ABOUT THE BOOK

Everyone is good at something. But at Lizzie’s school this is taken to extremes. Her classmate Ethan, who previously had no interest in sport, is now incredible at football; her brother’s suddenly an expert in robotics; and Lizzie has become really good at being bad. But when she tries to remember what awful thing she’s just done, all she has is a blank space in her mind.

How come they’ve suddenly changed so much? And why can’t they talk about it? It’s as though they have no power over their own actions. Could this be something to do with the mysterious new headmaster…?

Surrender yourself to the new hypnotic spell of the Demon Headmaster, with new kids, a new school, and a thrilling new scheme for world domination. This is a fast-paced and action-packed adventure, written by the award-winning Gillian Cross. Resistance is not an option.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gillian Cross has been writing children’s books for over 30 years. Before that she took English degrees at Oxford and Sussex Universities, and she had various jobs, including working in a bakery and being an assistant to a Member of Parliament.

She lives in Dorset. Her hobbies include orienteering and playing the piano. She won the Carnegie Medal for Wolf and the Smarties Prize and the Whitbread Children’s Novel Award for The Great Elephant Chase.

Find out more about Gillian Cross and her books at Gillian’s website (www.gillian-cross.co.uk), and the DHM website (www.demonheadmaster.com).

This is the seventh book about The Demon Headmaster. He’s back for a new generation, in a new school, and with a fresh group of young people facing up to his sinister plans to control the world.

See More Reading, below, to catch up with the other books in this series.
BOOKTALKING

Introducing the book

Look at the cover and the blurb and set the scene: read the first chapter to introduce the book, and maybe continue with one or two additional tasters from further into the story to entice people into reading more.

Then read the book all the way through, either reading aloud to everyone together or letting people read and experience the book for themselves.

Talking about the book: some booktalk questions

Get everyone to share their first responses to this book. This could be with everyone together, or children could discuss in small groups and then share their main feelings and questions with everyone.

Explore further what people think about the story, and encourage lots of discussion. There are no wrong answers—all answers are good!

- How did you feel when reading this book? And how did you feel when you’d finished it?
- What were the funniest bits for you?
- Which parts of the story do you remember most?
- And what were the scariest bits?
- Did you skip any parts? Which parts?
- Talk about anything you learned from reading this book.
- Was there anything that took you by surprise?
- Are there things you’d now like to find out more about?
- Were there any parts that didn’t make sense to you?
- What single word (or two!) best describes this book for you?
- If you gave up on this book, can you say why?

Talking about the story

- When Lizzie and Tyler start back at school, what do they notice that’s different about it? Collect a list of all the strange things you can find
- How soon did you realize what was going on and who was behind it? What made you realize?
- Imagine that everyone at your school gets programmed to be amazing at one particular skill. What would you want to be an expert in? What would you do with your skill?
- Hazelbrook Academy’s school motto is ‘Where Every Student is a Star’. What is your school’s motto? Think of another good motto for your school
- Tyler is afraid to go back to his school in England because he was bullied there by Blake. However, they find that Blake has been transformed, and it’s the Headmaster they have to deal with, rather than bullying. Before they realize this, what does Lizzie encourage Tyler to do about the bullying? Every school has an anti-bullying strategy. Talk about what your school does to prevent bullying and what you should do if bullying does happen
- ‘For the first time he [Ethan] was actually looking forward to his homework run. Not because of the actual running, but because he needed a chance to think.’ (p44) Talk about when and where you do your best thinking—is it on a run, like Ethan? Or maybe sitting quietly in a special place?
- ‘Reading has nothing to do with pleasure,’ Lizzie heard herself say. (p108) What do people think about this? Make lists of all the ways you think reading does bring pleasure—and any times when reading is not to do with pleasure.
- A fun activity when you’re thinking about reading is to ask people to compare it to sweets! For example, reading could be like chocolate: smooth and addictive; or it could be like toffee: tasty and with things to chew over…
- The Headmaster invites the Prime Minister to visit the school, to see all the brilliant things the pupils can do. What is the Headmaster hoping to gain from this visit?
- In the UK today what is the job of the Prime Minister? Talk about what you think the Prime Minister does and their position in the Government, and then research the subject to find out more and get a picture of how UK government works

- What were the funniest bits for you?
EYES

‘Her mind clouded over and everything dissolved in the depths of those cold green eyes.’ (p25)

Mesmerism

When the children look into the Headmaster’s eyes (or the eyes of his hologram) they fall into a trance, and while they are in this state of trance he gives them messages about what they are to do, which they receive in their subconscious.

