

INDEPENDENT STUDY COMPANION

THE WAR OF THE WORLDS



A LIVING BOOK STUDY - LEARNING BOOKLET

Name: _____

TASKS: DAY 1

Week 1 - Book One, I-II: The Eve of the War; The Falling Star

READ:

Astronomers see strange flashes on Mars. Soon a 'falling star' - really the first cylinder - lands on Horsell Common, and life carries calmly on.

NARRATION:

How do the Martians first announce themselves, and how calmly does ordinary life continue?

EXTENSION:

Science: research the planet Mars, and why Victorians imagined there was life on it.

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 2

Week 1 - Book One, III-IV: On Horsell Common; The Cylinder Opens

READ:

A curious crowd gathers around the pit. The great cylinder slowly unscrews, and the first Martian heaves itself into view.

NARRATION:

Describe the crowd at the pit and their first sight of a Martian.

EXTENSION:

Discuss: why does almost no one grasp the danger at first?

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 3

Week 1 - Book One, V-VI: The Heat-Ray

READ:

A party approaches the pit with a white flag of peace - and is destroyed by the Martians' invisible Heat-Ray.

NARRATION:

Retell the fate of the men who approach the Martians with a flag of truce.

EXTENSION:

Science: research how a laser works, and compare it to Wells's Heat-Ray.

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 4

Week 2 - Book One, VII-VIII: How I Reached Home; Friday Night

READ:

The narrator returns to his wife amid an uneasy calm, as more cylinders fall and the country slowly wakes to its danger.

DISCUSS:

How does Wells build a feeling of dread during this quiet pause before the storm?

EXTENSION:

Geography: begin mapping the invasion as it spreads across Surrey.

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 5

Week 2 - Book One, IX-X: The Fighting Begins; In the Storm

READ:

The towering fighting-machines rise up, the army opens fire, and the narrator is swept into a desperate flight through a thunderstorm.

NARRATION:

Retell how the fighting-machines appear and the narrator's escape through the storm.

EXTENSION:

Art: illustrate a Martian tripod striding through the rain and lightning.

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 6

Week 2 - Book One, XI-XII: At the Window; Destruction of Weybridge and Shepperton

READ:

The army manages to bring down a single Martian, but at a fearful cost, as whole towns are destroyed and the red weed begins to spread.

DISCUSS:

A Martian is destroyed at last. Why does this rare victory feel so small against the invasion?

EXTENSION:

Science: the 'red weed' spreads fast. Research real invasive species and the harm they do.

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 7

Week 3 - Book One, XIII-XIV: The Curate; In London

READ:

The narrator falls in with a frightened curate, while his brother, in London, watches the great city begin to panic.

NARRATION:

Introduce the curate, and describe how London first reacts to the news.

EXTENSION:

PSHE: discuss how people first react when normal life is suddenly threatened.

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 8

Week 3 - Book One, XV-XVI: What Had Happened in Surrey; The Exodus from London

READ:

The Martians unleash a suffocating Black Smoke, and millions flee the capital in a vast, chaotic exodus.

NARRATION:

Retell the horror of the Black Smoke and the desperate flight from London.

EXTENSION:

History: research real mass evacuations, and how societies cope under them.

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 9

Week 3 - Book One XVII + Book Two I-II: The Thunder Child; Under Foot; The Ruined House

READ:

The ironclad warship Thunder Child charges the machines to save fleeing ships. Then the narrator is trapped in a ruined house, watching the Martians at work.

NARRATION:

Describe the Thunder Child's heroic charge against the fighting-machines.

EXTENSION:

Discuss: the narrator is now trapped and helpless. How does the mood change as Book Two begins?

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 10

Week 4 - Book Two, III-IV: The Days of Imprisonment; The Death of the Curate

READ:

Trapped for days in the ruined house, the narrator and the curate turn on each other, with tragic results.

DISCUSS:

Fear affects the narrator and the curate very differently. What does it do to each of them?

EXTENSION:

PSHE: discuss how extreme stress and fear can change how people behave.

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 11

Week 4 - Book Two, V-VI: The Stillness; The Work of Fifteen Days

READ:

The narrator escapes into a strange, silent land smothered by red weed, and surveys the ruin the Martians have made.

NARRATION:

Describe the changed, silent, weed-covered world the narrator walks into.

EXTENSION:

Science: research how ecosystems recover after a major disaster.

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 12

Week 4 - Book Two, VII: The Man on Putney Hill

READ:

The narrator meets the artilleryman again, who lays out a grand plan for humanity to live underground and fight back - but does almost nothing.

DISCUSS:

The artilleryman talks boldly but acts idly. What is Wells saying about people through him?

EXTENSION:

Drama: perform the artilleryman's speech, and let your audience decide whether to believe him.

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 13

Week 4 - Book Two, VIII: Dead London

READ:

The narrator walks through an eerily deserted London - and finds the mighty Martians lying dead in their machines.

NARRATION:

Describe 'Dead London', and the narrator's astonishing discovery.

EXTENSION:

Science: research germs and the immune system - what really defeats the Martians?

Your response:

TASKS: DAY 14

Week 4 - Book Two, IX-X: Wreckage; The Epilogue

READ:

The world slowly recovers, the narrator is reunited with his wife, and he reflects on what the invasion has taught humankind.

WRAP-UP:

How does the world recover, and what lasting lesson does the narrator draw from it all?

EXTENSION:

'The Martians treat us as we treat lesser creatures.' How does Wells use the invasion to hold up a mirror to the British Empire?

Your response:

MY READING JOURNAL

Keep your own eyewitness journal of the invasion - note what happens, and how humanity's fortunes rise and fall.

Chapters	What happened	Who is winning now?

SCIENCE VS STORY

Wells mixes real science with invention. For each idea in the book, note the real science behind it - and how close Wells came.

Idea in the book	The real science
Life on Mars	
The Heat-Ray	
The red weed	
Why the Martians die	