The Zarg Tyranny

STUDENT BOOK, Pages 93–102

About the Selection

- **Form:** Short story
- **Summary:** A young Cratern rebels against Zarg tyrants.
- **About the Author:** Valerie Thame has written short stories, magazine articles, plays, and comics. She lives in the United Kingdom.

Curriculum Expectations

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<th>O: Oral</th>
<th>R: Reading</th>
<th>W: Writing</th>
<th>M: Media Literacy</th>
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<td>Communicate orally in a clear, coherent manner for purpose/subject/audience</td>
<td>Identify/explain how text patterns communicate meaning</td>
<td>Identify/order main ideas and supporting details for a writing piece</td>
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VOCABULARY

- artefacts
- bibliography
- callous
- decipher
- impassive
- intoned
- perimeter
- personnel
- Placators
- pulsating
- Repositories
- sanitized
- trawling
- tyranny

Assessment for Learning: Overview

- **ONGOING OBSERVATION**
  - Students who understand will:
    - identify narrative elements (characters, setting, problem/conflict, theme, perspective)
    - identify explicit events and implicit information that contribute to rising action
    - identify the climax
    - identify events that make up falling action
    - identify the resolution
    - explain how knowing narrative text pattern helps the reader understand what is read

- **DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION**
  - If students do not understand the strategy, use Differentiated Instruction (DI) Readiness, page 97.

- **ASSESSMENT**
  - **Key Assessment Questions**
    - List the characteristics of narrative text pattern and give an example of each from “The Zarg Tyranny.”
    - How did knowing narrative text pattern help you understand “The Zarg Tyranny”?
  - **Assessment Tools**
    - BLM 2: Oral Language Tracking Sheet
    - BLM 3: Observation Tracking Sheet
    - BLM 13: Rubric: Narrative Text Pattern
Oral Language

TALK ABOUT IT
Ask students to brainstorm rules we must live by and their contexts. (fans can't run on the field at a baseball game; students must walk, not run, in school hallways; children under age 18 must wear a bicycle helmet when riding bike) Have small groups of students discuss the Talk About It question on SB page 93, “Do you ever think you have too many rules?” Have groups give reasons to support their opinions. Survey the class and tally the number of students who agree and disagree with the statement and record students’ reasons.

Making Predictions

WORDSPLASH
Print the following words in different colours and at different angles on chart paper: rules, punishment, questions, history, forbidden, code, Infonet, decipher, classified, interrogation, all-powerful, nerve-wracking. Tell students that the words splashed on the chart paper are from the story they are about to read, called “The Zarg Tyranny.” Ask the class to predict what the story might be about. Have small groups select a word and write a sentence that makes a prediction about the story (e.g., punishment: The punishment for disobedience is exile; all-powerful: The Zarg tyranny is all-powerful). Have groups repeat the process for as many words as possible in the allotted time. Have groups share and explain their sentences with the class, noting similarities and differences. After reading the selection, students can revisit their sentences and check their predictions.

Reading “The Zarg Tyranny”

IDENTIFYING NARRATIVE TEXT PATTERN
Read aloud the prompt on SB page 93 and first eight paragraphs on SB pages 93 and 94, up to “Her grandmother…” Ask:

• What is this part of the narrative called? (introduction)
• What have you learned about the characters? (the main character is a 14-year-old girl named Jade who is very curious and doesn’t like rules; Jade’s mother, L42, is a lawyer and obeys the Zarg rules; Jade’s father, S11, was a scientist whom Jade hasn’t seen; Miriam is another character who might be a troublemaker)
• What have you learned about the setting? (it’s a place called Cratern with very strict rules and severe punishment for disobedience; it’s science fiction, so it’s probably set in the future and on another planet)
• What is the source of conflict in this story? (Jade feels the Zarg rules are too strict because they won’t allow her to learn about her family’s past; Jade and L42 disagree about Zarg rules)

Draw a pyramid diagram like the one on SB page 92 and note this information on it. Continue to add to the diagram throughout the reading.

