



NOTES FOR KS2 TEACHERS & LIBRARIANS

INTRODUCTION

Are you and your class ready to LAUGH YOUR SOCKS OFF? Are you ready to join us on PLANET OMAR?!!

These Teachers' Notes accompany the hilarious new illustrated series, *Planet Omar*, which is the perfect series for fans of *Tom Gates* and *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* – full of fun and mischief (the good, creative kind)!

The activities included here are the perfect way not only to get your class excited about books, but also to encourage those much-desired independent reading skills. They encourage students to dig deeper into what they read, to analyse multi-modal texts and language, to embark on creative writing projects and to consider the prevalent themes in the books: celebrating difference, coping with big feelings, family, acceptance, and the importance of a good laugh.



PLANET OMAR ACCIDENTAL TROUBLE MAGNET

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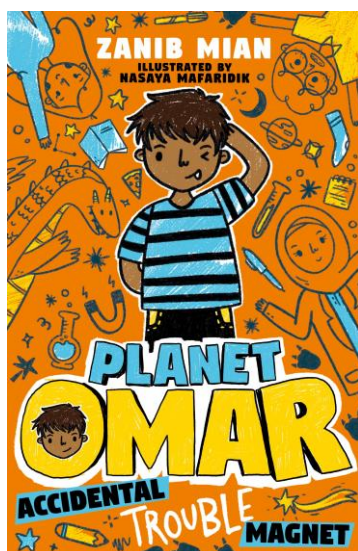
ABOUT THE BOOK

Welcome, readers, to the imaginative brain of Omar! You might not know me yet, but once you open the pages of this book you'll laugh so hard that snot will come out of your nose (plus you might meet a dragon and a zombie - what more could you want?).

My parents decided it would be a good idea to move house AND move me to a new school at the same time. As if I didn't have a hard enough time staying out of trouble at home, now I've also got to try and make new friends. What's worse, the class bully seems to think I'm the perfect target.

At least Eid's around the corner which means a feast (YAY) and presents (DOUBLE YAY). Well, as long as I can stay in Mum and Dad's good books long enough...

The combination of Zanib Mian's hilarious text and Nasaya Mafaridik's fantastic cartoon-style illustrations make the PLANET OMAR series perfect for fans of TOM GATES and WIMPY KID.



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READING QUESTIONS

- What do you learn about the story of *Planet Omar* from the cover and title? Can you guess what the storyline might be? What themes might be important? What do you think the main character will be like?
- What different objects can you see on the front cover? What might these objects symbolise? Do they give you any clues to the story? Pick an object and predict three ways that it might be used in the story.
- What do you notice about the style of the book? Does it remind you of any other books that you've read?
- Zanib Mian often uses words made up of capital letters in her writing. Can you find any examples of this in the book? What is the effect of using capital letters? What do they show?
- Can you find an example of onomatopoeia in the book? Why is this an effective technique for creating comedy?
- How does *Planet Omar* integrate lots of different text types and styles to capture the reader's attention?
- What is effective about using the first person to document Omar's adventures? Do you like this point of view? Why? How does it change the experience of reading?
- What do you learn about Omar's family in the first chapter of the book? What are their different relationships? What is their culture and religion?
- What does Omar have the feeling that 'there were a million frogs' hopping around in his tummy in Chapter 6? Have you ever felt like this? Do you find it easy to empathise with Omar in the book?
- The author, Zanib Mian, has been praised for her contribution to diversity in children's literature. What does this mean? Why is this important in a modern-day setting?



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FUN (AND FUNNY!) ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: GETTING TO KNOW OMAR

Reading Comprehension, Drama, Speaking and Listening

The 'Planet Omar' series invites readers into a world that is full of humour. Omar, the main character, makes us all laugh! Let's find out how...

- In pairs, re-read Chapter 1 from *Planet Omar: Accidental Trouble Magnet*. Find examples in the extract that show that Omar is: CLUMSY, FUNNY, ANNOYING (for his parents and siblings!), and LOVABLE! Can you think of any more words to describe Omar?
- If Omar was interviewed on the television, what do you think he'd be like in real-life? Brainstorm your ideas using the following headings: voice, body language and facial expressions.
- Carry out interviews with Omar, asking him all about his life with his family, and at school! Remember: try to make it as funny as you can.





