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A message from Talk for Writing

Dear Teacher/Parent/Carer,

Please donate to Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity if you use these resources.

Welcome to the second batch of 8 home-schooling unit booklets produced by Talk for Writing. We are pleased you seemed to love the first batch. Now we want to raise money for this vital charity.

We think the best way to do this is for people to contribute on a voluntary basis:

- **£5 per year group unit**

Schools using or sending the link to a unit to their pupils

- **£2 per unit**

Parents using a unit with their child, if they can afford to do so

These are recommendations only. If you are able to donate more, please do!

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www.justgiving.com/fundraising/talkforwriting

What is Talk for Writing?

- Thousands of schools in the UK, and beyond, follow the Talk for Writing approach to teaching and learning. If you're new to Talk for Writing, find out about it [here](#).
- If you sign up to our newsletter [here](#), you'll be the first to be informed of any new units, resources or training we are running.
- If you are a teacher, *Creating Storytellers and Writers* and *Talk for Writing Across the Curriculum* are the key texts you'll need to understand Talk for Writing. [Get them here](#).

We hope you find the units of use. Please do let us know your feedback via our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/pg/Talk4Writing/reviews/

With best wishes,

Pie Corbett,

Founder of Talk for Writing



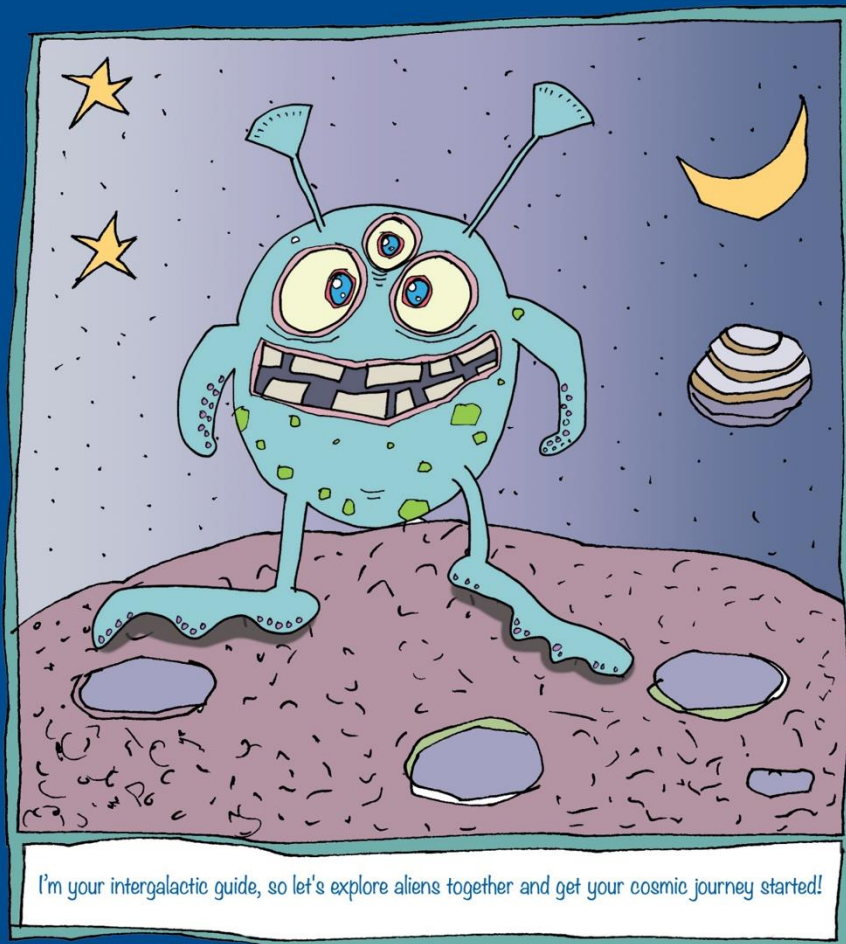
TalkforWriting™

Year 4

Talk for Writing Home-school booklet

Amazing Aliens!

by Maria Richards



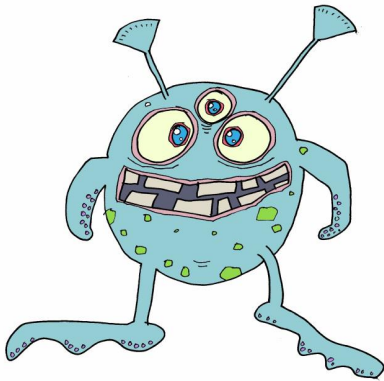
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www.talk4writing.com



Welcome to my alien world! You'll find lots of fun things to work through that will help you with your writing skills and build on the work you do at school.



