ITCH
THE EXPLOSIVE ADVENTURES OF AN ELEMENT HUNTER
SIMON MAYO
Itch Pupil Activities

Before you read the book

• Look at the book jacket. Ask yourself these questions:
  - What do you like about the jacket and why?
  - How does the jacket make you feel about the book?
  - If you could ask one question about the book, what would it be?
  - Make a prediction about the book’s plot i.e. what do you think is going to happen in the book and why?

• Now look at the blurb. Answer these questions:
  - Has the blurb given you any more clues about the plot of the book?
  - Look at the prediction you made earlier. Were you right?
  - Now you have more information, make another prediction about the book.

Studying the opening

• Before you read the opening. Think about what makes an effective opening? Write down three things that you look for in an opening e.g. suspense.
  1.
  2.
  3.

• Now read these five different openings to books. Rank them in order according to how much you like each one, 1 = most favourite 5 = least favourite. Remember to think about why you ranked them in this order.

A. A new term is about to begin and everything in the world is slightly less rubbish than it used to be.
   The Donut Diaries: Revenge is Sweet (Anthony McGowan)

   Wonder (R.J Palacio)

C. My name is Raphael Fernandez and I am a dumpsite boy.
   Trash (Andy Mulligan)

D. The room is cold because she’s left the window open, and a wintry storm has turned the sky purple. The wind sneaks in and stabs at her with its icy fingers but she doesn’t notice.
   Killing Honour (Bali Rai)
Wind howled through the night, carrying a scent that would change the world. A tall Shade lifted his head and sniffed the air. He looked human except for his crimson hair and maroon eyes. *Eragon.* (Christopher Paolini)

• Now read the opening of ITCH.

The earthquake was a small one. The post office shook only slightly, the window rattling in its frame and dislodging an Advent calendar. The van outside vibrated just enough to set off its alarm, and if you were watching closely you might have seen the traffic lights shudder in their concrete base.

- How effective do you think this opening is and why?
- What clues does it give us about what may happen later in the book?

Zooming in on the language

• The opening of ITCH is full of exciting verbs (action words). What is the effect of this?
  - Highlight all of the *verbs* in the opening.
  - For each one, think about the kind of *movement* it is describing. Is the movement big or small? Is it powerful or weak?
  - What do all of these words *suggest* about what is about to happen in the story?
  - How does this make you *feel*?

• After you have read the first section of the book (until *waiting*), write down what you think is going to happen at the end of the book. Remember, you must say *why* you think this. You will go back to your prediction after you have finished reading the book!

Introducing Itchingham Lofte

• Read chapters one to three.

• You are now going to create a *character profile* of Itch.
  1. On the next page, draw a picture of what you think Itch looks like.
  2. Around the picture, write down words or phrases to describe Itch e.g. quiet.
Think about your first impressions of Itch. **Why** have you made these conclusions about him? You must find some **evidence** to back up your **points**. Pick out 3-5 of your points from your character profile. Complete the first two columns in the table. Extension - can you also **analyse** the evidence that you have picked out?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How I would describe Itch (POINT)</th>
<th>My evidence (EVIDENCE)</th>
<th>Why my evidence supports my point (ANALYSE)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Itch is mischievous.</td>
<td>‘He had got away with so much over the years.’</td>
<td>This tells me that Itch is constantly doing things that he shouldn’t. It suggests that he is able to do things without his family knowing.</td>
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After you have finished reading ITCH

- How does Itch change during the book?
  - Look at the Itch character profile that you made after reading the first three chapters. Would you still describe Itch like this? Do you think he changed during the book? If so, how?
  - Write down five ways to describe Itch at the end of the book. For each point, decide if you would have described Itch like this in the beginning.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How would you describe Itch at the end?</th>
<th>Why would you describe like this? What is your evidence?</th>
<th>Was he like this in the beginning?</th>
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Itch – the accidental hero!

Itchingham Lofte isn’t your normal ‘hero’. Or is he? Think about other famous heroes. They can be real or imaginary. What makes them heroic? Write down 5-10 points in a mind map.

What makes a ‘hero’? Bravery
• Now think about how you described Itch in the ‘How does Itch change?’ activity. Does he have any of the heroic qualities you listed above? Is Itchingham Lofte a hero? You must give three reasons for your answer.

I think Itch is/is not a hero. I think this because:

1. .................................................................................................................................
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2. .................................................................................................................................
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3. .................................................................................................................................
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• Imagine if you were an ‘accidental hero’ like Itch. What skills would you have? How would you ‘save the day’. Would you have a sidekick like Jack?

• In the space below, draw and label your ‘accidental hero’. Remember, like Itch, you’re not allowed any super powers!
• ITCH ends on a cliffhanger. It makes us want to know more! Imagine there is a sequel to ITCH. What do you think would happen? Try writing the opening of this sequel. Think about how the first book finished.

And at the bottom of the well, a polythene and lead radiation box, closed and sealed, lay in a metre of mud. It was surrounded by rusted winch machinery, rotten wooden planks and pieces of melted rucksack. Inside the box a small dark cluster of rocks lay together, 1,285 feet below the school notice board. And waited.
ITCH Wordsearch

Use your quick thinking and observation skills to find the words hidden below.

V O O Y X F S R A C R Q X X B P G L V H
R Z N N G O Z H E I P L U T O N I U M Q
C V T O A O L A M O M C F P I M N Q L D
P P K N T R L O L V W G J U P D E Z S
E L X C E N G O D Z F A X R O N C M D G
R S H L O M W R E A S J Q A L C I A U H
I C F N K R E K A G D S A O O P N S O G
O I U V X F N L F D R U H V N E E U J H
D S T A C E U R E L I R B Q I N S O S B
I Y A O P L P H M R K O I Q U O R Q W U
C H B S T B E N Q H M H A C M I A C S R
B P L P P A W U N L U P Y C M T Y I J A
S S E Z A M A C L H I S G S T A F P L N
S C C L R M Y L D R D O Z C I I H S U I
U E Y I I L R A A P S P S C W A Q E I M
W Y G P C F P R K I S I S B G R J E N A
Z V R R L L M R F K E I X S U Y W H O X
A G S F E Z O F Y R O T A R O B A L U R
H I K C H E M I S T R Y Q L X I S Z S F

Arsenic   Laboratory   Geology   Radiation
Phosphorus Radioactive   Periodic   Uranium
Chemistry   Luminous   Physics   Rock
Element   Nuclear   Plutonium   Sodium
Flammable Particle   Polonium   Table

Extra Activity - Why don’t you try making your own scientific word search? Remember, there are 118 elements to choose from. Or 126 as the case may be...
Design your own element!

- Use your scientific knowledge and brain power to create your own unique scientific element. Will it be as powerful as lofteium?

**Draw your element**

**Describe your element.**

Itch by Simon Mayo - OUT NOW!

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