

ALEX NEPTUNE

DRAGON THIEF

TEACHING RESOURCE PACK 9+

← ALEX NEPTUNE: DRAGON THIEF →

NOTES FOR TEACHERS

Explore themes of:

Myths and Legends - Adventure - the Environment

Subject checklist:

Literacy - Art and design - STEM

In this resource pack, you will find extracts from the book with discussion questions and activities suitable for learners in KS2/KS3.



Scan the QR code or follow <https://qr.usborne.com/23kjk> to watch a video from the author!

ABOUT THE BOOK

For as long as Alex Neptune can remember, the ocean has been trying to kill him. So he's not too happy when a bunch of sea creatures drag him to the abandoned aquarium on the hill, where an imprisoned water dragon needs his help. But how can he say no to a magical myth?

Recruiting his tech genius best friend Zoey, legend lover Anil, a sharp shooting octopus, four acrobatic otters and a thieving seagull, Alex plots a heist to break the dragon out. And suddenly discovers the power of the ocean at his fingertips...



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SPOTLIGHT ONE: *THE TOWN OF HAVEN BAY*

OBJECTIVES:

Identify imagery and descriptive language in a text.
Practise writing descriptively about setting and produce creative artwork.

ACTIVITY ONE:

Write and design a postcard home from Haven Bay.

SPOTLIGHT TWO: *THE LEGEND OF BRINEBLOOD*

OBJECTIVES:

Explore themes of myths and legends. Build vocabulary, produce creative artwork and learn about rhyming verses.

ACTIVITY TWO:

Design a terrifying pirate scarecrow.

CHALLENGE:

Write your own sea shanty.

SPOTLIGHT THREE: *ZOEY'S WACKY INVENTIONS*

OBJECTIVES:

Identify and use similes. Design prototypes. Explore themes of recycling, pollution and protecting the environment.

ACTIVITY THREE:

Make rubbish inventions.



SPOTLIGHT ONE: THE TOWN OF HAVEN BAY

Pages 11-13:

Haven Bay was an old fishing village built on a hill that lifted steeply from the ocean. It rose in layers: first, the wide sea wall bounded the beach, topped by the wooden-framed shops and cobbles of the high street, with the old harbour and the boatyard at one side of the bay.

The next layer up the hill was multicoloured houses, faded to pastel shades by countless summers, tottering against each other like a pirate's crooked teeth. Above those was a thick strip of trees and bushes rising steeply up until the hill flattened at its highest point.

There, Alex could just see the domed glass structure housing the aquarium. The unlikely location had been selected a century before by an eccentric mayor who believed visitors would enjoy the panoramic sea view. Unfortunately, this made the aquarium extravagantly expensive to operate and it had finally closed down a few years ago. Now the empty tanks inside the grand glass walls had been left to rot.

"Let's find out what's *really* in the water." Zoey had collected a jam jar of seawater. It had taken months of begging before her dad had agreed to buy her a chemistry set so they could perform some tests. Now she busied herself wedging test tubes into the sand and filling them up.

While she squeezed droplets into the tubes, Alex gazed out across the bay. The shifting waves smouldered under the broad disc of the setting sun. An unruly formation of seabirds was making its raucous return to roosts in the nearby cliffs.

It would have been beautiful, were it not for the litter that smothered the water. Carrier bags and plastic bottles, tins and crisp packets, yoghurt pots and cotton buds formed floating bands of filth. Oil glistened on the surface of the waves. The lapping water left a shifting black tideline of gunk along the beach.

Barely a year had passed since Mayor Humbertus Parch took control of Haven Bay and approved construction of a mysterious facility known as the Station. The grey concrete building perched on the water's edge like an unsightly barnacle. Apart from the arrival or departure of the occasional boat, nobody was ever seen going in or out. Security guards in black uniforms stood watch outside every hour of the day.

The mayor claimed the Station monitored water quality. But shortly after it was built the water turned foul and tourists stopped showing up.

