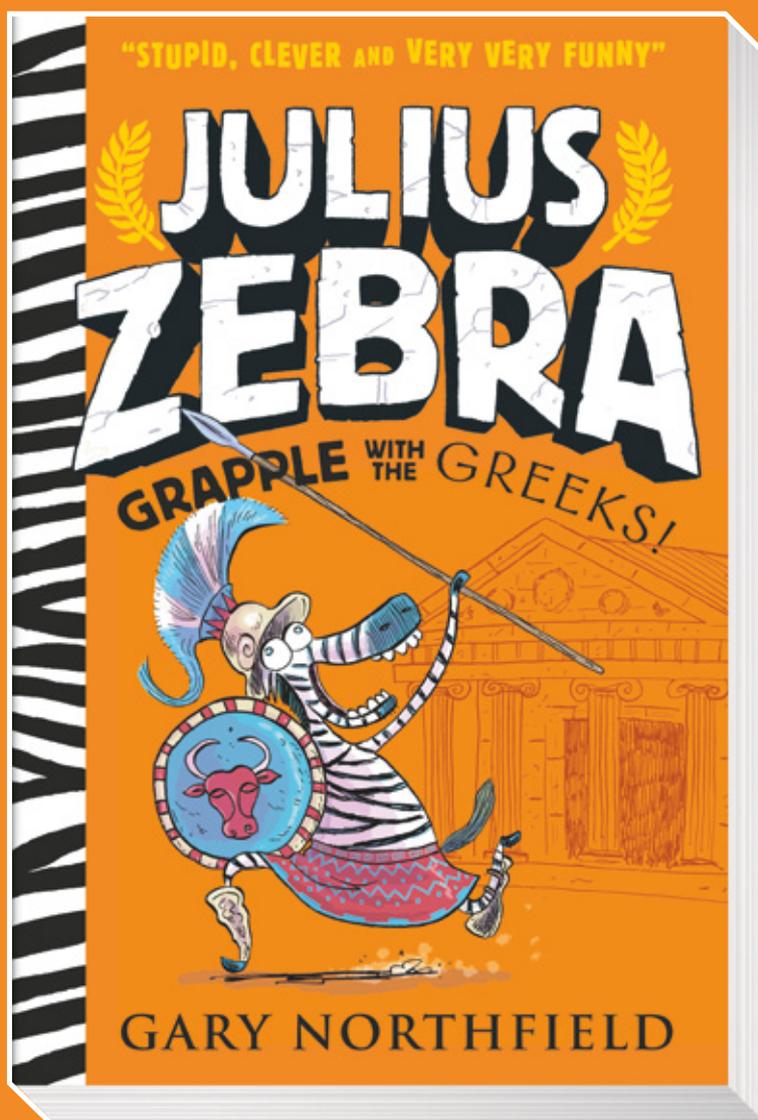


Walker Books Teachers' notes

Julius Zebra: Grapple with the Greeks!

GARY NORTHFIELD



For readers aged 8 years+

9781406380965 • Hardback • £9.99 | 9781406386387 • Paperback • £6.99

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A chapter by chapter reading guide



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GENERIC ACTIVITIES

Keep a reading log so you can record thoughts and ideas and viewpoints as they develop and change during the course of the story. This can include:

- Predictions
- Plot development – summarising each chapter
- Character studies – deduction and making inferences and refining opinions as the story progresses
- Author techniques – style analysis: form, language, imagery, foreshadowing, motifs, themes, viewpoint, tone
- Vocabulary – clarifying unfamiliar words and extending personal vocabulary
- Your own sketches of characters and ideas for your own comic strip or narrative which you can develop as you read the book

When considering discussion points, try out your ideas with a response partner before entering into whole class discussion.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Discussion points (Prediction and inference)

Make a note of your opinions.

