

# Teacher Resource Guide



# Attack of the Killer Komodos

Having rescued her town from zombifying mutant mushrooms, eleven-year-old Magnolia Stone is ready for her next adventure!

Maggie and her best friend, Nate, head to Yellowstone National Park to visit Maggie's park ranger dad. But when the kids bump into a rogue Komodo dragon, a dangerous predator that shouldn't even be in the park, and a major earthquake separates them from Maggie's dad, Maggie and Nate must set off alone to find him. On the way, they battle more earthquakes, landslides, wolves, and other unusual creatures.

While Maggie comes up with scientific solutions to their troubles, Nate focuses on conspiracy theories and getting stellar footage for his YouTube channel. But only by combining their skills, will they have any hope of saving each other or the park.

**Summer Rachel Short.** Summer lives in North Texas with her husband, three kids, plus a very fluffy cat and a big white dog. Before spinning tales for young readers, she once worked as a science reporter for her university's newspaper, where she wrote on topics like nanotech tweezers, poultry farm pollution, and the nighttime habits of spiders and snakes.

She enjoys exploring new places with her family, playing tennis, and dreaming up ideas for her next book.

Her debut novel, *THE MUTANT MUSHROOM TAKEOVER* released from Simon & Schuster in 2020. A sequel, *ATTACK OF THE KILLER KOMODOS*, followed on Sept. 14, 2021.

While **Attack of the Killer Komodos** is fictional, a number of the details are based on real science.

**Komodo Dragons** and **Tardigrades** are real life creatures! Both are fascinating animals with unique characteristics.



A few other elements of the book which are based on actual science include the **CRISPR technology** and **biolistic particle delivery system**. What would you do with this technology?

Yellowstone National Park was the first National Park and is home to **earthquake swarms** and many other geological wonders.

Be sure to read the Author's Note at the end of the book to learn more about all the real life science.





# Attack of the Killer Komodos

**Attack of the Killer Komodos** has themes of curiosity, the connections between people and nature, and conservation and stewardship of the world around us. As students discuss possible themes in the book, have students look for evidence in the story to support these themes.

**Text-to-Text Connections** - Have students brainstorm other books they have read with similar themes. How are they similar? How are they different?

**Text-to-Self Connections** - Have students think about a time in their lives when their actions have had an impact on the environment, positive or negative.

## Common Core Standards

(List of standards covered in this guide)

3rd Grade:  
ELA RL 3.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9;  
W 3.3; SL 3.4

4th Grade:  
ELA RL 4.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9;  
W 4.3; SL 4.4

5th Grade:  
ELA RL 5.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9;  
W 5.3; SL 5.4

6th Grade:  
ELA RL 6.1, 2, 3, 4, 9;  
W 6.3; SL 6.4

7th Grade:  
ELA RL 7. 1, 2, 3, 4;  
W 7.3; SL 7.4

Invasive species are introduced to Yellowstone National Park in **Attack of the Killer Komodos**, what examples can you find in the story of why this might not be good idea?



### Can kids make a difference?

Do you think kids can make a difference when it comes to conservation or stewardship of the world around us?

If so, how? What can kids do? What can you do?



### Dig Deeper

Have students research the following science related concepts:

- Fumarole
- Earthquake Swarms
- Tardigrades
- Carbon Snakes
- pH Scale





# Attack of the Killer Komodos

by Summer Rachel Short

**Attack of the Killer Komodos** may contain words that are new for you. Use this list as a bookmark and while you are reading, use context clues to investigate the meanings of these words. Since some of the vocabulary in the book is scientific, you may need to look up some of the definitions. On the back of the bookmark, write down other new words you find in the book

- Appendages
- Connoisseur
- Cryptobiosis
- Ecosystems
- Feisty
- Fumarole
- Gelatinous
- Gurgles
- Hybrid
- Hypothesis
- Lair
- Paranormal
- Predator
- Quip
- Scuttle
- Tardigrade
- Telescopic
- Translucent



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# Attack of the Killer Komodos by Summer Rachel Short

## Reading Response Questions

A few ideas for incorporating these questions into your reading of **Attack of the Killer Komodos...**

- Have students keep a journal while they read and answer questions as you read.
- Utilize Think-Pair-Share and discuss these questions throughout the reading.
- Select a couple of questions for students to write a longer written response. This is an opportunity for students to cite evidence in their writing to support their answers.