SPOTLIGHT ONE: *THE TOWN OF HAVEN BAY*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

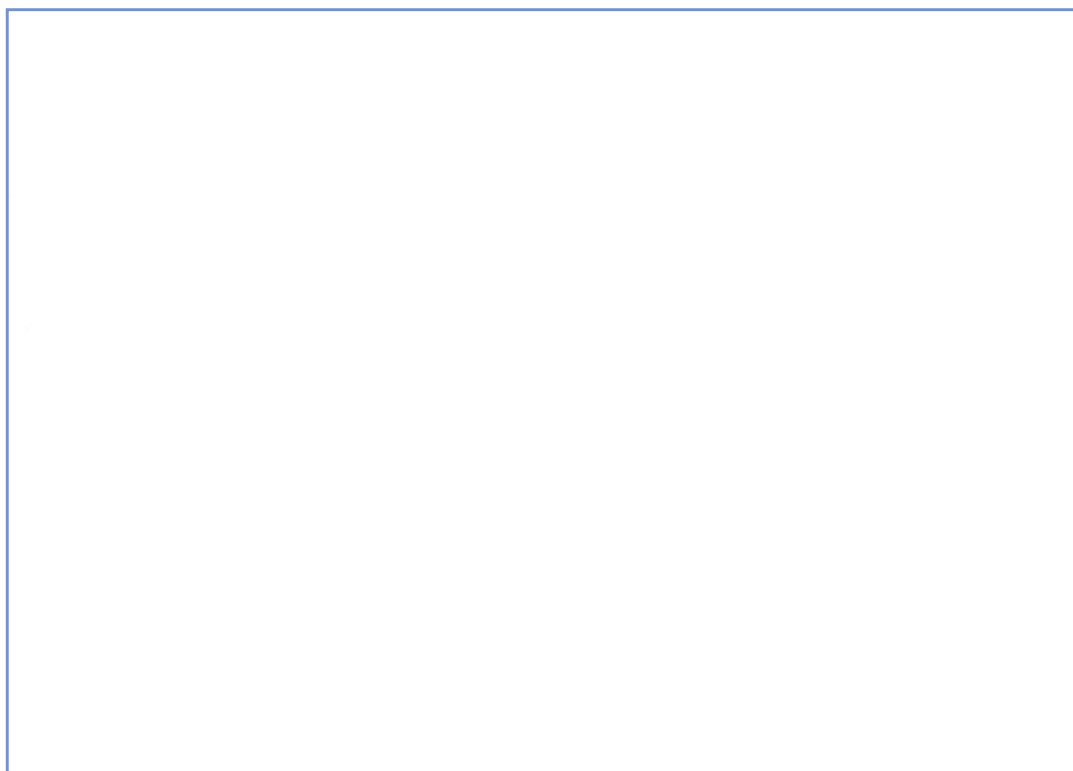
- What are your first impressions of Haven Bay based on the extract?
- Is it a seaside town that you'd like to visit? Why? Why not?
- Do you think that it has always been this way?
- Why do you think the author has chosen to compare the houses to 'crooked pirates' teeth'?
- What is the word beginning with 's' for this type of comparison?
- Can you spot any examples of alliteration in the extract?
- The author describes all of the pollution that Alex sees on the beach in detail. What examples does he give?
- Imagine that you were at this beach with Alex and Zoey, how would you describe it? Can you come up with a list of adjectives and write them below?

ACTIVITY ONE: WRITE A POSTCARD FROM HAVEN BAY

Guess what? You're going on a trip to the seaside town of Haven Bay. When you booked your holiday you were expecting to spend lots of time on the beach sunbathing, making sand castles, and swimming in the sea. You were also looking forward to seeing some amazing sea creatures in the aquarium. How do you feel now you're there?

