

TEXT	FOUR MILES WITHIN (2010)
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THEMES	Forces of Nature (unit 4), Getting Away (unit 8)
VOCABULARY	Exploration and science and adventure
WRITING	Students create a play script based on the text.
SPEAKING	Students perform their plays.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Contemporary science fiction stories and films such as *Star Wars*, *Star Trek* and *Interstellar* owe a lot to the 'pulp fiction' science fiction publications that appeared between the 1930s and 1960s. Publications like *Amazing Stories* and *Fantastic Tales* were very popular at the time. The stories in these publications expressed an interest in and excitement about the possibility of new worlds, space travel and technological innovation. Although many writers of this time are unknown nowadays, this kind of fiction also produced major literary figures such as Ray Bradbury and Philip K Dick and has influenced contemporary novelists like Margaret Atwood and Ursula Le Guin.

WARMER

Search *Amazing Stories* and *Fantastic Tales* covers online and select three or four examples of stories to show students. Ask them to speculate about what the stories are about, based on the covers, and how interesting they look. The graphics probably look old-fashioned, so ask students to say how present-day covers of similar science fiction/fantasy themes are different from these examples.

ABOUT YOU

The questions introduce some of the themes of the extract. Elicit examples of journeys of exploration – for example, Columbus, the Apollo space missions, Mars probes, climbing Everest, and exploring Antarctica. Then ask for ideas about why people do these things (to find new life, as a personal challenge, to colonise other lands, etc.) Go through the introduction and add any information from the *Background information* you think students might find interesting.

- 1 We are given some specific information about how they feel (proud / anticipation / eager / cheerful). Ask students to combine these examples and their own ideas (e.g. *excited*, *nervous*, *impatient*) and working in pairs, write their answers as a sentence. They then read the sentence to another pair and compare answers.

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Suggested answers

- 1 The title of the story and Phil's comments suggest it is a journey into/under the surface of the earth.
- 2 Ask for suggestions. Perhaps Phil shot someone or something or someone has shot him. Maybe it is just an accident.
- 3 Phil has helped the Professor prepare the journey and it was Sue who introduced him to her father. We can also infer that they have helped with their enthusiasm and support.
- 4 Ask for suggestions and ideas, as these will be used in the writing activity.

VOCABULARY

3

Answers

- 1 murmured 2 settled down
- 3 settles it (Point out the way *settles* it is often used as a fixed expression – a reason or circumstance *settles* it) 4 be off

4

Answers

- 1 spherical 2 glimmered 3 tolerantly
- 4 fondly 5 murmured

WRITING

- 5 Form groups of about six students. There are two or three main characters (the Professor, Sue and Phil – if he's still alive) and any further characters the students choose to introduce in their additional section of dialogue. Monitor and help with vocabulary.

SPEAKING

- 6 Students rehearse their script in preparation for performing it for the rest of the class. If you have a very big class, you might want to spread out the performances over several lessons and prepare a feedback sheet for students to complete after each performance. (They can feedback on clarity, ideas, dramatic effect, language etc.).

MIXED ABILITY

Drama activities often allow students to participate according to their level and confidence. Stronger students can take a leading role in the script writing process, by checking for accuracy and suggesting language to the rest of the group. Weaker students can focus on reading the lines and get help from stronger students on pronunciation and stress.