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POP! by Mitch Johnson

Notes for Teachers and Home Schoolers

What would you do if the secret recipe to the world's favourite fizzy drink washed up at your feet? Queenie de la Cruz is about to find out ...

An outrageous theft. A huge reward. Two friends on the run. POP! is an uproariously funny, action-packed new adventure about the power of courage, standing up for what's right, and fizzy drinks, from the award-winning author of *Kick*.

Activities

The activities included here are based on the environmental themes in *Pop!* and are suitable for home learning or in the classroom. For pupils aged 9+

Explore Themes of: ✓ Environmental Issues ✓ Sustainable Design ✓ Global Citizenship

Subject Checklist: ✓ PSHE ✓ Citizenship ✓ Art, Design & Technology ✓ Geography ✓ Science

BOOK COVER PROMPTS

- What different elements do you see on the cover? Make a list.
- For each element, make a note of what clues it gives you about the story.
- How does the cover grab your attention?
- What do you think are some of 'the most pressing environmental issues affecting us today'?
- How do you think you can help protect the planet?

(TURN OVER FOR FULL-SIZE COVER IMAGE)

POP! *Fizzy drinks. A trillion dollars.
The adventure that ends with a bang.*





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FUN ACTIVITIES!

ACTIVITY 1: A POLLUTED WORLD

Extract from p10:

Read the extract from the beginning of the story, describing Queenie's new home in 'North Nitch'.

She wandered away from the house, towards the water, and sat on an upturned plastic crate. It was fifty fifty whether Ma would come for her or not, but there was no way she'd come as far as the water's edge, not even to shut Chuckie up. Queenie put her chin in her hands and watched as the sun went down.

Some evenings, the sun just slid below the horizon without a whimper, like a coin fed into a slot. But other times, like this evening, it spilled itself across the water in a red flood, throwing pink light over everything on the shore: the coffee cups and chunks of polystyrene, the garden chairs tangled in fishing wire, the plastic bottles that looked like dead fish.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What sort of world is described in the passage? Would you like to live here?
- Which of the book's themes do you think are hinted at in the description?
- If you were standing in this place, what do you think you would feel? Why?
- What colours can you see? How does the author create contrast here?
- What is plastic pollution? Have you ever seen a beach like this?

MINI TASK: Use the description to draw the scene.



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THINKING ABOUT: ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

In the extract, Queenie looks at the litter on the beach: *'the coffee cups and chunks of polystyrene, the garden chairs tangled in fishing wire, the plastic bottles that looked like dead fish.'*

- What Environmental Issues can you see in Queenie's description of the beach?
- Use the Environmental A-Z Board to make a note of the Environmental Issues covered in the book or in everyday news. For example, the letter 'P' might stand for 'Pollution'.
- To make this into a bigger project, consider distributing one letter of the alphabet to each member of your class, your friends or family members.
- Individually, draw a big template of your given letter on a sheet of A3 paper. Illustrate your letter with things that represent the Environmental Issue you have chosen for your letter.
- Use lots of colours and interesting textures to make your letter stand out. When you have finished, cut it out and mount it on a piece of card. Using string, hang your A-Z of Environmental Issues around the room, to remind you of what is happening in our world.



Environmental A-Z Board

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P

POP!

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Environmental A-Z Board

Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X
Y	Z		

Question. Which of these Environmental Issues are touched on in the book?



ACTIVITY 1: A POLLUTED WORLD

Extract from p66-68:

Read the extract from the Mac-Tonic™ boardroom.

‘As part of the study, CGI conducted some tests on the Great Pacific Garbage Patch—’

‘The what?’ asked Randy van de Velde.

‘The Great Pacific Garbage Patch.’

‘And what in the hell is the Great Pacific Garbage Patch?’

There was a pause. ‘It’s a patch of garbage,’ Alexander Greenberg said. ‘In the Pacific Ocean.’

Randy van de Velde snorted. Alexander Greenberg carried on. ‘According to this report, it’s about three times the size of France.’

‘Why don’t they use a measure people can understand?’ Randy van de Velde asked. ‘Who knows how big a place France really is? Why can’t they use football fields instead?’

‘Well, the report offers an alternative scale. The Patch is about twice the size of Texas.’

Randy van de Velde whistled. ‘Hoooo-eeeeee! Hot damn, that’s big! No wonder they don’t use football fields. And who knew three Frances add up to two Texases? Europe must be a tiny place. Sorry, Al, you go right ahead with your little report.’

‘As I said, they took some samples for analysis and, well . . .’

There was a bristling pause as the executives readied themselves for the bad news.

‘How bad is it?’ Donnie Holland asked.

‘Pretty bad,’ said Alexander Greenberg. ‘From the samples they collected, they were able to estimate how much of that trash comes from Mac-Tonic™ products.’

He hesitated, like a doctor on the brink of announcing a bleak diagnosis. ‘It’s forty-two per cent.’

A muttering, hissing, tutting sound rippled around the table.

‘Forty-two per cent!’ Randy van de Velde shouted. ‘Forty-two per cent!’

‘Oh, hell,’ said Martin DeWitt. ‘That’s terrible. Did we have a target for this, Dwight? Did we hit our target?’

Dwight Eagleman shook his head. ‘This is an initial report, so no target was set. But I think our market share means we should be striving for at least fifty-one per cent of that Patch.’

The Kennedy Kid was confused. *They want to be responsible for more trash in the ocean?* Like everything else that occurred in the boardroom, it didn’t make sense.



ACTIVITY 2: SUSTAINABLE FIZZY DRINKS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What is the ‘Great Pacific Garbage Patch’?
- What percentage of the Garbage Patch comes from ‘Mac-Tonic™ products’?
- What impression do you get of Randy van de Velde here? Why?
- How do the different characters react to the news? What do their reactions tell you about them?
- Why is the Kennedy Kid ‘confused’? Do you feel confused, too?
- How do you feel reading this passage?

MINI TASK: In a group, re-create this scene as a piece of boardroom drama. Takes turn playing different characters.

THINKING ABOUT: DESIGNING A FIZZY DRINK!

The executives in the extract are arguing about how to cause more damage to the planet. But how could they cause less damage?

- Create your own Fizzy Drink with a catch – it must be good for the environment!
- First, write down any ideas that you have. You might want to use the Environmental A–Z Board to remind you of the issues that you need to be conscious of.

Consider the following things:

How is your drink made? What processes are involved?	What <i>packaging</i> does it have – e.g. plastic, glass, cardboard – or will it be sold in a can?	Does it have a label?	How <i>recyclable</i> or <i>reusable</i> is your drink?
Which <i>shops</i> will sell your drink?	How will it be <i>stored</i> in supermarkets or shops?	Who will consume your drink – who is it aimed at?	How will your drink be <i>marketed</i> or <i>advertised</i>?

- Research any other drinks packaging designs or sustainable products for inspiration. You could create a collage or ‘moodboard’ of your favourites.
- Create your own Fizzy Drink. Label it with environmentally friendly features and information. Finally... don’t forget to give your drink a catchy name!

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