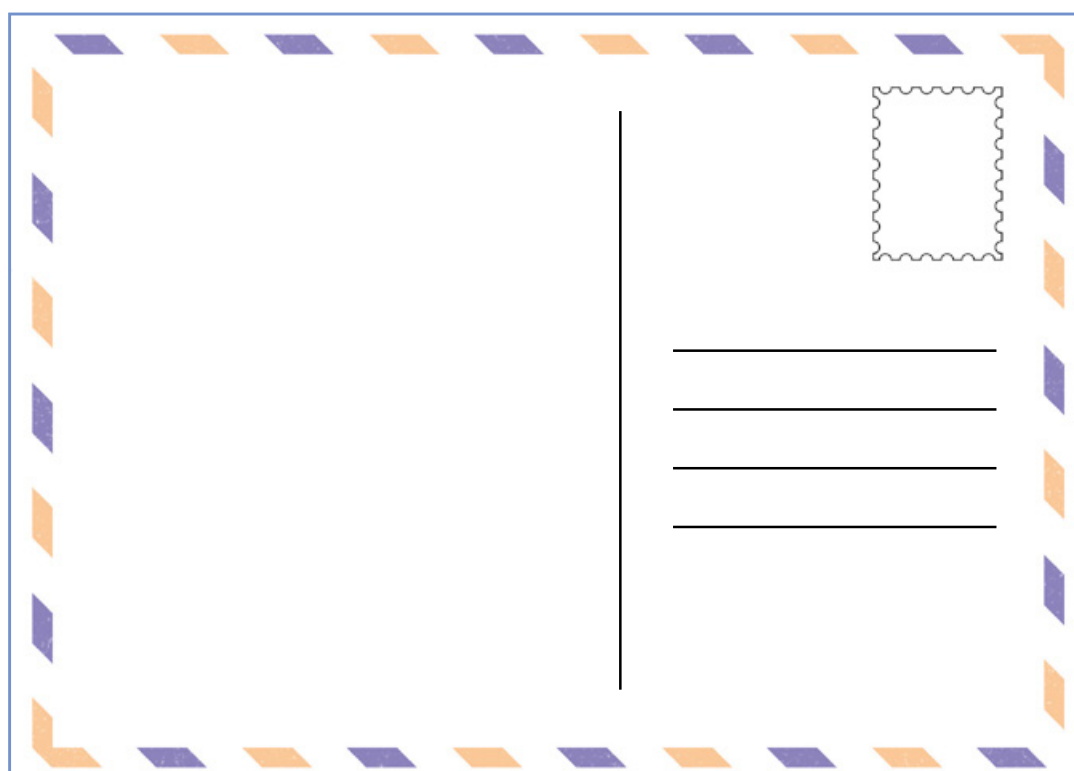
Write a postcard home describing your experience of Haven Bay. Describe the beach and what you have seen of the town so far. What is the atmosphere like? Be sure to include a picture of the town on the front of your postcard.

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SPOTLIGHT TWO: *THE LEGEND OF BRINEBLOOD*

Pages 24-25:

Neptune's Bounty – the tourist shop Alex's family owned and that he lived above with his dad, grandpa and sister – was closed for the night. Their ice cream van – which Grandpa ran, mainly to get the grumpy old man away from the shop as much as possible – was parked outside. While Alex fumbled for his key at the front door, the octopus clambered out of the bucket and onto his shoulder.

"You're not a parrot!" Alex told it. Though now he looked, the elegant swoop of its body and the backwards curve of its egg-shaped head – like a crown of plumage – lent it an oddly bird-like profile.

The shop was themed around the most famous part of the Water Dragon legend. A century after taking a bite out of the coast and creating the bay, the dragon had returned, chased there by a notorious pirate called Captain Brineblood. The pirate was obsessed with capturing the creature and wielding its power for evil deeds. Brineblood cornered the Water Dragon in the bay and deployed a blockade of ships to trap it there.

At the next full moon, a storm whipped up that was so powerful it could only have been summoned by the dragon. The raging waves dashed Brineblood's ship to pieces and scattered the others. The captain was swallowed up whole by the Water Dragon before it once again swam free.

Every year since, under the August full moon, the legend told that Brineblood's hollow-eyed ghost dragged itself from the ocean to roam the streets of Haven Bay in search of fresh crewmen to sail his drowned ship.