What do Nate and Maggie discover in the sagebrush? (Ch 1)

What do you think Maggie's dad and Gramma were discussing in the tent? What do you think Maggie's dad wants to investigate? (Ch 2)

Do you think there is a connection between the silver band in the duffel bag, the Komodo dragon, and the talk Maggie's dad had with her gramma? (Ch 3)

What happened because of the earthquake? (Ch 4)

What would you do if you were on your own like Ezra, Maggie, and Nate? (Ch 4)

What happened to Ezra, Maggie, and Nate during the night? (Ch 6)

How did the kids survive their encounter with the wolves? (Ch 7)

What do you think happened to the snake? (Ch 8)

If the Komodo dragon isn't causing all the changes in Yellowstone, what do you think is causing the changes? (Ch 9)

Based on everything that's happened so far in the story, what do you think the big mystery is? (Ch 10)

What do Maggie and Nate discover about the old cabin that might be unusual? (Ch 11)

What do Maggie and Nate find in the old cabin? (Ch 12)

Do you think Maggie's dad is connected to the cabin? Why or why not? (Ch 12)

Do you think Maggie and Nate made the right choice not going out to meet the Search and Rescue helicopter? (Ch 13)





# **Attack of the Killer Komodos by Summer Rachel Short**

## Reading Response Questions

Make a prediction: What do you think the snake looks like now? (Ch 13)

What do the kids see in the thermal pool? (Ch 14)

What shows up at the campsite as they are finishing dinner? (Ch 16)

What happens to Maggie when she escapes the mosquitoes? (Ch 17)

What does Maggie discover about her dad while reading his journal? (Ch 18)

Do you think Finn and his crew are the good guys or the bad guys? What evidence do you have to support your opinion? (Ch 19)

Why do the kids want to get away from the film crew? (Ch 20)

What help do the kids find on the way to the pond? (Ch 21)

Where do they find Maggie and Ezra's dad? (Ch 21)

Who created all of the hybrid animals? Why did they do it? (Ch 22)

How do kids fight off the lizards? (Ch 23)

What do you think is going to come out of the thermal pool? (Ch 23)

What happens to Finn while he's trying to film the tardigrade? (Ch 24)

How does Finn escape the tardigrade? (Ch 25)

What do you think they should do with all of Finn's creations? (Ch 26)

What lessons did Ezra learn from Slither? (Ch 27)






# YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

**Attack of the Killer Komodos** is set in Yellowstone National Park which is a geological wonder! Now it's your turn to research the park and create a travel brochure or commercial for the park.

As you research different areas and features of the park, record your notes below and then have fun designing a promotional product for the park.

When you're finished you can also share your finished product on social media, with **Summer Rachel Short (Instagram: summerrachelwrites; Twitter: summer\_rachel\_)**

<div>Illustrate what this part of the park looks like.</div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>
<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>	<div></div> <div></div>

# MY FIELD NOTES

Throughout **Attack of the Killer Komodos** Mags makes field observations about what she sees around her. She records her notes and draws pictures of her observations. Now it's your turn!

Explore the world around you and make observations about what you see and notice. Once you've recorded your observations, create a Nate style video about the cool things you observed.

When you're finished you can also share your field notes or videos on social media, with **Summer Rachel Short (Instagram: summerrachelwrites; Twitter: summer\_rachel\_)**

Illustrate what you observe here.



Describe what you observe here.