

The Lost Ship

During World War II, a captain is accused of making a tragic mistake.
Can a middle schooler clear his name?

About the Story

Lexile: 880L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective: to identify key ideas in a nonfiction article about the tragic sinking of the USS *Indianapolis* and write a speech honoring the ship and its crew

Key Skills: mood, author's craft, text features, text structure, key ideas and details

Essential Questions:

- How can we right the wrongs of the past?
- How do we make sense of a tragedy?
- Why is it important to learn about the past?

Standards:

The article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, 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 support materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Video:

- Behind the Scenes

Audio:

- Author read-aloud
- Text-to-speech
- Vocabulary

Slideshow:

- Background Builder

Differentiated Articles:

- Lower-Lexile version
- Spanish language version

Skill Building Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Close Reading and Critical Thinking
 - Preparing to Write: Plan Your Speech
 - Video Discussion Questions
 - Nonfiction Elements*
 - **Core Skills Workout:** Summarizing*, Text Features, Text Structure, Text Evidence*
 - Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice
 - Quiz*
 - Contest Entry Form
- *Available on two levels



Step-by-Step Lesson

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

1. Preparing to Read

15 minutes

Watch the Video (10 minutes)

- Watch the **Behind the Scenes** video, which introduces the time period and events described in the article. Then have students respond to the **Video Discussion Questions** in small groups or independently.

Preview Vocabulary (5 minutes)

- Project the **Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice** on your whiteboard, or if you're remote, share it on your screen. Review the definitions as a class. (Optionally, have students complete the practice activity for homework.) Highlighted words: *assessing, delirious, exonerate, integrity, sham, testimony*

2. Reading and Discussing

45 minutes

- Have a volunteer read the As You Read box on page 4 of the magazine or at the top of the digital story page.
- Read the story once through as a class. (*Differentiation: Share the **lower-Lexile version** of the article with students who may need it.*) Optionally, have students listen to author Kristin Lewis read the story while they follow along. The **audio read-aloud** is located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View.
- Divide students into groups to read the story again and respond to the following close-reading questions. *Tip: If you're remote, you can have each group respond in a shared doc or discuss the questions in their own chat room; you can also use the questions as an asynchronous assignment.*

Close-Reading Questions

(10 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.

- 1. How does the mood shift throughout the introduction? How does author Kristin Lewis create these moods?** (mood, author's craft) *The mood of the introduction starts off as quiet and calm before changing to terrifying and suspenseful. Lewis begins the section by describing the ship moving through the darkness and the crew deciding to "sleep under the stars." She also explains that the mood on the ship was hopeful because World War II was coming to an end and those fighting could soon go home. These details create a sense of calm. Then Lewis writes, "But the Indianapolis would never go home." This line creates a feeling of suspense and foreboding. The mood then shifts briefly back to calm as Lewis describes Captain McVay retiring to his cabin, believing the ship to be safe and out of harm's way—before Lewis again builds up the suspense with the line "This, it would turn out, was not correct." The mood remains terrifying and suspenseful throughout the rest of the section as Lewis vividly describes the ship being struck by torpedoes and the crew becoming stranded in the ocean.*
- 2. Consider the information in the caption titled "The War." Why is this information important to the story?** (text features) *These details are important to the story because they help explain why the USS Indianapolis was in the Pacific and why it was torpedoed by a Japanese submarine. The information in the caption helps put the events of the article into historical context.*
- 3. What does the section "What Really Happened?" add to the article?** (text structure) *The section helps readers understand that the sinking of the Indianapolis could not be blamed entirely on Captain McVay and that the Navy had made a mistake. The section also helps readers understand why Hunter may have felt so strongly that McVay's name needed to be cleared.*

Critical-Thinking Questions

(8 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.

- 1. What does Hunter's quest to exonerate Captain McVay reveal about Hunter as a person?** *Answers will vary but students will likely say that Hunter's quest reveals that he is an empathetic and determined person. The fact that Hunter sacrificed so much time to clear the name of a man he did not know simply because he thought it was the right thing to do shows that he has a strong moral character. Hunter's refusal to give up after initially failing to clear McVay's name shows that he is determined.*

2. **Lewis writes that when Hunter began writing to survivors from the *Indianapolis*, “The response was beyond anything Hunter could have imagined.” Why do you think so many survivors wanted to share their story with Hunter?** *Answers will vary. Students may say that the survivors wanted to make sure the public understood what really happened to them and to make sure that their experience—and the experience of Captain McVay—was being accurately portrayed. Students may also say that the survivors wanted to share their stories with Hunter because it was something they felt strongly about and perhaps because it was a traumatic experience they hadn’t spoken much about over the years.*
3. **Why is it important to tell stories from the past like this one about the *Indianapolis*?** *Answers will vary. Students may say that it’s important because otherwise, these stories would be lost to time. Captain McVay and his crew on the *Indianapolis* served our country. Many of them died. It’s important that their experiences are remembered as part of human history, both to honor the Captain and the crew as well as to contribute to our understanding of World War II.*

3. Skill Building and Writing

20 minutes

- Have students complete **Preparing to Write: Plan Your Speech**. This activity will help them organize their ideas in preparation for the writing prompt on page 9 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story page.