- Looking only at the front cover (don't peep at the blurb!), pick out as many clues as possible to predict what you think this book will be about.
- What does 'grapple' mean?
- How does your view develop further on reading the blurb? What sort of tone is established?
- What genre of book do you think this might be?
- Who do you think the target audience for this book is?
- Discuss the design features of the book cover and end papers. Discuss the different features and evaluate the overall effect.
- Performance poetry:
 - Synonym search: find synonyms for *gladiator*, *rebel*, *adventurer* and create a 'Julius Rap', incorporating these, thinking about rhythm and alliteration, and possibly rhyme – but don't force it!
- Brainstorm as a class what you already know about the Greeks. As you progress through the book, and undertake your own research, add new discoveries in a different colour so that you can map how much you have learned.
- Think, pair, share:
 - Look at the contents page. What is unusual? What could you do to help you understand the page numbering system?
 - Discuss possible ways that the plot might develop, map these out quickly and share with the class.
 - What do the following mean: *Epilogue*, *Glossary*?
 - What do you think 'EXTRAS' might mean?
- On a piece of paper measuring the same dimensions as the book cover, create your own design to

fit the title. What features will you need to include?

- Creative thinking:
 - In pairs, using the chapter headings, create a story map of how you imagine the tale of Julius will develop. Share your views with your class.
- Watch Gary Northfield introducing Julius Zebra: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AaQK2lScObc>
- Watch Gary Northfield drawing Julius Zebra. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-hH7pdBAUA>
 - What top tips does he give? Have a go at creating the first of your characters that might appear in your own work, using these techniques. You could create a class gallery of different characters.

Dedication

- Find the dedication at the front of the book. What does this tell you about the creator of the book?
- Who would you dedicate a book to, if you were a published author? Write your dedication. Remember, it has to be short, but meaningful.

INTRODUCTION

Author technique

- What purpose do you think the double page spread, *WHAT YOU THINK YOU KNOW ABOUT JULIUS ZEBRA* serves?
- Why do you think the author has linked the words *knowledgeable* and *gnu*?
 - Create your own list of words which use a silent *k* and a silent *g*. Do any of them link together well in pairs?
<http://www.neilramsdn.co.uk/spelling/searcher/>
This is a great website for finding spelling patterns quickly.
- What does the word *preposterous* mean? Construct your own sentence using this word and say it with expression.
- Who do you think the stranger might be? (Inference, making connections)

Reflect and discuss (Literal comprehension, inference, making connections)

- What do you think the character of Julius will be like, judging from the illustration?
List what you know about zebras. What else would you like to find out?
<https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/discover/animals/general-animals/zebra-facts/#!/register>
<https://www.mnn.com/earth-matters/animals/stories/20-things-you-didnt-know-about-zebras>
- Looking at the characters and their speech bubbles, which one appeals most to you, and why?
- What do you know about Heracles?
- What is his Roman name?

Role on the wall

- Draw the different characters as you meet them in the book and attach the cut-out to the wall.
- Using post-its, write down words and phrases that tell you about them and stick on the figure: known facts can be written around the silhouette, and thoughts, feelings, attitudes and motivation on the inside.
- Add to your observations as you read through the book and find out more.

- Create a chart and decide which category each character belongs to as you progress through the book:

| Pessimist | Optimist | Realist |
|-----------|----------|---------|
| | | |
| | | |

CHAPTER 1 ADVENTURE TIME

Reflect and discuss (XIII - XVI) (Literal comprehension, prediction, inference)

- What does *muscle-bound* mean?
- Judging from the chapter title, what do you think might happen?
- What are your initial feelings towards Heracles?
- What words would you use to describe him – a thesaurus might help?
- What does *demi-god* mean?

Rapid research (XVI)

- Find out about the twelve labours of Heracles, discuss and rank them in order of difficulty, justifying your choices.

Play time: drama (XVI)

- Strike a *dramatic pose*! How many different ones can you do? Create a photograph gallery and label the emotions or moods you think are being portrayed.

Reflect and discuss (XVIII – XIX) (Literal comprehension, inference)

- In what ways are Felix's and Cornelius's reactions to Heracles different?
- What does *immortality* mean?
- Why do you think some people desire immortality? What are the pros and cons and how do you feel about it?

Short burst writing/Play time (drama)

- Turn pages XVIII – XXII into a play script with clear stage directions.
- Practise and perform.

CHAPTER 2 OLYMPIC GOLD MUDDLE

Reflect and discuss (Literal comprehension, inference)

- What does the title suggest?

Author technique

- What simile is used on page XXIII? Why is this effective?

Vivid vocabulary

- What is a *mêlée*?
- What do you notice that is unusual about the word?
- Find out about its origins.
- Create a sentence using the word *mêlée*.

