

J.R.: Earth Kid in Space

An Animated Comedy Series for Kids Ages 6 - 12
by Ben Deeb & Graham Towers

Logline:

It's hard being the new kid at school, especially when your school is in space, you're the only human, and your vice principal is a super-strict cockroach monster. Luckily, J.R. and his fellow outsiders Blurgle and Vic always manage to find time for both school and adventure at their deep-space science academy.

Premise:

The Galactic Academy for Stellar Scholars (G.A.S.S.) isn't your average school. Sure, it's got classrooms, teachers, and students, but they're all in a space station 20,000 light-years from Earth. Oh, and everyone there is an alien – except for 11-year-old J.R. Bakir, the first human to attend the school. Only the best and brightest of each sentient species get invited to study at G.A.S.S., and J.R.'s representing Earth. Each episode follows J.R. and his best friends Blurgle and Vic as they get in and out of trouble, experience the ridiculous mysteries of the universe, and find their place among a variety of bizarre alien creatures.

Characters:

J.R.

J.R. Bakir is an eleven-year-old boy – the first human ever to attend the Galactic Academy. He's the kind of kid you wished lived next door to you (or, you know, in the next space-pod over) – helpful, spunky, and always hunting for adventure. J.R. was one of the only Arab-Americans at his school back home, so he's used to being the odd man out. He's often teased for being from Earth, which some of the other students think of as a backward planet. J.R.'s got a lot to prove, and he's so excited for the chance to explore the universe that he's not going to let silly things like bullies, rules, or the risk of getting jettisoned into deep space stop him. This leads to him getting into trouble a bit more than he'd like, but he almost always has a way out, whether it's convincing the aliens chasing him that he's the all-powerful Emperor of Earth or tricking the wrathful vice principal into giving him thirty minutes in the (super-fun) zero gravity chamber as a punishment.

Blurgle

Blurgle Streptococcusmitis is a member of an alien species called the Blobazoa, which are basically giant amoebas that can change their shape and color. Blurgle also has the ability to split into multiple smaller versions of himself, though

each only has a fraction of his intelligence, which can make using this power a bit tricky. Blurgle's family has a long tradition of attending the Galactic Academy, so he's under a lot of pressure to excel academically and keep himself out of trouble. While Blurgle is much more book-smart than J.R., he lacks his friend's social skills and struggles to be accepted by his peers at the Academy. J.R. and Blurgle became friends when J.R. helped him with his anxiety (Blurgle was constantly stress-splitting at inopportune moments), and Blurgle showed J.R. the ropes when he was new.

Vic

Vic (Technically V.I.C. – Various Incarnations of Current) is an electromagnetic life form. She appears to others as a blue electrical ghost girl and has the power to inhabit and control anything electronic. She used to be the Galactic Academy's spirited digital assistant, acclimating new students to the school (like a resident advisor crossed with Siri). Lately, though, most students see her as an obsolete piece of technology, completely ignoring her offers to help them out. The only ones who treat her as an equal are J.R. and Blurgle, who relate to her outsider status. Because of this, they've become inseparable friends, and Vic's vast databanks of knowledge prove invaluable in their adventures.

Vice Principal Azerax

Azerax is the Vice Principal in charge of oxygen-breathers, which means he runs the section of the school that J.R. and Blurgle inhabit. He's also a hideous-looking cockroach alien with no sense of humor, though his high-pitched voice and uptight personality are at odds with his fierce physical appearance. He takes the education and safety of his students very seriously, and cherishes his gigantic binder of school rules. In Azerax's view, a successful school is an educational penal colony where children spend their days writing quietly in workbooks and taking standardized tests. J.R. has a wildly different idea of what constitutes a successful education, which makes him a constant pain in Azerax's antennae.

Themes:

While each episode features an exciting Sci-Fi adventure, the heart of the show lies in the character relationships, emotional conflicts, and the theme that being different is not only okay, but something to strive for. The cast of bizarre alien creatures will highlight the inherent value in diversity: what one character sees as weird and totally ridiculous is commonplace for another.

Because of their varied backgrounds, J.R., Blurgle, and Vic each have very different approaches to problems – J.R. prefers to jump into action, while Blurgle wants to avoid conflict, and Vic likes meticulous planning. Only by working together and combining their strengths do the characters succeed. Through this focus on respecting diverse points of view, the show will teach kids that it's important to always be yourself – even if you're a little weird.

Possible Episodes:

J.R.: Earth Kid in Space will be episodic with some elements of serialization. Episodes will often be set at the school, but many will also take place on field trips to alien planets, the uncharted reaches of the galaxy, and anyplace else that lends itself to a new and exciting story. Some possible episodes include:

Alien Nation: On a field trip to visit alien ruins on an asteroid, J.R. is hungry for adventure and wants to stray from the trail to do some *real* exploring. Blurgle warns him that this is a bad idea, but Vic assures them that the aliens there have been extinct for millennia. They take off into a mysterious cave only to find that the asteroid's inhabitants aren't as extinct as they'd thought. Chased by strange creatures, they try to rejoin the school group. While Blurgle does his best not to stress-split on the run, Vic has to deal with being wrong for once, and J.R. wrestles with the fact that his recklessness may have put his best friends in danger.

Sweet Home Blurgle-bama: It's the Space Holidays and school's on break. Blurgle brings J.R. and Vic to his home world where they meet Blurgle's family – who are all genetically identical to Blurgle. As the best and brightest of his species, Blurgle is a beloved celebrity on his home world, a far cry from his status at school. J.R. struggles with suddenly not being the center of attention and it doesn't help that all the praise goes to Blurgle's head. Meanwhile, Vic goes a little bonkers after finding out that all the blobozoas have identical DNA. She spends hours trying to biologically classify them before realizing that their most important differences are on the inside.

Right Place, Wrong Time: Blurgle opens a portal that allows him, J.R., and Vic to travel to Earth. J.R., excited to show them his home and be the know-it-all for once, is bummed out when they arrive on Earth thousands of years before humans exist on the planet. Trapped with no modern conveniences (and with the threat of prehistoric megafauna), J.R. blames Blurgle for getting the date wrong, and Blurgle blames J.R. for wanting to bring them to such a backward, dangerous planet. Vic has to think fast to stop her friends' bickering and get them safely back to school.

Friendship Test: J.R. and Blurgle have to take the G.A.S.S. version of standardized tests, and since Vic has access to all the school's databanks, she's banned from the testing room. Separated from her friends, she becomes convinced that Blurgle and J.R. are going to outgrow her and leave her behind the way previous generations of students have. Her fears are accidentally exacerbated when V.P. Azerax (the least comforting person imaginable) tries to console her.

The Holo-Man: Blurgle, stressed out about schoolwork, decides to make a holographic copy of himself so he can take two classes at once (without having to split and thus lose his intelligence). J.R. and Vic warn him that this might not be the best idea, and they're eventually proven right when the hologram becomes self-aware and goes on a school-wide crime spree. When Blurgle starts beating himself up over his botched plan and begins to stress-split, it's up to his friends to console him while also dealing with his insane holographic double.