

The Space Invaders

by Geoffrey Matthews

Chapter One: 'I am Omega'

Author: Adrian Tennant
Level: Intermediate
Age: Teenagers
Time needed: 30 minutes approx
Preparation: Activity 1: enough A2 or A1 (large) sheets of paper and board markers for each group to have one each. Activity 2: copies of the newspaper article.



Activity 1

- 1 Divide your class into groups (teams) of three to five students.
- 2 Give each team a sheet of A2 paper and a marker pen.
- 3 On the board write the title of the book: *The Space Invaders*.
- 4 Explain that you want the students to write down all the words they think they will hear in the first chapter on their piece of paper. You will give them a time limit of two minutes.
- 5 Say Go and give the students two minutes. Then tell them to stop writing.
- 6 Ask them to stick their sheet of paper on the classroom wall.
- 7 Tell them that you will play the first chapter and that they should tick the words they hear that are on their piece of paper (it's a good idea to give each group a different coloured pen at this stage).
- 8 Play the recording.
- 9 Tell students that they get one point for each word on their paper that was on the recording (and that they have ticked).
- 10 Check (you could get teams to check each other's paper using the transcript) and award the points.

Note: The title *Space Invaders* can be used to generate quite a lot of discussion with your class. Apart

from the vocabulary activity above, you could also ask students to predict what the story might be about, where it could be set, what might happen etc. Students can revisit their predictions at the start (or end) of every lesson and make new ones based on what they've heard in each chapter.

Extension: Spidergrams

Give each team another piece of paper and get them to turn the words they ticked into a spidergram i.e. write the words *The Space Invaders* in the middle then words such as *spaceship*, *robot*, *planet* around the board. Explain that as you play subsequent chapters they can add new topic words to the spidergram.

Activity 2

- 1 Make copies of the newspaper article below and ask the students to read it.

Earlier today on planet Earth a valuable painting was stolen from a museum. The thief was seen stealing the painting and some policemen chased him towards his spaceship. They had been waiting for the thief outside the museum.

The thief ran through a swamp and fell into the river. Here the guards caught the man before he could disappear.

- 2 Tell them that the article contains eight factual mistakes.

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- 3 Ask them to turn their article over so that they can't see it.
- 4 Play the recording once.
- 5 Ask students to look at their article and circle the eight mistakes.
- 6 Put students in pairs and have them compare their ideas together.
- 7 Play the recording again and ask them to check their answers.
- 8 Then, in their pairs ask the students to try to correct the eight things they have circled.
- 9 Play the recording once more and check together.

Answers:

Earlier today on planet Zeron a valuable crystal was stolen from the strongroom. The thief was not seen stealing the painting and some policemen chased him towards his spaceship. They had been waiting for the thief outside his spaceship.

The thief ran through a swamp and fell into a pool of water. The guards did not catch the man because he disappeared.



Extension: Hot off the press

Newspaper project: Tell the students that they will be making their own newspaper and will be adding to it at various points during the course.

Ask students to think of a title for their Intergalactic newspaper and to write a headline for the article.

Transcript

Varon pushed his way through the thick, wet grass of the swamp. Behind him, he heard the sound of loud voices. He tried to go faster, but the thick grass held him back. He had to push his way through it step by step. Varon had come about three kilometres from the Zeron strongroom and was very tired.

The first part of Varon's plan had been successful. He had got into the strongroom deep under the ground – he had found the crystal – and he had got out again. He had succeeded in stealing one of the most valuable crystals in the Universe. And no one had seen him.

But the second part of his plan had gone completely wrong. The guards on the planet Zeron had found his spaceship. Varon had been told that only the strongroom on Zeron was guarded. But now he knew that was wrong. There were guards all over the planet. The guards had been waiting for him when he got back to the spaceship. And now they were chasing him and there was no way he could escape.

Varon pushed his way through the grass and fell into a pool of dirty, green water. The shouts were coming closer. He had to keep moving.

Varon pulled himself slowly to his feet. His face, hands and overalls were covered in thick green mud. Varon wiped his hands on his overalls and felt in his pocket. The small, square box was still there. And in the box, there was the Zeron crystal. The crystal would make him rich – very, very rich. But first, he had to get back inside his ship. There was no other way he could escape from Zeron.

He now moved out of the long, thick grass. He was standing on harder, drier ground. There were some thick bushes in front of him. Behind him, there was the swamp and the guards who were chasing him. Varon hurried towards the thick bushes.

'I must get back to the spaceship,' Varon thought. 'I'll have to find some way of tricking the guards. I can't escape from Zeron if I can't get back to the spaceship.'

Varon took two steps forward into the bushes. Suddenly he stopped. He knew he was not alone. He dropped down on one knee. There was somebody near him. His hand reached for the laser gun on his belt.

'Do not touch your weapon,' said a soft voice.

The voice spoke from behind a bush. Varon turned towards the voice and pulled his gun from his belt. He pointed the laser gun at the bush and pressed the trigger. Nothing happened. Varon pressed the trigger again. Again, nothing happened.



Transcript

The quiet voice spoke once more. 'Your gun cannot be used. Put it back in your belt. You will not be harmed.'

Varon lowered his hand, but did not put the gun back in his belt. He rose slowly and took a step towards the bush.

'You are not permitted to move any nearer,' said the soft, quiet voice. It was a strange voice – neither friendly nor unfriendly.

Varon raised his foot to take another step towards the bush. But he could not move his leg forward. He tried and tried to move his leg, but it would not move. He could move backwards, but he could not go nearer the bush.

'Who are you?' Varon asked. 'What do you want from me?'

'I want to help you, Stefan Varon,' said the voice.

'You know my name!' said Varon in surprise. No one on Zeron knew him.

'Yes, I know your name. And I know what you do. And where you come from. And why you are here. I know everything. I am Omega.'

The leaves of the bush were moved slowly to one side. A tall figure stood in front of Varon. The figure was made of metal. Its face was neither friendly nor unfriendly. It didn't have a nose, mouth, eyes and ears like a human. It was a robot!

Varon was very surprised. He knew that the guards on Zeron did not use robots. He knew there were no robots on Zeron. Or was he wrong again? A robot was standing here in front of him.

'What do you want from me?' Varon asked once again.

The robot did not reply. It seemed to be listening to something. Its head moved round to the right. Varon heard the voices of the Zeron guards.

'He's over there,' a voice shouted. 'Near those bushes!'

Varon turned to the left and began to run. Omega raised one arm and pointed it at Varon. A bright, red light came from the metal arm and covered Varon's body. The red light quickly faded. When the Zeron guards reached the bushes, they found nothing. Varon and Omega had disappeared.