The story was so popular that tourists flocked to the town every summer for the famous Water Dragon ceremony. Everybody put up a grotesque Brineblood scarecrow outside their homes to scare the evil pirate wraith away. And when the full moon rose, a model Water Dragon was paraded through the streets and released into the ocean to escape.

SPOTLIGHT TWO: *THE LEGEND OF BRINEBLOOD*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

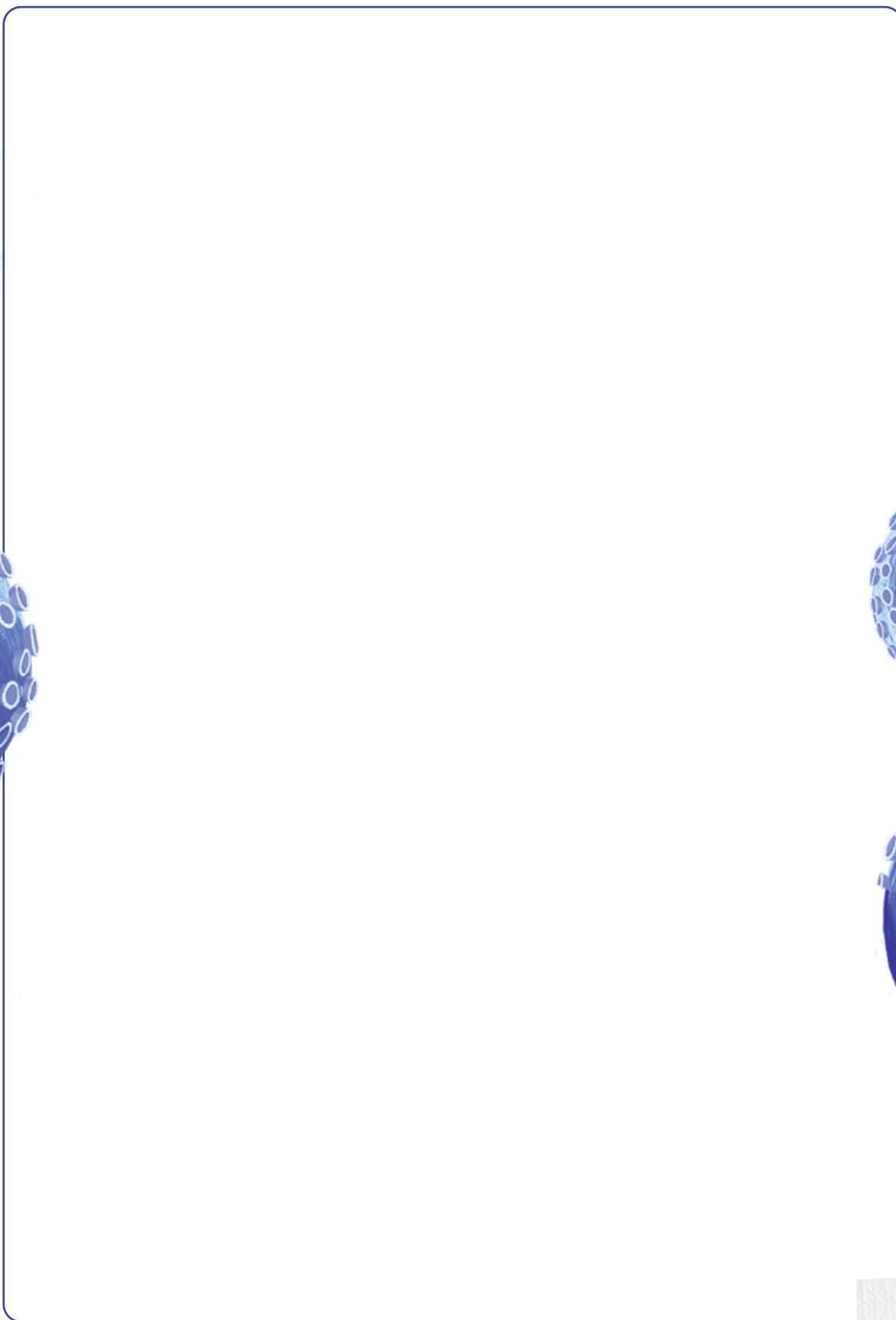
- What type of story is a legend?
- Do you believe there might be some truth in this legend? Or think, like Alex, that it was made up by a bored fisherman a long time ago?
- How many years ago were the events of the Brineblood legend supposed to have taken place?
- Why did the Water Dragon summon a storm to sink Brineblood's ship in the story?
- Why do Haven Bay residents build scarecrows and put them in front of their homes?
- Can you spot the other word meaning ghost in the text?
- Why do you think tourists would come and see the Water Dragon Festival?

