

SUPERZERO by Darrel Bristow-Bovey

Chapter 1: You can't spell zero without a Zed

Pre-reading

1. Have you ever felt 'different'? Why?
1. *This is an open-ended question designed to build or activate background knowledge. It is more likely than not that each of the learners has had this experience.*
2. Who or what is a superhero? Name one and say what is 'super' about him or her.
2. *A superhero is someone who has superhuman powers and uses these to protect defenceless people, to prevent disasters, and to hold evil or criminal people in check. Learners can choose any superhero: e.g. Superman (able to fly through the air at tremendous speed; leap a huge distance; pick up incredibly heavy objects like an ocean liner; withstand attack (skin cannot be pierced)).*

During reading

3. Why does Zed feel he is different from the other children?
3. *He seems to have mishaps all the time, his coordination is very poor so he is no good at sport and he has poor social skills. Unlike the others, he feels ill at ease with others of own age and does not know what to say.*

Post-reading

4. What is Zed's point of view about bad luck? Why does he feel this way?
4. *He believes that everyone has much the same amount of bad luck. Since he has used up a great deal of his share of bad luck already, he feels that he will have an easier time later on.*
5. Why does he get on so well with Katey?
5. *Katey is very kind and she knows when to keep quiet. Even though she sees his shortcomings, she remains his loyal friend.*
6. Zed says he has had "an adventure from which he barely escaped with his life". Suggest some possibilities.
6. *This is open-ended. The question demonstrates the learners' ability to read between the lines, using the insights they have gained into Zed's character. Accept anything that would be feasible.*
7. Write down an example of a simile from the chapter.
7. *"As big as a gorilla" or "A head like a flowerpot"*

Chapter 2: The box of secrets

Pre-reading

1. Why are garages, old loft rooms, and attics often so interesting? What are some of the things that are usually stored there?
1. *You never know what you will find there. People usually store old books, photographs, old clothes and furniture or household items that they do not have space for.*
2. Which comic book superhero is your favourite? Which super powers would you like to have?
2. *This is open-ended. It encourages identification with Zed.*

During reading

3. Why does Zed enjoy the comics so much?
3. *This is open-ended. It provides an opportunity for learners to show how good an understanding they have of Zed. [The comics make him feel special because he feels they were left just for him./ They take him away from his dull and rather unsuccessful life to a very exciting world of high achievement.]*

Post-reading