

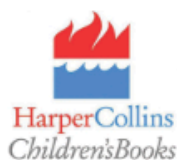
THAT TIME I GOT KIDNAPPED

ACTIVITY PACK

For ages 11+

PERFECT FOR: Older readers who will enjoy a thrilling superhero-filled adventure across America; exploring character relationships and connections; discussing themes of friendship, difference, courage, family and self-belief.

ACTIVITIES INCLUDE: writing in role; exploring settings and map work; creating superheroes and comic books; newspaper articles; researching UFO sightings; roleplay and drama; historical research into The Odyssey.



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS For students aged 11+

1. Before beginning, spend some time looking at the map of Jacob's journey. Find some pictures and photographs of some of the places mentioned – Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Chicago. Have you visited any of these places? How are they similar? How are they different? **Predict what might happen** to Jacob in each of these places.
2. Read the first chapter and discuss what your first impressions of Jacob are. Do you like him? How does the author develop Jacob's voice and personality in the first chapter? Now, complete a **Role on the Wall** activity. Draw an outline of Jacob. On the inside of your drawing write down everything you learn about him in the first chapter. On the outside, record any questions you might like to ask him. Continue adding to this as the story progresses.
3. How are the **relationships between Jacob's family presented and explored** throughout the first few chapters? What do we learn about them? How are parent/child relationships explored and how are the relationships between Jacob and Amy explored? Do any of the family members remind you of anyone you know? Why?
4. At the beginning of Chapter 7, Jacob has a difficult choice – should he tell the police about the girl sitting next to him or cover for her? What should he do? As a class, create a **Conscience Alley**. One side of the class should be voices persuading Jacob to keep quiet. The other side of the class should persuade Jacob to speak to the police. Take it in turns to play Jacob walking through the alley of voices. How do you feel? Write three paragraphs exploring your conflicting feelings and final decision.

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5. Read up to Chapter 9. How are Jacob and Jennifer similar? How are they different? Use a **Venn Diagram** to compare and contrast them. As you continue to read, add your ideas and thoughts to your Venn Diagram. Do you find they have anything in common as the story progresses? You could write some predictions about Jennifer and why she has run away and what is in the parcel too on the outside of your diagram.

6. Can you describe **Nicky** in three words? What role does she play in the story? Do you think she is right to allow Jacob and Jennifer to travel with them? How do you think Jacob feels about her? Do you think the bus driver has enjoyed his journey with Nicky and the zombies? Use evidence from the story to support your ideas.

7. On page 108, Jacob asks if '**brave**' is the **opposite** of '**scared**'. What do you think? Are brave people ever scared? Or are you brave because you face your fears, even if you are scared? Can you think of any other synonyms for the word 'brave'? Have you ever done something you would class as being brave? What evidence has there been so far in the story that Jacob is brave?

8. What might Jacob and his Mum be thinking in Chapter 17 during their phone call? Choose one of the characters and write an **inner monologue** to show their feelings. Now, act out the scene in pairs, taking time to pause and share your monologue. Is there a difference between what your character is saying and what they are feeling?

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9. Look at page 145. What is the most important piece of information you learn? Were you surprised by it? **How does this revelation help develop your understanding of Jennifer?** Why might the author have left it until now to reveal what's in the box? Later, Jacob finds that 'language abandons' him – what would you say to Jennifer?

10. On page 204, Jennifer says, 'Honestly, Jacob, sometimes it's like you're speaking a different language.' Throughout the story there are lots of comic misunderstandings between Jacob and Jennifer arising from their use of language. For example, Jacob refers to the bathroom as a 'toilet' and he is also confused by the idea of a peanut nutter and jelly sandwich. What other differences can you spot in the story between the **American and British words, phrases and sayings?**

11. In a group of three, **re-create the events from Chapter 38**. One of you should play Jacob, one should play Jennifer, and one of you should play Mr Lewis. Perform the scene three times; each time considering another character's perspective. Think about how you will change your body language, voice and facial expression each time.