Reflect and discuss (XXVII)

- How do you feel when taking part in a race? Think about physical sensations and emotions.

- How do you think others behave?
- Do you enjoy/dislike racing? Give reasons for your answers.

Commentator challenge (XXVIII)

- Create a commentary for the race. Listen to an example of a race commentary on the internet to give you ideas. E.g. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SLVyuqfSre4>

Reflect and discuss (XXXI - XXXIII)

- What is a quest?
- Can you think of other stories which feature quests?
- Classify the animals in terms of fixed and growth mindsets.

Play time: mime (XXXIV)

- Act out the part of Julius Zebra, trying to imitate Heracles, when throwing the stone.

Short burst writing (XXXVIII)

- Paraphrase the sentence beginning '*Unhappy ...*', using a thesaurus to find alternative words.

Reflect and discuss (XXXVIII-XLIII) (Deduction, inference, making connections)

- What do you think Heracles' motive is for recruiting the animals?
- What are the qualities that Heracles has said that the animals need on the quest?

Crazy cartoons (XLII)

- Create a cartoon of the episode where Brutus throws the stone, adding captions, speech and thought bubbles.

CHAPTER 3 BEAST QUEST

Rapid research (XLV)

- Find out where Leptis Magna is.

Reflect and discuss (XLV - XLVIII)

- What do you think the title may refer to?
- If you could live for ever, how would you plan your never-ending time, do you think?
- How would you sum up the characters of Cornelius, Julius, Milus and Brutus so far?
- Do you think, because someone is '*a proper LEGEND*', they won't be devious?

Vivid vocabulary (XLV)

- What synonyms can you think of for disquiet? Use these in a variety of sentences.

Author technique (L)

- By using the word *snickered*, when talking about Heracles, what does the author suggest about his character?

Rapid research (L & LI)

- Find out about Heracles' sister, Athene, and add the information to your Greek character frieze.
- Find out about the difference between a maze and a labyrinth.

Creative challenge (LI)

Reflect and discuss (LI - LIII) (Deduction, inference, opinion)

- Why do you think Heracles wants the animals to keep his quest secret?
- How do Julius and Felix think their fame will be celebrated?

- What would the equivalent showcase for famous people be in modern times?
- Would you like to be famous? Why/why not?

Rapid research (LII)

- Find out about Greek pottery design. What do you notice about the style and colours?
- Recreate one, as a drawing, painting or clay design.

CHAPTER 4 LOYALTY CAD

Reflect and discuss (LIV)

- Explain the pun in the title.
- Looking at the picture, which creature would you say is the most reluctant to get on board? Why do you think this is?

Vivid vocabulary (LIV-LVII)

- What words would you choose to describe this character?
- What are synonyms for the words *peril* and *pledge*? Use them in a sentence.
- Pick out examples of sarcasm in the text.
- What is Hades?

Short burst writing

- Create your own oath of loyalty to swear to, using formal language.
- Create a thought bubble for Heracles to show what you think he might be thinking.

Play time: Readers' Theatre (LVI-LXI)

Work out how many people you need.

- Discuss the types of voices you need to use to convey the different characters.
- Practise and perform.

Reflect and discuss (LXIII)

- What are your predictions?
- Will there be monsters and, if so, will Julius tackle them first?

CHAPTER 5 HEAVY METAL

Reflect and discuss (LXVI - LXVIII)

- What do you think this chapter heading might indicate?
- What does it mean: to be '*in control of our own destiny*'?
- Do you think we are in control of our own destinies?
- What do you think the '*large round thing*' might be?
- What does the double spread illustration depict?

Short burst writing

- Write a brief description of what has happened, as if you were one of the characters.

Reflect and discuss (LXIII - LXXIV)

- What do you notice about Heracles' reactions?
- Who do you think the '*massive person*' might be?
- Why do you think he is throwing rocks?

Rapid research (LXXVI)

- Find out about Talos. Don't forget to consult Gary's Glossary.
- Make a list of metals and find out which ones rust and which do not.

Reflect and discuss (LXXVII)

- Why doesn't Julius want to try to make it rain?
- Have you ever been asked to do something and avoided it because you don't want people to think you're 'an idiot'?

Short burst writing

- Write about your experience, explaining what happened and whether you succeeded or not, and if you failed, how it affected you.
- How can we make learning easier for each other?