Out of their trance they behave normally until some trigger, placed in their subconscious by the Headmaster, gets them to do the things he has programmed them to do—e.g. Lizzie graffitis the school, and Blake has become a perfect ‘welcomer’.

The Headmaster has put them into a hypnotic state by imposing his will on them, using the power of his eyes. This is called mesmerism.

Find out more about mesmerism and hypnotism, and how they can be used in real life to help people.

The power of eyes

Talk about how we communicate so much with our eyes, and about the power of eye contact—how effective it is when we make this contact when we are speaking with each other, and the messages we give when we avoid eye contact, or give too much. Our eyes can often say more than our voices or our smiles do.

The Demon Headmaster uses the power of his eyes to control people. How else does he use eyes to monitor what the children do?

A picture of an eye is sometimes used as a symbol to ward off evil, as with the Eye of Horus, an Egyptian god. It can also be used in the opposite way—find out about the phrase ‘the evil eye’!
Being controlled

‘If the visit goes well, the Headmaster will be taking over hundreds of other schools...’ (p102)

‘...I shall be in charge of the entire education system – making sure it produces the right kind of workers, in the right numbers.’ (p107)

This is part of the Demon Headmaster's plan for world domination. What do you think he means by ‘the right kind of workers, in the right numbers’?

Do you think we are being controlled today at all? For example, are we being made to—or encouraged to—think or believe in certain things, or to want certain things?

Talk about the following things and how they can affect our thinking and behaviour:

- Advertising
- Newspapers, television, radio
- Social media
- Fake news
- Politicians’ messages and propaganda

If there is anything happening here which we don’t like, how can we try to do something about it?

Who's Who

These characters from The Demon Headmaster are telling us something about themselves, but their words have been matched up with the wrong names. Can you sort them out? Talk some more about each character and the things they do in this story.

Lizzie
I am really keen on computers, and Maths is my favourite subject. I’m not keen on football, but I seem to be surprisingly good at it.

Tyler
I run a coffee stall and have created a wonderful hot chocolate ginger drink with whipped cream and honeycomb crumbs. The drinks are selling well, but I need to get my business plan sorted.

Ethan
Tyler remembers me as a bully, but now I am a school welcomer. In this story I get to wear an amazing outfit—green and purple with giant shoulder pads, sequinned trousers, and high-heeled boots.

Blake
I’m back from the States with my younger brother. I try to look out for him. I’m studying Shakespeare sonnets. I’m also getting a reputation for vandalism, though I don’t know how this is happening.

Angelika
I’ve just started a new school with my older sister. I’ve designed an amazing robot, but the thing I really like is doing magic tricks.
BEING SAFE ONLINE

Passwords

‘He was halfway there. Now he needed a program that could hack the password. It might take a couple more days, but then he’d be in.’ (p47)

It takes Ethan just three days to work out the Deputy Head’s password and hack into the school admin network.

It’s important that you have a strong password which can’t easily be hacked, and it’s important, too, that you don’t write it down or tell anybody.

Lots of people use the names of their pets or family as passwords, and some people even use the word ‘password’. This means their online activity could easily be hacked.

Have a go at creating strong passwords by inventing a code using letters, numbers, and symbols. The challenge is also to make sure it’s one that you can remember but no-one else can guess!

‘Miss Wellington was really careless, and he’d seen her ID and password half a dozen times.’ (p46)

Talk about and make a list of all the things you should do to keep yourself safe online.

BOOKS AND LIBRARIES

‘Very few books are necessary to access information now…’ (p61)

Mr Bains says this to Lizzie in the ‘information hub’, a room which used to be called the ‘library’. Once crammed with books, it is now filled with computers and shelves of magazines and files.

Does your school have a library? What is it like? What kind of resources and activities does it have? And is there a school librarian to manage it?

Talk about how useful a school library can be—if your school doesn’t have one, what could you do to get one going, and what would you like to have in it?

Do you agree with Mr Bains that few books are needed now to access information? You could have a debate with arguments for and against this proposal:

‘This house believes that very few books are necessary to access information now.’

For a debate you need to have:

- Your proposal or proposition
- A proposer to make a speech with arguments to support this proposal
- An opposer to make a speech giving the arguments against this idea
- Someone to second the proposer, adding to their argument
- Someone to second the opposer, with more arguments against
- The rest of the class or group asking questions, to make sure everyone understands both points of view
- A vote—for and against the proposal

Tips for debating

- Research your facts thoroughly, for both sides of the argument
- Make some notes to prepare your speech, but just refer to them, don’t read them out like an essay
- Make your points clearly, with persuasive arguments
- Be confident in your speech and body language
- Listen carefully to the opposing arguments
Holograms

“What is it?” he whispered. “Is he really here?” ‘I think...it’s a hologram,’ Lizzie whispered back.