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12. What role does the **cowboy** play in the story? How might the plot have changed if he had been removed from the story? How does the author make him appear menacing and frightening throughout? Do you agree that he's just doing his job? What do you think the point of chapter 32 is with regards to the Cowboy's character development? Do your feelings about him change at all as the story progresses?

13. How do Jacob and Jennifer **change, develop and grow** over the course of the story? Can you pinpoint a moment when Jacob begins to enjoy himself? What do you think the most important lesson Jennifer learns is? Record your ideas using an **Emotions Graph** to track both character's changing thoughts and feelings during important scenes and events in the story.

14. Which of these do you think is the most important theme in the story? **Order them from most important to least important.** Now, think of examples in the story where each of these themes is pivotal: superheroes, courage, confidence, lies, friendship, illusion, danger.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 1 For students aged 11+

BEFORE-READING: THE SETTING

- Spend some time finding all of the places that Jacob discovers himself in during his adventure (including Las Vegas, Chicago, Los Angeles). **Use a map to locate each of the places and landmarks mentioned.**
- Use the map at the beginning of the book to work out **how many kilometres is it from each place** mentioned on Jacob's journey. Can you record this in metres and miles too? How long would it take to drive and fly each part of the journey?
- Choose one of the places mentioned in the story and create a **persuasive leaflet** about it, encouraging holidaymakers to visit. Include information about your location's climate, culture, food, famous attractions and popular places to visit. Remember to include diagrams, photographs, alliteration and descriptive vocabulary to help your reader visualise your location.
- Use a shoebox to create a **3D diorama** of one of the locations visited during Jacob's hilarious adventure. You could include information about the place, quotes from the book, reference to the main events in the story and some of the main attractions and landmarks you might see if you visit.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 2 For students aged 11+

DURING-READING: SUPERHERO POEM

- Jacob has won a competition to appear as an extra in a superhero movie! To win the competition **Jacob was required to write a poem about a superhero.**
- As a group, **make a list of all the superheroes you know** and find pictures of them. Who is the best superhero? Who is the class's favourite superhero? You could record the results as a bar graph or pie chart.
- **What special characteristics does a superhero need?** Do they need to be brave? Selfless? Strong? Make a list.
- Spend some time exploring the poems in '**Invasion of the Supervillains (Raps and Rhymes to Worry the Galaxy)**' and '**Here Come the Superheroes (Raps and Rhymes to Save the Galaxy)**' – both of these are written by Neal Zetter, illustrated by Chris White and published by Troika. You can find lots of Neal Zetter's superhero themed poems here too:
<https://www.cccpworkshops.co.uk/neal-zetter/>
- **Choose one to perform in a group**, with actions and musical instruments to bring your poem to life. What do you like about it? What do you dislike about it? Does it remind you of any other stories, TV shows, films or poems you know? Is there anything puzzling or confusing about it? Use different coloured pencils to identify the rhyming structure and discuss its effect.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 2 (CONTINUED) For students aged 11+

DURING-READING: SUPERHERO POEM

- Now use this poem as a structure for planning, drafting and writing your own winning superhero poem. You could even design your own brand-new superhero, thinking about their special powers and traits and why they're so wonderful and then base your poem on them. You could even refer to Captain Proactive and Worry-Man, who are mentioned in the story!
- If you're feeling brave, at the end of the lesson, you could **share your superhero-themed poems and give each other feedback**. Can you add actions to your poem and think about how to engage your listener by adapting your expression, pace and volume?