For many years, humans all over the world have wondered whether we really exist. Well, I can tell you we do and, what's more, we have been getting up to all sorts of mischief on our visits to Earth! Now I'm hoping we can help you with your writing and inspire you to believe that aliens are amazing!

First, here are some facts about our species.

You can listen to an audio recording of the facts below here
<https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/amazing-aliens/>

Amazing Aliens

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to meet an alien? Read on and find out more about our fascinating species.

What is an alien?

An alien is a peculiar humanoid from outer space.

Appearance:

Most aliens are tall and can grow to over 10 metres in height. However, the Pigmy alien is the tiniest of aliens and is the size of a household mouse. Additionally, aliens have tough, green skin that is often wrinkled to help keep them warm. Amazingly, some aliens have shiny scales that are harder than diamonds.

Habitat:

Aliens are found across the Solar System. The majority like to live well away from planets inhabited by human beings. Usually, they live in pods or space shacks made of ice. Some aliens like to sleep in cocoons, which are woven from a silk-like thread that space worms produce.

What do they eat?

All Aliens are vegetarian, but also candyarian, which means they have an extremely sweet tooth. They love chocolate, cakes and desserts. Furthermore, they are extremely fond of fizzy drinks. Their favourite food is ice-cream. Interestingly, aliens can dislocate their jaws in the same way as a snake, so they can fill their mouth with huge portions of sweet treats.

What do they do?

Aliens are best known for exploring in spaceships. They usually land their spacecrafts in remote areas and like to find out about the planets they are visiting. Interestingly, most aliens are extremely good mathematicians and they love to calculate the answers to complicated maths problems in their heads.

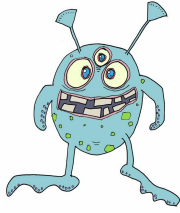
Fascinating facts

- The fastest aliens can run up to 450mph.
- Aliens can live until they are 205.
- Aliens can make themselves invisible if they are threatened.
- Nightshade aliens are the only nocturnal alien, that means they come out at night.

Are aliens on earth?

Watch out! The next time you see someone in your class guzzling extraordinary portions of sweets, getting top marks in their times tables tests and winning every race at Sports' day, just maybe you've got an alien invader of your own!

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Amazing Aliens

Glossary - definitions of some of the technical vocabulary:

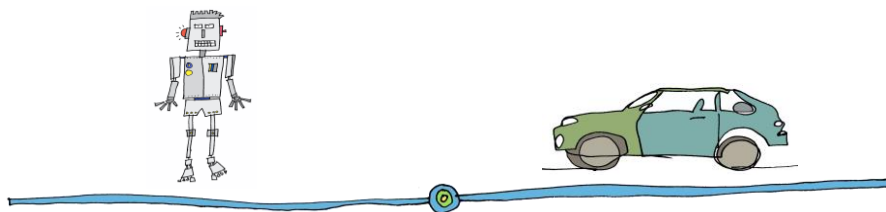
humanoid: something that has the shape of a human being

cocoon: a silky case, usually spun by insects

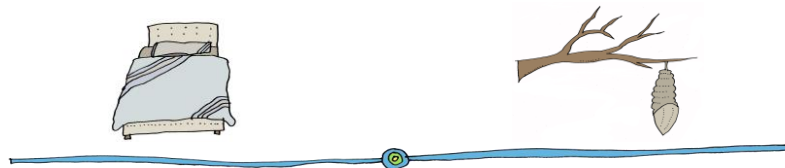
vegetarian: a person or creature that does not eat meat or fish

dislocate: to move a bone out of its normal position

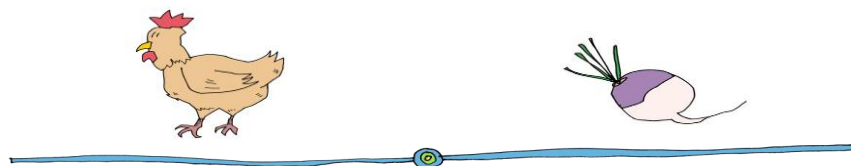
★ Tick the picture below that best represents each word:



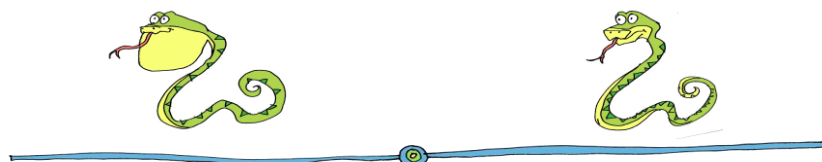
humanoid



cocoon



vegetarian



dislocate

★ Now take a look at this line from the text:

All Aliens are vegetarian, but also candyarian, which means they have an extremely sweet tooth.

Vegetarian is a real word but *candyarian* is an alien word and only exists in our alien language. Let's explore alien words by playing the Alien Word game with compound words. Compound words are made when two words are joined to form a new word, for example: blackboard. I have taken compound words from your language and split them up. Your challenge is:

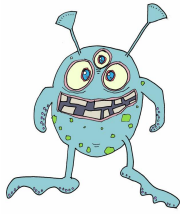
- ★ Join a word in column 1 with any word in column 2.
- ★ Write the new word in the box below.
- ★ Invent a definition for your new alien word.

I've done one for you and remember – be as inventive as you like!

Column 1		Column 2	
water	melon	lady	bird
basket	ball	snow	man
hand	bag	door	way
play	ground	butter	fly

The Alien Word Game

Alien word	Definition of the new alien word
snowmelon	fruit that grows on frozen space-trees in a solar winter



What do the words mean?

Read the information on aliens again. Underline any words you don't know the meaning of. Can you find out the definition? You could ask someone else in your home to tell you, use a dictionary or search the internet. Write your definitions out on a separate piece of paper.

★ **Challenge:** can you put these new words into a sentence?



Alien Comprehension!

Here's a quick-fire reading quiz about aliens. How many can you answer?

How fast can aliens run?

What does *candyarian* mean?

Where do aliens like to sleep?

Which word in the text means the same as *investigating*?

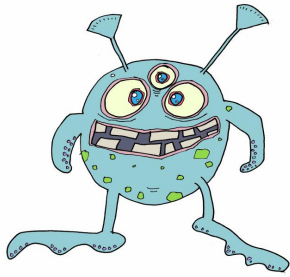
What is the name of the smallest alien species?

Aliens have soft skin. True or false?

What type of food might be on an alien's shopping list?

Why might aliens scare humans?

Why might you have an alien in your class if you spot someone doing extremely well in maths tests?



Help! I've seen an alien!

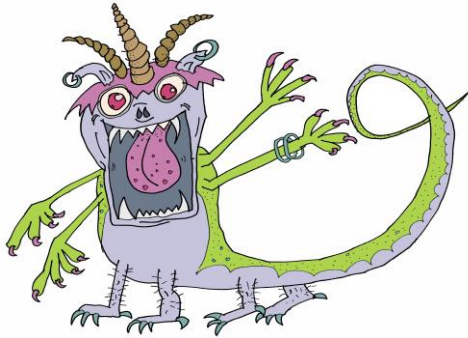
★ Let's investigate some of the words and phrases that would help you to describe an alien to a friend if you ever saw one.

The Adjective Game:

Adjectives are used describe things (nouns): e.g.

The **fluffy, grey** cat slept on the **comfortable** sofa.

To make descriptions more powerful for a reader you can add adjectives to describe different nouns. Your challenge is to describe my alien friend below, using two adjectives. I have done one for you.



Remember, when you use two adjectives, you separate them using a **comma**.

The alien I saw had **fiery, oval** eyes.

Write some interesting adjectives to describe different bits of the alien.

The alien I saw had:

_____ , _____ horns

_____ , _____ teeth

_____ , _____ claws

_____ , _____ skin

_____ , _____ head

Writing Tip – “Has every word earned its place?”

