

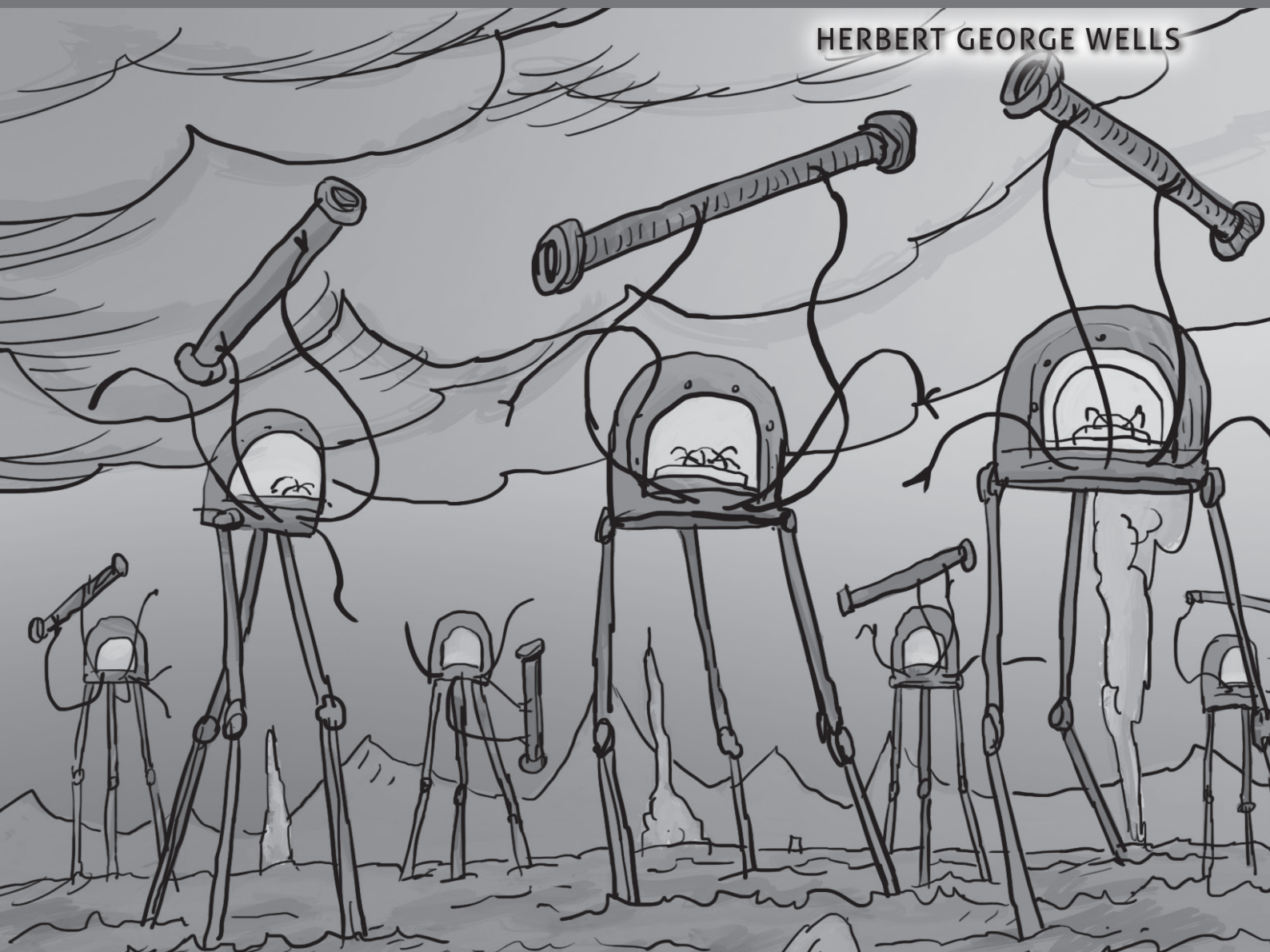
SIMPLIFIED READERS

B2

LEVEL 6

The War of the Worlds

HERBERT GEORGE WELLS



WORKSHEETS

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ABOUT THE NOVEL

The War of the Worlds is a science fiction novel by English novelist, sociologist and historian H. G. Wells. It was serialised in a literary magazine between 1895 and 1897 and was published as a novel in 1898. It is one of the earliest stories that details a catastrophic conflict between humankind and extraterrestrial entities and is considered a landmark work of science fiction. It is told by an unnamed narrator who describes a Martian invasion of Southern England.