ACTIVITY TWO: DESIGN YOUR OWN TERRIFYING PIRATE SCARECROW

The residents of Haven Bay design scarecrows using old clothes, broom handles and straw. Draw a design of your own pirate scarecrow on the next page.

Think about the materials you could recycle to make it.

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SPOTLIGHT TWO: THE LEGEND OF BRINEBLOOD

CHALLENGE: WRITE YOUR OWN SEA SHANTY

As part of their celebrations for the Water Dragon festival, the residents of Haven Bay sing a song about the legend. Songs about pirates and sailors are often called sea shanties.

Your challenge is to write your very own sea shanty, use the example below to help you.

Top tip:

A shanty is like a poem. Can you count how many syllables are in each line? What is the rhyming structure of the verses below? This will help you with writing your own shanty.

*“Old Brineblood sought to snag the sea and
crush it under heel. He chased the monster,
made it flee and trapped it with his zeal!”*

*“The monster sheltered in the bay, a haven
of its own. Rousing its powers for the fray it
gobbled Brineblood’s wicked bones!”*



Suggestion:

Why not host your own Water Dragon festival? You could make a pirate scarecrow and Water Dragon model and sing your sea shanties.

SPOTLIGHT THREE: ZOEY'S WACKY INVENTIONS

Pages 44-45:

Most mornings of their summer holiday had been spent combing the rubbish freshly washed up on the beach for junk Zoey needed for her latest invention, and she was keen to hunt for the final required item.

Dad shook his head. "Alex has to work in the shop."

"Can't I go for a few hours?" Alex begged. "There hasn't been a single customer since we opened."

Sadly, he was right. They had opened promptly two hours ago, but nobody had so much as glanced in the window.

"All right, fine." Dad looked between them gravely. "Just the rest of the morning! Make sure you're back by lunchtime."

"And be careful what you go rummaging through!" added Mr Wu.

Alex and Zoey left their fathers to put up the scarecrow outside the shop and hurried to the beach.

The black tide had washed carrier bags, shreds of netting, plastic bottles and ready-meal containers high up the sand. A chemical smell edged the morning air. Together they picked doggedly through the litter for anything Zoey could use.

"It smells like dirt under a big toenail," she said, pinching a sodden sponge between the fingers of her bright yellow rubber gloves. Underneath was a tangle of wires braided with seaweed. Zoey seized it triumphantly. "Yes! This is exactly what I need!"

Although Zoey's inventions were built with good intentions, they had a habit of going spectacularly wrong with very little warning. There had been the self-guiding life raft that would only guide itself towards rocks, before exploding. Oh, and the seawater purifier that instead of producing drinkable water turned it into a corrosive paste that smelled like rotten fish guts. And then exploded. In fact, Alex struggled to think of any of her inventions that *hadn't* exploded.

"Don't look at me like that!" she said. "Right now my drone only catches fire a little bit when it turns left."

A flying drone would allow them to spy on the Station and find out what was really going on in there. Zoey had been trying to perfect it since the start of the holidays.

She kicked grumpily at a block of driftwood, grumbling under her breath.

"Are you okay?" asked Alex.

"My dad thinks art is more important than technology. I want to show him that what I do *is* important. But I can't do that if my inventions don't work." Zoey gazed around the beach. "Technology doesn't have to just hurt the environment. I want to use it to help too. When we save the bay, he'll finally see."

