

Towers of Ice

These artificial glaciers provide water for Himalayan villages.

About the Story

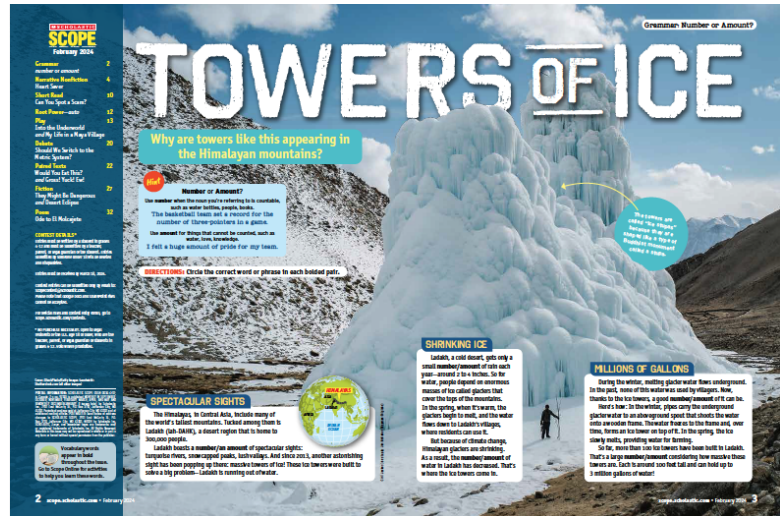
Learning Objective: to practice using the commonly confused words *number* and *amount*

Featured Skill: grammar, usage, and mechanics

Standards:

The article and its suite of support materials support this Common Core Anchor Standard: L.1

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



Your Teaching Package

Find your full suite of support materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Audio:

- Text-to-speech

Videos:

- Grammar Hack: *Number or Amount?*
- What Are Ice Stupas?

Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- *Number or Amount?* Anchor Chart and Practice Activity
- In-Magazine Activity: Interactive Version

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

1. Prepare to Read (10 minutes)

Watch Two Videos

- Show students the video **What Are Ice Stupas?** to introduce the topic of the article they are about to read.
- Next, show students **Grammar Hack: *Number* or *Amount*?**, a short animated video with tips for how to keep these words straight.

Set a Purpose for Reading

- Direct students' attention to the hint box and directions on page 2 or at the top of the digital story page. Read each aloud.

2. Read and Discuss (10 minutes)

- Have students read the three boxes of text independently or with a partner, circling the correct word or phrase in each bolded pair. Optionally, share the interactive version of this article, which contains drop-down menus. Then discuss the answers.
- Find an anchor chart and an additional skill-reinforcement activity in your Resources tab: ***Number* or *Amount*?**

3. Write (1 minute)

- Have students practice using this grammar skill in context. Project this Exit Ticket prompt on your board for students to respond to on a sticky note before they leave class:

Write a sentence that includes these words: *flour*, *cookies*, *amount*, *number*.

Heart Saver

How Vivien Thomas became a pioneer in heart surgery
and saved countless lives

About the Story

Lexile® Measure 990L

For qualitative complexity factors,
go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective: to
identify key ideas and details in a
narrative nonfiction article

Featured Skill: key ideas and
details

**Additional skills covered in
this lesson plan:** mood,
author's craft, text evidence,
figurative language, compare and
contrast

Essential Questions:

- What is a trailblazer?
- How does prejudice affect society?
- How do people overcome challenges?

Standards:

The article and its suite of
support materials support these
Common Core Anchor
Standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5,
R.7, W.2, SL.1, SL.2

For more standards
information—including TEKS—go
to Scope Online.



Your Teaching Package

Find your full suite of support materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Audio:

- Article read-aloud
- Text-to-speech
- Vocabulary

Video:

- Meet the Illustrator: Alvin Epps

Differentiated Articles:

- Lower-Lexile version
- Spanish language version

Connected readings

from the Scope archives:

- Black History: Stories from the Scope Collection

Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice
- Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions
- Featured Skill: Key Ideas and Details
- Choice Board
- Core Skills Workout: Summarizing,* Text Features, Nonfiction Elements
- Lesson Plan Slide Deck
- Quiz*

*Available on two levels

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

1. Prepare to Read (20 minutes)

Do Now: Journal (5 minutes)

- Project the following sentence stems on your whiteboard for students to respond to in their journals, on a piece of paper, or in their own digital document:

Being educated means _____.

Education takes place in _____.

Preview Vocabulary (15 minutes)

- Project the Google Slides version of **Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice** on your whiteboard. Review the definitions and complete the activity as a class. Highlighted words: *artery, brash, delicate, dramatic, economic, menial, reluctance, rigorous*. Audio pronunciations of the words and a read-aloud of the definitions are embedded on the slides. Optionally, print the PDF version or share the slideshow link directly to your LMS and have students preview the words and complete the activity independently before class.

2. Read and Discuss (55 minutes)

- Invite a volunteer to read the As You Read box on page 5 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 the article being read 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 and Critical-Thinking** questions, also located in the Resources tab.

