

# Voilà!

A sweet story about finding the magic in everyday moments

## About the Story

**Lexile:** 760L (story)

**840L (interview)**

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

## Learning Objective:

to explain how an idea is developed in a work of fiction

## Key Skills:

figurative language, text structure, tone, author's craft, theme, character

## Essential Questions:

- Why do we make assumptions about others?
- How should elderly people be treated in society?
- How can we pay more attention to the world around us?

## Standards:

These texts and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: **R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.6, R.9, W.1, W.9, SL.1, L.4, L.5, L.6**

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



## Your Teaching Support Package

Find your full suite of materials at [scope.scholastic.com](http://scope.scholastic.com).

### Audio:

- Story
- Vocabulary (for interview)
- Glossary: French and Creole phrases

**Literature Connections:** ideas for connecting to curricular texts

### Activities to print or project:

- Vocabulary (for interview)
- Glossary: French and Creole phrases
- Close Reading and Critical Thinking
- Theme: Everyday Miracles
- **Core Skills Workout:** Inference
- Quiz\*
- **Literary Elements:** Theme Anticipation Guide, Character Thinking Tool
- Contest Entry Form

\*Available on two levels

# Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

## Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

### 1 Preparing to Read

#### Do-Now: Theme Anticipation Guide

(5 minutes)

As a class, complete the **Anticipation Guide** to activate prior knowledge and build curiosity.

### 2 Reading the Story

**“Voilà!”** (40 minutes)

**DIFFERENTIATION:** Students who need more support should first listen to the audio version.

- Read the story once through as a class.
- Divide students into groups to read the story again, pausing to discuss the close-reading questions that appear in the margins. Have students write their answers in the margins or on the **Close-Reading Questions** handout.

#### Answers to Close-Reading Questions

▶ **1. Figurative Language** (p. 23) *Ma Tante is saying that wonderful, special, surprising things happen every day all around us, but whether you notice them depends on your attitude—your heart has to be open to seeing them. (Answers will vary.)*

▶ **2. Text Structure** (p. 23) *Simone assumes that Louis and Waverly will look down on her or pity her for living in the East Ward, but this doesn't seem to be true. Also, Waverly incorrectly assumes that Mr. P. needs a wheelchair.*

▶ **3. Tone** (p. 25) *Simone disapproves of the doctor. This is clear from her unkind nickname for him, “Dr. Bighead”; how she sarcastically refers to him as “the good doctor” while explaining that he tries to sneak in while patients have been waiting for hours; how she mentions that her cousins have encouraged Ma Tante to find another doctor; and how she says, “From where I sit, all he does is prescribe her more pills,” implying that she doesn't think the*

*doctor makes much effort or does much good for Ma Tante.*

▶ **4. Author's Craft** (p. 25) *The author may have chosen to include the Creole and French words to help readers imagine what it is like to be in the waiting room with Simone and Ma Tante. Including those words also helps the reader understand the experience of the characters in the story who do not speak these languages—and understand the language barrier that Ma Tante faces. Plus, speaking in Creole and French is an important part of Ma Tante's and Simone's identities. (Answers will vary.)*

▶ **5. Theme** (p. 25) *The idea that most people don't recognize the gems in front of them is similar to Ma Tante's comment in the opening section that the magic that fills our lives is invisible to most people.*

▶ **6. Character** (p. 25) *Waverly seems impressed with herself for delivering Mr. P. to the doctor's office: She “proudly” tells him she has gotten him there in one piece, and her “There you go” is a bit condescending, stressing her role in his arrival. What's more, Waverly is very surprised when she is told she will have to wait. Waverly also rams Mr. P.'s wheelchair into a row of chairs and doesn't notice how this affects him or Ma Tante. At the end of the story, it's revealed that Waverly ignored Mr. P. when he said he didn't need to be in a wheelchair.*

▶ **7. Text Structure** (p. 26) *In the opening section of the story, Simone explains that Ma Tante says “Voilà” to alert Simone to “the tiny, everyday miracles in progress.” So the first section explains why Ma Tante is saying “Voilà” here, letting the reader know that an everyday miracle is in progress. The winking between Ma Tante and Simone connects to Simone's note that identifying magic was her and Ma Tante's “secret.”*

### 3 Reading the Interview

#### Preview vocabulary.

(5 minutes, activity sheet online)

Project or distribute the **Vocabulary Words and Definitions**. Review as a class. Highlighted words: *affluent, convey, fissure, informal, purgatory*

#### Read and discuss the interview.

(20 minutes, activity sheets online)

- Have students read the interview independently.
- As a class, discuss the following questions, which draw on both texts.

#### Critical-Thinking Questions

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

▶ **How did Debbie Rigaud draw on her own experiences to write “Voilà!”?** *Rigaud drew on some of her own experiences—waiting in a doctor’s office with an older relative, her relationship with her family, as well as some of her experiences as a Haitian American—and put them into a fictional context, inventing characters and details that were not part of her own life.*

▶ **Rigaud says that after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, many people suddenly thought they**

knew something about those of Haitian descent. This is what happens with Simone and the “look-alikes”—and Simone is not very happy about it. Why might it be irritating to have people think they understand you based on an event that they heard about in the news? *Answers will vary, but students might offer that it would be irritating because, in short, those people do not understand you—that there is much more to who you are and where you come from than one natural disaster or other event, much more than the limited information they have just learned about the place you come from. People treating you this way might make you feel like they are reducing you to something less than the complex human being you are or that they are making incorrect assumptions about you.*

▶ **Describe one thing you have experienced or observed in the past week that could be considered an “everyday miracle.” Explain why you think so.** *Answers will vary.*

### 4 Skill Building

#### Featured Skill: Theme

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

To prepare students for the prompt on page 27, have them complete the activity **Theme: Everyday Miracles**. For alternate culminating tasks, see the box below.

## Differentiate and Customize

#### For Struggling Readers

On page 23, Simone refers to “everyday miracles” and the magic that is all around us. What do you think she means? Answer this question in a well-organized paragraph. Use text evidence to support your answer.

#### For Advanced Readers

Consider the title of the story. What idea does it convey? How is that idea developed in the story? Answer both questions in a well-organized essay. Use text evidence to support your ideas.

#### For Artists

Retell the story of “Voilà!” in a visual way. This can be as a graphic novel, drawing, or painting.

#### For Fiction Writers

Choose a character from the story to “interview” about the events of that day in the doctor’s office. Your interview may be in the form of a written Q&A, modeled on the interview with Debbie Rigaud. Or you may perform the interview as a podcast or video, casting people as the interviewer and the character from the story.