ACCIDENTAL TROUBLE MAGNET

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ACTIVITY 2: A MILLION FROGS IN YOUR TUMMY

PSHE, Writing: Scriptwriting

Omar experiences a lot of big feelings in the story – for example on his first day at school – and he often uses comedy and humour as a way of coping with these feelings. Is this something that you can empathise with? Is it something that you do, too?

- In groups, write a list of emotions or 'big feelings' that you can have. Discuss which emotions you think are 'biggest' in your group. These are the emotions that affect you the most.
- Next to each emotion, draw the number of frogs that it might cause you to have in your tummy! The biggest feelings should have the most frogs. Discuss why some feelings give you more frogs than others.
- Our bodies give us signals when we have big feelings. Choose one emotion that you have discussed. Write it at the top of a blank piece of paper and draw a stick figure below. Then, label all the places you might feel the emotion in your body and what you would feel. What does your head feel like? Your hands? Your stomach? Any other physical signs of this feeling? Don't forget to draw a face for your figure that shows their feelings inside!
- What strategies for managing these emotions can you think of? For example, you might stop to name your feelings, share them with a friend or a loved one, spread happiness, visualise a calm scene, breathe deeply, or even find a way to make it funny!
- Think of a situation where you might use one of these strategies and write a short script about it, including what can cause the feelings, what they feel like, and at least one way to manage them. Perform it for the class and take pictures or film your scripts in action.



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ACTIVITY 3: IT'S HOW YOU TELL 'EM

Reading Comprehension, Writing: Creative Writing

'Planet Omar' incorporates things in everyday life that make us all laugh. But how does author Zanib Mian transform scenarios using comic devices in her writing?

- In pairs, consider *how* Zanib Mian makes everyday situations funny in her stories. How does she tell them?
- Zanib Mian uses lots of comic devices in her writing to make it funny. Looking back at Chapter 1 of *Planet Omar: Accidental Trouble Magnet*, find examples in the extract of the following comic devices: USE OF CAPITAL LETTERS, INFORMAL WORDS, ONOMATOPOEIA, USE OF CARTOON/ILLUSTRATION, REPETITION, FUNNY SCENARIOS.
- For each comic device listed, think about how it helps to make the story funny. Can you use one of these devices in your own writing to tell a funny story?

ACTIVITY 4: SIDE-SPLITTING STORYBOARDS

Writing: Creative Writing

Jeff explains that he always wanted to be a comic book writer. As inspiration for 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid', he came up with the idea that he would write as a kid writing his diary – and that way he could sneak his hilarious cartoons in too!

- Using some of the comic devices from Activity 3, create a six-panel storyboard.
- Your storyboard should be based on something funny that has happened to you recently in your everyday life – either at home, or at school. It might be a journey to school, something that happened in class, or an argument with your siblings!
- Share your storyboards with your classmates. Can they spot any comic devices that you have used? Can they give you any tips for how to make your storyboard even more side-splittingly hilarious!



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ACTIVITY 5: CELEBRATING DIFFERENCE

Reading Comprehension, Geography, R.E., PSHE

Author Zanib Mian has been praised for how she promotes diversity in her books. Why is it important to promote diversity in today's world? Why is it important to celebrate difference?

- In pairs, discuss the following questions: What would school be like if every lesson was exactly the same? What would the world be like if everyone was good at the same thing?
- In what ways can we be different? Make a list of ways on a big A3 sheet of paper – you might include things like: where we come from, what our beliefs are, what we look like.
- How is Omar different? How is he different to other protagonists that you have read about recently? Add Omar's differences to your A3 sheet.
- With the people sitting next to you, discuss how you are different from each other. You can use the following sentence starters to help you:

I am different because of the way I look (e.g. I have brown eyes etc.)

.....

I am different because my favourite things are.....

.....

I am different because my *least* favourite things are

.....



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ACTIVITY 5: CELEBRATING DIFFERENCE (cont.)

I am different because my talents are

I am different because my family is

- Consider the following questions together: What is unique about each person in your group? How might your differences be a challenge for your group? How might they help your group to be successful?
- Now that you've found out about your other teammates, work together to create a Team Profile showing your team's differences. Don't forget to give your team a brilliantly funny and hilarious name – you might even use onomatopoeia to make it truly stand out from the crowd!

