

THE ZARGON CONNECTION

A Teacher's Guide Language Arts Activity for grades 7, 8 and 9

PURPOSE

To examine our personal values concerning killing.

OVERVIEW

THE INVASION OF EARTH BY THE ZARGONIANS is a science fiction scenario describing a future world in which aliens from the planet Zargon hunt human beings for sport. This role reversal—humans as hunted, nonhumans as hunters—encourages students to consider sport hunting from what may be a new perspective. The scenario deliberately mimics both the way humans treat animals in the wild and the justifications that are typically given for the sport hunting of wild animals.



OBJECTIVE

Students will understand the ethical issues of sport hunting from a new perspective by placing themselves in a fictional context.

MATERIAL

THE INVASION OF EARTH BY THE ZARGONIANS; several flip charts and marking pens.

DIRECTIONS

- 1) Duplicate THE INVASION OF EARTH BY THE ZARGONIANS and distribute to each student.
- 2) Have the class read THE INVASION OF EARTH BY THE ZARGONIANS.
- 3) Break students into groups of 3 to 6. Have each group select a discussion leader and a reporter.
- 4) Assign each group an argument listed in THE ZARGONIAN CASE FOR HUNTING PEOPLE. The leader will keep the discussion on track with the topic while the reporter will capture the most significant comments, or the consensus points on flip chart or notebook.
- 5) At the end of the allotted time (10-15 minutes) have the students regroup into a class. Let each reporter describe their group's discussion.

ACTIVITY EXTENSION

- 1) Divide the class into two groups: Zargonians and Earthlings.
- 2) Have a class discussion around an argument given in THE ZARGONIAN CASE FOR HUNTING PEOPLE. Number 8, "*Sport hunting is a tradition on Zargon,*" would generate some active debate.
- 3) Explain to students that they must represent their species during the discussion.
- 4) Encourage a resolution to the debate. For example, if discussing question number 8, the class may decide that although Zargonians have always hunted humans, that does not justify their continuing a sport that results in the death of another. Earthlings may recognize that hunting is an old Zargonian tradition, therefore making it difficult for them to change. Zargonians should be asked what would be the most effective way Earthlings could convince them to stop their "sport." Is empathy the secret to finding a resolution? Would Zargonians object if they were the "game" species? If so, on what grounds do they justify killing others?

Humane And Responsible Teachers — All One Community

A project of New Jersey Animal Rights Alliance, PO Box 174, Englishtown, NJ 07726 (732) 446-6808

Information provided by The Fund for Animals, Silver Springs, MD

THE INVASION OF EARTH BY THE ZARGONIANS

A SCIENCE FICTION SCENARIO

Since March 14, 2020, life on Earth for us humans has never been the same. On that day, Earth was first invaded by explorers from the planet Zargon located thousands of light years away in the Andromeda galaxy. Since then—it is now 2150—Earth has been a Zargonian possession.

Before Z-Day, as it has come to be called, we were the masters of the planet and of all who lived on it, able to do as we pleased. We controlled our own destiny, proud, confident in our role as the top of the food chain. No more. Now we live at the sufferance of the aliens.

These aliens are mentally far superior to us. They do not attempt to organize human affairs or govern human society, any more than we tried to organize the affairs of squirrels or rabbits. Instead, they use Earth for their own purposes, and simply push us aside or kill us when our presence becomes inconvenient.

Zargonian technology has advanced to a level that humans cannot even comprehend. Their star ships, for example, can travel thousands of times the speed of light, a feat that according to human physics is impossible. Therefore, humans cannot travel to Zargon, but Zargonians can visit humans on a long weekend. Naturally, these visits are not all that welcome.

Zargonians are great lovers of swimming and water sports, but their home planet has no natural beaches. So they have turned our beaches and coastal areas into vacation resorts that are off limits to humans. The remainder of Earth they have designated as "human management areas," where they hunt us for pleasure, and for our meat, which is considered a delicacy by Zargonian gourmets.

Zargonians use a variety of hunting techniques. Most often they shoot us from ambush. Other times, they frighten us and then shoot us in the back as we run for our lives. Another favorite technique is to unleash vicious Zargonian hounds who chase us to exhaustion and desperation, sometimes tearing us apart with their

claws and teeth when they catch us. Occasionally, in a technique known as baiting, Zargonians will set up a fast food restaurant or pizza parlor and burst in on us while we eat, with their Zargonian "street sweepers" blazing. Zargonian weapons, the operating principles of which are not well understood by human scientists, can kill us at extremely long range. Our weapons, on the other hand, are rarely able to injure or kill a Zargonian hunter. When a human does kill a Zargonian hunter or destroys one of their vehicles, the Zargonians become indignant about "vicious" humans. They take measures to deal with the problem, such as extending the hunting season and increasing the bag limit.

However, even the Zargonians' technology is not perfect. Often their weapons leave us alive but dreadfully wounded, and we die slowly and painfully from blood loss, infection, or starvation. Some of us are mothers, and we die knowing that our children are orphans. Some of us are children, left to starve alone and afraid when they kill our parents.

