

# REX OGLE

# THE SUPERNATURAL SOCIETY

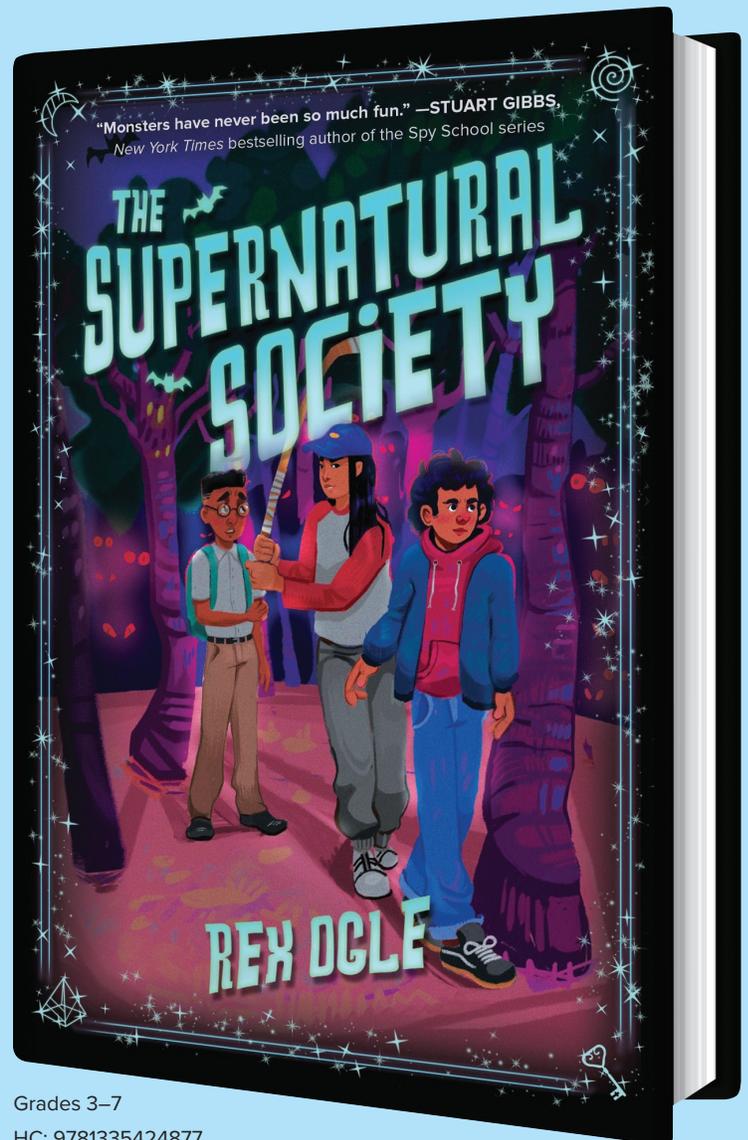
Classroom Activity Guide

## MONSTERS, MAGIC, MYTHS, AND MAD SCIENCE

*Un nuevo comienzo—A fresh start, said his mother. But is it?*

When Brooklyn native Guillermo (Will) Hunter and his mother move into the creepy old town of East Emerson, Massachusetts, he sees all sorts of mythical beasts and monsters that look like they've walked off the page of a graphic novel. But his mom doesn't see them. Actually, no one does—except his neighbor Ivy. And so begins an adventure where Will, Ivy, and Ivy's brother, Linus, have to face supernatural foes to save their town from ancient evil forces and become "the heroes of their own lives."

This series starter is a modern retelling of the classic tale of the misfit newcomer becoming the reluctant hero with his newfound friends. The story, told from the point of view of an observing monster, is full of twists and turns, masterly woven with ancient monsters and mythological beasts from across many cultures, and includes evil spells and lots and lots of teamwork. Coded messages, ciphers, and cryptograms give tantalizing clues about what is really going on in this strange town that Will must now call home. *The Supernatural Society* is an enchanting, adventurous tale with relatable, diverse characters and is a natural springboard for exploring additional literature, such as Greek mythology. A thrilling addition to any classroom library!



Grades 3–7

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## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- Will is the new kid in town, reluctantly moving with his mother out of necessity. East Emerson is very different from the life he knew in Brooklyn, but it seems like a typical American town. Why is Will having a particularly hard time adjusting? Remember a time when you were the “new kid” in school or summer camp or some other place where you felt you didn’t belong. What advice would you give Will? How does his exchange with Ivy in history class change his perception?

Common Core State Standards Correlation:  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3

- Why is the old book *PERDITIT HISTORIA RERUM* (134) significant to the young heroes? How does it relate to what is going on in the town?