Close-Reading Questions

(30 minutes)

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

1. **The article begins with a dramatic description of a very sick baby. Why might Lauren Tarshis have started her story this way?** (mood, author's craft) *Tarshis likely started her story this way to draw the reader in. The heartrending description of the baby shows the seriousness of blue baby syndrome and makes the reader want to keep reading to find out what happens.*
2. **What challenges did Vivien Thomas face while trying to achieve his goals of attending college and medical school? How did he overcome these challenges?** (text evidence) *Thomas's plans were first shattered by the Great Depression. He lost the education savings he'd been working for since age 13, and there was no more carpentry work to be found. Taking a major pay cut, Thomas accepted a job in Alfred Blalock's lab at Vanderbilt University and worked hard to learn everything he could. Tarshis writes that he often went home with stacks of textbooks that he pored over late into the night. Thomas proved himself to Blalock, who soon came to consider Thomas a partner in his research. However, because Thomas was Black, he faced discrimination. After six years at Vanderbilt, he was still being paid a menial wage. What's more, Vanderbilt listed him as a janitor in its official records. Thomas stood up for himself and spoke to Blalock; his salary soon increased. When Thomas moved to Maryland so that he could continue working with Blalock, he experienced even worse discrimination. He had trouble finding a landlord who would rent to him and his family, and his new employer, Johns Hopkins, was segregated. But Thomas refused to let the unfair and hateful way he was treated distract him from his work with Blalock.*
3. **Tarshis writes that in the 1940s, heart surgery was seen as the "Mount Everest" of medicine. Explain the metaphor she is using. What does it help the reader understand about Thomas, Alfred Blalock, and Helen Taussig?** (figurative language) *Mount Everest is an incredibly difficult and dangerous mountain to climb—anyone who successfully scales Everest joins a small and elite group of the world's best climbers. By comparing heart surgery and Everest, Tarshis helps readers understand that Thomas, Blalock, and Taussig were undertaking something incredibly difficult and full of risk, and that they were among the best in their field.*
4. **How was Thomas's life in the lab different from his life outside of it? How was it the same?** (compare and contrast) *Out in the world, Thomas was treated unfairly and with great prejudice because he was Black. Throughout the U.S. at that time, Black people were forbidden to swim in most public pools, sit in the front of buses, or even go into most libraries. Inside the lab, Thomas was Blalock's partner and a respected member of the team. Yet because he was Black, Thomas was not able to earn a medical degree from the very institution where he helped develop the procedure to treat blue babies. He did not receive the same level of recognition from the world that Blalock did, and he did not receive fair pay for his work.*

5. **At the end of the article, Tarshis writes that a portrait of Thomas now hangs across from Blalock's in the medical school at Johns Hopkins. Why might she have included this detail?** (author's craft) *This detail shows that after years of being overlooked, Thomas has finally been recognized for his contributions. Placing his portrait across from Blalock's presents the two men as equals.*
- As a class, discuss the following questions.

Critical-Thinking Questions

(5 minutes)

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

1. **An unsung hero is someone who has achieved greatness but is not recognized or celebrated for their achievements. How was Thomas an unsung hero?** *Thomas was a hero because he helped pioneer a lifesaving heart surgery and went on to train other heart surgeons who saved many more lives. He also opened the door for other Black people to enter medicine, including his own nephew. Thomas was "unsung" because he was not recognized for his accomplishments for many decades. Unlike Blalock, Thomas never became rich or famous.*
 2. **Think about the kind of prejudice and racism that Thomas faced during his lifetime. How does this kind of discrimination affect society?** *Answers will vary. Students may say that segregation prevented many Black people from getting an education. Thomas, for example, was barred from entering public libraries and attending most medical schools, including Johns Hopkins. Such discrimination is immoral and it discourages people from realizing their potential.*
 3. **Tarshis writes that Thomas and Blalock created blue baby syndrome in animals so that they could figure out how to treat it. What's your opinion: Is animal testing for scientific research and medical advancement justified? Explain.** *Answers will vary.*
- Have students revisit their Do Now responses and edit if necessary. Discuss: How did reading about Thomas confirm, challenge, or change your responses?

Watch a Video (10 minutes)

- Show students our **Meet the Illustrator video**, in which Alvin Epps talks about creating the illustrations for "Heart Saver" and his job as an illustrator and graphic novelist in general.

3. Write About It: Key Ideas and Details (45 minutes)

- Have students complete the **Featured Skill Activity: Key Ideas and Details**. This activity prepares them to respond to the writing prompt on page 9 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story page:

Your legacy is how you are remembered and the contributions you make during your life. What is Vivien Thomas's legacy?

- Alternatively, have students choose a task from the **Choice Board**, a menu of culminating tasks. (Our Choice Board options include the writing prompt from the magazine, differentiated versions of the writing prompt, and additional creative ways for students to demonstrate their understanding of a story or article.)

Support for Multilingual Learners

These questions are designed to help students respond to the text at a level that's right for them.

Yes/No Questions

Ask students to demonstrate comprehension with a very simple answer.

- Did Vivien Thomas have a medical degree? *No, he didn't.*
- Would most medical schools admit Thomas in 1944? *No, they wouldn't.*
- Did Alfred Blalock treat Thomas as his equal and partner? *Yes, he did.*
- Were Blalock and Thomas able to save Eileen Saxon's life? *Yes, they were.*
- Did Thomas become rich and famous? *No, he didn't.*

Either/Or Questions

Encourage students to use language from the question in their answer.

