

## GASTRONAUTS

JAMES FOLEY

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YEAR LEVEL: Y2–6

CROSS-CURRICULUM PRIORITY: Sustainability

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Sally Tinker, the world's foremost inventor under the age of twelve, has an extraordinary new challenge. The brain-enhancing nanobots she is testing have been accidentally swallowed by her baby brother, Joe.

The only way to stop Joe turning into a superbaby and wreaking super havoc, is to shrink herself and travel inside Joe's body on a journey to tackle the problem head-on. What could possibly go wrong? As it turns out, this is only the beginning.

A hilarious graphic novel for young readers, now in full colour.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

James Foley is a children's author and illustrator. His books include the S.Tinker graphic novel series, *In the Lion*, *The Amity Kids Adventures*, *The Last Viking*, *The Last Viking Returns* and *My Dead Bunny*.

James is an ambassador for Books in Homes and Room to Read Australia, and the Regional Advisor for SCBWI Australia West. His interests include comics, film, psychology, science, history (anything nerdy and geeky really), as well as yoga and social justice.

He has far too many books in his bedside reading pile.

### THEMES

- Imagination
- Invention
- Design and Technology
- Friendship
- Family
- The human body
- Responsibility

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM OUTCOMES

Y2–6 English

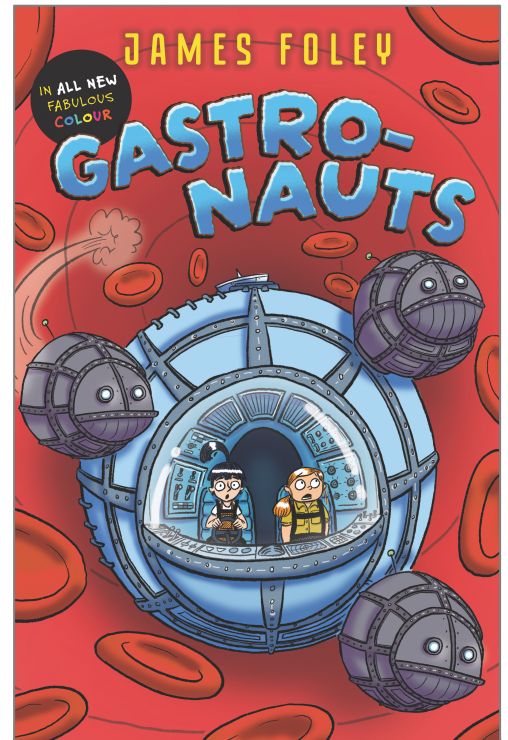
Y2–6 Biological Sciences

Y2–6 Design and Technologies

Y2–6 Visual Art

### USEFUL WEBSITES

- Author's website: [jamesfoley.com.au](http://jamesfoley.com.au)
- Author's blog: [jamesfoley.com.au/blog](http://jamesfoley.com.au/blog)



## CLASSROOM IDEAS

### Discussion questions

1. Sally shows Charli some shrunken objects through her Microscopic Handheld Object Viewing Window. What is a microscope? How does it work?
2. Sally's newest invention is the smartCHIP. What is a microchip? What is a supercomputer?
3. Charli suggests minimising carbon dioxide emissions and reducing global warming, or shrinking the world's rubbish to minimise pollution. If you had a Resizenator with super shrinkafying abilities, how would you put the technology to good use? In groups of four, brainstorm a list of ten ideas.
4. Do you think Sally should test the smartCHIP on herself? What things could go wrong?
5. Sally has also built nanobots to protect her smartCHIP. What does the prefix 'nano' mean? List some of the things you think nanobots could be used for.
6. Look carefully at 'The SMARTBOT' diagram. How does Sally define 'artificial intelligence'? What are some advantages of this technology, and what are its potential disadvantages and dangers? Can you think of any examples of artificial intelligence technology that are already in use?
7. Why do you think Nan calls Sally and Charli 'Gastronauts' when they travel to Joe's large intestine?
8. Sally and Charli visit numerous parts of Joe's body including his stomach, intestines and brain. Create a map of their journey.
9. Sally refers to 'Tesla's moustache'. Who was Nikola Tesla and what was he famous for?
10. How are the themes of family, friendship and responsibility important in this story?
11. How does the author use humour to engage the reader? Provide an example that made you laugh.

### Science and technology

1. Research a famous inventor from history and write a short biography of their achievements (e.g. Thomas Edison, Katharine Burr Blodgett, Alexander Graham Bell, Grace Hopper).
2. If you could design and build your own technology for any purpose, what would it be? Create a diagram on grid paper (like Sally's), labelling the dimensions, materials and features of your invention.
3. Can you design and construct a new invention out of recycled materials? In teams of four, build, test, evaluate and modify your invention based on peer feedback.
4. Design a name and logo for your own company – look at the logo for S.Tinker Inc. for inspiration!
5. Create a labelled diagram of the major organs in the human body. What role does each organ play in keeping the body functioning?

### Graphic novels

1. What is a graphic novel? How are its structure and layout different to those of a chapter book? Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the features of these two unique forms of storytelling. Which do you prefer?
2. What style has James Foley used to draw the characters – realistic or cartoon? What do you like about this style?
3. Where are objects positioned on each page? How are the images framed? Does this make the book more exciting or more confusing to read than a graphic novel with a standard grid?
4. How does James Foley convey the characters' thoughts and feelings? Find a page where one of the characters looks excited, irritated, scared, proud or disgusted. Use the cartooning worksheet for primary students available from Foley's blog to help you draw facial expressions on your own characters: [jamesfoleyillustrations.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/faces\\_part\\_1.pdf](http://jamesfoleyillustrations.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/faces_part_1.pdf)
5. Choose your favourite scene from the story and design it anew.