Make sure **both** adjectives you have used to describe your alien are telling the reader something different. For example, **large, big** teeth doesn't work because **large** and **big** are saying the same thing.



The 'Talk Like an Expert' game

Now let's invent some facts about aliens. Imagine you are world expert on aliens and you are answering the interview questions below. Make up one fact for each question.

- ★ Start your answers with one of these generalisers. These are words that sum up things e.g. *most, all, some, many, a few*. For example:

Most aliens like cheese.

Where do aliens go on holiday?

What do aliens like to do to relax?

How do aliens travel to work?

Why do aliens live alone?



★ Challenge: Add on to your facts by using the adverb 'additionally'. Use it to start a NEW sentence to add on to your fact. For example:

Most aliens like cheese. Additionally, they also enjoy eating broccoli covered in marmite.

- ★ Rewrite your sentences below. Remember to use a capital letter to start, a comma after additionally and a full stop at the end of your sentences. Check you have two sentences.

_____ . *Additionally,* _____ .



.....

.....

.....

.....

.....



- ★ Now write your own questions to ask an alien. Use the question words: *who, what, when, where* and *how*. Don't forget to end your sentence with a question mark.

.....

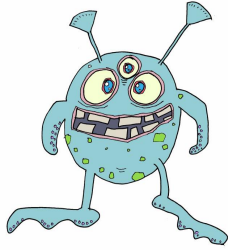
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.....

- ★ Creative challenge: On a separate piece of paper, create your own alien. How many eyes will it have? How many legs? What colour will its skin be? What special powers will it have? Label your alien to show what it can do e.g. *laser eyes for fighting enemies*.





Alien Headlines

Now, let's find out what mischief I've been up to when I've visited earth. Here is the opening of a newspaper report about me.

The Farming News

Alien Antics

Last night, local farmer Barry Bartlett, 46 years old, received the shock of his life when he discovered an alien spaceship landing in one of his wheat fields.

★ **What do you think I did once I landed in the wheat field?**

I predict

★ **What does ... 'shock of his life' mean?**

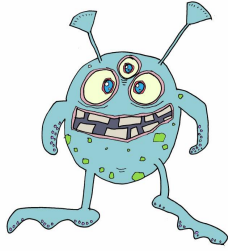
To receive a shock of your life means ...

The headline game

A headline is a short, punchy sentence that sums up the newspaper story. Sometimes it uses rhyme (Stranger Danger) or alliteration (where words start with the same sound e.g. Bear bites baddie). Imagine each picture below is part of a newspaper report. Have a go at creating a punchy headline for it.

★ Challenge: Can you use alliteration in at least one headline?





When? Who? What? Why? Where? openers

My favourite paragraph in a newspaper report is the first one. It's clever because it tells you the whole story without you having to read it all. It uses the 5 W's above to do this.

Last night **(when)**, local farmer Barry Bartlett, **(who)**, 46 years old, received the shock of his life **(what)** when he discovered an alien spaceship landing **(why)** in one of his wheat fields **(where)**.

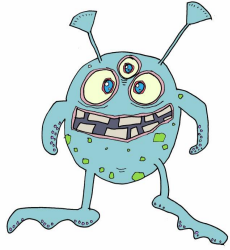


★ How else could I have surprised a local person? Maybe I was found snooping around in a garage or maybe I was seen in a park or I arrived at school?

For example: Yesterday, local shopkeeper Ada Rudge, 34 years old, received the shock of her life when she found a green, slimy alien eating tinned hotdogs at the back of her shop.



★ Now you try using the 5 Ws to write a new paragraph about my mischief. Remember to tell me when, who, what, why and where. Use the example above to help you.



Crazy Quotes

There are usually quotes from witnesses in newspaper reports too. This is when you write down what people say about an event. Here's what Barry said about me in the newspaper:

"I never expected to see an alien in my field. It was the scariest moment of my life," Barry **told** the Farming News.