- Did Vivien Thomas work as a carpenter or a janitor before joining Alfred Blalock? *Vivien Thomas worked as a carpenter before joining Alfred Blalock.*
- In the early 1940s, were there just a few blue babies or thousands of blue babies? *There were thousands of blue babies.*
- Was moving to Maryland easy or challenging for Thomas? *Moving to Maryland was challenging for Thomas.*
- After the surgery, did Eileen Saxon's skin turn from blue to pink slowly or quickly? *Eileen's skin turned pink quickly.*
- Was the surgery on Eileen a failure or a success? *The surgery on Eileen was a success.*

Short-Answer Questions

Challenge students to produce simple answers on their own.

1. How did Vivien Thomas develop the procedure Helen Taussig asked for? *Thomas created blue baby syndrome in animals so he could figure out how to treat it. He also created better instruments to use.*
2. How did parents of blue babies react to Eileen Saxon's surgery? *Following Eileen's surgery, families from all over the United States rushed their blue babies to Johns Hopkins Hospital for treatment.*

Language-Acquisition Springboard: Preview figurative language

Before reading the article, tell students that figurative language is a way of using words and expressions in a creative, nonliteral way. *Nonliteral* means not using a word's usual meaning—the way it would be defined in a dictionary. Have students consider the following sentences. (The bolded phrases appear in "Heart Saver.")

1. *Winning the Superbowl is **the Mount Everest of** football.*
Ask: What is Mount Everest? *Mount Everest is the highest mountain in the world.*
Project: an image or video of Mount Everest or people summiting Mount Everest
Ask: If a task or achievement is described as the "Mount Everest" of something, do you think it is easy or difficult?
Explain: This phrase compares something to Mount Everest, one of the tallest and most challenging mountains in the world to climb. If you say a task is the "Mount Everest" of some category, you mean it is the most challenging task within that category.
2. *The concert gates opened and fans **flooded into** the stadium.*
Ask: What is a flood? *A flood is a large flow of water that spreads over land that is normally dry.*
Project: an image or video of a flood
Ask: If people are flooding into an area, do you think there is a small number of people or a large number of people? Are they moving quickly or slowly?
Explain: This phrase suggests a large number of people or things moving quickly and filling a space.
3. *Steve Jobs **blazed a trail** in the world of technology with the invention of the iPhone.*
Ask: What is a trail? *A trail is a marked path or route.*
Explain: Blazing a trail means putting marks on trees to show where the trail is.
Project: an image of a tree with a blaze (trail marker) on it
Ask: If someone "blazes a trail," do you think they are the first person to do that thing or have many people done that thing before them?
Explain: This phrase means to be the first one to do something and to show others how to do it.

As you read, be sure to pause and discuss Tarshis's use of the expressions:

p. 8: "At the time, heart surgery was considered the 'Mount Everest' of medicine—few doctors had even attempted it."

p. 8 (in the caption "Making Medical History"): "Following the first successful surgery to repair a blue baby's heart, other blue babies and their families began flooding into Johns Hopkins from across the country."

p. 10: "Thomas never became rich or famous, but he blazed a trail for Black Americans in medicine, including his nephew, who entered Johns Hopkins medical school in 1983."

Connected readings from the *Scope* archives:

- [Black History: Stories From the *Scope* Collection](#)

Can You Spot a Scam?

How students can protect themselves from online scams

About the Story

Lexile® Measure 960L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective: to read a short informational text, then craft a constructed response that includes a claim, text evidence, and commentary

Featured Skill: constructed response

Additional skills in this lesson
plan: identifying central ideas and details

Standards:

The article and its suite of support materials support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.6, W.2, SL.1, SL.2

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to [Scope Online](#).



Your Teaching Package

Find your full suite of support materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Audio:

- Article read-aloud
- Text-to-speech
- Vocabulary

Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice
- Short Write Kit
- **Core Skills Workout:** Central Ideas and Details*
- Quiz*

**Available on two levels*

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

1. Prepare to Read (10 minutes)

Preview Vocabulary (10 minutes)

Project the Google Slides version of **Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice** on your whiteboard. Review the definitions and complete the activity as a class. Highlighted words: *con*, *legitimate*, *lurk*, *nefarious*. Audio pronunciations of the words and a read-aloud of the definitions are embedded on the slides. Optionally, print the PDF version or share the slideshow link directly to your LMS and have students preview the words and complete the activity independently before class.

2. Read and Discuss (20 minutes)

- For students' first read, have them follow along as they listen to the **audio read-aloud**, located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View.
- Have students read the story again.
- Optionally, divide students into groups to complete the **Core Skills Workout: Central Ideas and Details** activity. This graphic organizer asks students to identify the central idea and supporting details of each section of the article and the central idea of the article as a whole. (This activity comes on two levels, with more or less scaffolding.)
- Reconvene as a class. Together, choose three of the ads in the illustration at the beginning of the article and explain how you can tell that they are likely scams. Encourage students to support their ideas with text evidence from the article.

3. Write About It

(20 minutes)

Have students complete the **Short Write Kit**. This activity guides students to write a claim, support it with text evidence, and provide commentary in response to the prompt on page 11 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story page:

Imagine you get a message online stating that you've won a free phone. What should you do and why, according to the article? Answer in a short paragraph. Use text evidence.