Reflect and discuss (LXXXVI)

- What tactic is Heracles using?
- Predict what might happen when the animals reach the shore.

Rapid research

- Find out if there are sharks in the Mediterranean Sea.

CHAPTER 6 SPA-RRING PARTNER

Reflect and discuss (LXXXVII)

- What is the word play in the title?

Rapid research (XCI)

- Find out about the island of Crete.
- Create an infographic and locate it on a map of Europe.
- How is aqua aerobics beneficial?

Vivid vocabulary

- What do the words *aqua* and *aerobics* mean?
- What does the word 'balmy' mean?
- What do the following mean:

shenanigans

moseying

'Bob's your uncle'?

- Try to use them in some sentences.

Reflect and discuss

- If you had money to invest in a business, what sort of business would you set up and why?

Creative challenge

- Design a wanted poster for Julius.

Vivid vocabulary (XCV)

- What do the following mean:

'bounty'

'subterfuge'? Look at the Latin derivation of this word.

Reflect and discuss (XCV) (Literal comprehension, inference, making connections)

- Why should subterfuge be exciting?
- Can you think of other stories where there is subterfuge?
- What does Pliny's reaction indicate?

Creative challenge (XCV)

- Using the same drawing style as Gary Northfield, create a series of drawings showing Pliny's physical actions.

Rapid research

- Find examples of images of the Minotaur in Greek art.

Short burst writing

- Choose one of the images and write a brief, but detailed, description, using a thesaurus to extend your choice of vocabulary.
- Now find a modern depiction of the Minotaur and write a description.
- How do the images and descriptions differ?

Reflect and discuss (XCVII - CIV) (Prediction, summarising)

- What sort of disguises do you envisage Pliny will give to the creatures?
- What services does a spa offer?
- Who is Pliny referring to when he talks about the '*local legion*'?
- Paraphrase his sentence at the end of page CI.
- Who do you think the people are who are using the steam bath?
- What is the object that Pliny gives to Julius at the end of the chapter and how do you think it will be used?

Vivid vocabulary (CIV)

- What synonyms can you find for '*hoof it*' and '*vamoose*'?

CHAPTER 7 AMAZERBALLS

Reflect and discuss (CIX - CXI) (Evaluation, prediction, inference, making connections)

- In what ways does Julius not fit the role of '*hero*'?
- What do you think will happen if they enter the labyrinth?
- What is '*granite*'?
- Why do you think the labyrinth stinks?
- What do you think your first instinct would be if you saw a friend in an unpleasant predicament?

Vivid vocabulary

- Find synonyms for:
 - fragrant
 - gingerly
- Create a sentence that uses some of your chosen words.

Reflect and discuss (CXIV-CXVI)

- What is your opinion regarding what Cornelius says about bones?
- How would you use the string?
- Why do you think there is a skeleton so near the entrance with a map of the labyrinth?

CHAPTER 8 STRING THEORY

Reflect and discuss (CXIX)

- What does the title refer to? If you are not sure, look it up.
- What are your strong points?

Physical/mental challenge

- Using a range of maps of your local area, can you find the correct orientation and give accurate directions for others to follow, to find two of the following:
 - shop
 - church
 - station
 - woodland
 - park
 - castle
 - bridge

Creative challenge

- Create a labyrinth. Decide on the scale: small or large.

You could use:

- paper/pen
- string/rope
- papier mâché
- sunflower seeds – a long term project!
- masking tape
- computer
- pebbles
- mowed grass
- Lego
- string/glue
- paperclips
- other materials of your choice.

Puzzle time:

- Where do the creatures need to aim for? Give directions.
- See if you can find your way through each other's mazes and labyrinths.

Creative challenge

- Create a play script for Julius, Lucia, Felix, Milus, Cornelius and Pliny, from page CXXV – CXXVIV.
- Rehearse and perform.

Reflect and discuss (CXXVI)

- Why do you think Gary Northfield chose to do a double spread illustration at this stage in the story?
- What plan would you make at this point?

CHAPTER 9 LET SLEEPING BULLS LIE

Reflect and discuss (CXXX-CXXXIII)

- What word has been changed in the title?
- What other proverbs do you know? Would any fit this story?

Author technique

- How does Gary Northfield build up the tension?

Quick burst writing

- Using these ingredients, write your own comic suspense scene with different characters and setting.

