

# Stay or Go?

It's the toughest decision Adrian will ever make.

## About the Story

**Lexile:** 680L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to *Scope Online*.

**Learning Objective:** to analyze descriptive writing in a work of short fiction, then practice writing descriptively

**Key Skills:** inference, figurative language, character, conflict, key ideas and details

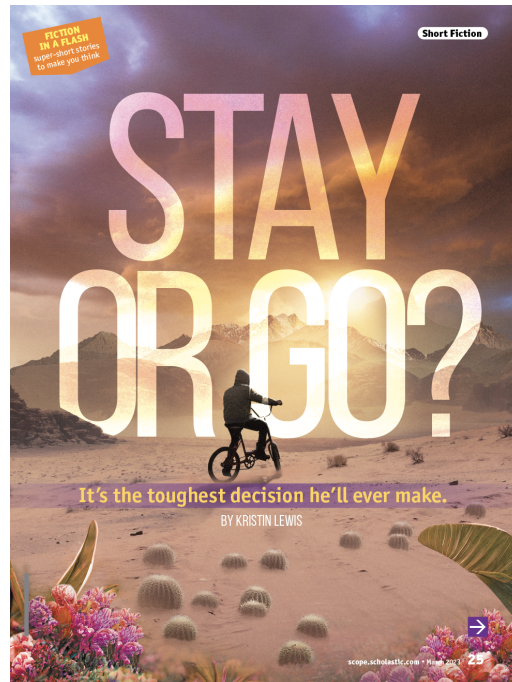
### Essential Questions:

- How do we make difficult decisions?
- What is the meaning of *home*?
- How do authors bring their stories to life?

### Standards:

The article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.6, W.3, 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
- Text-to-speech
- Vocabulary

### Connected readings from the *Scope* archives:

- "Wake Up, Maddalena"
- "The Roach"
- "The Cloud"

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

- Narrative Writing Planner
- Discussion Questions
- Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice
- Double-Entry Journal
- Choice Board
- Contest Entry Form

# Step-by-Step Lesson

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

## 1. Preparing to Read

5 minutes


### Preview Vocabulary (5 minutes)


- Project **Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice**. Review the definitions as a class. Highlighted words: *converged*, *crescendo*, *decipher*, *faltering*, *primitive*, *tonic*. Optionally, print or 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 in the interactive slides.


## 2. Reading and Discussing

45 minutes


- Read the “Spotlight On” box on page 26 or at the top of the digital story page. Tell students that the author uses vivid language—that is, language that produces powerful feelings or strong, clear images in the mind—to describe the story’s setting and characters.
- For students’ first read, have them follow along as they listen to author Kristin Lewis read her story aloud. The **audio read-aloud** is located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View.
- Have students reread and annotate the story independently. Here are some symbols you might have them use:

 = movie moment (details that form images in your mind as you read or that make you feel like you’re living in the story)

 = love this

 = important

 = I don’t understand

 = I’m thinking ...

Alternatively, have students complete a double-entry journal during their reread. In their journals or on a piece of paper, have students create a T-chart. In the left-hand column, have them record vivid language or sensory details: words, phrases, or lines that speak to the five senses of sight, smell, touch, sound, and taste. In the right-hand column, have them record their reactions to these details with illustrations, questions, comments, connections, or analysis. (You can find both a print and digital version of the **Double-Entry Journal** handout in the Resources tab.)

**Movie Moments/Sensory Detail examples:**

**Touch:** *“brush the thistles off his socks”; “He expected it to be burning hot from sitting in the sun all day. But when he picked it up, it was cold as ice”; “even as the valley floor sizzled”; “He thumbed the thing in his pocket.”*

**Sound:** *“If this were a movie, Adrian thought, this would be the moment the drumbeat began. It would start low and get louder—a drumbeat crescendo”; “If he listened very closely, he could hear the sound of traffic from town murmuring on the wind”; “Aunt Lorna opened her mouth and said something in her language, a low-pitched gurgle that reminded Adrian of flowing water”; “The screen sputtered to life.”*

**Sight:** *“A cloud of dust bloomed upward”; “The mountains rose steeply, their sky-bound peaks white-tipped”; “She had bright pink hair, which she wore in a towering bun”; “She flicked on a lamp, and the dust that always hung in the desert air shimmered like thousands of fairy wings”; “He looked at the desert unfolding into the horizon beneath a sky vibrating with starlight.”*

**Taste:** *“He breathed deeply and could almost taste the cactus.”*

**Smell:** *n/a*

- Divide students into groups to discuss their annotations or double-entry journals. Then reconvene as a whole group and pose the following questions, some of which may draw on students’ reading responses and group discussions. (If you prefer to have students answer these questions in writing, there is a print and digital **Discussion Questions** activity in the Resources tab.)