What is a hologram?

Think of some everyday examples, like the ones on £5 notes or credit cards.

Larger scale holograms, illuminated with lasers or displayed in a darkened room with carefully directed lighting, are incredible. They’re two-dimensional surfaces that show absolutely precise, three-dimensional images of real objects.

How does the Headmaster use a hologram in this story? And how might he use them in his plans to control the country’s education system?

Imagine you have control of a hologram of yourself, or perhaps of something or someone else. What would your hologram look like? And what would you do with it?

Write a short story about your hologram and how you might use it so that you could be in two places at once!

The Next Adventure!

‘Good!’ said Angelika fiercely. ‘Let’s hope we never see him again!’...she knew they were thinking the same thing.

If only we could be sure... (p173)

It looks as if The Demon Headmaster will be back! What might his next plan for world domination be?

Think about what this plan might be, have a go at writing the first paragraph of the next book in this series, and decide on a title for the book.

Remember your discussion about the ways in which people and organizations try to influence us in the world today—through the media, for example.

And remember the power of those cold green eyes!
### More reading

**More books by Gillian Cross**

<table>
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### More adventures in schools

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<tr>
<td>Pamela Butchart</td>
<td>My Head Teacher is a Vampire Rat (see the ‘Baby Aliens’ series)</td>
<td>Nosy Crow</td>
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<td>Stuart Gibbs</td>
<td>Spy School</td>
<td>Simon &amp; Schuster</td>
<td>9781442421937</td>
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<td>Tom McLaughlin</td>
<td>The Accidental Prime Minister</td>
<td>OUP</td>
<td>9780192737748</td>
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<td>Jill Murphy</td>
<td>The Worst Witch</td>
<td>Puffin</td>
<td>9780141349596</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robin Stevens</td>
<td>Murder Most Unladylike</td>
<td>Puffin</td>
<td>9780141369761</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jamie Thomson</td>
<td>The Headmaster of Doom (see the ‘Dark Lord’ series)</td>
<td>Orchard</td>
<td>9781408341421</td>
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### Poetry about school

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<tr>
<td>Allan Ahlberg</td>
<td>Please Mrs Butler</td>
<td>Puffin</td>
<td>9780140314946</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul Cookson</td>
<td>Crazy Classrooms</td>
<td>Frances Lincoln</td>
<td>9781847805058</td>
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# The Eyes Have It!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tr>
<td>All eyes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have one’s eye on</td>
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<tr>
<td>In the public eye</td>
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<tr>
<td>With open eyes</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>My eye!</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Clap eyes on</td>
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**Quiz: About the UK Government**

Choose a, b or c for each of these statements. NB: One of them has two right answers!

1. The Prime Minister is
   a. A clergyman
   b. Head of the Government
   c. A painter and decorator

2. The Secretaries of State are in charge of
   a. Computers and stationery
   b. Government departments —e.g. Department of Education
   c. Taking the minutes of meetings

3. The Cabinet is
   a. The place where all the laws are filed
   b. The place where dinner plates are kept
   c. The Prime Minister and all the Secretaries of State

4. Parliament is the place where
   a. HP Sauce is made
   b. The Secretaries of State live
   c. Politicians meet to decide laws and make decisions for the country

5. A coalition government is
   a. Where two or more political parties join together to run the country
   b. A government of coal miners
   c. Where members of parliament share computers

6. A General Election is held
   a. At least every 10 years
   b. At least every 5 years
   c. Every 4 years

7. The Prime Minister’s official residence is
   a. 10 Downing Street
   b. Buckingham Palace
   c. Chequers

8. Big Ben is
   a. The leader of the members of Parliament
   b. The tallest member of Parliament
   c. The bell in the tower of the Houses of Parliament

9. A Bill is
   a. A proposed new law
   b. The cost of fixing Big Ben
   c. Anyone in Parliament called William

10. A summit meeting is
    a. A meeting of heads of state
    b. A meeting of mathematicians
    c. A meeting at the top of a mountain

Here’s a research checklist for finding out more about the people and things in the quiz.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESEARCH CHECKLIST</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td>A General election</td>
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<td>Members of Parliament</td>
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<td>How a Bill becomes law</td>
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<td>Summit meeting</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
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