Illustration observations (CXXXV)

- How many different things do you notice in this picture?
- What amusing extra detail do you notice in the illustration of the Minotaur on page CXXXVI?

Reflect and discuss (CXXXVIII - CXLV)

- Why is Julius suddenly brave at this point in the story?
- What do you think Lucia's plan is?
- Add any additional information you have discovered about Heracles onto his cut-out figure.

Rapid research (CL)

- Find out about the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur, if you are not already familiar with it. Retell it orally.

Quick burst writing

- Write your version of the story of Theseus and the Minotaur, possibly incorporating a labyrinth puzzle into the design of your re-telling.

Reflect and discuss (CLI - CLIII)

- What do you think the creatures will do, now that Theseus has given them the information about the Garden of the Hesperides?
- What do you think Pliny's solution might be?

Creative challenge (CLIII)

- Design a hundred-headed dragon.

CHAPTER 10 APPLE WATCH

Reflect and discuss (CLIV)

- Spot the pun!
- What is the boat used for?
- What percentage discount does Pliny give?
- How much information does the boat convey?

Creative challenge

- Design your own paper advertising boat for a product of your choice.

Vivid vocabulary game

- Find different ways of finishing '*I'm so hungry, I could eat my wig.*'
Work round the class, avoiding repetition and hesitation: *I'm so hungry, I could ...*
- What is '*the crow's nest*'?

Reflect and discuss (CLVII - CLX)

- Devise a plan for what you would do, on arriving at the Garden of the Hesperides.
- Predict what might happen if the creatures knock at one of the doors.
- What do you notice about the way the goats speak?

Quick burst writing (CLX - CLXI)

- Write some sentences of your own that work in this way.
- Take the sentence beginning, '*After a short trek...*' and paraphrase it.

Reflect and discuss (CLXVI)

- What do you think is in the parcel?
- What idea do you think Pliny might have now?

Rapid research (CLXX)

- Find out about the story of the Trojan Horse.

Reflect and discuss (CLXX)

- What do you think of the plan?
- What other precautions do you think they should make?

CHAPTER 11 TROJAN ZEBRA

Reflect and discuss

- How likely do you feel that this ruse will succeed? Give reasons to support your opinion.
- Have you ever hidden and had to stay very quiet? How did it feel and how did you act?
- What is the big surprise at the end of the chapter?

Readers' Theatre (CLXXIV – CLXX)

- Allocate parts for all the characters who speak, plus the narrator, and create a readers' theatre presentation, giving plenty of individual expression.
- Practise and perform.

Quick burst writing

- Write about your experience of hiding, building up the tension with vivid details.

CHAPTER 12 KID YOU NOT

Reflect and discuss (CLXXXI - CLXXXIV) (Literal comprehension, deduction, inference and evaluation)

- Explain the title pun.
- Give your opinions on whether Aristophonis's explanation provides a full justification of his actions.
- Why do you think Milus has stayed with the creatures when he is always so critical and negative about them?
- What words and phrases would you use to describe Lucia's character?
- Look at the double page spread. Who is calling Aristophonis a scoundrel and why?

Creative challenge

- Design and make your own '*ridiculous contraption*' from junk which can act as a container and move.
- Devise a set of criteria against which you can evaluate your designs.

Reflect and discuss (CXCI)

- Do you think Brutus's words are justified?
- Think about arguments you have had. Have you ever said anything that you later regretted?
- What do you already know about King Midas? How do you think visiting him might help?

CHAPTER 13 GET KNOTTED

Vivid vocabulary (CXCIV)

- Find synonyms for '*tetchy*' and '*grumpy*'.

Read and reflect (CXCIV - CXCV) (Making connections)

- Think of reasons that cause people to feel jealousy?
- How can these be avoided?
- Can you think of any characters in films or books who behave badly because they are jealous?

Quick burst writing

- Write a short episode that indicates how negative comments can impact on behaviour and mood. It can be made up or taken directly from experience.

Reflect and discuss (CXCVIII – CC)

- Summarise Lucia's tactics for dealing with the Romans and comment on them.

Vivid vocabulary (CCI)

- What does the word '*placate*' mean?
- Find out about its derivation.

CHAPTER 14 DON'T GET TOUCHY

Reflect and discuss (CCIV)

- What is the play on words in this chapter title?
- What makes you touchy?

