detective Agency' series.

Book Introduction

- What do you think a renegade robot is?
- How does the front cover make it clear that Jack and Wanda are in danger?
- What makes the big robot look so evil?

New vocabulary

In addition to the vocabulary provided on page 4, here are some technical words and phrases in the order they appear in the story:

- P8 Hyper drive – a device allowing a space ship to travel faster than the speed of light.
- P9 Mechanic – a person who fixes machines
- P18 Warehouse – a place where goods and merchandise are stored.

Group work

Discussion points

- Why do you think Jack is wrong on both counts? (p7)
- Why is Wanda surprised to see Jack in Megapolis? (p10)
- Wanda does not think Jack is cool. Jack thinks he is. Which one do you think is right? Why?
- Do you think Tobor really needs to be worried about Jack? (p21/22) Why? Why not?

Pair work

- Imagine what Jack and Wanda may have said to each other when they realised they had been kidnapped by the robot taxi driver. Do you think they would both blame each other for their predicament? Role play your ideas.
- **Write an alternative version of how Jack and Wanda foiled the robot revolution.**

Individual work

- Tobor is robot written backwards. Tobor's robots are meant to be reliable. But Tobor is the leader of a robot rebellion. Why do you think the author chose to give the leader of the robot rebellion this name?
- **Think of three other names for bad guys that disguise their true nature. E.g. Dr Live**

Y5, Strand 7

Explore how writers use language for comic and dramatic effects.

- How does the author use humour to highlight Jack and Wanda's plight when they arrive at Tobor's warehouse?
- Tobor is the villain of the story. Look at the adjectives the author uses to describe the way Tobor speaks. How do they help to show Tobor's character?

Using the CD

Using the illustration on page 23, write think bubbles for each character.

Or

Look at the illustration on page 27. Do you feel sorry for Tobor? Why? Why not?

Copymasters

A: Author's Viewpoint

Why are robots so often shown as being threatening to humans when they are supposed to make our lives easier?

B: Design a Robot

Make a design for a robot. Give it a name. What jobs will your robot do?

For example, will it be for domestic chores like cleaning the car and washing up? You decide.

Make up three rules that your robot must always obey.

Extension 1 (literacy)

Write a short newspaper report about how the Robot Revolution was foiled. Don't forget to start with an eye catching headline like Revolting Robots!

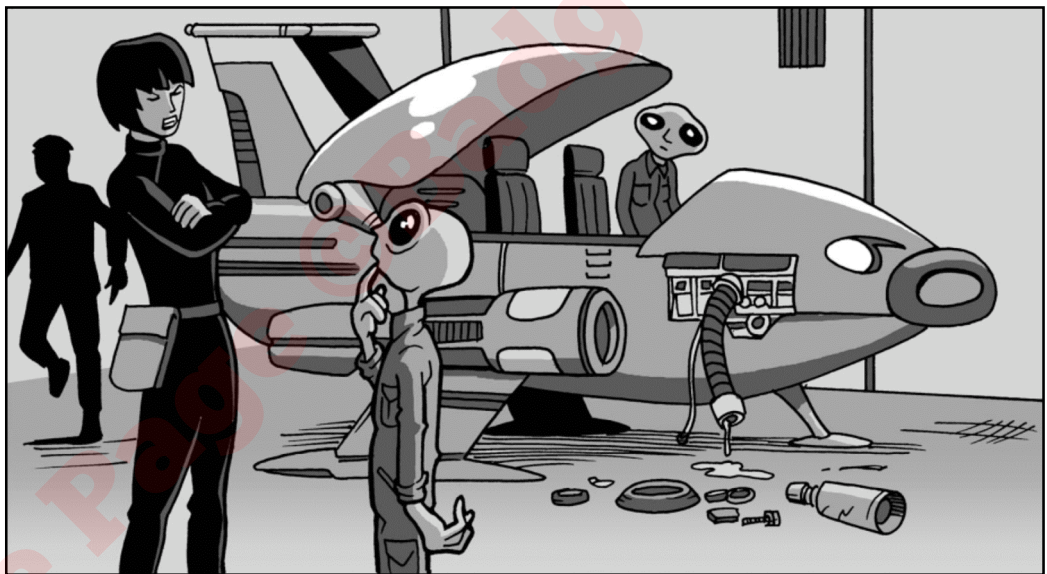
Write a blog for Tobor explaining why he felt the need to start a robot revolution.

Was he just evil or did he have genuine reasons for his anger?

Extension 2 (cross curricular)

Find three different examples of the ways in which humans make use of robots.

Make a time line showing how robots have developed throughout history.



1

Renegade Robots (A)

Author's Viewpoint

Whenever I go on holiday to a new city I always end up getting lost. I don't mind because I have fun meeting the local people and seeing things I would never see if I stuck to the tourist guide book. Mind you, I've never met any renegade robots or anyone like Wanda Darkstar on my travels. But I thought it would be fun if Jack did when he gets lost in the Martian city of Megapolis.

Roger Hurn

Questions

Q Why did the author start the story with Jack being lost in an alien city?

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Q Why do you think the author chose to make robots the bad guys rather than the Martians?

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Q Why does the author have Jack and Wanda squabble with each other?

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Q Do you think the author thinks Jack is "cool"? Why do you think this?

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Q Why do you think the author makes Wanda seem more sensible than Jack?

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Renegade Robots (A)

Q Do you think Wanda really is more sensible than Jack? Why? Why not?

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Q Why do you think the author has made Jack and Wanda such different personalities?

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