The novel was written at a time when there were widespread concerns about potential foreign attacks. It has been interpreted as a commentary on the theory of evolution,

imperialism and Victorian era fears, superstitions and prejudices. Wells later said that the catastrophic effect of European colonisation on the Aboriginal Tasmanians was an inspiration for the plot.

The War of the Worlds has been highly popular and influential. It has spawned countless movies, radio dramas, TV series, comic book adaptations and sequels or parallel stories by other authors. The novel even influenced the work of scientists. Robert H. Goddard was inspired by the book and helped develop the rocket technology which resulted in the Apollo 11 Moon landing 71 years later.

SUMMARY

One night, a cloud of flaming gas is observed on Mars, which is later discovered to be a missile sent to Earth. In the following nights, more of these are sent, making a total of ten.

The first of these crashes over Horsell Common near Surrey, England. It is believed to be a meteorite. Ogilvy, the well-known astronomer, is the first to go to the pit. The narrator lives in Maybury, close to the crash site, so he also goes. The thing inside the pit is a cylinder. When the top finally opens, a creature with a horrifying appearance emerges. A group of people called the Committee approach the pit waving a white flag, but the Martians kill them with the Heat-Ray. The narrator runs away in terror.

The next day the military forces arrive at the site and gunfire begins. In the evening, the narrator decides to take his wife to Leatherhead, where they will be safe. He borrows a horse cart from an innkeeper and takes her there. The same night, he drives back to Maybury to return the cart. On the way, he encounters two giant Martian fighting-machines—tripods—and crashes the cart. The horse is dead, and the narrator barely escapes. He walks back to his house and looks outside. He sees an artilleryman in his garden and invites him in. The next day, they leave the house, planning to go northward.

The two travel together for a while. At Weybridge, they see many boats carrying the people across the river. Suddenly, several tripods appear. They attack the people with their Heat-Rays. The narrator barely escapes by going under the water. Later he finds a boat and moves towards London. Exhausted and in pain, he lies down under the bushes. There he meets a curate.

The narrator stops telling his story to tell his brother's account of the events in London. Although people in London are quite calm at first, once firing is heard and news about the Black Smoke arrives, a great panic starts, and people begin fleeing the city. Meanwhile the narrator and the curate witness the attack of seven tripods that are armed with this chemical weapon, the Black Smoke.

The brother travels alone for a while and later meets two women, Mrs Elphinstone and her sister-in law. The three of them get on a steamboat, and as they leave the coast, Martian tripods appear. The warship the *Thunder Child* destroys two of them before being destroyed itself. The steamboat continues on its way.

The narrator returns to his own story. He and the curate are trapped in a house by the Black Smoke. When they are finally able to escape, they see a Martian fighting-machine which hunts people and collects them in a box on its back. The narrator and the curate go into a house and find some food. Suddenly, there is an enormous explosion, and the house collapses. Later they realise that a fifth cylinder has landed and that they are lying on the edge of the pit the Martians are making.

They are trapped beneath the ruins of the house for two weeks. They watch the Martians through a small hole in the wall and ration their food. As the days go by, the curate goes more insane, and their relationship deteriorates. The narrator has difficulty controlling the curate who acts hysterically. Eventually the curate is killed accidentally. Hearing the noise, a Martian stretches a tentacle into the ruins. It takes away the curate's body, and the narrator has a narrow escape.

The narrator keeps hiding in the ruins for a few more days. When the Martians finally leave the pit, he comes out and starts walking towards London. On the way, once again he encounters the artilleryman, who tells him that the Martians have destroyed London and it is the end of humankind. He tells the narrator about his plan to go underground and build a community of survivors there. The narrator seems persuaded at first but later decides not to join him. He leaves and resumes his journey.

He finds that London is a ruined city. He is hopeless and depressed. As he walks, he hears a Martian howling "Ulla, ulla". He follows the sound and sees a fighting-machine. He decides to end it all and walks towards the machine. To his surprise, the Martian inside it is dead. He discovers that all the Martians are dead—killed by disease bacteria.

