

SKY THIEVES

ACTIVITY PACK

Sky Thieves activity pack for teachers and reading groups

Ideas for children's discussions and activities, including research, creative writing, art and further reading

Take to the skies with a crew of bandits as Dan Walker brings you the swashbuckling adventures of Zoya Delarose and the sky thieves aboard the *Dragonfly*. *Sky Thieves* is a story of friendship, family and courage.

ABOUT SKY THIEVES

Welcome aboard, welcome to the world of sky thieves...

A world of meteor storms, sword fights, midnight raids, floating islands, and long-lost treasure.

Zoya Delarose wakes aboard a creaking sky ship in the dead of night. She has no idea why she was smuggled aboard or that her life is about to change forever. With the deadliest of enemies closing in, will she find the strength to soar, or will she plummet from the skies?



WHAT READERS SAY

This is the stuff of classic swashbuckling fast-moving adventure, complete with a wonderful cast of gloriously named characters, a deliciously evil baddie and a feisty heroine coming into her own.

Booktrust

Classic good versus evil tale with a colourful cast of flying thieves and unlikely heroes. Original, exciting and full of interesting characters and vivid action scenes, Dan Walker has created an excellent air-borne adventure story in Sky Thieves.

LoveReading4Kids

Sky-high adventures on an air-ship crewed by Robin Hood style pirates and a life or death battle against an evil nemesis make Dan Walker's new book a thrilling read from beginning to end.

Books for Keeps

ABOUT DAN WALKER

Dan lives in the centre of the UK, just outside Nottingham, with his lovely, patient and supportive wife Dominika.

He spent his childhood being dragged up and down the hills of the Peak District, frantically hammering away at computer games and raiding his cousin's bookshelf for anything with a colourful cover. He later tricked the University of Derby into allowing him admission, before graduating with a first-class degree in English. Since then, he has worked with a procession of wonderful people in bookshops, libraries and schools. He currently helps to run a specialist Autism centre.

On the rare occasion you find Dan away from the computer, he can normally be found trying to tease a melodious sound out of his guitar, re-reading his favourite books for the eighty-eighth time or fighting off everyone nearby for the last blueberry in the pack.

For more information about Dan, visit danwalkerauthor.com.





BOOKTALKING

1) INTRODUCING THE BOOK



Talk briefly about *Sky Thieves*. You could show this book trailer from Dan's website: danwalkerauthor.com/news/sky-thieves-trailer to kick-start the discussion.

Then look at the cover and the blurb of *Sky Thieves* to set the scene.

2) READING THE BOOK



Nominate someone to read the first chapter aloud and pick up on any questions. Then, read the book all the way through, either reading aloud to everyone together, or letting children read and experience the book for themselves. Keep the flow of the story, and at the end allow time for students to reflect on it and think about their responses to it.

3) TALKING ABOUT THE BOOK



Get everyone to share their first responses to this book. This could be with everyone together, or children could discuss in small groups and then share their main feelings and questions with everyone afterwards.

Explore further what everyone thinks about the story, and encourage discussion. There are no wrong answers!

- ✦ How did you feel when reading this book?
- ✦ And how did you feel when you'd finished it?
- ✦ Which parts of the story do you remember most?
- ✦ Did you skip any parts? Which parts?
- ✦ Was there anything that took you by surprise?
- ✦ Were there any parts that didn't make sense to you?
- ✦ If you gave up on this book, can you say why?
- ✦ What were the funniest bits for you?
- ✦ And what were the scariest bits?
- ✦ Talk about anything you learned from reading this book.
- ✦ Are there things you'd now like to find out more about?
- ✦ What single word (or two!) best describes this book for you?





DIFFICULT WORDS IN SKY THIEVES



Can you pronounce these words and explain what they mean? You'll find answers at the end of this activity pack.

MOMENTARILY

RANSACK

FURROW

PREOCCUPIED

REVERBERATION

SWASHBUCKLING

PLUMMET

EXTINGUISH

ORNITHOLOGIST

INSUBSTANTIAL

QUIZ TIME!



Put your knowledge about *Sky Thieves* to the test and answer these 10 questions about key characters, objects and locations featured in the story.