WHAT THE RESEARCH SAYS
“Well-structured text enhances recall and comprehension for those who have acquired sensitivity to structure (Pearson & Dole, 1987), and many studies have shown that instruction designed to teach students to recognize the underlying structure of text improves comprehension (Gersten et al., 2001).”
—Joanna Williams
Have students continue reading the story independently to the end of SB page 94. Then read the prompt on SB page 94. Ask:

- **Who is Miriam?** (Jade’s grandmother)
- **How is Miriam different from Jade’s mother?** (Miriam hates the Zargs because they took her husband, Kern, away; she disobeys the rules and looks back to the past)
- **What is the relationship between Jade and Miriam like?** (they both hate the rules; they both like to look back to the past; they think the mother is wrong)

Have students read SB page 95 independently. Read the prompt on SB page 95 aloud. Ask:

- **Can you summarize the key points about the subplot?** (Jade and Miriam have a close, special relationship; there is friction with L42)
- **How does the subplot about Jade, L42, and Miriam help you understand the setting?** (Miriam’s forbidden book shows they don’t live on Earth, which is now a dead planet; Zarg laws are very strict on Cratern, and people who disobey them are taken away)

Have students read SB page 96 up to “Jade tried to retrieve the program.” Then read the prompt on that page. Ask:

- **What important events in the rising action have happened so far?** (Miriam and Jade read a forbidden book about Earth; they find code words in an unknown language; their conversation was heard, so Miriam has been taken away; Jade searches for information about the history of Cratern, even though she’s breaking the rules by doing so)

Have students continue reading the story independently to the first prompt on SB page 101. Ask:

- **What important events in the rising action have happened in these pages?** (Jade gets caught researching forbidden information about Earth and is taken to the Interrogation Chamber; Jade tricks the Zarg; Jade uses the secret code and blanks out the computer; she learns the secret of Zarg)
- **What do the secret code words mean?** (“a voice and nothing more”)
- **Does the language of those words look familiar to you?** (looks like Latin; like the words in the dictionary that show the origins of some words)

Have students continue reading the story independently to the second prompt on SB page 101. Read the second prompt aloud and have students read to the end of the page. Ask:

- **Do you believe the problem has been successfully resolved?** (Miriam’s worry lines make the reader think Jade might not have solved the problem; “have doubts” signals that Jade might have missed something)

Have students read to the end of the story. Then return to the first prompt on SB page 101. Ask:

- **What evidence can you find that this is the climax of the story?** (Jade says, “I’ve done it!” which means she’s succeeded in solving the problem of the Zarg tyrants; people imprisoned by the Zarg, including Miriam, have been freed)
- **After reading the end of the story, do you think this is the climax?** (yes; she solved the problem, but the falling action and ending let the reader know that there’s still work to be done to make Cratern a better place)
Read the two prompts on page 102 aloud. Ask:

- Was your prediction about whether the problem was successfully resolved correct? (Jade was successful in saving the Craterns from tyranny, but there’s a hint that they still have work to do to make it a happy place to live)

- How does the final dialogue between Jade and Miriam help to show that this story has come to an end? (Miriam says nothing’s wrong; they talk about what they have to do to change Cratern in the future)

- How does the author resolve the subplot involving Jade’s family? (the author suggests that Jade’s mother will have to make changes and be easier to get along with now that Zarg rules have been eliminated)

**Reflecting** (SB page 102)

**UNDERSTANDING TEXT PATTERNS**

How does the subplot support the main conflict in the story?

(Jade’s mother is so brainwashed that she supports the Zarg over her own family; Miriam risks her own safety to support Jade’s quest to find out about the past and defeat the Zarg; the talk of change to Cratern at the end of the story signals a change in the relationship among the three)

**METACOGNITION**

Create a diagram to help you understand the story. What other strategies could help you understand this story?

(besides visualizing, I made connections with science fiction shows I’ve seen; the story was long so I had to chunk it and summarize each section; I asked questions about the story as I was reading)

**To support:** For their diagrams, students could recreate the pyramid that you developed during the reading, use a graphic organizer template such as a story map or web, or sketch the story development in a storyboard format. They could work in pairs or you could work with them for further support.
CRITICAL THINKING
What do you think of the idea that a society could be run by computers? How believable is it that a computer system could be shut down so easily?