A Star's Secret

Learn about the Greek prefix *auto* through a graphic-novel-style story.

About the Story

Learning Objective: to use Greek and Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meanings of words

Featured Skill: vocabulary acquisition

Standards:

The article and its suite of support materials support this Common Core anchor standard: L.4

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



Your Teaching Package

Find your full suite of support materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Audio:

- Text-to-speech
- Read-aloud

Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Root Power: *auto*

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

1. Prepare to Read (5 minutes)

- If students are unfamiliar with graphic novels, preview some basic graphic novel terminology and definitions:
 - **panels:** the square or rectangular boundaries that contain elements of the story
 - **gutters:** the space between panels, where the reader's imagination connects the elements between two panels to create a flowing storyline
 - **balloons:** where spoken or narrated words and sound effects are contained
- Have a volunteer read aloud the directions located beneath the story's title. Then locate the words in blue in the story and read them aloud together.

2. Read and Discuss (25 minutes)

- Read the story once through as a class, then have students reread it independently.
- To check comprehension, have students write a quick objective summary of the story on a sticky note.
- Using their knowledge of affixes and roots along with context as clues, students can then turn and talk to a partner to discuss their preliminary understanding of the meanings of the words in blue.

3. Root Challenge (25 minutes)

- Have students take the **Root Challenge** at the bottom of the page in the printed magazine or at the bottom of the digital story page. Be sure to have digital or print dictionaries handy for students to verify their definitions. Optionally, have students complete this task using the **Root Power activity** found in your Resources tab at Scope Online. It contains a chart for recording definitions, an extra practice activity, and space to record their own *auto*



word, sentences, and illustrations. Sample definitions and answers can be found in the **Answer Key**, which can also be found in the Resources tab at Scope Online.

Into the Underworld

A thrilling story from Maya mythology

About the Story

Lexile® Measure 970L (captions only)
For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective: to analyze how a conflict is resolved over the course of a play

Featured Skill: conflict

Additional skills covered in this lesson plan: text structure, key ideas and details, plot, metaphor, synthesis

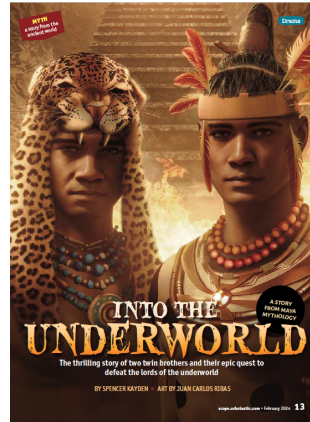
Essential Question:

- What can we learn about a society from its stories and myths?

Standards:

The article and its suite of support materials support these Common Core Anchor Standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, W.2, SL.1, L.4, L.5, L.6

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



Your Teaching Package

Find your full suite of support materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Audio:

- Text-to-speech
- Q&A read-aloud
- Vocabulary
- Pronunciation Guide

Slideshow:

- Background Builder

Connected readings from the Scope archives:

- *Olympians Rising*
- *Pandora's Box*
- *Gods Versus Giants*
- *The Doomed Quest*
- *Hunting a Snake-Headed Monster*
- *Prince Setna and the Book of Magic*

Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice
- Pronunciation Guide
- Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions
- Featured Skill: Conflict
- Genre Explorations
- Choice Board
- Lesson Plan Slide Deck
- Quiz*

*Available on two levels

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

1. Prepare to Read (15 minutes)

Preview Vocabulary (10 minutes)

- Project the Google Slides version of **Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice** on your whiteboard. Review the definitions and complete the activity as a class. Highlighted words: *emerge, intact, marimba, outwit, realm, smugly, summoned, valiantly, wither*. Audio pronunciations of the words and a read-aloud of the definitions are embedded on the slides. Optionally, print the PDF version or share the slideshow link directly to your LMS and have students preview the words and complete the activity independently before class.
- Project the **Pronunciation Guide** video at Scope Online to teach students how to pronounce the Maya names and words that appear in the play and interview.

Build Background Knowledge (5 minutes)

- Project the **Background Builder** slideshow, which provides context for the play and interview, including information about the Maya, Mesoamerica, and the Popol Vuh.

2. Read and Discuss (55 minutes)

- Invite a volunteer to read aloud the As You Read box on page 14 or at the top of the digital story page.
- Assign parts and read the play aloud as a class.
- Divide students into groups to discuss the following **Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking** questions, which are also located in the Resources tab.

Close-Reading Questions (25 minutes)

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

1. **What is the purpose of the prologue?** (text structure) *The elders in the prologue provide the audience with background information about the Popol Vuh and the Maya people. They*

introduce the time (thousands of years ago) and place (Mesoamerica) where the events of the play take place. They also engage the audience and transition audience members from reality to a fictional world—a magical place with powerful beings that can communicate with all creatures.

