

# The Experiment

Dr. Heidegger's water will keep you young forever. Want a sip?

## About the Story

**Lexile:** 770L (captions)

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

**Learning Objective:** to analyze the theme of a story through a narrative, in-role writing prompt

**Key Skills:** setting, foreshadowing, inference, theme

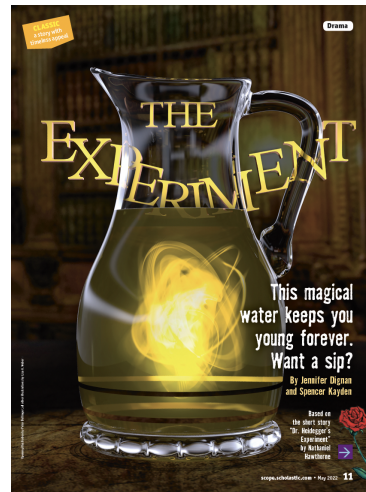
**Essential Questions:**

- What does it mean to grow old?
- Can people change?
- Why do people long for the past?

**Standards:**

The article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.10, W.3, W.9, SL.1, SL.2, L.4, 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:

- Text-to-speech
- Vocabulary

### Vocabulary Slideshow

### Connected readings from the Scope archives:

- *The End of Jimmy Valentine*
- *A Christmas Carol*

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

- Preparing to Write: Dr. Heidegger's Experiment
- Close Reading and Critical Thinking
- Theme Anticipation Guide
- Vocabulary: Definitions
- Choice Board
- Quiz\*
- Contest Entry Form

\*Available on two levels

# Step-by-Step Lesson

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

## 1. Preparing to Read

20 minutes

### Do Now: Anticipation Guide. (10 minutes)

- Project the **Theme Anticipation Guide** on your whiteboard or share the Google Form version with each student (both available in your Resources tab). Have students decide whether they agree or disagree with each statement, then discuss. After reading the play, ask students to share whether any of their answers have changed and, if so, why. You could also have them complete the **Theme Anticipation Guide** as one of the characters.

### Preview Vocabulary (5 minutes)

- Project the **Vocabulary Slideshow** on your whiteboard. Review the definitions and complete the activity as a class. The audio pronunciations of the words and a read-aloud of the definitions are embedded on the slides. Words: *acquaintance*, *decadent*, *decrepit*, *dreary*, *extinguished*, *heartily*, *reviled*.

## 2. Reading and Discussing

45 minutes

- Have a volunteer read the As You Read box on page 12 of the magazine or at the top of the digital story page.
- Break students into groups to discuss the following close-reading and critical-thinking questions.

### Close-Reading Questions

(15 minutes)

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

1. **What is Dr. Heidegger's study like? What does the setting suggest about Dr. Heidegger? What mood does the setting convey?** (setting) *The study is covered in dust and cobwebs. Bookcases filled with old books "loom in the shadows." The doctor's guests discuss a mirror on the wall from which the ghosts of Dr. Heidegger's patients are rumored to peer. The guests also comment on a photograph of Dr. Heidegger's former girlfriend, whose death is a strange mystery to them—perhaps the result of a secret experiment gone wrong. These details suggest that the doctor is bizarre and might do experiments that haunt the soul. The setting creates a dark, creepy mood.*
2. **Dr. Heidegger tells his friends, "... you have had a lifetime of experiences. It would be a shame if, passing through youth a second time, you were to repeat the mistakes of your past." What does this foreshadow?** (foreshadowing) *When the doctor's friends become young again, they return to their old vices and make the same mistakes they made in their youth.*
3. **Considering the way they acted after drinking the water, why do you think the guests want to go in search of the Fountain of Youth at the end of the play?** (inference) *Answers may include that they are foolish, that age has not brought them any insights, that they would rather be young and foolish or cruel than old and wise, and that they enjoyed the optimism and strength they felt in their youth and don't care if their behavior was wrong.*
4. **What is the play's theme, or main message, about people or the world? Do you agree with that theme? Can you think of any stories, real or fictional, that offer a different point of view?** (theme) *Possible statements of theme include: People don't learn from their mistakes; people are inherently foolish or sinful; youth is a foolish obsession; and given a second chance, most people won't rise to the occasion.*

### Critical-Thinking Questions

(5 minutes)

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

1. **Tell about something you have learned from a mistake, or describe a situation in your life in which you *failed* to learn from a mistake.** *Answers will vary.*
2. **Is Dr. Heidegger a good or an evil character? Is he kind to give his friends a chance to relive their youth, or awful to experiment on them?** *Answers will vary.*

### 3. Skill Building and Writing

30 minutes

- Have students complete **Preparing to Write: Dr. Heidegger's Experiment**. This activity will help them organize their ideas in preparation for the writing prompt on page 15 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.

#### Connected read-aloud plays from the *Scope* archives:

- [\*The End of Jimmy Valentine\*](#) (explores ideas about the power of second chances, December 2021/January 2022)
- [\*A Christmas Carol\*](#) (explores ideas about how and why people change, December 2019/January 2020)