Creative challenge (CCIV)

Either:

- Using the synonyms you found for being touchy and grumpy, create a 'Grampus' poem. It can help to devise a pattern, thinking about alliteration, rhyme, half-rhyme, assonance and rhythm! Try to think of a good, strong line to end your poem with.

E.g. of using a repeating pattern:

- Don't nag, it makes me touchy.
- When you sing, it makes me tetchy.
- Don't brag, it makes me angry.
- When you gloat, it makes me grouchy.

Or:

- Create a conversation with a traveller.

Or:

- An encounter with a gang of bandits.

Another creative challenge! (CCVI)

Create either:

- a four line zebra song – it should be zany

Or:

- a four line mouse song – it should be plucky!

Or:

- a four line song for a creature of your choosing.

Number cruncher (CCVIII)

- What is *perimeter*?
- Find out and map the perimeters of the following and compare your results with your friends to check on accuracy:
 - Your desk
 - Your classroom
 - Your main school building.

Reflect and discuss (CCXI – CCXV)

- What creates the ominous feeling about this scene?

Play time: drama (CCXVI and CCXVIII - CCXX)

- Hot seat the different characters at this point in the story to find out what they are really thinking.
- In pairs, create a script of the dialogue between Julius and Midas.
- Act it out, conveying the mood changes through facial and vocal expression.

Rapid research

- Find out the name of Phrygia in the modern world and locate it on a map.
- Find out about the origins of the fork and how the design has changed over the years.

Vivid vocabulary

- What does '*I like the cut of your jib*' mean and what is the origin of the saying?

CHAPTER 15 GOLDEN BOY

Reflect and discuss

- What assumptions could you make from the title of this chapter?
- Summarise what happens.
- Does the scene play out as you predicted?
- If you could turn some

CHAPTER 16 HE AIN'T HEAVY...

Reflect and discuss

- Do you know what follows the ellipsis of this title? If not, your teacher may be able to help you!
- Why do you think the author chose this title?
- How do you think the problem of Brutus might be solved?

Vivid vocabulary (CCXL)

- Find synonyms for '*charlatan*'.

Creative challenge (CCXL)

- Create a chant for animals using some of the synonyms that you have found and the animal types or names of the characters.
- Think about alliteration and rhythm, and rhyme, as long as it is unforced!

CHAPTER 17 JOURNEY TO THE UNDERWORLD

Rapid research

- Find out the phrase used to indicate when writers use weather to reflect the mood of the character.
- How does the author use this technique in this chapter?

Creative challenge

- Choose one of the following moods and describe a scene where the weather reflects the mood.
 - Anger
 - Delight
 - Misery
 - Amusement
 - Confusion

- See if you can guess each other's chosen moods!

Reflect and discuss (CCXLIV)

- What is the purpose of a pontoon?

Author technique (CCXLVI - CCL)

- How does the author use silence to increase suspense?

Reflect and discuss (CCXLVIII)

- Looking at the double spread illustration, what observations can you make?
- Can you think of other hooded characters in literature who create an air of menace?

Creative challenge

- Create your own illustration using the techniques Gary Northfield has used.
- Create your own description of an unwelcoming landscape, creating a feeling of foreboding.

CHAPTER 18 SPIRITED AWAY

Reflect and discuss

- Comment on the title.

Rapid research (CCLVI and CCLIX)

- Find out about Cerberus (don't forget Gary's Glossary) and add to your character display.
- Find out about the lyre. What instrument does it remind you of?

Reflect and discuss (CCLIX)

- Do you agree/disagree with Lucia: is there *'ALWAYS a way'*?

Creative challenge

- Create your own scene of Hades, describing the characters.

Play time: conscience alley

- Divide into two groups, arranged in parallel lines facing each other. Choose someone to represent Julius who will walk down the alleyway.
- One group whispers all the reasons why he should look back to check on Brutus, the other group whispers why he shouldn't.

CHAPTER 19 JOURNEY'S END

Reflect and discuss

- How do you think the author is going to wrap the story up?

Play time: Freeze frame (CCLXXVI)

- In groups, create a freeze frame of the characters on the boat.
- Investigate what each character thinks they should do.