You'll find answers at the end of this activity pack.

1) What is the name of Jupiter and Dominika's airship?

- A. Robin
- B. White Knight
- C. Firefly

2) Beebee is fascinated by which animals?

- A. Birds
- B. Rats
- C. Butterflies





- 3) What is the name of the aviation museum Zoya visits near the start of the book?
- A. Garibald Amstad's Fabulous World of Flying Machines
 - B. The Wonderful and Weird Aviation Museum
 - C. Montgomery Munford's Marvellous Mystery Machines
- 4) What is the name of the man who owns Zoya's orphanage?
- A. Mr Bumblebee
 - B. Mr Hopkins
 - C. Mr Whycherley
- 5) Where do Zoya and Captain Vaspine go to find the Doc?
- A. A misty mountain
 - B. A seaside village
 - C. The Island in the Sky
- 6) What skill does Rosie teach Zoya on the *Dragonfly*?
- A. How to clean the decks
 - B. How to climb the rigging
 - C. How to swordfight
- 7) Pilot Cid wears a T-shirt while he is flying the airship. What colour is it?
- A. White
 - B. Blue
 - C. Green
- 8) After the meteor storm, Zoya and Bucker fix the outside of the ship. How do they reach the hull?
- A. Take a transporter
 - B. Bungee-jump
 - C. Use the ship's extra-long hammers
- 9) What is the name of the town on the Island in the Sky?
- A. Moonfall
 - B. Deeplake
 - C. Undertown
- 10) What popular game do sky thieves play on board the *Dragonfly*?
- A. Cards
 - B. Chess
 - C. Bowling





WORD SEARCH



Find 20 words that appear in the book. Go forward and backward, diagonally, up and down.

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

AVIATION
 ORPHANAGE
 METEORS
 AIRSHIP
 VOLCANO
 ENGINEER
 PILOT
 MOUNTAIN
 PULLUPS
 SWORDFIGHTING
 NAVIGATION
 SKYMAP
 FIREWORK
 MAINMAST
 COLOSSAL
 CHECKPOINT
 SHIPYARD
 EQUIPMENT
 MESMERIZED
 TREMBLING

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE A GOOD SKY THIEF?



In the book there are "good" and "bad" sky thieves. "Good" sky thieves steal from the "bad" and rich sky thieves and give money to the poor. Like in a Robin Hood story.

List five characteristics of a "good" sky thief on the *Dragonfly* airship.

1)

4)

2)

5)

3)





DESCRIBE YOUR FAVOURITE CHARACTER



Now, pick your favourite character from the book and describe him/her in one paragraph (5-7 sentences). Write a reason why you picked this character.

You can start by writing:

My favourite character in Sky Thieves is Zoya Delarose because she reminds me of my younger sister. Zoya is brave, feisty and kind. She doesn't hesitate to help others, despite being in great danger. She picks up new skills quickly, especially sword-fighting, that she later learns come in handy during fights...





LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!



Sky Thieves is like a movie. Its action-packed plot and dialogue work as a perfect script that can be performed by actors.

Act out a scene from the book. For this, you'll need a director and actors. Allocate roles to each other and don't forget the props! A director, under the supervision of your teacher or librarian, will film the scene on a camera (a good quality camera on a smartphone or tablet will suffice). Perform chosen scenes in groups and review the clips with the rest of the class.



