



Core units: Exemplar Year 4

Illustration 2: The GeoSix and the swamp monster story

The GeoSix and the swamp monster

Chapter One

'My sneakers are ruined!'

Sophie was horrified as she stared at her sneakers. They were covered in thick purple slime.

'How did that happen?' asked Antonia.

'I was walking across the vacant block where we always walk, but something has happened there. You know that there is always rubbish there, but today there seemed to be slime oozing from the ground, and the rain has turned the block into a swamp.'

'Perhaps there is a swamp monster there!' said Joshua, 'I would like to see a black speckled swamp monster with breath so poisonous that it gives off a horrible smell!'

'No,' said Hannah, 'there is no such thing as a swamp monster – at least not in our town! I wonder if somebody has dumped some horrible goo there?'

'Let's find out what has happened!' said Jonty.

The others agreed. The six cousins had already had a few adventures together, and they called themselves the GeoSix because they particularly liked adventures related to the geography of their surroundings. They were pleased to have a new challenge.

At this point you might think about be the causes other than a swamp monster for the slime and the smell.

Chapter Two

When the GeoSix reached the vacant block, they saw that Sophie was right. The recent rain had turned the block into a swamp, and not just an ordinary swamp. There was slime of different colours in many places. The surface of the water shone with different colours and oily patterns.

'It is really smelly!' said Hannah.

'See! I told you that there would be a swamp monster with bad breath!' said Jonty.

Dominik looked closely at the water and ooze. He told the others to be careful not to touch it, so they walked around the block and kept out of the water while they looked at it.

'It's not a swamp monster,' he announced. 'I think that some awful chemicals have been brought to the surface by the rain. They must have been underneath the ground before, but now they are at the surface.'

The cousins also noticed that the usual rubbish was still on the block. People had dumped unwanted metal, furniture and tins. They saw that some of the tins were turned over, and there were liquids dripping from them.

'This might be really dangerous!' exclaimed Antonia. 'It might not be just smelly and messy. It might be poisonous and dangerous to health. We had better tell someone about it.'

At this point you might think about who the GeoSix could tell, and who would have the responsibility for taking care of a place such as this. You might also discuss whether there are any places in your local area where wastes and pollution are a problem.

Chapter Three

Nearby the swampy vacant block was a small creek where the GeoSix had sometimes played when they were younger. As they went past the creek, Jonty said 'Look! There are dead frogs on those rocks beside the creek'.

Sure enough, there were the bodies of half a dozen dead frogs. 'I have never seen that happen before,' said Joshua, 'I wonder what has caused that?'

Jonty replied: 'In my book on frogs, at home, it says that they are one of the first creatures to be affected by changes to their habitat. I think that something has happened to the water in the creek'.

'Let's investigate this,' said Dominik. 'If we walk along the edge of the creek, going upstream, we might see if there are any clues.'

The six cousins agreed to do this, and they followed the creek slowly, looking for more dead frogs and any evidence of what had killed them. A little further up the creek they found a clue. It was a pipe pouring dirty water into the creek.

Antonia looked carefully at the muck pouring from the pipe, and said: 'This liquid is the same colour as the dirty, oily slime we saw in the vacant block. I think that this must be coming from that block. If I am right, then we have found enough clues to link the dead frogs with the dumped tins of oil that we saw in the vacant block'.

At this point you might think about the concept of the habitat of animals being easily damaged. You might think about the fact that frogs, in particular, are very sensitive to changes in their environment, but that all animals are affected by changes such as pollution.

Chapter Four

The six cousins told their parents about what they had seen. Their parents phoned each other and decided that they should first tell the local council about it. They all agreed that the vacant block had been a problem for some time, but this new development created a new set of dangers.

'This shows the problems with getting rid of all the rubbish we make,' said Sophie's father. 'We never know when something which was buried or hidden is going to create a problem. Waste material is often long lasting and dangerous.'

The GeoSix decided that they could help by looking around the district for any other problem places with wastes or pollution. They were really concerned that other animals might be killed by dangerous waste materials and pollution.

During the next few weeks they explored parts of their district they had not seen before. They found that vacant blocks were a particular problem because no-one seemed to care for them. They also noticed that some parts of main roads had a lot of empty containers from food and drinks thrown onto them. They walked up and down along the creek, looking for other pipes that might be pouring wastes into the creek.

Joshua thought that he had discovered a street where the footpath was lined with more pieces of junk than he had ever seen in his life. He was amazed, because outside almost every house was a pile of wood, metal and other trash left on the footpath.

'This must be the most rubbishy street in the district,' he announced to the others.

'It's not, you know!' said Dominik. 'In fact, it's just the opposite! That street is having a hard-rubbish collection this week, and all those objects will be collected for recycling.'

'Well, at least that shows that people are taking some actions about wastes,' said Antonia. 'I wonder what else can be done to help people understand that throwing away dangerous rubbish can have all kinds of effects on our environment?'

At this point you might think about the actions that local councils and governments take to help residents to dispose of their wastes correctly. As a concluding activity you might write your own story about wastes, rubbish, pollution, and slime.