- ★ You need to use speech punctuation when you write a quote in a newspaper, just like you do in your stories. To help you remember where the punctuation goes, use the steps below:

Speech Toolkit

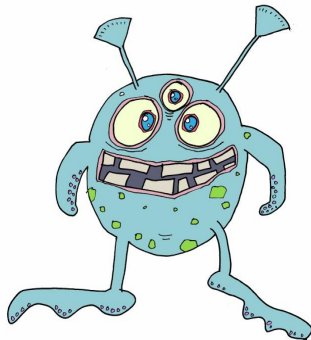
1. Open speech with inverted commas: “
2. Write what the person is saying
3. Signal the end of the speech with punctuation: usually it's a comma but could be ? or ! (depending on what's been said).
4. Close speech with inverted commas: ”
5. Say who said it. e.g. *told, reported, exclaimed, informed, stated, said.*
6. End with a full stop.



Go back to the pictures above on page 11 and write a quote from the characters for each one below.

★ **HAVE YOU CHECKED YOUR PUNCTUATION?** Go back and take a look.

You can listen to an audio recording of the text below here
<https://soundcloud.com/talkforwriting/aliens>



A Day in the Life of ...

Exploring planets is very exciting. Every time I visit a planet, I make sure that I keep my 'Explorer's Log' up to date. It is a bit like a diary and is where I write down what has happened on my visits. Here is my entry from my visit to Zargon 9 in the Joomula System:

Yesterday was the most unbelievable day of exploring yet! It all started when I landed on Zargon 9. It was the first time I had ever visited the Joomula system and I wasn't expecting to see such wonderful sights. Excitedly, I put on my exploring suit and gravity boots because there is only 20% gravity on the planet. I set out at 09.45am space time.

First, I visited the crystal waterfalls and took samples of the purple liquid that cascaded down the falls. After that, I studied the tiny creatures that were teeming through the hard, red soil that covered the landscape. They looked rather like earth spiders but had 12 legs and tiny horns on their heads. Carefully, I scooped up two of them to take back to the ship.

Next, I took measurements of wind speed and recorded a temperature of 1004 degrees around the funnel volcano, which is like a normal volcano but the shape of a tall, slim tube. After the volcano trip, I walked across the bubbling, sludge plains that were covered in green mud. It was easy to walk on but it wobbled and rippled if I went too fast.

Finally, I headed back to the ship because it was getting late. When I got in, I recorded my findings and stored my samples in the lab. Tomorrow, I will travel to Zargon 10.

Creative challenge: On a separate piece of paper, design Zargon 10. What would you be able to see as you hover over it in a space ship? What special features will it have? Label the map to show what is on this planet. You can use some ideas from Zargon 9 to help you. Try to draw it in the style of this map but make it look much more like an alien planet!



Your Log

- ★ Now imagine you have explored Zargon 10 and are ready to write your log. Follow the same pattern as me and use this planner to jot down some ideas.

Underlying structure	New Ideas
Intro: state when event happened, sum up day & tell reader something interesting: e.g. <i>Yesterday was amazing. It was the first time ...</i>	
What you did before you set off: e.g. <i>I put on my space boots and ...</i>	
Event 1 – what happened? <i>First,</i>	
Event 2 – what happened? <i>Next,</i>	
Event 3 – what happened? <i>After that,</i>	
Event 4/5/6... – what happened next? <i>After that, Next, Then, ...</i> *Have as many events as you like	
Round off your report and tell the reader where you are going next. <i>Finally,</i>	



Detail please

Before you write your log, try practising some sentences that will help you to add detail about what you are doing. We are going to use *and* and *but* to add detail. For example:

1. I visited the crystal waterfalls and took samples of the flowing purple liquid.
2. They looked rather like earth spiders but had 12 legs and tiny horns on their heads.

Try altering sentences from your ideas above, using and or but to add detail.



'When' or 'How' please

The log uses sentence signposts to tell the reader when or how something is happening. The ones used in the log are known technically as 'fronted adverbials' – adverbs (or phrases beginning with adverbs) that are placed at the front of sentences. (**When:** *first, Next, After that, Then, Afterwards, When I got in, When I got up.* **How:** *Carefully, Excitedly, Slowly, Without stopping, Quickly, Bravely, Greedily.*)

For example:

1. *Next, I took measurements of wind speed*
2. *Carefully, I scooped up two of them to take back to the ship.*

Redraft sentences from your ideas above, using fronted adverbials to show when and how.



