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The War of the Worlds
H. G. Wells



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Response Journal

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

The War of the Worlds

BOOK I
THE COMING OF THE MARTIANS

CHAPTER THE FIRST
The Eve of War

1. The title of Book I, “The Coming of the Martians,” tells the reader immediately that this book will be fiction and that it will be a novel of one kind of fiction: the genre known as science fiction. The author, H. G. Wells, has mixed reality with fiction in this first chapter. Re-read the chapter specifically to find other points which you believe are true as opposed to fictional. Make a list of eight facts and the page on which each is found. An example is given below.

Chapter the First: True Things:

- A. Mars revolves around the sun 140,000,000 miles from Earth.
2. This novel is written from a first-person point of view. The narrator does not have a name, nor does he seem to be scientifically trained. The reader learns much from him about signs of Martians before the first missile is on its way to Earth but still is 10,000,000 miles away. Imagine that you are a science writer for *The New York Times* and recognize the unusual occurrences in the night sky. Write a brief story warning people that it appears that something dangerous is taking place. The headline of your story would be, “Could There Be Something Out There?”
3. H. G. Wells uses some harsh words about how we on Earth have been “ruthless” and brought “utter destruction” to animals and other humans. Although this novel was written over a hundred years ago, do you think Wells is right? Do you think what he wrote has been continuing to go on since that time? Begin your paragraphs with the following sentence:

Considering how we on Earth treat...

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

The Cylinder Opens

8. One can hardly imagine more horrible creatures emerging from the cylinder in the sandy pit than the ones described in this chapter. That description is what H. G. Wells imagined in the late 1800's. Now it is your turn to play author and imagine another type of monster that might have emerged from the crashed cylinder. Describe your creature in terms of color, height, size, sounds, lips, eyes, fur/skin, behavior, smell, etc. Your first sentence could be:

I cannot believe my eyes! Oh, please, NO!

9. You will remember that a man from the town has fallen into the pit and cannot get out. He is still in there when the creatures emerge from the cylinder. The narrator, from his hiding place in the woods, thinks he should go back to try to help the man, but he states, "My fears overruled." Complete the following dialogue you might have with a classmate about whether the man is a coward or whether he just is realistic in knowing that there is nothing he could do to save the man.

You: I feel really terrible about that man.

CHAPTER THE NINTH

The Fighting Begins

18. Keep in mind that the title of this novel is *The War of the Worlds*. Also remember that at the end of the last chapter, a second cylinder had fallen to Earth not too far from the first. Without looking ahead for your answer, how much of a “war” do you think this is going to be before the end of the novel? Imagine that you are the narrator and have seen the second cylinder fall to Earth. Write the entry he would have written in his journal that night in which he predicts how extensive the “war” is going to be (only in Woking? only in England? only in Europe? over the entire world?) Be sure to give the reasons why he would think the way he does. The following could be your first sentence:

Entry date:_____ Another cylinder has fallen! Does this mean...

19. Up to this point, the novel has had very little dialogue. There is a good example, though, of regional dialect (language spoken by a certain class, or in a certain place) in this chapter. Copy the dialect which begins with the words, “Crawl up under...” and finishes with, “and do it at once....” Then rewrite the dialogue in understandable modern English. Be sure to use proper punctuation, being especially careful with quotation marks.

BOOK II
THE EARTH UNDER THE MARTIANS
CHAPTER THE FIRST

Under Foot

35. In this chapter, the narrator and the curate are still together in the empty house in Halliford. The narrator's wife is still separated from him, and he is hoping she is all right and still in Leatherhead. He talks about his anxiety for her because he can get no word of her. With the advances in telecommunications which we have today, do you think you would ever be forced to be completely "out of touch" with your family? Think about all the forms of communication available to you personally and how you feel about them. Write a paragraph on either of the two topics below. In your paragraph, give details about the part communications play in your life and your feelings about them. The topics to choose from are these:

A. I just love my...

OR

B. Look out; I'm throwing this _____ out of that window!

36. We next learn that the Martian fighting machine has another agenda than just destruction. It picks up "four or five little black figures" and throws them into a carrier on its back. The narrator does not speculate what this action may be all about, but you may. Imagine that you are the narrator and always carry a small journal in your pocket in which to make daily entries about the events of your day. Write the journal entry you would make under moonlight that night in which you try to figure out what the Martians might want with the Earth creatures they threw in the carrier basket. Begin your entry as follows:

Entry date:_____ Why did they pick up...