2. **Who or what helps the twins pass the three “tests” the lords of the underworld give them: surviving the House of Darkness, the House of Knives, and the House of Jaguars?** (key ideas and details) *The twins’ cleverness along with their magical powers allow them to pass each of the three tests. In each case, animals also play an important role in the twins’ success: Fireflies keep the candle “lit” without burning it, an army of ants retrieves the flowers the lords demanded, and hungry jaguars obey the twins and eat the bones the twins conjure rather than eating the twins themselves (as the lords intended).*
3. **What role does the ball game pok-ta-pok play in the plot of *Into the Underworld*?** (plot) *After a mosquito reveals to the twins that their father and uncle’s ball playing equipment is hidden in their hut, the twins decide to play the game. The lords of the underworld become angry about the noise and summon the twins to the underworld to kill them—just as the lords summoned the twins’ father and uncle before them. In other words, the game is the reason the twins end up traveling to the underworld in the first place. (The twins, unlike their father and uncle, survive their trip to the underworld.)*
4. **The caption “The Game” states that the ball game pok-ta-pok is often viewed as a metaphor for both the battle between good and evil and the cycle of life and death.**

A. Which characters in the play represent good and which represent evil? How do these two groups battle each other? (metaphor) *The lords of the underworld are evil. They trick, torture, and kill people, and they rule over a terrifying realm and have names like Flying Scab and Skull Scepter that reflect their awful natures. The twins—who live on the surface of the Earth, defeat the evil lords, and become the sun and moon—are good. The good characters and evil characters battle each other by playing the ball game—it is quite literally a contest between good and evil. The two groups also battle each other as the lords try to kill the twins, who then turn around and kill the lords.*

B. How is the idea that life and death are a cycle developed throughout the play? (metaphor) *The idea that life and death are a cycle is developed when the twins jump into a bonfire and die—and are then resurrected after their ground-up bones are sprinkled in the river. The idea that life and death are a cycle is also developed through the corn stalks in the grandmother’s hut, which flourish when the twins are safe, wither when they die, and then flourish again when they come back to life. In addition, when the twins return to the underworld in disguise, Skull Scepter asks, “But can you destroy a living thing and bring it back?,” and Hunter responds by pulling Jaguar Moon’s heart out and then replacing it, reviving him. The idea is further reinforced when Hunter and Jaguar Moon become the sun and moon, which are symbols of renewal, cycles, and rebirth.*

“My Life in a Maya Village”

- Read the Q&A as a class. Optionally, have students listen to the interview being read 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.
- As a class, discuss the following **Critical-Thinking Questions**, some of which apply to the play and the interview.

Critical-Thinking Questions

(10 minutes)

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

1. **How does *Into the Underworld* highlight the importance of corn in Maya culture? How does the interview further support this idea?** *Corn appears or is mentioned at many points in the play. The elders stand in a cornfield as they deliver the prologue. The twins are masterful corn farmers. The twins plant corn stalks in their grandmother’s hut that will flourish as long as the twins are safe but will wither if the twins die. When the twins seek Xulu’s help in resurrecting themselves, they ask him to tell the lords to grind their bones into dust “like the softest flour made from corn.” In addition, the caption “The Corn” explains that corn was and still is a crucial crop with cultural and spiritual significance for the Maya. In the interview, Ezekiel shares that his family, his village, and Maya people in general are masterful corn farmers who eat corn daily, sell it for their livelihoods, and feed their livestock with it.*
2. **What other elements of ancient Maya culture reflected in *Into the Underworld* are mentioned in the interview as part of Maya culture today?** *In the play, the elders tell the story of the Popol Vuh and how the sun and moon came to be; Ezekiel says that this story was passed down through his own family, from his grandfather to his father to him. Ezekiel also shares that pok-ta-pok is still played and that jaguars—which appear in the play in the House of Jaguars and after which Jaguar Moon is named—are a part of everyday life in his village. A photo shows Ezekiel dressed as a jaguar for a ceremonial dance.*
3. **How would you characterize the twins: boastful and foolish or confident and clever?** *Answers will vary.*

3. Write About It: Conflict

(45 minutes)

- Have students complete the **Featured Skill Activity: Conflict**. This activity will prepare them to respond to the writing prompt on page 18 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story page:

To outwit someone is to beat them through cleverness. How do the twins outwit the lords of the underworld? Answer in an essay, using text evidence from the play.

- Alternatively, have students choose a task from the **Choice Board**, a menu of culminating tasks. (Our Choice Board options include the writing prompt from the magazine, differentiated versions of the writing prompt, and additional creative ways for students to demonstrate their understanding of a story or article.)

Connected readings from the Scope archives—other read-aloud plays based on ancient myths:

- [Olympians Rising](#)
- [Pandora's Box](#)
- [Gods Versus Giants](#)
- [The Doomed Quest](#)
- [Into the Burning Sun](#)
- [Hunting a Snake-Headed Monster](#)
- [Prince Setna and the Book of Magic](#)

Should We Switch to the Metric System?

Students read arguments on both sides of the debate and take a stand.

