

Nothing Holds Me Back

Noah, 15, runs, skis, and plays the piano. Noah is also blind.

About the Story

Lexile: 950L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective:

to identify misconceptions about blindness and explain how one teen is helping to shatter them

Key Skills:

author's craft, literary devices, inference, key ideas and supporting details, tone, author's purpose

Essential Questions:

- What does it mean to be inclusive?
- What does it mean to defy expectations?
- Why do people make assumptions about others?

Standards:

This article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards:

R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, 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.

Audio:

- The article (English and Spanish)
- Vocabulary

Differentiated articles:

- Lower-Lexile version (printable)
- Spanish version (printable)

Literature Connections: ideas for connecting to curricular texts

Activities to print or project:

- Vocabulary
- Close Reading and Critical Thinking
- Key Ideas: Shattering Misconceptions
- **Core Skills Workout:** Central Ideas & Details*, Summarizing*, 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, activity sheet online)

Ask students to write down everything they do in the morning before school. Invite them to share their lists. Then say: Now imagine you are no longer able to see. How would you do those same things?

Preview vocabulary.

(8 minutes, activity sheet online)

Project or distribute the **Vocabulary Words and Definitions**. Review as a class. Highlighted words: *advocate, daunting, dwell, forged, paraeducator, petitioning, tactile, tedious*

2 Reading and Discussing

Read and discuss the article.

(45 minutes, activity sheets online)

- Have a volunteer read aloud the As You Read box at the top of page 5.
- Play the audio at Scope Online while students follow along in their printed magazines.
- Have students work in groups to discuss the following close-reading questions.

Close-Reading Questions

▶ Consider the introduction of the article.

How does author Kristin Lewis portray Noah Carver? (author's craft) *Lewis portrays Noah as a tough and determined athlete, describing how his "muscles strained" and explaining that "he'd been training hard for months."*

▶ In the section "A World Without Sight," Lewis asks a series of questions. **Why? What purpose do these questions serve?** (literary devices, author's craft) *Lewis's questions are meant to help the reader imagine what it would be like to be blind.*

▶ On page 6, Lewis includes a quote from Noah about being blind. He says, "There is just one thing that's different about us in the physical sense—can't see a thing!" **What can you tell about Noah from this quote?**

(inference) *You can tell that Noah has a positive attitude. His ability to be humorous about being blind shows that he is comfortable with who he is and doesn't view being blind as something that holds him back.*

▶ On page 7, Lewis writes, "Often one of the biggest challenges of being blind isn't not being able to see; it's dealing with what sighted people assume about blind people."

How does Lewis support this idea? (key ideas and supporting details) *Lewis supports this idea by providing examples of incorrect assumptions that people have made about Noah over the years. For example, Lewis writes that Noah struggled to find a piano teacher for years (7). This is likely because many teachers assumed he wouldn't be able to learn how to play or they thought it would be too difficult to teach him. Lewis also writes that Noah was left out of the dance scene in a school musical because the musical director assumed Noah couldn't learn the steps (7).*

▶ Consider the details about Noah's parents provided throughout the article. **From these details, what can you infer about them?**

(inference) *You can infer that Noah's parents are extremely supportive and dedicated to helping Noah lead as "regular" a life as possible. For example, on page 7, Lewis explains that Noah's mom decided to become Noah's full-time paraeducator and that she translates all his schoolwork into Braille for him. On page 6, Lewis writes that Noah's dad made him a tactile*

map of his school so that Noah could find his way around on his own. These details show that Noah's parents are dedicated to helping Noah be independent and do everything he wants to do.

► **What do you think Lewis's attitude toward Noah is? How do you know?** (tone) *Lewis admires Noah and considers him to be a person of strength, resilience, and courage. On page 7, when writing about Noah learning the dance moves for a school play, she writes, "Not surprisingly, he nailed them." On page 8, Lewis writes, "Still, if there is one thing you have to know about Noah, it's that he is courageous and determined." She also writes that Noah uses "his powers for good" and describes him as "a strong advocate" for the blind community. These details show how much she admires him.*

► **What is the main purpose of the sidebar "What Noah Wants You to Know"?** (author's purpose) *The main purpose is to address misconceptions people may have about blindness and to provide advice on how to interact with a blind person in a kind and respectful way.*

- Reconvene to discuss the following questions.

Critical-Thinking Questions

► **In the sidebar, Noah encourages people to ask questions about his blindness. What is the value of asking each other questions about things we don't understand?** *Answers will vary. Students may say that asking questions gives people the opportunity to correct any misconceptions that they have. It can also help make us all more accepting and empathetic.*

► **How can the sighted world's understanding of blindness be increased?** *Answers will vary. Students may say that reading about people's experience with blindness or vision impairment is one way. Another way is by including those who are blind or visually impaired and getting to know them.*

3 Skill Building

Featured Skill: Key Ideas

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

Have students work in groups to complete the activity **Key Ideas: Shattering Misconceptions**. This activity will prepare students to respond to the writing prompt on page 8. *For alternate culminating tasks, see the box below.*

Differentiate and Customize

For Struggling Readers

In a well-organized paragraph, explain how Noah shows determination. Support your answer with text evidence from the article.

For Advanced Readers

Your outlook is your attitude toward life. What is Noah's outlook? How has it shaped his life? Answer both questions in a well-organized essay. Support your answer with evidence from the article.

For History Lovers

Choose one figure from history who was visually impaired (such as Ray Charles). Research that person's life. Then write an essay or create a video about that person.

For Advocates

Help spread awareness about Noah's petition to have AD added to all movies. You might write a social media post, a letter, etc. Find the petition here: www.change.org/p/make-movies-accessible-to-the-blind