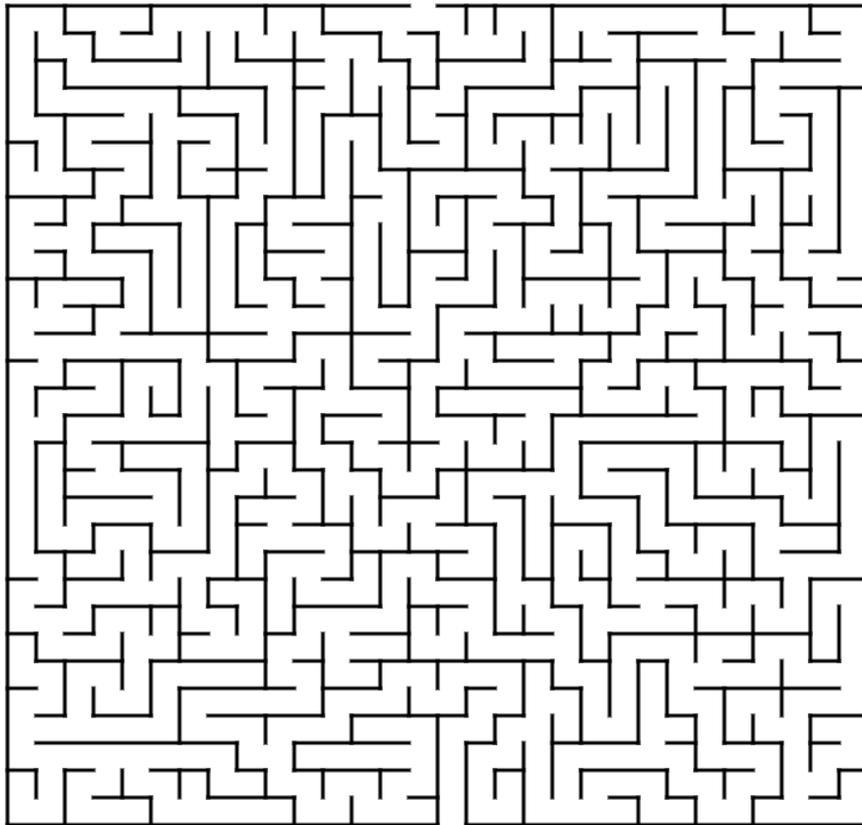
Consider running an Oscars ceremony, where the best actor and director are voted for by your teachers, librarians and fellow students.



HELP ZOYA FIND THE TREASURE



When Zoya Delarose joins the *Dragonfly* she learns from Captain Vaspine about the long-lost treasure. Help her get to the treasure by finding a way through the maze.





GUESS WHO?



These characters from *Sky Thieves* are telling us something about themselves. Can you guess who says what and match up their names with the descriptions on the left?

Lendon Kane **Rosie Blake** **Mr Whycherley** **Doc** **Beebee** **Carlos Vaspine**

What I say	Who am I?
1) I'm very strong, very tall and I have a fondness for birds.	
2) I always wear black and I am the best swordfighter on the <i>Dragonfly</i> .	
3) I am famous throughout the sky for my evil deeds and I wear a top hat.	
4) I am fascinated by sky thieves and you'll find books about them in my office.	
5) I have bright red hair, a cat called Sol and I am the smartest person on the <i>Dragonfly</i> .	
6) I once worked with Jupiter and Dominika and I am the captain of the <i>Dragonfly</i> .	