About the Story

Lexile® Measure 900L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

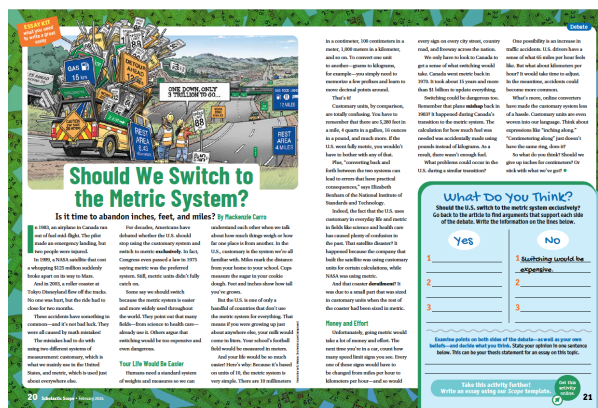
Learning Objective: to read and analyze a text that presents arguments on both sides of a debate, then take a stand

Featured Skill: argument writing

Standards:

The article and its suite of support materials support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.6, R.8, W.1, SL.1, SL.4

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



Your Teaching Package

Find your full suite of support materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Audio:

- Article read-aloud
- Text-to-speech
- Vocabulary

Connected readings from the Scope archives:

- "Should We Get Rid of Paper Money?"
- "Should We Get Rid of the Penny?"
- "Should We Get Rid of Daylight Saving Time?"
- "Should You Learn Cursive?"

Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Measurement in Everyday Language
- Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice
- Argument Terms Glossary
- Featured Skill Activity: Essay Kit
- Anchor Chart: Great Transitions
- Anchor Chart: Argument Essay Checklist
- Persuasive Appeals: Ethos, Pathos, Logos
- Lesson Plan Slide Deck

*Available on two levels

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

1. Prepare to Read (25 minutes)

Do Now: Interpret Measurement Expressions and Sayings (15 minutes)

- Project the following task on your whiteboard, or distribute our **Measurement in Everyday Language** handout, found in your Resources tab.

Customary measurement units are part of our everyday language, found in many common expressions and sayings. Consider the phrases below. For as many as you can, explain what the phrase means and/or use it in a sentence.

*the whole nine yards
a mile a minute
walk a mile in someone's shoes
a ton of bricks
a country mile
missed it by a mile
an ounce of sense
Give someone an inch and they'll take a mile.
inching along
all wool and a yard wide
within an inch of one's life
won't budge an inch
wouldn't touch it with a 10-foot pole
A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.
pound for pound
An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.*

- Invite students to share their answers. Sample answers can be found in the Answer Key.

Preview Vocabulary (10 minutes)

- Project the Google Slides version of **Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice** on your whiteboard. Review the definitions and complete the activity as a class. Highlighted words: *derailment*, *exclusively*, *mishap*. Audio pronunciations of the words and a read-aloud of the definitions are embedded on the slides. Optionally, print the PDF version or share the slideshow link directly to your LMS and have students preview the words and complete the activity independently before class.

2. Read and Discuss (45 minutes)

- Read the article once as a class. Optionally, for students' first read, have them follow along as they listen to the **audio read-aloud**, located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View. Then have students silently reread the article to themselves.
- Project the article. Complete the following steps as a class, modeling text marking on your whiteboard while students mark their magazines:
 1. **Using a colored pencil, pen, or marker, write a sentence that expresses the central claim on one side of the debate.** (e.g., *The U.S. should stop using the customary system and switch to metric exclusively.*)
 2. **In that same color, circle the paragraphs that contain reasons that support the central claim.** (all of the section "Your Life Would Be Easier," the first five paragraphs of the introduction)
 3. **Have students repeat steps 1 and 2 independently, but for the other side of the debate, this time using a DIFFERENT color.** (central claim: *The U.S. should not abandon the customary system. Circle all but the final paragraph of the section "Money and Effort."*)
- Have students fill in the "Yes/No" chart in their magazines based on the details they identified in the text. Sample responses:

YES:

- People need a standard system of measurement and almost everyone outside the U.S. uses metric.
- The metric system is much easier to use than the customary system.
- Converting back and forth between systems leads to errors.
- Many fields in the U.S. already use metric.

NO:

- Switching would be expensive.
 - Switching would take lots of time and effort.
 - Switching could lead to accidents.
 - Online converters make it easy to use both systems.
 - Customary units of measurement are woven into our everyday language.
- Discuss: Which supporting detail do you think is the strongest? The weakest? Do you think the writer shows bias—that is, a preference for one side of the debate or the other? Explain and support your answer with text evidence.

3. Write About It: What Do You Think?

(45 minutes)

- Have students work individually to complete the **Essay Kit**, a guided writing activity and outline that will help them write their own argument essay in response to this question:

Should the U.S. switch to the metric system exclusively?

- Students can use the **Great Transitions** and **Argument Essay Checklist** anchor charts to help them edit and evaluate their essays.

Connected readings from the Scope archives—other debates about changing long-held systems:

- ["Should We Get Rid of Paper Money?"](#)
- ["Should We Get Rid of the Penny?"](#)
- ["Should We Get Rid of Daylight Saving Time?"](#)
- ["Should You Learn Cursive?"](#)

Would You Eat This?

Could bugs one day become a staple in the American diet?

About the Story

Lexile® Measure 990L

For qualitative complexity factors,
go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective: to
synthesize key ideas from two
nonfiction articles

Featured Skill: synthesis

**Additional skills covered in
this lesson plan:** key ideas
and details, supporting a claim,
compare and contrast, problem
and solution

Essential Questions:

- What role does food play in our lives?
- How can we demonstrate respect for other cultures?
- How can we contribute to a more sustainable future?

Standards:

The article and its suite of support materials support these Common Core anchor standards:
R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.6, R.7,
R.9, W.2, SL.1, SL.4

For more standards
information—including
TEKS—go to Scope Online.