Common Core State Standards Correlation:  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4

- In Chapter 8, Oracle Jones tells Will, “If only ya believed that you’re the hero of your own life” (195). What is she referring to? Why does this “chance” meeting with the witch in the woods change the game plan for the young heroes? How do they decide to proceed? How can *you* be “the hero of your own life”?

Common Core State Standards Correlation:  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4

- In Chapter 12, Dr. Pamiver explains how he was tricked into his current situation. What were the veterinarian’s intentions? How has the situation gone terribly wrong? Think of a time when you (or a character from another book or movie) had the best intentions but somehow the situation got out of hand and ended very differently than expected. At what point did you realize that something was going off track? What did you or the character do to attempt to remedy the situation? What did you or they learn from the situation?

Common Core State Standards Correlation:  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1

- Throughout the story we have a running commentary by the “author” of the book, Adam Monster, which starts with a stern warning to not read the story. How do Adam Monster’s experiences of growing up compare with what Will is going through? How does Adam view humans? How do we know he feels this way? How does Will view monsters? Does his view change over time? How does Adam Monster’s final cryptic message affect the mood at the end of the book? Why might Ogle use Adam Monster to guide us through the book?

Common Core State Standards Correlation:  
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6

**“Frightening and fun!”**

—NEIL PATRICK HARRIS, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Magic Misfits*

**“Scares, ciphers and plenty of laughs.  
Monsters have never been so much fun.”**

—STUART GIBBS, *New York Times* bestselling author of the *Spy School* series

**“Three friends on an action-packed, monster-filled adventure?  
And laughs? Sign me up!”**

—MAX BRALLIER, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Last Kids on Earth* series



# MONSTERS, MAGIC, MYTHS, AND MAD SCIENCE!

## Create a Graphic Novel Side Story

Throughout the story, members of the town of East Emerson show up as unique, magical, and mythological creatures from various cultures. Just imagine what it must be like to go through the day in a place like East Emerson (especially their middle school!). In this activity, students will explore the various monsters that make up this town with the ultimate goal of creating a graphic novel side story about those very monsters.

### Part 1: Who are the creatures in your neighborhood?

Have students research and create a quick guide to some of the distinct, unusual beings that inhabit this town, using the following table as a guide. (These are a few of the monsters.

Feel free to have your students add more!)

Name and Job	Monster or Mythical Beast	Culture/ Part of the World That It Is From	Powers/ Significance
Mr. Rhapaho, history teacher	mummy		
mayor	sasquatch		
Dr. Pamiver, veterinarian	vampire		
Miss Maria, school cafeteria cook	chupacabra		
librarian	lamia		
janitor	jack-o'-lantern		
townsperson	cyclops		
townspeople	pixies		
townspeople	werewolves		
townsperson	Fukuiraptor		

## Part 2: If you were to create a new creature, who would it be?

Have students create three new monsters or mythological characters for their story that takes place in Will’s school. They could be school personnel, teachers, etc. They can be already existing monsters or characters, come from legends or stories, or students can create their own completely new creatures.

Name and Job	Monster or Mythical Beast	Culture/ Part of the World That It Is From	Powers/ Significance
<i>Example: Mrs. Humphreys, English teacher</i>	<i>mermaid</i>	<i>Seas/oceans throughout the world</i>	<i>Magical, sometimes benevolent, sometimes evil, hypnotic singing</i>

## Part 3: Let the story begin!

Have students use the information from the two tables to create a funny, mysterious, short companion book (fan fiction!) in graphic novel format.

- Everyday survival in middle school is sometimes fraught with drama. Have students tap into their own experiences when navigating their school conflicts and friendships, but with a twist—their new story should be modeled after Ogle’s. In their graphic novel, how do Will, Ivy, and Linus deal with the students’ newly created monsters during the school day? (Remember, the monsters are not aware that Ivy and Will can see them!)
- The story line might include Will forgetting his homework for a class taught by a short-tempered monster, Linus accidentally stepping on a star athlete’s tail, the mayor coming to history class as a guest but getting really itchy because of fleas, or any other zany, creative ideas your students come up with! The catch is to weave their new characters into their plot and conflict.
- Be sure that the plot keeps true to the main characters and themes of the book and fits into the general story.

- The story can be made with original artwork or properly cited artwork from other sources and can be digital or hard copy. Peer editing is greatly encouraged—perhaps another student understands the “true” feelings of a sasquatch; or another classmate has deep insight as to whether mermaids consider themselves to be feminists.
- And remember to ask yourself, “Would Adam Monster approve of this new story?”
- Stories this good just have to be shared! This is an awesome opportunity for reading aloud, swapping books, sharing stories with younger students (who can give feedback), or hosting a book signing where students share their work and pencil-in dedications to their readers! It can even be a fancy event! Make sure to have student work on display as a small “library” afterward.