(it’s possible, because we already have automated systems such as traffic lights, and robots in factories are automated; in some ways it’s believable because some computer viruses have shut down computers around the world, but I think the one sentence that Jade typed is too simple to knock out a computer system that runs a planet)

Oral Language
DISCUSSING THE SELECTION
1. Have small groups of students revisit the Talk About It prompt on SB page 93, “Do you ever think you have too many rules?” Ask:
   - How do the rules and outcomes in your situations compare with those in the story? (Analysis)
2. What text-to-text connections can you make with this science fiction story? Explain. (Comprehension)
3. “People imagine the future based on what is around them today.” To what extent is this quotation from “Future Visions: Yesterday versus Today” on SB page 71 true of this selection? (Evaluation)

Oral Language
READERS’ THEATRE
First, have small groups of students share their analyses of the narrative text structure of this short story. Assign one student to take the narrator’s lines and the other students to take the other characters’ lines. When not speaking their assigned roles, group members can contribute appropriate sound effects. Encourage each group to use vocal techniques such as varying their volume, tone, pitch, and pacing to make their presentations vocally interesting. Have them use their analyses to build the tension of the story to the climax point. Small groups can share their Readers’ Theatre version of the story with another group and receive feedback on the extent to which their oral version mirrored the rising action, climax, and falling action of the story.

Writing
WRITING THE PREQUEL
Inform students that a prequel deals with parts of a story that occurred in the past, before the original story began (the opposite of a sequel). Have partners discuss back stories that are hinted at in the selection that they might use to develop their prequel. (the mother’s life as a model pupil; Kern’s abduction and Miriam’s and L42’s responses; Jade’s great-great-grandfather’s knowledge of the secret of the Zarg; why humans set up a ZARG system on Cratern in 2500; Jade’s earlier trip to the Interrogation Chamber) Have partners use narrative text pattern to plan the introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution of their prequel narratives. Have partners write a draft of their prequel and share and compare it with another student pair to receive feedback. Students can store their drafts in their writing portfolios.
**DI READINESS**

To challenge: Challenge students to revise and edit their prequels and compile them in a class anthology that students in another class or in future years might read, enjoy, and learn from.

**Media Literacy**

**TV ADAPTATION**

Have small groups of students discuss the potential for this story to be developed into a movie, video game, or TV series. Have them choose one of these media forms and discuss plans for adapting the story to that form. They should consider who their target audience is, their purpose—what they want the audience to get out of it and the overall tone and mood of the production, ideas for who would play the main roles, ideas for secondary characters, what the setting might look like, and how their plans would reach their intended audience. Have groups present their ideas to another group or the class and compare the different approaches.

**Word Study**

**WORD CHOICE: CHARACTER TRAITS**

1. Write these characters’ names on the board or chart paper: Jade, L42 (mother), Miriam. Ask students to think of an adjective to describe each character, and to support their choice with sentences from the text. Build up a chart entitled Character Traits, similar to the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Support from Text</th>
<th>L42 (mother)</th>
<th>Support from Text</th>
<th>Miriam</th>
<th>Support from Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jade</td>
<td>curious</td>
<td>obedient</td>
<td>proud</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>rebellious</td>
<td>serious</td>
<td>secretive</td>
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2. Explain to students that writers use descriptive adjectives to develop character traits. Examine the supporting sentences to discover how that character’s actions, thoughts, and dialogue lead readers to make judgments about each character. These judgments, when written as adjectives, are character traits.

Refer to BLM 21: Building Character for additional practice with character trait adjectives.
### Assessment for Learning

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<th>CHECKING PROGRESS</th>
<th>NEXT STEPS</th>
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<tr>
<td>● identify narrative elements (characters, setting, problem/conflict, theme, perspective)</td>
<td><strong>Key Assessment Questions</strong> Students may respond to the Key Assessment Questions in writing, or orally in a conference.</td>
<td>● If students do not understand the strategy, use DI Readiness, page 97.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● identify explicit events and implicit information that contribute to rising action</td>
<td>● List the characteristics of narrative text pattern and give an example of each from “The Zarg Tyranny.”</td>
<td>● If students need more support in identifying narrative text pattern, use the following selection for guided reading: “Across Three Millennia,” average to challenging (short story)</td>
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<td>● identify the climax</td>
<td>● How did knowing narrative text pattern help you understand “The Zarg Tyranny”?</td>
<td>● If students understand narrative text pattern, use the above selection as practice in independent reading.</td>
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<td>● identify events that make up falling action</td>
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<td>● identify the resolution</td>
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<td>● explain how knowing narrative text pattern helps the reader understand what is read</td>
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Record individual progress on BLM 13: Rubric: Narrative Text Pattern.