**Discussion Questions**  
(25 minutes)

*The close-reading questions can be shared in printable or interactive form.*

1. **What clues does the author give you in the first two sections that the Travelers are not of this world?** (inference) *Students may say the fact that a quarter-like object was ice cold even though it was sitting on a sizzling-hot desert floor suggests that something supernatural or not of this world is at play. It becomes clear that the Travelers are not human or of this world when the narrator describes the fungus Aunt Lorna used from “back home” to make a tonic that all the Travelers drank “to keep their bones from crumbling” and that she figured out how to make a lemonade that “didn’t upset their sensitive digestive systems.” Students may also say that upon*

*finishing the story, it was clear that the line “Aunt Lorna was one of those women who could be 35 years old—or 350” was a clue; given that the Travelers can live 50 times as long as humans, Aunt Lorna may literally have been 350 years old.*

2. **Consider this line: “If this were a movie, Adrian thought, this would be the moment the drumbeat began. It would start low and get louder—a drumbeat crescendo.” What does Adrian mean? How does he feel when he picks up the object? (figurative language)** *This comparison reveals that Adrian knows the moment of finding the object is monumental—a moment of great importance when everything will change.*
3. **Why does Adrian consider dropping the object he finds back on the ground or burying it? (character)** *Adrian considers dropping the object on the ground or burying it because he realizes giving the object to Aunt Lorna will mean leaving Earth to return to his home planet, and he isn’t sure he wants to go.*
4. **Adrian says that Aunt Lorna has a way of understanding you—sometimes before you understand yourself. Where in the story does Aunt Lorna show this ability? (character)** *Aunt Lorna shows this ability when she reads Adrian’s expression and says, “You want to stay.” She understands how conflicted Adrian is about leaving, without him saying anything.*
5. **Why is Aunt Lorna worried about Adrian staying behind? How does Adrian seem to feel about her concerns? (conflict)** *Aunt Lorna is worried about Adrian staying behind for two reasons: She thinks the humans will find out that Adrian is not of this Earth, and she fears that he will come to regret his decision after all the humans he currently knows and loves are gone. Adrian doesn’t seem too concerned about the humans learning his secret; he says, “Perhaps they will. Perhaps they won’t.” He does seem shaken and upset, however, after Aunt Lorna voices her second concern. His voice cracks, he is unable to respond, and his resolve falters.*
6. **Consider how the Travelers are acting as they board the ship at the end of the story. What does their behavior suggest about how they feel? (inference)** *The Travelers are exhibiting a wide range of reactions—some are crying, some are laughing, some are in a daze. These varied reactions suggest that while some Travelers are excited to finally return to their real home, others, like Adrian, may feel conflicted about leaving Earth, the place they’d come to accept as home. And perhaps some simply feel overwhelmed.*
7. **Explain the meaning of the title and the tagline. (key ideas and details)** *The title refers to the decision Adrian faces in the story: to stay on Earth or return to the Travelers’ home planet. The tagline refers to how difficult this choice will be. Earth is where Adrian has lived most of his life and he clearly loves it, but staying means risking discovery, losing the Travelers, and outliving everyone he loves. In addition, staying likely means never finding out what happened to—and possibly reuniting with—his parents.*
8. **If you were Adrian, would you stay or go? Why? Answers will vary.**

### 3. Skill Building and Writing

30 minutes

- Have students complete the **Narrative Writing Planner**. This activity will help them organize their ideas in preparation for the writing prompt on page 27 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 works of flash fiction from the *Scope* Archives with narrative prompts that incorporate author's craft:**

- Sensory details: ["Wake Up, Maddalena"](#) (March 2022)
- Establishing setting: ["The Cloud"](#) (March 2021)
- Figurative language: ["The Roach"](#) (March 2020)