

Island of Sorrow

How a teenage boy brought hope to hurricane-ravaged Puerto Rico

About the Story

Lexile: 930L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective:

to explain how the idea that anyone can make a difference is supported in the article

Key Skills:

tone, author's craft, text structure, inference, central ideas and details, text evidence

Essential Questions:

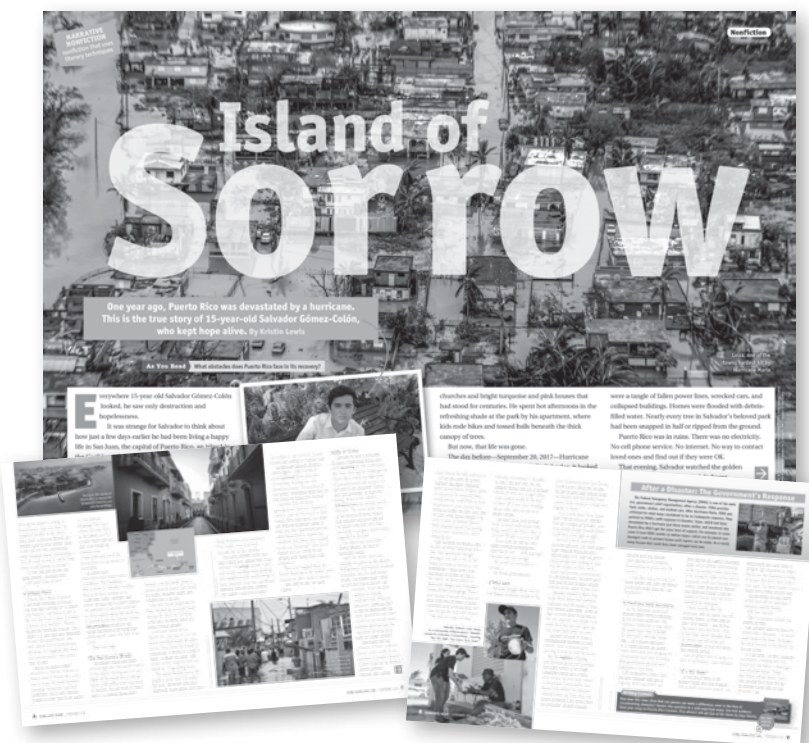
- What is the value of hope?
- What role does infrastructure play in our lives?
- How can one person make a difference?

Standards:

This article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards:

R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.6, R.7, W.2, 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.

Video: “Behind the Scenes”

Audio:

- The article
- Vocabulary

Differentiated article:

- Lower-Lexile version (printable)

Literature Connections: ideas for connecting to curricular texts

Activities to print or project:

- Vocabulary
- Video Discussion Questions
- Close Reading and Critical Thinking
- Central Ideas and Details: What One Person Can Do
- **Core Skills Workout:** Central Ideas & Details*, Summarizing*, Text Features, Text Evidence*, Tone*
- Quiz*
- Nonfiction Elements*
- Contest Entry Form

**Available on two levels*

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

1 Preparing to Read

Do-Now: Make a list.

(5 minutes)

Ask students to make a list of everything they do each day that requires electricity. Invite them to share their lists. Then say: Now imagine the power goes out and you have no idea when it might be restored. What would you do? How would you survive? Discuss students' ideas. Then explain that they are going to read a story about an island where that is exactly what happened.

Watch the video.

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

Project or distribute the **Video Discussion Questions**. Show our **Behind the Scenes video**. Then, as a class, answer the discussion questions.

Preview vocabulary.

(8 minutes, activity sheet online)

Project or distribute the **Vocabulary Words and Definitions** and review the words as a class. Optionally, play the audio version of the words at Scope Online. Highlighted words: *careened, daunting, deluge, infrastructure, intermittently, logistics, meteorologists*

2 Reading and Discussing

Read and discuss the article.

(45 minutes, activity sheet online)

- Have a volunteer read aloud the As You Read box on page 4.
- Have students work in groups to discuss the following close-reading questions.