DESIGN A BOOK COVER

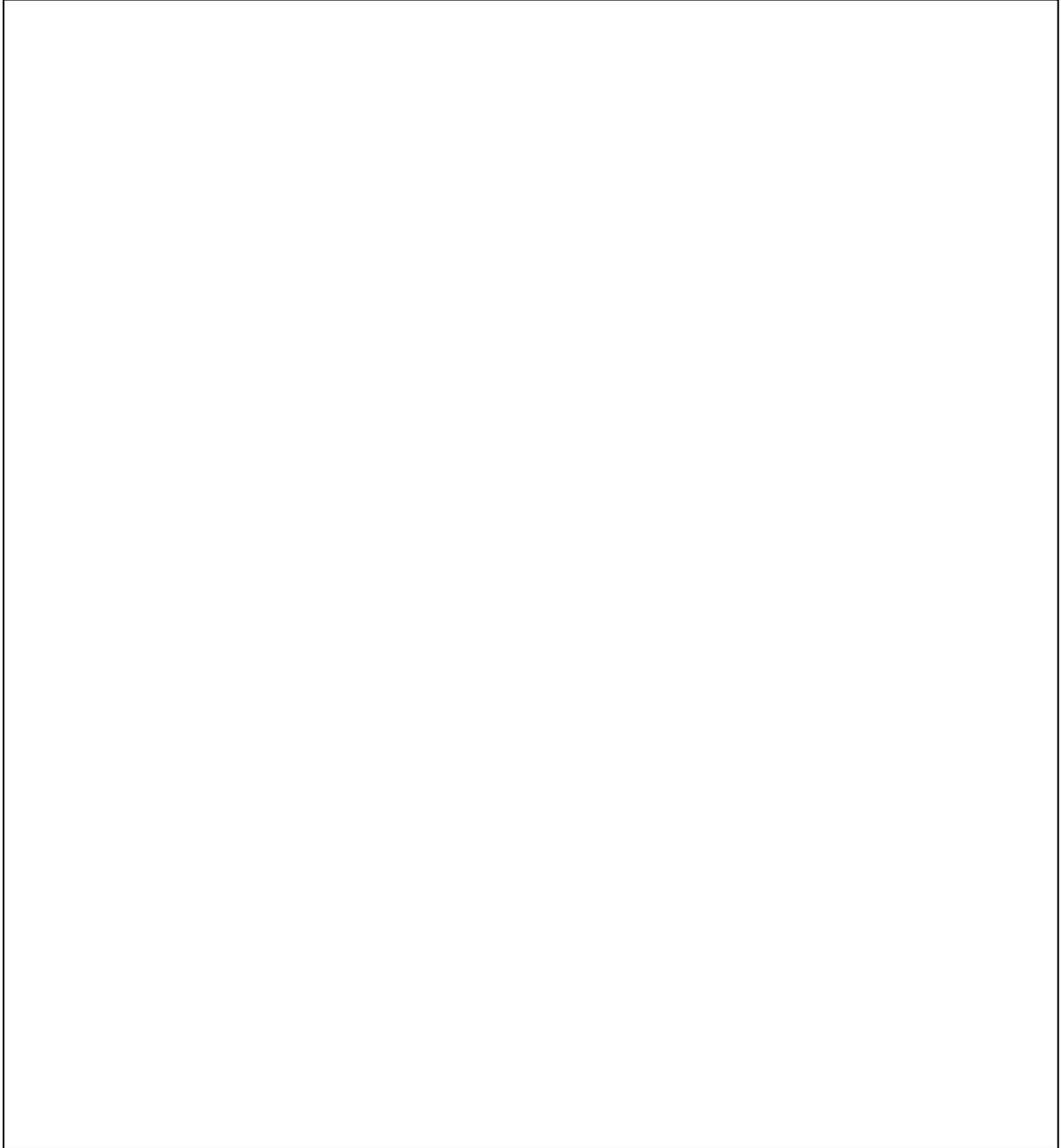


The book cover for *Sky Thieves* shows one of the scenes from the novel, where Zoya bungee-jumps off the *Dragonfly*. There are explosions in the sky and another airship in the distance. You can also see a city below the action.

Now it's your turn to design a new book cover. Think about your favourite scene from the book and draw your own cover for *Sky Thieves*.

Ready? Steady? Draw!







WRITE A BOOK REVIEW



Other readers will always be interested in your opinion of the books you've read. Whether you've loved the book or not, if you give your honest and detailed thoughts then people will find new books that are right for them.

If you're stuck on what to say in a review, it can help to imagine you're talking to someone who's asking you whether they should read the book.

1) Start with a couple of sentences describing what the book is about

But without giving any spoilers or revealing plot twists! As a general rule, try to avoid writing in detail about anything that happens from about the middle of the book onwards. If the book is part of a series, it can be useful to mention this, and whether you think you'd need to have read other books in the series to enjoy this one.

2) Discuss what you particularly liked about the book

Focus on your thoughts and feelings about the story and the way it was told. You could try answering a couple of the following questions:

- Who was your favourite character, and why?
- Did the characters feel real to you?
- Did the story keep you guessing?
- What was your favourite part of the book, and why?
- Were certain types of scene written particularly well - for example sad scenes, tense scenes, mysterious ones...?
- Did the book make you laugh or cry?
- Did the story grip you and keep you turning the pages?

3) Mention anything you disliked about the book

Talk about why you think it didn't work for you. For example:

- Did you wish the ending hadn't been a cliff-hanger because you found it frustrating?
- Did you find it difficult to care about a main character, and could you work out why?
- Was the story too scary for your liking, or did it focus on a theme you didn't find interesting?