Your Teaching Package

Find your full suite of support materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Audio:

- Article read-alouds
- Text-to-speech
- Vocabulary

Video:

- “Edible Insects”

Differentiated Article:

- Lower-Lexile version

Connected readings from the Scope archives:

- “How Tacos Conquered America” and “The Story of Spaghetti and Meatballs”
- “How Pizza Conquered America” and “Sushi Takes Over”
- “Hot Dog World”
- “Love at First Crunch”
- “Mac and Cheese Mania”
- “Why Are These Chips Soooooo Delicious?”

Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice
- Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions
- Featured Skill: Synthesis
- Choice Board
- Core Skills Workout: Text Evidence,* Text Structure*
- Lesson Plan Slide Deck
- Quiz*

*Available on two levels

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

1. Prepare to Read (20 minutes)

Do Now: Journal (5 minutes)

- Project the prompts below. Have students choose one prompt to respond to.
 - Think of a food you absolutely love but which you think someone else might find gross. Draw a picture of this food and write a description of it. Share why you enjoy it so much, and try to convince someone who has never tried it to give it a chance. What might surprise them about its taste?
 - Have you ever eaten insects? Describe the experience. If you haven't eaten insects, would you? Why or why not?
 - Have you ever thought a food was totally disgusting—until you tried it? Describe the food and explain why you didn't think you'd like it and what happened when you tried it.
 - Is there any food you used to like but because of a certain experience can no longer bring yourself to eat? Describe the food and the experience.
- Invite volunteers to share their responses.

Preview Vocabulary (10 minutes)

- Project the Google Slides version of **Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice** on your whiteboard. Review the definitions and complete the activity as a class. Highlighted words: *cultural, defects, delectable, delicacy, revulsion, scrumptious, vital*. Audio pronunciations of the words and a read-aloud of the definitions are embedded on the slides. Optionally, print the PDF version or share the slideshow link directly to your LMS and have students preview the words and complete the activity independently before class.

Watch a Video (5 minutes)

- Project the video “**Edible Insects**” at Scope Online.

2. Read and Discuss (45 minutes)

“Would You Eat This?”

- Invite a volunteer to read the As You Read box on page 22 or at the top of the digital story page.
- Read the article once as a class. (*Differentiation: Share the lower-Lexile version of the article.*) Optionally, have students listen to the **audio read-aloud** while they follow along. The 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 and Critical-Thinking Questions**, also located in the Resources tab.

Close-Reading Questions

(25 minutes)

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

1. **What is entomophagy’s role in various cultures around the world?** (key ideas and details) *People around the world have been eating insects for a very long time. In the past, some cultures considered insects to be special treats. Today many people still eat bugs. In fact, more than 2,000 types of insects are eaten around the world. About 2 billion people, which is a quarter of all the people on Earth, include insects in their meals. So while many Americans may view entomophagy as strange, it is obviously seen as quite normal in many places.*
2. **The introduction states that “eating [bugs] is easy on the environment.” How is this claim supported in the article?** (supporting a claim) *First, the article mentions that farming insects requires fewer resources (land, water, energy) than farming traditional livestock. For example, the article states that raising crickets for meat takes significantly less water and feed than raising cattle for beef. Second, the article explains that because insects grow and reproduce so quickly, farmers can produce large amounts of them efficiently.*
3. **What are some of the challenges mentioned in the article that may interfere with insect eating becoming popular in the United States?** (key ideas and details) *The challenges mentioned in the article that may interfere with insect eating becoming popular in the United States include the “ick factor” (that is, the cultural aversion to eating bugs), the lack of infrastructure for insect farming, and the relatively high cost of insect-based foods.*
4. **How does the nutritional content of insects compare to that of traditional sources of protein?** (compare and contrast) *The article mentions that many insect species are rich in*

protein, iron, fiber, and other essential nutrients. It specifically compares cicadas and beef, stating that cicadas contain the same amount of protein per pound as beef. However, it notes that you would have to eat a large quantity of cicadas (about 230) to obtain the same amount of protein found in a 12-ounce steak.

5. **According to the article, why might insect consumption be important to the future of food production?** (problem and solution) *The article suggests that insect consumption might be important to the future of food production because of the growing global population. The world's population is expected to reach 9.8 billion by 2050, which is a huge number of people to feed. The article suggests that insects could be an efficient and sustainable source of food to meet the growing demand.*

“Gross! Yuck! Ew!”

- Read the informational text as a class. Optionally, have students listen to the read-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.
- As a class, discuss the following **Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions**, some of which apply to both articles.

