

# Roddy Doyle - The Star Dogs

Told from the perspective of the Russian dog Tsygan, this is the story of the first living creatures to be sent into space – the ‘star dogs’ of the title.

Genre: space, animals, adventure

Themes: loyalty, friendship, perseverance, team work, overcoming fear, good vs. evil, trust

Age: 11-12 years old

Activities:

1. Put it on a postcard: Ask pupils to imagine they are one of the characters in the book "The Star Dogs," (they could choose Rover, Buster, or Red for example). Ask them to create a series of postcards about their journey into space and how they are feeling. On the front side of the postcard they can illustrate what they can see from the rocket. **(Use 'Postcard' resource)**
2. Character analysis: Ask students to choose one of the main characters from the book, such as Rover or Buster, and create a character analysis. They can describe the character's personality traits, motivations, and actions throughout the story. They can also include quotes or passages from the book to support their interpretation.
3. Venn activity: One of the key themes of the story is ‘good vs. evil’. Discuss the concept of good vs. evil with the class and ask them to identify the characters in the book who represent each side. Have them create a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the traits of the good and evil characters. **(Use Venn diagram resource)**
4. History of space exploration: Have pupils research the science behind space exploration and create a timeline of major space missions. Encourage them to identify key technological advances and discoveries that have made space travel possible. Then pupils can write a paragraph about how the science of space exploration is represented in "The Star Dogs."
5. Journal it: Have pupils identify a character in the book who shows perseverance in the face of adversity, such as Rover or Buster. Ask them to write a journal entry from the character's perspective, detailing the challenges they faced and how they overcame them.

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Postcard

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**Venn diagram**