### ONLINE RESOURCES

[How Fan Fiction Can Transform Student Writing \(and Reduce Your Grading\)](#)

[The Importance of Graphic Novels to Stimulate Writing and Reading](#)

[How to Create a Graphic Novel on Google Slides Template for Paper Version](#)

Common Core State Standards Correlations:  
 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.4,  
 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.5, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.6,  
 CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.8

# WELCOME TO EAST EMERSON!

## Create a “welcome” guide for a new resident of East Emerson

Will was unhappy about the move to East Emerson and he knew very little about the town. Maybe he would have felt differently if he’d known a little more about the town before he’d arrived. (Or maybe he would have run the other way!) Have students create a “welcome” guide to East Emerson, introducing certain parts of the town and different members of the community.

- Allow students to decide the format for their “welcome” guide (i.e., brochure, poster).
- This activity is completely adaptable to individual students, groups, or an entire class, with students working on different, individual pieces. It can be completed online or in old-school paper format.
- The mood of the guide should be cheerful but with some funny and/or mysterious double meanings that point to the danger of the town.
- With partners or in small groups, have students brainstorm what to include in their “welcome” guide based on the book. They might include historical blurbs, advertisements from local businesses (i.e., Dr. Pamiver could offer a bit of peculiar pet advice while advertising his veterinarian’s office), reviews from past visitors (um, victims!) of East Emerson, crosswords, or local events (i.e., Dr. Oracle Jones

could give a lecture or interview on hexes past and present). Adam Monster might be the chairperson/monster of the “welcoming” committee and author or editor of the “welcome” guide.

- Encourage students to include plenty of original artwork, photographs, or properly cited images from other sources. Artwork could even be from the monsters themselves or include some coded messages, ciphers, and cryptograms.
- Roles such as copy editor and ad designer can also be assigned.
- Most importantly, have fun exploring the twisted inner workings of East Emerson!

### ONLINE RESOURCES: Historical Travel Brochure Examples

[Creative Educator](#)

[Literacy in Focus](#)

Common Core State Standards Correlations: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.2, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.3, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.4, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.6, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7, CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.8

This guide was created by Room 228 Educational Consulting, with public school teacher Elizabeth Swiatkowski as lead teacher. We at Room 228 believe all monsters have good in their hearts—sometimes it just takes a little decoding to find it. To learn more, visit [rm228.com](http://rm228.com).

## CHALLENGE STUDENTS WITH A SPECIAL-EDITION CIPHER FROM THE AUTHOR ON THE NEXT PAGE

Why are mummies the best detectives? *They know how to wrap up a mystery.*

Why couldn’t the werewolf go to school with the witch? *He couldn’t spell.*

Why is Frankenstein’s monster always smiling? *The doctor keeps him in stitches.*



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rex Ogle has had lots of jobs. Some involved waiting tables, moving boxes, or cleaning toilets. Other jobs involved creating stories for Star Wars, LEGO, Power Rangers, Minions, DC Comics, and Marvel Comics. Now Rex is a full-time writer and the author behind *Free Lunch*, winner of the YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction. And he’s written the first book in The Supernatural Society series. Why? Because while it was fun to clean toilets, it is much more fun to write about monsters. To find out more, visit [www.rexogle.com](http://www.rexogle.com) or @thirdrex on instagram.



# ATBASH CIPHER



Howdy readers!

In my book *The Supernatural Society*, three young heroes are out to save their town from monsters, myths, magic, and mad science. Along the way they decipher codes and cryptograms to further unlock the mysteries of an ancient witch. Have you ever experimented with secret languages? Why not give it a try? (Then use it with your friends to pass secret messages to each other.)

Let me introduce you to the **ATBASH CIPHER**. All you do is line up a normal alphabet with a reverse alphabet. See how the letters line up on the code dial below? A = Z, B = Y, and C = X. So your ABC's become your ZYX's. Try to decode the following jokes.

Best,  
Rex Ogle

**DSB ZIV NFNNRVH GSV YVHG WGVXGREVH?** \_\_\_\_\_

**GSVB PMLD SLD GL DIZK FK Z NBHGVIB.** \_\_\_\_\_

**DSB XLFOWM'G GSV DVIVDLOU TL GL HXSLLD DRGS GSV DRGXS?** \_\_\_\_\_

**SV XLFOWM'G HKVOO.** \_\_\_\_\_

**DSB RH UIZMPVMHGVVM'H NLMHGV I ZODZBH HNRORMT?** \_\_\_\_\_

**GSV WLXGLI PVVKH SRN RM HGRGXSVH.** \_\_\_\_\_