Reflect and discuss (CCLXXVIII - CCXCV)

- *'STOP!'* Who do you think is bellowing this command?
- What do you think the relationship between Hades and Heracles is like and why do you think this?
- Do you think that Heracles' punishment fits his crime?
- How is the language of Hades different from that of the other characters?
- What do you think each of the characters will wish for?

- What would you wish for?
- What does the double page spread illustration tell you?
- Why do we value people, even when they are not perfect?
- What is surprising in the last chapter?
- Why do you think the author gives Milus the last word?

EPILOGUE

Reflect and discuss

- Why did the author choose to end the book in this way?
- What do you think Hadrian's plan might be?

Number cruncher

- How many years ago was Hadrian Emperor of Rome.

Creative challenge

- Make a story map of the next episode in Julius's or Brutus's life.

ROMAN NUMERALS

Quiz time

- Explain the rules of Roman numerals to a partner.
- Write out some Roman numerals and see if your friends can work out their value accurately.
- Have speed trials for converting Roman numerals.

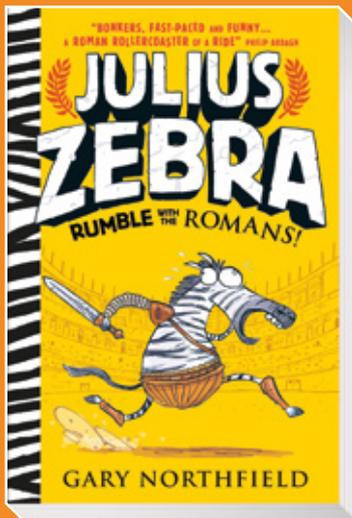
CORNELIUS EXPLAINS THE COSMOS

Rapid research

Pick out the main points of information about the planets and create a bullet point list of facts.

Choose one of these to investigate and create an infographic of your findings.

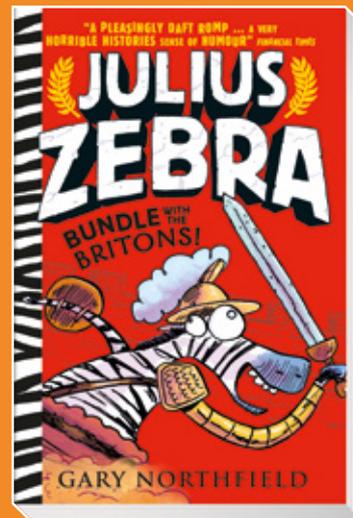
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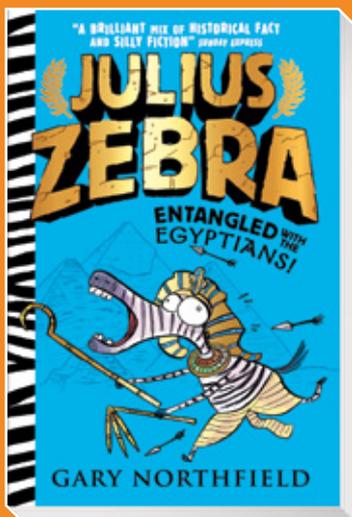
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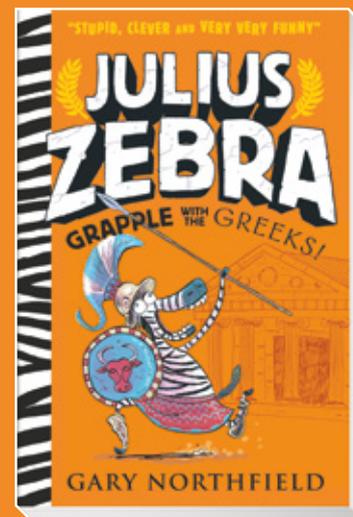
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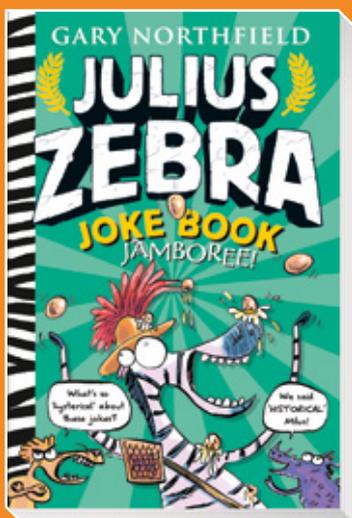
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