

Summer of Blood

The gripping true story of the shark attacks of 1916

About the Story

Lexile: 850L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective: to explore key ideas and details in a work of narrative nonfiction

Key Skills: author's craft, text structure, key ideas and details, cause and effect, inference

Essential Questions:

- How does scientific understanding change over time?
- What responsibility do humans have to protect wild animals?
- Who defines truth?

Standards:

The article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards:
R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.7, SL.1, L.4, L.5, L.6, W.2

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.

Audio:

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

Video:

- Beyond the Story

Differentiated Articles:

- Lower-Lexile version
- Spanish-language version

Connected readings from the Scope archives:

- Special Collection:
Earth Day Every Day

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

- Anticipation Guide: Sharks: Fact or Fiction?
 - Preparing to Write: Sharks and Humans
 - Close Reading and Critical Thinking
 - Choice Board
 - Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice
 - Video Discussion Questions
 - Nonfiction Elements
 - Core Skills Workout: Summarizing,* Text Features, Text Structure*
 - Quiz*
 - Contest Entry Form
- *Available on two levels

Step-by-Step Lesson

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

1. Preparing to Read

15 minutes

Do Now: Anticipation Guide (10 minutes)

- Project the anticipation guide **Sharks: Fact or Fiction?** on your whiteboard or share the Google Form version with each student (both available in your Resources tab). Have students decide whether each statement about sharks is true or false.
- Take a poll of students' responses, or click on the "Responses" tab if you're using the Google Form. Don't share the correct answers with students just yet—after reading the article and watching a video, students will revisit the anticipation guide and revise their answers based on what they've learned. (The answers are in the Answer Key in the Resources Tab.)

Preview Vocabulary (5 minutes)

- Project **Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice**. Review the definitions as a class. Highlighted words: *ferocity*, *harpoons*, *mustering*, *stifling*, *subsided*. Optionally, share the interactive link directly to your LMS and have students preview the words and complete the activity independently beforehand. Audio pronunciations of the words and a read-aloud of the definitions are embedded on the slides.

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 article once as a class. (*Differentiation: Share the **lower-Lexile version** or the **Spanish version of the article**.*) Optionally, have students listen to author Lauren Tarshis read her article aloud 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 article again and respond to the following close-reading questions.

Close-Reading Questions

(15 minutes)

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

- 1. In the introduction, how does the author describe Matawan Creek? How does the tone of the introduction contrast with the tone of the illustration on pages 4-5? (author's craft)** *The author uses descriptive details to paint a picture of Matawan Creek as the perfect getaway. Its "cool water" and "rolling waves" are a "happy escape" and a "paradise" compared with the "blazing hot" city and its "stifling air." The boys have fun leaping, splashing, and blasting to the surface of the water. However the illustration shows a very different picture: It shows a close-up of a shark's open mouth, highlighting the shark's sharp teeth and massive jaw as two boys run away. The splashing water shows the chaos of the scene.*
- 2. How does the section "A Mood of Dread" contribute to the article? (text structure)** *The section "A Mood of Dread" provides context for what was going on in the world at the time of the shark attacks—the start of World War I—and the general mood of the country. It also helps readers understand why the shark attacks did not get much news coverage at first.*
- 3. The author writes, "Many saw the shark with their own eyes. Yet as the story spread, few believed it." Why did people have a hard time believing there was a shark attack? (key ideas and details)** *At the time, most people did not have much knowledge about the ocean, sharks, or sea creatures in general; marine biology was a new science. Most people, including scientists, believed that sharks were shy creatures with "weak jaws and small appetites." Also, there had never been a proven case of a living person being bitten by a shark. So although people witnessed the shark attack, others did not believe it to be true.*
- 4. What role does Captain Thomas Cottrell play in the story? What might have happened if he hadn't jumped into action? (cause and effect, inference)** *Captain Cottrell spotted the shark in Matawan Creek and raced to spread the news. Although others doubted him and didn't join his rescue mission, he jumped into his boat and rushed up the creek. Thanks to the captain and the two men in his motorboat, Joseph Dunn survived the shark attack. Without them, Joe might not have survived.*

Critical-Thinking Questions

(5 minutes)

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

- 1. Why should people care about sharks? Answers will vary.** *Some students may point out that sharks are important because they play a critical role in their ecosystems, which are vital to the*

planet's health. Other students may say that sharks are not monsters but are extraordinary creatures. Others may argue for the intrinsic value of all creatures.

2. After reading the article and viewing the video, has your view of sharks changed? Why or why not? Answers will vary.

3. Extended Learning

15 minutes

- Watch the **Beyond the Story** video to learn more about sharks. Have students respond to the **Video Discussion Questions** (available in your Resources tab) in small groups or pairs.
- Revisit the **Sharks: Fact or Fiction?** anticipation guide. Ask students whether they would change any of their responses. Then share the correct answers with them.

4. Skill Building and Writing

30 minutes

- Have students complete **Preparing to Write: Sharks and Humans**. This activity will help them organize their ideas in preparation for the writing prompt on page 10 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story page.
- Alternatively, have students choose a culminating task from the **Choice Board**, a menu of differentiated activities.

Other conservation stories about misunderstood creatures from the *Scope* archives:

- [Narrative Nonfiction: "Saving America's Wolves" \(May 2018\)](#)
- [Narrative Nonfiction: "The Bear Attacks That Changed America" \(May 2020\)](#)
- [Narrative Nonfiction: "Stalking the Bat Killer" \(May 2019\)](#)

View the rest of the [Special Collection: Earth Day Every Day](#)