SPOTLIGHT THREE: ZOEY'S WACKY INVENTIONS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What does Zoey use to make her inventions?
- Do you think reusing the rubbish washed up on the beach is a good idea?
- Zoey describes the rubbish filled beach as smelling 'like dirt under a big toenail'. Can you come up with any of your own silly similes to describe the beach?



- Zoe says her dad thinks art is more important than technology. What do you think?
- Do you think it's important to protect the environment like Zoey and Alex? Why?
- What things can you do to help protect the environment?

ACTIVITY THREE: MAKE RUBBISH INVENTIONS!

Think of the recycling rubbish that you have at home and school. It's always better to reuse things where we can. Why not design an invention that would help protect the environment and reuse some of that rubbish?

Ideas: a beach Hoover, a water cleaner, a waste plastic collector

Step one: design, draw and label your invention.

(tip: think of the items you could use to build a prototype.)

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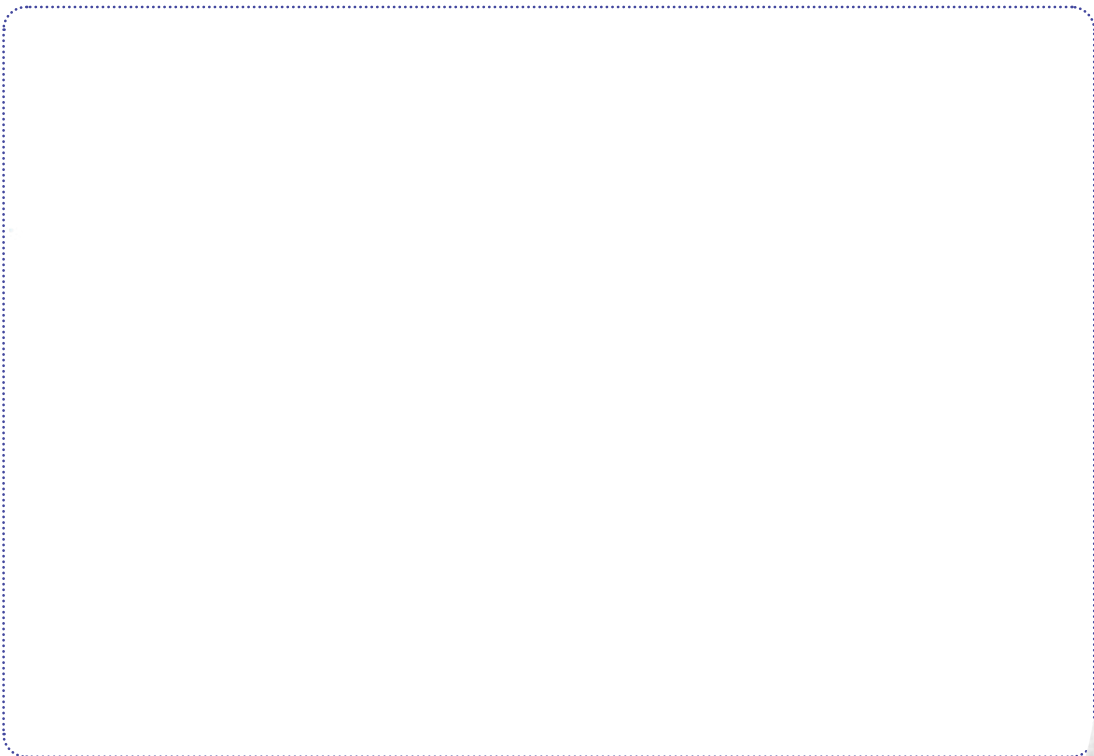


Step two: build your prototype invention using your rubbish!

Useful things that you might need for this are:

- Glue
- Scissors
- Tape
- Your recycled rubbish
- A grown-up to help

Why not stick a picture of your invention below?





Thank you for using these resources!
We hope you enjoyed your trip to Haven Bay.
We would love to see any work you have created.
Please share with us on Twitter @Usborne
using #AlexNeptune