Explain please

Now try practising some sentences that will help you explain what you were doing using *because* to add your explanation.

For example: Finally, I headed back to the ship *because* it was getting late.

Take sentences from your ideas above but add ***because*** to explain why you did something. Start your sentence with a fronted adverbial again. For example:

1. First, I packed my metal umbrella *because* the planet has acid rain.
2. Excitedly, I captured the insects *because* I wanted to study them.



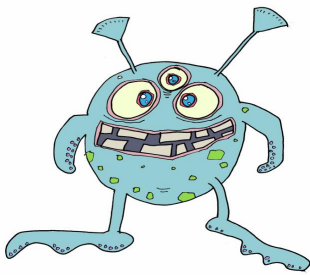
Write Away!

Now you're ready to write your log! Use your plan (and the model for Zargon 9 if it helps) to draft your log on a separate piece of paper.

Remember to:

- add detail to your sentences by using *and* or *but*;
- add explanation to your sentences using *because*;
- use fronted adverbials like *After that*, to start some sentences;
- check your capital letters at the start of sentences, full stops at the end and commas after your fronted adverbials.

★ Don't forget to read your work and check it flows and makes sense.



I want to go there!

Zargon 10 sounds like a brilliant planet to visit. Let's have a go at persuading people to visit it. Take a look at this example advert:

Fabulous fun for all the family at Alien Park

Are you ever bored at the weekend? Do you long for something exciting to do? Why not zoom to Alien Park and enter an amazing world?

Marvel at flying vampires. Wonder at the Dragons' Cave. Be amazed by Crocodile World. There is also ample parking, a cool café and a stunning shop.

Only 5 minutes from airstrip 21! Join the Alien A-team!

Now let's use the structure and imitate the language to write our own.

★ **Ask 3 questions:** Are you ever bored at the weekend?
Do you long for something exciting to do?
Why not zoom to Aliens Park and enter an amazing world?

★ **Use weasel words** – words that are sneaky and boastful that try and make you think everything is absolutely wonderful. Underline all the *weasel* words in the advert above. I've done a few for you.

★ **Tell your reader what to do by using bossy imperative verbs:** **Marvel** at flying vampires. **Wonder** at the Dragons' Cave. **Be amazed** by Crocodile World.

★ **Add on more detail with a sentence of 3 things:** There is also **ample parking, a cool café and a stunning shop.**

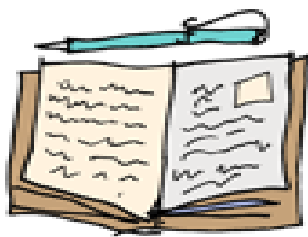
★ **Tell them where it is:** Only 5 minutes from **airstrip 21!**

★ **Round off with a catchy slogan:** **Join the Alien A-team!**

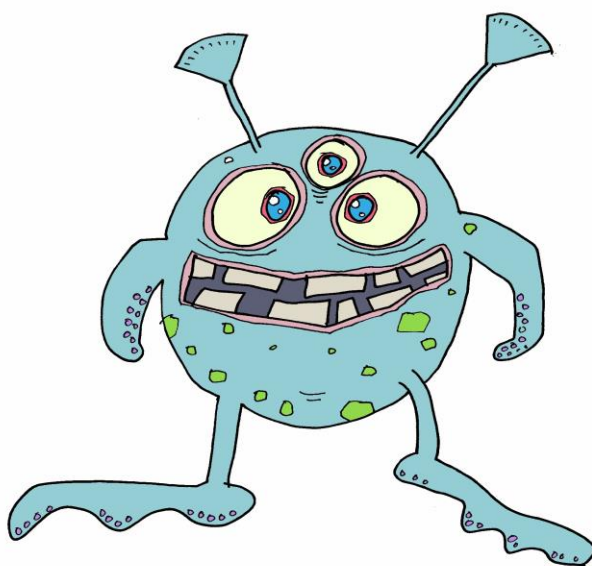
Let's innovate!

