

Text Talk – activities and resources to use with The Darkest Dark – by Chris Hadfield

Read the story in a group or as a class – find the key vocabulary as you read...

astronaut	Someone who travels to space
important	Something that means a lot to you
planet	A large, round object in space that moves around a star
declared	To say something with authority
depended	Needed in order to live
gravity	The force which causes things to drop to the ground
experiment	A process used to test something out
shadows	A dark shape on a surface when something stands between a light and that surface
universe	the whole of space and all the stars, planets, and other forms of matter and energy in it
mystery	Something that is not understood or known about

Talk

Discuss the main things that happened:



At the beginning

In the middle

At the end

Add notes if you like!



The best bit of the book was when....



Does it remind you of any other books or anything else?

Group Talk Teacher Prompts



These prompts can be used to aid conversation about the book. They are just ideas to get you started with Text Talk. You will probably need to adapt them and re-phrase them to fit the text and your learners. The idea is to initiate conversation and then encourage developing comprehension and inference through structured conversation and discussion.

Stage 1 – (initiate talk)

Tell me about....

Do you think.....

How did.....

Why did _____ do _____? (adapt to fit the book)

Stage 2 – (develop talk further)

Tell me more about _____

Can you extend your answer?

Can anyone else add anything more?

What made you think that?

Yes, good point....what about....

Stage 3 – (encourage critique/discussion)

Do you agree with what _____ said?

Did anyone think anything different?

Could there be another reason for _____

Can you explain why you disagree/agree?

Illustration Investigation

This section gets children to consider the important role that illustrations play in books. The section is based around conversation, promoting deeper inference skills and empathy discussions. Teachers can dip in and out of sections, using whatever prompts they feel are suitable. There are no answers provided because the answers will differ depending on a child's interpretation of an illustration.

The cover

Photocopy the cover of the book, or use post it notes, and ask the children to create thought bubbles to consider what Chris and Albert are thinking or feeling at this moment. Discuss why they think this.

After reading the book, ask the children to design a new cover for the book.

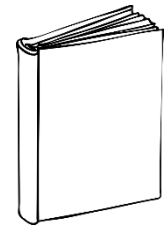
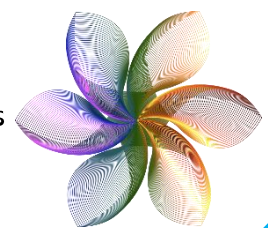


Illustration prompts

Did the colours of the pictures match the story? If so, in what ways? Did the illustrations add more to the story than just the words? Find examples in the story to show if they did.

Did any of the pictures show how the characters felt? If so, which ones? Describe what the pictures looked like and how the characters were feeling?



Page Detective

Get the children to look at the page where Chris is in bed and there are aliens/shadows in his room (pg 7-8). Get the children to talk about what they can see. Are the aliens real? What could they be?



Compare the page with the page where Chris is looking out of his window, doing his experiment (pg 27-28). Has anything changed? What do they think makes this illustration different?

Word Activities

These can be used with any text

Choose activities to complete for the book

Base word hunt

Look for words in the story where you can identify the base word, for example:

Jumping – jump

Sunshine – sun / shine

Bravely – brave

Darkness - dark

Word builder

Look for words in the story from which you can build more words, for example:

Smile – smiling - smiled

Hot – hotter – hottest

Silent – silently - silenced

Word spot

Find words in the story with the following number of letters – do you know what they all mean?

2 letters	3 letters	4 letters	6+ letters

Writing Activities

These can be used with any text

This is how it went ... write a brief overview of the story:

Beginning

Middle

End

Use the key vocabulary on page one if you need to!

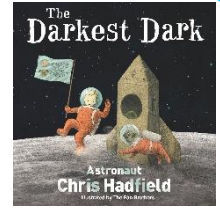
Character Interview

Choose a character from the story and write down three questions that you would like to ask them.



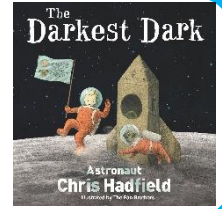
Now write what answers you think the character might give!

Comprehension Questions



1	What did Chris say he was doing when it was bath time?	Playing	Dancing	Saving the planet
2	Why do astronauts not like to sleep?	They're not tired	They're excited	Their work is never done
3	Where did Chris like to sleep?			
4	Which three places did his parents check for aliens?			
5	Why do you think they took his bell away?			
6	What did Chris watch on the TV?			
7	Why did the astronauts jump so high?			
8	What did Chris want to explore?			
9	Would you like to go to space? Why or why not?			
10	Are you afraid of anything? How do you try and be brave?			

Answers



1	What did Chris say he was doing when it was bath time?			Saving the planet
2	Why do astronauts not like to sleep?			Their work is never done
3	Where did Chris like to sleep?	In his parent's bed		
4	Which three places did his parents check for aliens?	Under the bed, the wardrobe and in his underwear drawer		
5	Why do you think they took his bell away?	He kept ringing it!		
6	What did Chris watch on the TV?	The moon landing		
7	Why did the astronauts jump so high?	There is less gravity on the moon		
8	What did Chris want to explore?	Every corner of the night sky		
9	Would you like to go to space? Why or why not?			
10	Are you afraid of anything? How do you try and be brave?			