Close-Reading Questions

- ▶ Find places in the article where author Kristin Lewis describes Puerto Rico before Hurricane Maria. Does she describe the island in a mostly positive, neutral, or negative way? Support your answer with text evidence. (tone)

Lewis describes Puerto Rico in a mostly positive way, mentioning its “beautiful churches and bright turquoise and pink houses” (4-5) and writing that the island “has long been famous for its beauty and vibrancy,” with “sandy beaches, sweeping mountains, and lush rainforests” (6). In the city of San Juan, she writes, you can eat “mouthwatering” food and watch people dance in the streets to live music (6). She makes the island seem like a beautiful and fun place to be.

- ▶ Think about what the article would be like if Lewis had not included the descriptions of Puerto Rico before Hurricane Maria. Then explain how her descriptions of pre-hurricane Puerto Rico affect your reaction as you read about the storm's destruction. (author's craft, text structure) *Students may answer that Lewis's portrayal of Puerto Rico before Maria makes the storm's destruction seem extra devastating—that knowing what was destroyed makes you feel the loss more deeply.*

- ▶ On page 7, Lewis writes that Puerto Rico faced special challenges in its recovery: unemployment and poverty, a failing economy, and infrastructure in disrepair. Why would these factors have made the recovery particularly challenging? (inference) *Cleaning up and rebuilding after a hurricane cost a lot in materials and labor. The fact that so many people are impoverished and that the economy was failing means that neither individuals nor the government had the money needed for recovery. The condition of the infrastructure likely made it more susceptible to damage.*

- ▶ On page 7, Lewis writes that dozens of people died during Hurricane Maria and that thousands more died in the weeks and months that followed. Why did so many people die after the storm ended? (central ideas and details,

inference) *The hurricane created dangerous conditions: Hospitals and pharmacies could not operate; food could not be refrigerated; and faucets, toilets, and sewers stopped working. On page 9, Lewis explains that restoring power to Puerto Rico has been challenging and slow; you can infer that many of the dangerous conditions that existed immediately after the storm persisted for months, leading to many deaths.*

► **What kind of person is Salvador? Support your answer with details from the article.** (inference, text evidence) *Students may say that Salvador is caring and empathetic; he said that “It was scary thinking about what other people were going through,” and he decided to do something to help (8). Students might also describe Salvador as determined, optimistic, generous, and resourceful for figuring out a way to help those in need, donating his time and energy to the project, believing that he could make a difference, and following through.*

- Reconvene as a class to discuss the following critical-thinking questions.

Critical-Thinking Questions

► **Consider his mom’s advice when Salvador told his mom his idea for the solar lamps and washing machines: that he must finish**

what he starts. Why do you think she gave Salvador this advice? *Answers will vary.*

Perhaps she sensed that the mission was going to be more difficult than Salvador anticipated, and she was trying to warn him. Or perhaps she was telling him not to get people’s hopes up and then disappoint them.

► **Salvador says hope helps him and others in Puerto Rico face challenges and uncertainty. Where do you think hope comes from, and what keeps it going?** *Answers will vary. Students might say that it is human nature to have hope—perhaps because we need it to keep going when times are hard. Students might also connect hope to religious belief. Possible answers about what keeps hope going include: any small sign of improvement, support and encouragement from others, and religious faith.*

3 Skill Building

Featured Skill: Central Ideas and Details

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

Have students complete the activity sheet **Central Ideas and Details: What One Person Can Do**. This activity will prepare students for the writing prompt on page 9. *For alternate culminating tasks, see the box below.*

Differentiate and Customize

For Struggling Readers

In a well-organized paragraph, summarize how Salvador helped people in Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria. Support your answer with text evidence.

For Advanced Readers

Write an essay called “One Kid Can Make a Difference” in which you profile three young people who have helped solve a big problem. Draw on “Island of Sorrow” and at least two other sources of your choosing.

For Artists

Create a mural that tells the story of Puerto Rico before, during, and after Hurricane Maria. Be sure to include Salvador Gómez-Colón in your mural. (This project can be done alone or in a group.)

For Volunteers

Identify a problem in your community—anything from hunger to the need for park space. Make a plan for how to help, and take action. Record your project in a journal or blog. After six months, give a class presentation about your project.