

# How *Animal Crossing* Conquered the World

The story of two delightful games that helped Americans through tough times

## About the Story

Lexile: 980L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

### Learning Objective:

to compare and contrast two games and the roles they've played in Americans' lives

**Key Skills:** figurative language, key ideas and details, cause and effect, inference, text features, summarizing, synthesis, compare and contrast

### Essential Questions:

- How do we cope in times of crisis?
- What is the importance of human connection?
- What does it mean to have a healthy relationship with technology?

### Standards:

The article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.7, R.9, W.2, 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 support materials at [scope.scholastic.com](https://scope.scholastic.com).

### Audio:

- Author Read-Aloud
- Vocabulary
- Text to Speech

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

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

- Close Reading and Critical Thinking
- Preparing to Write: The Power of Play
- **Core Skills Workout:** Text Evidence\*
- Choice Board
- Quiz\*
- Vocabulary
- Contest Entry Form

\*Available on two levels

# Step-by-Step Lesson

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

## 1. Preparing to Read

8 minutes

### Do-Now: Make a List (3 minutes)

- Post this prompt in your classroom or virtual hangout: *Make a list of some of your favorite games to play from your early childhood until now. (These can be board games, video games, sports, etc.) After making your list, write about what you liked or like about those games. Invite volunteers to share their responses.*

### Preview Vocabulary (5 minutes)

- Share **Vocabulary: Words and Definitions** and review the words as a class. (Optionally, have students complete the **practice activity** for homework.) Highlighted words: *bleak, blissfully, chaotic, contagious, debut, eradicated, fad, Great Recession, mundane, respectively, serene, transported, ward*

## 2. Reading and Discussing

45 minutes

### “How *Animal Crossing* Conquered the World”

- Have a volunteer read the As You Read box on page 25 in the magazine or at the top of the digital story page.
- Read the article as a class. Optionally, have students listen to author Mackenzie Carro read the article while they follow along. (The **audio read-aloud** is located in the Resources tab in Teacher View, and at the bottom of the story page in Student View.)
- Divide students into groups to respond to the following close-reading questions. *Tip: If you're remote, you can have each group respond in a shared Google Doc or discuss the questions in their own chat rooms.*

### Close-Reading Questions

(10 minutes)

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

1. **In the introduction, author Mackenzie Carro writes that *Animal Crossing* “took the world by storm last spring.” What does she mean?** (figurative language) *Carro means that Animal Crossing quickly became extremely popular and successful.*
2. **According to Carro, what factors contributed to *Animal Crossing*’s success?** (key ideas and details, cause and effect) *Carro explains that the release of Animal Crossing coincided with the outbreak of Covid-19, a disease that led to people staying at home in order to curb its spread. Because people were confined to their homes, they needed something to do. Perhaps more important, Carro explains, the game’s simplicity, peaceful feeling, and ability to connect people provided comfort in a scary, strange, and uncertain time.*
3. **On page 26, Carro writes of *Animal Crossing*, “You don’t play to win; you play to play. There are no dangerous storms to outrun, monstrous creatures to kill, battles to win, or high scores to obtain.” What do these lines help readers understand about *Animal Crossing* and why people play it?** (inference) *They help readers understand that Animal Crossing is different from many video games: It’s not competitive, intense, serious, or violent. Carro is implying that there is very little stress involved in playing the game, which makes it enjoyable and relaxing.*
4. **How does the information in the sidebar on page 27 contribute to the article?** (text features) *The sidebar provides information about how games can be good for our brains, our bodies, and our social and emotional health—at all times, not just during a crisis.*

### “A Sweet Treat in a Tough Time”

- Read the article as a class. Optionally, have students listen to author Talia Cowen read the article while they follow along. (The **audio read-aloud** is located in the Resources tab in Teacher View, and at the bottom of the story page in Student View.)
- Discuss the following close-reading and critical-thinking questions, some of which draw on both articles.

### Close-Reading Questions

(10 minutes)

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

1. **How did a polio epidemic inspire the creation of Candy Land?** (summarizing, key ideas)  
*Teacher Eleanor Abbott wanted to create a game that would entertain children during a polio epidemic—a scary, lonely, and boring time. Initially, her game was intended for use in the hospital where she and many children were being treated for polio; later, the game was enjoyed by children across the country who were quarantined in their homes to help prevent the disease’s spread.*
  2. **How is Candy Land’s aesthetic similar to that of *Animal Crossing*?** (synthesis) Both games could be said to have the aesthetic of a ‘warm hug’ (27): Their designs are incredibly simple, their colors, fonts, and characters are bright and cheerful, and their settings—a land made out of candy and a beautiful island, respectively—are meant to bring peace, joy, and delight to players.
  3. **On page 27, Carro quotes Angelina on *Animal Crossing*: “I think for a lot of people it’s a means of escape. They want to get away from the bad parts of the world right now.” What line or lines in Talia Cowen’s article express a similar idea about Candy Land?** (synthesis) Answers may include: “It transported them from the bleak world of the hospital to a delightful world of sweets” (28) and “They could visit a world where the worst thing that could happen was to get stuck in the Molasses Swamp for a turn or two.” (29).
- Share the following critical-thinking questions with students and let them choose one to respond to.

### Critical-Thinking Questions

(5 minutes)

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

1. **What are the advantages and disadvantages of connecting with people virtually?**  
*Answers will vary.*
2. **How might learning about the history of Candy Land be helpful to kids living in 2020?**  
*Answers will vary. Students may say that reading about how people got through a difficult time in history—especially one with similarities to the time we’re in now—makes them feel more hopeful about the future.*
3. **How has Covid-19 changed the ways we play? Have these changes been negative? Positive? A mix of both?** Answers will vary. Students may say that Covid-19 has had negative effects on their ability to play; quarantines and social distancing rules have made being physically

*close to friends impossible. They may also note that Covid-19 caused the cancellation of organized play, such as youth recreation leagues, professional and college sports, and the Olympics. Students may note that Covid-19 has changed the way people play in positive ways as well, such as leading them to play outside more, to spend more time playing with family members, or to play in ways they hadn't played in a long while—doing puzzles, drawing with sidewalk chalk, playing board games, etc.*

### 3. Skill Building and Writing

20 minutes

- Have students complete **Preparing to Write: The Power of Play**. This activity will help them organize their ideas in preparation for the writing prompt on page 29 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story article.
- Alternatively, have students choose a culminating task from the **Choice Board**, a menu of differentiated activities.