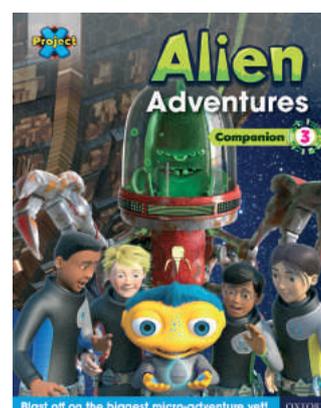
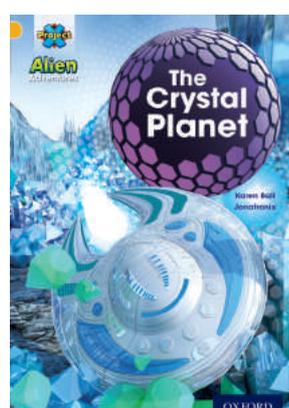
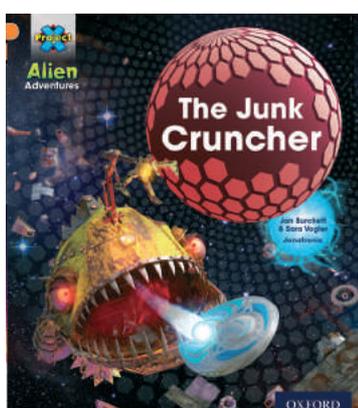
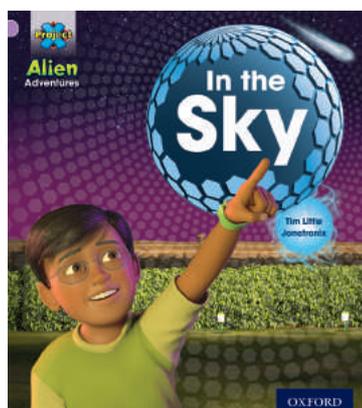


Project X Alien Adventures

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Reviewed by: John Dabell



The Project X whole school reading programme is a leviathan that just keeps on growing and growing. The investment in this resource must have been enormous.

If you aren't yet familiar with Oxford University Press's Project X resource, it is based around four children who discover a collection of watches that allow them to shrink down to micro-size. Together they face many challenges during a series of adventures in which they make new friends, encounter various baddies and use all sorts of gadgets to overcome sticky situations. These are exciting character stories with a real knockout factor.

Alien Adventures is the latest resource from the Project X programme and it contains a whopping 96 brand new levelled stories for children from Reception to Year 4. Designed to develop independent reading

from day one, the books are 100 per cent decodable and have been carefully and expertly written to ensure small steps of progression. The adventure centres on a daring space mission in which Max, Cat, Ant and Tiger travel on their micro-ship and make new alien friends. (If you want to set the scene, there are two free Project X animations on the Oxford University Press website that will press children's excitement buttons and kick-start their imaginations.)

So, what next? Well, the books are correlated to book bands, letters and sounds phases and Oxford levels, so you'll easily be able to match children's reading abilities, organising their reading experiences quickly and accurately.

At the beginning of each book you'll find tips for 'talk before reading', as well as a glossary of any challenge words children are likely to encounter. These are accompanied by ideas on what to do during a reading of the book and suggestions for further challenges once it has been finished.

These notes are all succinct, achievable and extremely helpful – particularly for parents.

I can't fault the artwork of the books. They are produced to an incredibly high standard and children are bound to be captivated

by the brilliant 3D-illustrated characters and contexts. The text itself is also written to a similarly high standard. The stories are very inventive and the space theme has really allowed the authors to let their creativity fly, with each band being pitched at just the right level.

Three Alien Adventures companion books accompany the series, which provide piles of extra information and facts about the



characters, watches, spaceship, and gadgets. They also contain comic strip adventures, jokes, games and things to do and make. I just wish there were more than three as they are really enjoyable to interact with and read.

The series has been written for all learners and is designed to appeal to boys in particular.

For each of the books there are corresponding photocopiable masters ideal for follow-up work to develop children's comprehension skills, and you will also find more generic worksheets for further practice. The teachers' handbooks more than deliver, offering a raft of advice and support for assessing pupil progress. If this isn't enough then Oxford University Press has eBooks, free resources and expert videos to support independent reading on its Project X website.

www.oxfordprimary.com/projectx

Verdict: Has the X-factor

Alien Adventures is a welcome addition to the ever-growing Project X series. The stories are inventive, the reading bands perfectly pitched and parents in particular will benefit from the accompanying tips and support.