- ★ What do you want to say about Zargon 10? Use the planner below to plan your ideas. You can use some of the sentences above but try to add sentences and ideas of your own. I have left space in the plan for this, too:

Underlying structure	Jot down your ideas in note form
Ask a question to the reader to draw them in e.g. <i>Do you ...</i>	
Tell the reader what there is on Zargon 10. Name 3 things. e.g. <i>Don't miss...</i>	
Add on more detail with a sentence of three	
Tell them where it is	
End with a catchy slogan e.g. <i>See you there!</i>	



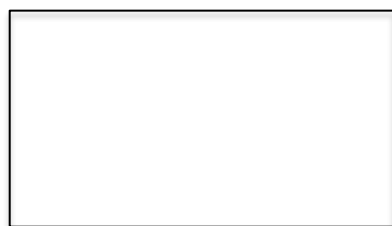
★ Now you're ready to write your advert! Use your plan to draft it on a separate piece of paper and don't forget to check the punctuation and flow. Does it sound persuasive enough?



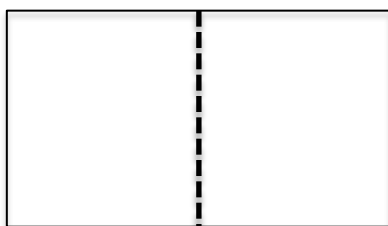
Let's publish!

I want to take your advert back to my planet with me, so how about making it into a leaflet? You can make one using the instructions below. You can add pictures, maps of where things are, quotes from visitors and whatever else you'd like to make your leaflet colourful and exciting.

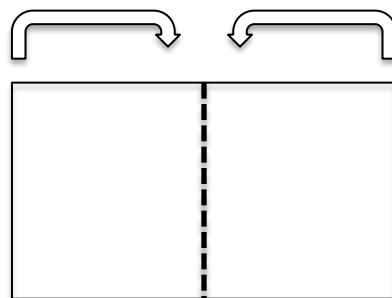
How to make a simple leaflet



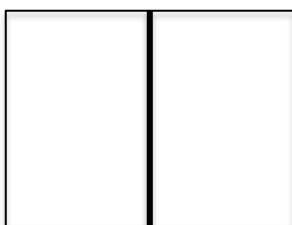
A4 paper



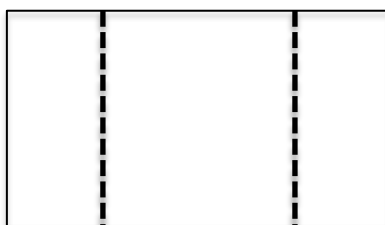
Fold it in half



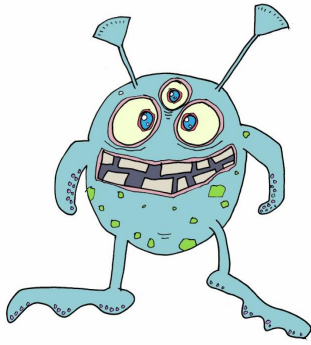
Fold each side into the middle



You have a leaflet!



Add in pictures, maps
and lots of detail. Use all sides
of the paper.



Invention

Well Done! We've reached the end of our non-fiction journey.

If you want to do more writing, you could try some **INVENTING** by using what you have learnt at school already. Here are a few ideas:

- ★ Write a set of instructions showing how to catch an alien.
- ★ Write an information text about the alien that you designed in this unit.
- ★ Write a story that has an alien as the main character. Use a story pattern that you know or use this basic structure:

Once upon a time

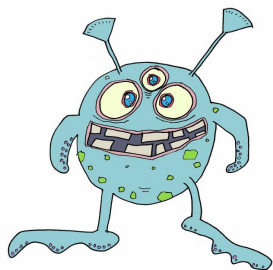
One day

Unfortunately

Luckily

In the end

- ★ Write a sorry letter to the farmer from me, apologising for scaring him



Time for me to leave. I hope you've had fun and enjoyed your writing! Why not rate your journey with me. Put a star along the scale to show how much you enjoyed it:



My favourite parts of the booklet were ...

This workbook has helped me learn ...



© Maria Richards for Talk for Writing

Maria Richards, former teacher and National Strategy Literacy Consultant, now works with Talk for Writing to help schools develop the approach.

Edited by Julia Strong

Prepared for online distribution by Nick Batty

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