Sometimes, to make the hunt more "sporting," Zargonian hunters limit themselves to what they call "primitive weapons." They claim that this gives us a better chance to get away and is in the spirit of "fair chase." But these weapons are primitive only by Zargonian standards, not ours, and they do not even the odds; it simply means more of us are wounded rather than killed outright. In any event, we do not see anything fair or sporting about killing us from ambush, shooting us in the back, or killing us with powerful technology, even technology that looks primitive to the aliens.

Zargonians communicate telepathically and, consequently, do not have either a spoken or written language. They consider spoken and written communication as characteristic of lower life forms and do not consider our languages as indicative of anything deserving to be called intelligence. Because their brains are different than ours or perhaps because they are simply not interested, Zargonians, surprisingly enough, seem unable to learn human languages. Therefore, we cannot communicate with them in any but the simplest fashion.

Despite these differences,

Zargonians seem to have the same physical needs as humans: food, sleep, exercise, etc., and a similar, if not identical, emotional make-up. They experience fear, pain, pleasure, joy, love, anger, and the other basic emotions that we do, and sometimes they seem to recognize these needs and these emotions in humans. Incredibly enough, Zargonians also have a very highly developed system of ethics and pride themselves on their compassion. This being the case, we cannot understand why they continue to hunt.

An Earthling Rights Movement on Zargon has formed that is trying to have the hunting of humans banned because it is cruel and unworthy of the advanced Zargonian civilization. When challenged, Zargonian hunters, supported by the Zargonian government, defend their sport with the arguments in *The Zargonians' Case for Hunting People*.

On Zargon, this Earthling Rights debate rages on. On Earth, the fearsome Zargonian weapons take their toll. Every hunting season, we suffer and die by the hundreds of millions; our children are orphaned, our adults widowed. Terror and grief are now the most common human emotions. No one is left unaffected. The cruelty of the Zargonian hunters has twisted one way or another every human life. However, the most crushing truth of all is that we are helpless to end this slaughter. Our fate is in the hands of the Zargonians; we are completely at their mercy. When will it end? How will it end? Will it ever end? These are the most important questions in our lives, but only the aliens can answer them. We wait. We hope. And while we hope, we die.



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THE ZARGONIAN CASE FOR HUNTING PEOPLE

- 1) **Sport hunting is an essential component of scientific Earthling management.** Before they introduced regulated sport hunting, humans were seriously overpopulating, causing disease, starvation, wars and serious environmental degradation. Now, with hunting and other advanced techniques, the human population is under control and these problems are far less serious. Killing humans is considered more compassionate by Zargonian hunters than letting them die of illness, hunger, and war.
- 2) **Humans are not an endangered species,** nor is the ecology of the planet seriously damaged by regulated sport hunting of human beings. Therefore, no cause for concern exists.
- 3) **Regulated hunting of humans is necessary to prevent nuisance incidents,** otherwise humans would frighten and perhaps injure Zargonian children, and interfere with the pleasure of Zargonians on vacation from the stresses of life on Zargon.
- 4) **Humans kill each other all the time.** In wars, from anger, jealousy, fear, and greed, humans harm one another. Humans have no right, the Zargonians say, to become indignant when we kill them.
- 5) **Humans kill members of other species by the billions,** for food, in scientific research, and for sport and entertainment. Humans kill others and justify it because they feel they are a higher life form and entitled to do so. Zargonians claim that the same argument justifies their killing of humans.
- 6) **Humans are sub-Zargonian,** they are mentally incapable of participating in Zargonian society. Since they cannot perform the responsibilities of that society, the Zargonians reason, they have no entitlement to be protected by its ethics. Zargonians, therefore, feel free to use humans as they like without guilt.
- 7) **The food chain is a fact of nature**—the stronger kill and eat the weaker. Many, although not all, Zargonian hunters eat the humans they kill. Since because of their superior intelligence and technology they are higher on the food chain than humans, they are entitled to do this. It is part of the nature of things.
- 8) **Sport hunting is a tradition on Zargon,** it is an integral component of the culture of many Zargonians. Preserving it is important and passes on to future generations the traditional values of society. If Earthling Rights activists do not want to hunt, they do not have to. However, they should respect the rights of those who do.
- 9) **Zargonian technology has remade the planet Zargon.** It no longer contains any natural features, except in a few small parks, which are always crowded. Hunting trips to Earth are spiritually energizing because they let Zargonians reconnect with the natural universe.
- 10) **Hunting trips bond the Zargonian family.** They give Zargonian parents an opportunity to spend quality time with their children in a setting that allows them to pass on solid family values.
- 11) **Zargonians are genetically programmed to hunt.** The Zargonian evolutionary theory suggests that in prehistoric times all Zargonians were hunters. (Note: Fewer than 6 percent of Zargonians currently hunt.)