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 3 For students aged 11+

DURING-READING: UFO SIGHTING

- Spend some time in groups conducting research into **Roswell** and the strange happenings there. Can you locate it on a map? Discuss what the landscape around the area is like and why this might be.
- **Create a timeline** showing the main events throughout history that have occurred at Roswell. You might wish to include reference to the discovery in 1947, Mac Brazel's involvement, Project Mogul and the supposed dummy drops in the 1950s. Why are some people sceptical about the government's explanation for the odd events at Roswell?
- In groups, spend some time looking at a variety of **local and national newspaper articles**. What are the important events and news taking place right now?
- **Use a table to explore the similarities and difference between a broadsheet and tabloid newspaper**. Think about the layout, type of language use, the number of photographs used and who these papers might be aimed at.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 3 (CONTINUED) For students aged 11+

DURING-READING: UFO SIGHTING

- **Choose one newspaper article which reports on a UFO sighting**, perhaps the famous events in 1947 at Roswell. First, use a piece of tracing paper and trace the layout of your newspaper article, identifying the key points, the headline, any photographs, quotes or statements and the conclusion.
- Now, **plan and write a newspaper article about an imaginary UFO sighting in your local area**. Alternatively, you could write one about a famous UFO sighting you've researched. You could also use the picture book 'Tuesday' by David Wiesner for inspiration! Remember to include all the features of a newspaper report too.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 4 For students aged 11+

DURING-READING: THE ODYSSEY

- Throughout his manic journey, Jacob often mentions the story of **'The Odyssey' by Homer**. What do you already know about this ancient Greek poem?
- Spend some time exploring some re-tellings of 'The Odyssey' – the version written by Gillian Cross and illustrated by Neil Packer is especially good. Now, use a **Venn Diagram to compare and contrast 'The Odyssey' with 'That Time I Got Kidnapped'**. How are they similar? How are they different?
- **Write a diary from the viewpoint of Odysseus**, describing one of the main events on your journey. Now, **write a diary as Jacob**, re-telling an important part of your journey. How might the language, character voice and structure of the diaries differ? Can you refer to your characters' thoughts, feelings and motivations? Can you see any connections between the two stories?
- Use a range of mixed media and **create an ancient map** showing Odysseus's frightening journey – tea-stained paper works very well! You may wish to include reference to the attack on Ciccones, the storm, the terrifying cyclops, the attack by the Laestrygonians, Poseidon's role in the story and the enticing and dangerous Sirens.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 4 (CONTINUED) For students aged 11+

DURING-READING: THE ODYSSEY

- Alternatively, you could **continue the graphic novel theme and summarise the story of 'The Odyssey' using speech and thought bubbles** and a range of comic book panels and templates.
- Are there any other stories, films, TV shows or poems you know that feature an **epic adventure**?

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 5 For students aged 11+

AFTER READING: GRAPHIC NOVELS AND COMIC BOOKS

- Create **illustrated character profiles** for Jennifer, Jacob, Mr Lewis and the cowboy. Include information about their personality, relationships and how they develop as the story progresses.
- Now spend some time working in groups to **freeze-frame what you consider to be the five main events in the story**. Think carefully about your facial expressions and body language. You could even take photographs of your freeze frames and use them to summarise the story later on.
- As a group, **explore a range of comic books and graphic novels**. As well as a range of superhero comics, you could also look at:
 - 'Mr. Wolf's Class' by Aron Nels Steinke
 - 'Arthur and the Golden Rope' by Joe Todd-Stanton
 - 'Click' by Kayla Miller
 - 'The New Boy' by Jerry Black
- Create a **spider diagram** to record their main features, thinking about their layout and use of speech and thought bubbles.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 5 (CONTINUED) For students aged 11+

AFTER READING: GRAPHIC NOVELS AND COMIC BOOKS

- Using a comic book style or template, summarise the main events in the story. **Use thought and speech bubbles to show the characters' development, captions for your illustrations and onomatopoeia.** You should also think about the shape of your panels and the font style and typography you might like to use.
- Alternatively, you could consider **what might happen in a sequel to this story.** Will Jacob manage to find Jennifer again? What trouble will they get into next? Create a comic book to predict and plot the events of a sequel!