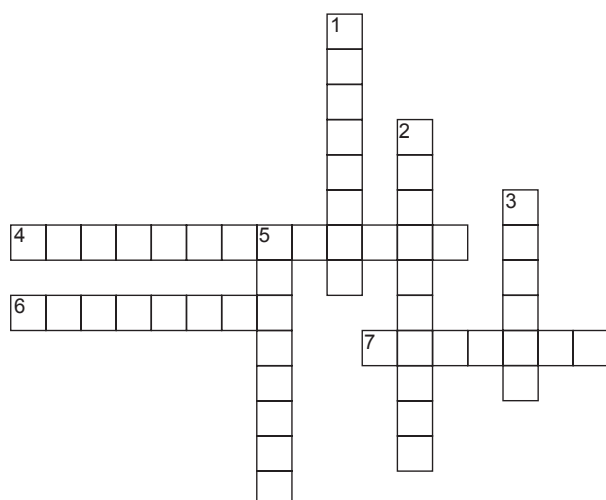
The narrator suffers a nervous breakdown and is taken care of by a kind family. After he recovers, he returns to Maybury and discovers that his wife has survived. Later, he reflects on the Martian invasion and warns future generations to prepare themselves.

Discuss before you begin reading:

- 1 Do you think extraterrestrial intelligence exists? What could it be like? Write a short description or draw a picture.
- 2 What do you know about the human mission to Mars? Do you think colonisation of Mars is possible? What kind of people would participate in this one-way mission? Would you volunteer?

A Word Search

Crossword puzzle. Find the words that are defined below. The first two letters are given.



ACROSS

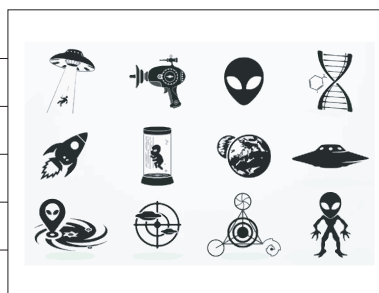
- 4 (adj) very special, unusual, strange: **ex**____
 6 (adj) very large, massive, huge: **en**____
 7 (adj) far away in space or time, remote: **di**____

DOWN

- 1 (v) be around something/someone, enclose, encircle: **su**____
 2 (adj) beyond belief, unbelievable, unimaginable: **in**____
 3 (v) win against someone, beat, overthrow: **de**____
 5 (v) find, uncover, detect: **di**____

B Using the adjectives and verbs in Part A and the nouns given below, write a short story (5-10 sentences) about an extraterrestrial attack on our planet. Use at least 5 of the words.

chaos	courage	destruction	intelligence
civilisation	defence	explosion	threat
			tragedy



C Do you know the difference?

meteor

meteorite

meteoroid

They are all related to the flashes of light called "shooting stars" sometimes seen streaking across the sky. However, we call the same object by different names, depending on where it is.

1 _____ are objects in space that range in size from dust grains to small asteroids. Think of them as "space rocks."

When these "space rocks" enter Earth's atmosphere (or that of another planet) at high speed and burn up, the fireballs or "shooting stars" are called 2 _____.

When a "space rock" survives a trip through the atmosphere and hits the ground, it is called a 3 _____.

A After reading Chapter 1, match the descriptions with the names. Put a tick (✓) in the relevant box.

	Henderson	Lord Hilton	Ogilvy	Stent	The narrator	The narrator's wife
famous astronomer						
the Astronomer Royal						
journalist						
owner of the land of Horsell Common						
member of Committee that approaches Martians						
lives near crash site						
watches cylinder through telescope						
coordinates work at crash site						
escapes to Leatherhead to avoid the Martians						

B What happens next? As you read Chapters 2 and 3, stop at the given pages and guess what happens. Then continue reading to see if your guesses were correct.

- 1 Stop reading at the end of page 32. Do you think the Martians will notice the narrator hidden under the bush?
- 2 Stop reading at the end of page 35. Who is the soldier? Is he good or bad?
- 3 Stop reading at the end of page 41. Will the army guns destroy all of the Martian machines?
- 4 Stop reading at the end of page 47. Who is the curate? Is he good or bad?
- 5 Stop reading at the end of page 58. Will the narrator and his brother find each other?
- 6 Stop reading at the end of page 66. Will the two women be a benefit or a burden for the narrator's brother?
- 7 Stop reading at the end of page 71. Will the brother and the two women be able to escape by boat?

C Read Chapters 4 and 5 and number the events in the order that they happen. The first ones are given.

Chapter 4

- ___ a The narrator and the curate witness the Martians killing people and feeding on their blood.
- ___ b They see a Martian picking up people one by one and putting them in a metal box.
- ___ c The fifth cylinder falls on the house, and they are trapped under its ruins.
- ___ d The narrator comes out of the ruins of the house.
- ___ e The curate makes a lot of noise digging the ground; the narrator has difficulty controlling him.
- 1 f The narrator and the curate escape the house they are trapped in by the Black Smoke.
- ___ g A Martian's tentacle enters and takes away the curate.
- ___ h The narrator and the curate enter a house in Sheen and find some food.
- ___ i The curate starts shouting; the narrator fights him; the curate falls and hits his head.

