



I'M SORRY!



1 To the Staff and Parents of Malaburn Primary School,

I am writing this letter to say that I am very sorry for my actions last Friday. My misbehaviour was foolish and I deserve to be punished. But, I did not do this on purpose. I did not wake up on Friday morning with this plan in mind. It just happened. So, while I am very sorry, I think that I am being punished too harshly.

A month of afternoon detentions is just too much. Hopefully you will agree with me once I've made my case.

2 This school has always rewarded creativity. You give students story-writing tasks, have end of year plays and weekly art classes. I once wrote a story for Ms Cunningham about my family going camping on the moon. Her comment at the bottom said: "Fantastic work,

Russell — you have a brilliant imagination! Never stop using it!" If I wrote a story about last Friday I think I would be given the same comment. My bad luck was that it happened in real life.

3 I did not know that Mark, Eliza, Ben and Feneil were all terrified of the colour green. Green is a pretty common colour. In fact, it's all around us, especially when people talk about "thinking green" for the environment. So maybe I could believe one person had a phobia about the colour green. But four? And in the same classroom? I am sorry they freaked out so much, but please, understand that it was completely unexpected.

4 Mark and Ben were part of the gag as well. Ben actually encouraged me to do it, before he found out that I had used green dye. I know I shouldn't have done something just because my friends told me to. But, keep in mind, that they knew what was coming, so I thought they would have been fine with it.

5 This makes Eliza and Feneil the only real victims. They had no clue what was coming when I asked them if they wanted to see what I'd found behind the canteen. But, Feneil had taught me how to make the goo last summer. He seemed to be an expert at it back then. You would think that an expert could spot harmless corn flour goo, even if it was coloured like green sick.

6 I apologised to Eliza as soon as everyone started freaking out. She was the only one who could not have known that the alien slug was a fake. Most of all, I really feel bad about

upsetting her. My plan was to impress her with how creative I was. Then, a few days later, I was going to ask her to come with me to the dance party. Doesn't really look like that will be happening now. Surely that alone is punishment enough?

7 The whole slug thing was completely accidental anyway. Originally, I had planned to make up a story about the green goo from outer space and, at the climax, eat a bit and pretend that I had become an alien slave. I've been doing some drama classes after school, so I could've been really believable. But, it was pure luck that slugs found the goo so tasty. By the time I'd laid the goo and gone to get the other kids, a whole family of slugs had started tucking in on the feast. So, when I saw it, I did what any good actor would have done when the script has changed — I improvised. I said the slugs must have been these evil alien parasites that I'd read about on the Internet. Mr Farrugia, my drama teacher, would have been so proud. If anything, that makes me a model student, not a delinquent.

8 Also, I was not the person who ran around the playground yelling "Aliens are taking over children" when Eliza, Ben, Mark and Feneil started freaking out. That was Chris and Rachel. I think Chris was doing it on purpose because I heard him laughing. Rachel may have just been frightened, I don't know. But soon the whole playground was filled with kids running around, screaming about an alien invasion. Yes, I started it all with my gag, but I insist that I was not the one who decided to tell the whole school about it. In my defence, I told my friends straight away that it was just a joke. But that didn't seem to help at all.

9 I am not innocent and I will accept the final punishment that you give to me. But, please consider what I have written here, know that I am truly sorry and perhaps rethink that month of detentions.

Yours faithfully,

Russell Spielberg



Questions

- 1 What is Russell trying to argue here?
 - a He should not be punished.
 - b He had nothing to do with what happened on Friday.
 - c He was wrong, but should not be punished too harshly.
- 2 What was particularly bad about the colour green?
 - a Russell's friends were terrified of it.
 - b It looked like alien sick.
 - c Slugs loved the colour green.
- 3 Who were the only real victims, according to Russell?
 - a Mark and Ben
 - b Rachel and Chris
 - c Eliza and Feneil
- 4 When did the slugs appear?
 - a Russell put them there at the start.
 - b The slugs came while he was getting his friends.
 - c Chris found some slugs in the mud.
- 5 Russell hoped that he would impress Eliza with his
 - a creativity.
 - b detention.
 - c innocence.
- 6 Who else might be punished for what happened on Friday?
 - a Eliza and Feneil
 - b all of the school children
 - c Chris, Rachel, Ben and Mark

Vocabulary

Find words in the text that match the meanings below. The word is in the section shown in brackets.

- 7 Misconduct (1)
- 8 An unnecessary fear of something (3)
- 9 A specialist (5)
- 10 A youth who repeatedly does wrong (7)
- 11 An unwanted attack (8)

Alphabetical Order

The following words appear in the text. When placed in alphabetical order, which one would be **first**?

- 12 farewell, family, fact, faithfully
- 13 completely, colour, could, coming
- 14 this, that, the, think
- 15 story, staff, students, started

Back To The Text...

- 16 Russell didn't foresee what might happen.
 - a true
 - b false
- 17 Prediction: What is likely to happen in the future?
 - a Russell will use blue dye next time.
 - b Russell will have to do some detention.

- 18 The purpose of this text is
 - a to persuade the staff and parents.
 - b to inform the staff and parents.

Think About This

- 19 Look at the illustrations. When is Russell writing his letter?
 - a 12 o'clock
 - b one o'clock
 - c two o'clock
 - d three o'clock
- 20 The illustration on page 3 is described in
 - a section 5.
 - b section 9.
 - c section 7.
 - d section 8.
- 21 The word *climax* in section 7 means
 - a beginning.
 - b end.
 - c time.
 - d peak.
- 22 The word *consider* in section 9 means
 - a read.
 - b copy.
 - c contemplate.
- 23 This incident could best be described as
 - a a prank.
 - b a play.
 - c a lesson.
 - d a dance.

Challenge Option

Writing: Write about something that you were involved in that went wrong.