4) Round up your review

Summarise some of your thoughts on the book by suggesting the type of reader you'd recommend the book to. For example: younger readers, older readers, fans of relationship drama/mystery stories/comedy. Are there any books or series you would compare it to?





5) You can give the book a rating, for example a mark out of five or ten, if you like!

Here's a template you may wish to use.

Name.....School/class/reading group.....

Book title.....

Author.....

1) What's the book about?

2) What did you particularly like about the book?

3) What did you dislike about the book?

4) Round up your review

5) Out of 5 stars how would you rate this book?





BONUS QUESTION: WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT?



On the thief ship, skipping through the clouds, hundreds of miles above the earth, with the wind in her hair and a job always there to be done, with everything to learn, friends and good people around her, she realized things had never felt more...right. Zoya Delarose had never felt more at home. (p.293)

What do you think will happen next? Will Zoya stay on the airship? Where will she go next? Is evil Lendon Kane finally defeated and no longer a threat?

Write a short paragraph (5-7 sentences) describing what happens next. Once written, swap your answers with your fellow students and read them out loud.

The story of Zoya Delarose and the sky thieves continues in Book 2. Find out what actually happens next in *Desert Thieves* and see how close you were with your predictions.





FURTHER READING



MORE BOOKS BY DAN WALKER	<i>Desert Thieves</i>	OUP	978-0-19-274703-7
FANTASY BOOKS BY OTHER AUTHORS...			
Philip Pullman	<i>Northern Lights</i>	Scholastic	978-1-40-718610-8
Alex Bell	<i>Polar Bear Explorers' Club</i>	Faber & Faber	978-0-57-133254-0
Abi Elphinstone	<i>Sky Song</i>	Simon & Schuster	978-1-47-114607-7
Sinéad O'Hart	<i>The Eye of the North</i>	Little Tiger Press Group	978-1-847-15941-0
Peter Bunzl	<i>Cogheart</i>	Usborne Publishing	978-1-47-491500-7
Padraig Kenny	<i>Tin</i>	Chicken House	978-1-91-107765-7
...AND PIRATES			
Geraldine McCaughrean	<i>Peter Pan in Scarlet</i>	OUP	978-0-19-272621-6
Robert Louis Stevenson	<i>Treasure Island</i>	Penguin Books	978-0-14-132100-4
John Meade Falkner	<i>Moonfleet</i>	Penguin Books	978-0-14-137762-9

ANSWERS

DIFFICULT WORDS IN SKY THIEVES

MOMENTARILY – For a very short time. ‘as he passed Jenny’s door, he paused momentarily’

RANSACK – Go through (a place) stealing things and causing damage. ‘burglars ransacked her home’

FURROW – Mark or be marked with lines or wrinkles caused by frowning, anxiety, or concentration. ‘his brows furrowed in concentration’

PREOCCUPIED – Engrossed in thought; distracted. ‘she seemed a bit preoccupied’

REVERBERATION – Prolongation of a sound; resonance. ‘electronic effects have been added, such as echo and reverberation’

SWASHBUCKLING – Engage in daring and romantic adventures with bravado or flamboyance. ‘a crew of swashbuckling buccaneers’

PLUMMET – Fall or drop straight down at high speed. ‘a climber was killed when he plummeted 300 feet down an icy gully’





EXTINGUISH – Cause (a fire or light) to cease to burn or shine. 'firemen were soaking everything to extinguish the blaze'

ORNITHOLOGIST – A person who studies or is an expert on birds.

INSUBSTANTIAL – Lacking strength and solidity. '*the huts are relatively few and insubstantial*'

QUIZ TIME!

- 1) B
- 2) A
- 3) A
- 4) C
- 5) B
- 6) C
- 7) A
- 8) B
- 9) A
- 10) A

GUESS WHO?

- 1) Beebee
- 2) Rosie Blake
- 3) Lendon Kane
- 4) Mr Whycherley
- 5) Doc
- 6) Carlos Vaspine

REFERENCES

Booktrust, *How to write a book review*, Luisa Plaja, booktrust.org.uk/books/writing-tips/writing-tips-for-teens/how-to-write-a-book-review/.