Chapter 5

- ___ a The artilleryman tells the narrator about his plans to live underground.
- ___ b The artilleryman tells the narrator about his predictions about the future of humankind.
- ___ c The narrator discovers that all the Martians have died.
- ___ d The narrator has doubts about the artilleryman's plans, so he leaves him.
- ___ e The narrator goes back to Maybury and finds that his wife is alive.
- ___ f The narrator arrives in London and follows the "Ulla, ulla" sound.
- 1 g The narrator meets the artilleryman again.
- ___ h The narrator is saved by some kind people who take care of him.

TEST YOURSELF

TOTAL

.....

THE WAR OF THE WORLDS by Herbert George Wells

B2 - Level 6

A Match the sentences (1-5) with the reasons (a-f). (5x3=15 pts)

- ___ 1 Planet Mars must have cooled down faster than the Earth.
- ___ 2 The narrator thought we had no right to judge the Martians.
- ___ 3 At the end of the 19th century, we were unable to notice the trouble ahead of us.
- ___ 4 The narrator heard about the cloud of flaming gas on Mars.
- ___ 5 Ogilvy went to find the first falling star.

- a We treated the species on the Earth the way the Martians treated us.
- b Ogilvy told him about it.
- c We did not have advanced tools.
- d He thought it was a meteorite.
- e It is much smaller in size than our planet.

B Mark the sentences as True (T) or False (F). (6x4=24 pts)

- ___ 1 The narrator asked Lord Hilton to put up a fence around Horsell Common to keep the people out.
- ___ 2 People expected something resembling a man to come out of the cylinder.
- ___ 3 The army was informed about the Martians by the telegraphs sent by Ogilvy and Stent.
- ___ 4 The narrator's wife did not believe him when he told her about the Martians in the pit.
- ___ 5 The narrator drove from Leatherhead to Maybury and returned the cart to its owner.
- ___ 6 The artilleryman had been in the battlefield and witnessed many deaths.

C Match the two halves of the sentences (1-8 with a-h). (6x4=24 pts)

- 1 Although the Martian attacks at Horsell Common began on Friday, ___
 - 2 The narrator's brother did not understand the real power of the Martians ___
 - 3 Even though nothing seemed to happen when the Martians fired their tubes, ___
 - 4 The Martians blew steam at the Black Smoke ___
 - 5 Mrs Elphinstone's husband had not left with his wife and sister ___
 - 6 Many people lost their lives in the River Thames ___
- a they were in fact shooting out the deadly Black Smoke.
 - b because he wanted to warn the neighbours about the Martians.
 - c the news reached London the next day.
 - d when they did not need it any longer.
 - e until he read the Sunday evening papers.
 - f as they tried to get on the boats to escape London.

D Mark the correct answers. (7x3=21 pts)

- 1 The narrator was anxious about his wife because he believed his cousin ----.
 - a was not very smart or brave
 - b was going to London
 - c could not act fast in the face of danger
- 2 Seeing a Martian pick up people and put them in a box, the narrator realised the Martians ----.
 - a had an underlying purpose
 - b simply wanted to destroy all humans
 - c were running out of Heat-Ray, so they stopped killing people
- 3 The biology of the Martians was unusual in that they ----.
 - a had a complicated digestive system
 - b reproduced much like some plants on Earth
 - c had a very developed muscular system
- 4 The narrator could not get along with the curate because the curate ----.
 - a acted violently
 - b had a weak character
 - c continuously threatened him
- 5 The narrator connected his own ---- to the curate's ----.
 - a strength / weakness
 - b madness / sanity
 - c dreams / insanity
- 6 Days after the curate's death, the narrator finally looked out and saw ----.
 - a the white houses
 - b the building-machines still working
 - c the empty pit
- 7 The narrator felt upset about ---- and indifferent about ----.
 - a the curate's death / where the Martians were
 - b the location of the Martians / his wife
 - c his wife's fate / the death of the curate

E Use the words in the box (a-h) to complete the summary. (8x2=16 pts)

- | | | |
|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| a beneficial | b civilisation | c contribute |
| d predicted | e sensible | f domesticated |
| g gather | h invent | |

The artilleryman believed that it was the end of human 1 ____, so humans needed to 2 ____ a new way of life. His plan was to live under the ground. He planned to 3 ____ only the strong and 4 ____ people who would be 5 _____. They would not include the weak or lazy ones because he 6 ____ that the weak ones would become 7 ____ animals. They would also have people who could 8 ____ by saving human knowledge: science, ideas and literature.

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