



# CACTUS KID

## DISCUSSION NOTES

FOR AGES 10+ UKS2-KS3



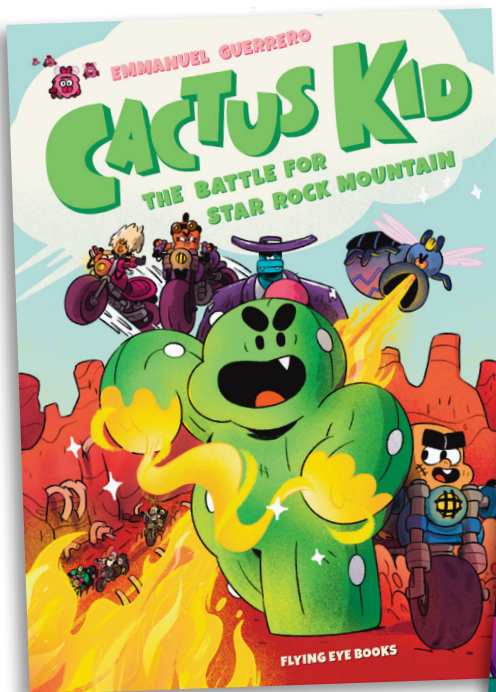
**For teachers:** Use these discussion notes to introduce students to the new graphic novel: *Cactus Kid: The Battle for Star Rock Mountain*. These reading questions will help them to develop their comprehension and inference skills, explore themes in the story, and analyse features of the graphic novel format.

### For pupils:

- A graphic novel is a type of text combining words and images. Why is this a good way to tell a story? How does reading a graphic novel differ from reading a novel without images?
- Graphic novels share similar features to comic books, for example: pages split into panels; thought and speech bubbles; sound effects (onomatopoeia); captions for narration; and motion lines to show movement. Can you find some of these features as you read *Cactus Kid*?
- The story is set in 'The Neverending Desert'. What sort of place is it? Would you like to visit it? Why or why not? How does the author use colour to give the setting a particular atmosphere?
- Why is Cactus Kid in The Neverending Desert? What is his goal? (pages 12–15).
- What or who motivates Cactus Kid? What do 'Dad' and 'Ruby' think of him?
- Who are 'The Shells' and 'The Clams'? What is the relationship between the two groups? How does the author depict this relationship?
- Why does Cactus Kid need the Star Rock? Why do The Clams laugh at him when he says he is looking for it? (page 52).
- In the sections 'Across the Neverending Desert' (pages 40–4) and 'Elsewhere in the Neverending Desert' (pages 72–74), there are no captions, only images and sound effects. Why do you think the author has chosen to do this?
- What is the Moto-Brawl? How does Freddy persuade Cactus Kid to join his team?
- Who appears at Coral's 'looking for some things of mine'? (page 81). How has the author made this villain seem more important and ominous in the story than other villains so far?



- What are the different locations in the story? What is the effect of switching between them?
- Why does Cactus Kid decide to leave The Clams? (pages 88–92).
- On pages 94–96, a different colour-scheme is used for some of the panels. Why do you think the author has chosen to do this? What is the effect of changing the colour scheme?
- What techniques does the author use to create a sense of excitement and tension in the Moto-Brawl race? How do you feel as you read this section?
- What is the significance of the Compass? How does it lead the mysterious lizard villain to Cactus Kid? What can it detect?
- How does Cactus Kid defeat the lizard villain and win the Moto-Brawl race? How does Freddy help him?
- What do you think Cactus Kid has learned from his adventure in The Neverending Desert?
- Refer back to the ‘Fire Magic’ book on pages 10–11. Which of the Advanced Fire Spells has Cactus Kid now mastered? Can you invent any new spells for Cactus Kid to attempt on his next adventure?
- Can you guess what might happen in the next instalment of the Cactus Kid series? What or who will be chasing Cactus Kid? Why?
- Which is your favourite spread in *Cactus Kid: The Battle for Star Rock Mountain*? Why? Is it because of the illustrations, the colour scheme, the layout of the panels, or something else?
- If *Cactus Kid* was written as a novel without images, how would the reading experience be different? What have you enjoyed about reading this story in graphic novel format?



We hope you enjoyed reading and discussing Cactus Kid! If you did, make sure you keep an eye out for Cactus Kid's second adventure *Rumble at the Rodeo!*