Close-Reading Questions (5 minutes)

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

1. **How is disgust a survival tool?** (key ideas and details) *Disgust is a survival tool because it helps us avoid things that might make us sick, such as vomit, feces, and rotting meat, which often contain germs, such as parasites.*
2. **What factors influence what people find disgusting? Can feelings of disgust change?** (key ideas and details) *The factors that influence what people find disgusting include an innate sense of what might be dangerous, cultural background, and prior experiences. The article suggests that feelings of disgust can change over time with exposure and familiarity, the way that nurses become accustomed to blood and pus.*
3. **What message does author Kristin Lewis convey about different tastes and trying new foods?** (inference) *Lewis encourages an open-minded approach to food and people's food preferences. She encourages readers to respect diverse food preferences and to be willing to explore new culinary experiences.*

Critical-Thinking Questions

(5 minutes)

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

1. Would you try the dishes featured in the article? Why or why not? *Answers will vary.*
2. What do you think it would take for insect eating to become popular in the U.S.? *Answers will vary.*

3. Write About It: Synthesis (45 minutes)

- Have students complete the **Featured Skill Activity: Synthesis**. This activity prepares them to respond to the writing prompt on page 26 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story page:

Do you think insects could ever become a staple of the American diet? Why or why not? Draw from both “Would You Eat This?” and “Gross! Yuck! Ew!” to support your ideas.

- Alternatively, have students choose a task from the **Choice Board**, a menu of culminating tasks. (Our Choice Board options include the writing prompt from the magazine, differentiated versions of the writing prompt, and additional creative ways for students to demonstrate their understanding of a story or article.)

More stories about the role food plays in our lives from the Scope archives:

- Paired Texts: [“How Tacos Conquered America”](#) and [“The Story of Spaghetti and Meatballs”](#)
- Paired Texts: [“How Pizza Conquered America”](#) and [“Sushi Takes Over”](#)
- Infographic: [“Hot Dog World”](#)
- Short Read: [“Love at First Crunch”](#)
- Short Read: [“Mac and Cheese Mania”](#)
- Short Read: [“Why Are These Chips Soooooo Delicious?”](#)

They Might Be Dangerous

Who are the mysterious creatures that crashed down from outer space?

About the Story

Lexile® Measure 720L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective: to analyze characters in a work of fiction, then continue the narrative in a sequel

Featured Skill: character

Additional skills covered in this lesson plan: inference, character, author's craft, figurative language, setting, genre

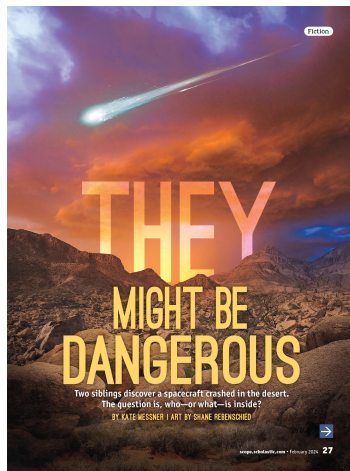
Essential Questions:

- Are humans alone in the universe?
- What causes fear? What are its effects?
- How can people understand and respect those who are different from them?

Standards:

The article and its suite of support materials support these Common Core Anchor Standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.6, W.3, SL.1

For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.



Your Teaching Package

Find your full suite of support materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Audio:

- Story read-aloud
- Text-to-speech
- Vocabulary

Slideshow:

- Vocabulary

Connected readings from the Scope archives:

- "Are Those Aliens?"
- "The Day We Sent a Message to Aliens"
- "What We Saw"

Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Theme Anticipation Guide
- Vocabulary: Definitions
- Featured Skill: Character
- Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions
- Choice Board
- Lesson Plan Slide Deck
- **Core Skills Workout:** Inference
- Quiz*

*Available on two levels

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Featured Skill

1. Prepare 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 are available in your Resources tab). Have students decide whether they agree or disagree with each statement, then discuss. After reading the story, ask students how they think the characters would respond to the statements in the Theme Anticipation Guide.

Preview Vocabulary (10 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. Highlighted words: *annihilate*, *celestial*, *colonize*, *cosmos*, *electromagnetic*, *keening*, *presumed*, *telepathic*, *veered*.

2. Read and Discuss (75 minutes)

- Read the “As You Read” box on page 28 or at the top of the digital story page.
- For students’ first read, have them follow along as they listen to the **audio read-aloud**. The read-aloud is located in the Resources tab in Teacher View and at the top of the story page in Student View.
- Optionally, have students reread and annotate the story independently. Here are some symbols you might have them use:

! = I’m surprised.

? = This is unfamiliar.

★ = This is important.

💬 = “I wonder . . .” (add comments or questions)

♥ = I love this.

- Divide students into groups to discuss the close-reading questions along with their annotations. (The close-reading questions appear in the margins of the print magazine or by clicking on the bolded words on the digital story page.) If you'd like students to respond in writing, an interactive and printable **Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking activity** is available in your Resources tab.

Close-Reading Questions

(30 minutes)

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

- 1. Why do Zak and Alia want to avoid the watchers?** (inference) *Based on the way Zak commands Alia not to touch the wreckage, his urgency to leave the park, and his fear that he and Alia will get in trouble if they don't leave, readers can infer that the watchers control the search for intelligent life in their galaxy and don't take kindly to interference. Later, it is revealed that the watchers' goal is to take control of other planets, no matter who already lives there. The watchers are clearly an intimidating force in Zak's and Alia's eyes.*
- 2. How are Alia and Zak different from one another?** (character) *It's clear that Alia is full of curiosity, longs for adventure, and wants to push the boundaries that have been set for her. She has difficulty sitting still at school, she always wants to explore further into the desert (against her parents' rules), and she is excited and fearless at the prospect of meeting life from other planets. Zak seems to be the opposite of Alia. He is fearful of the unknown and the authorities.*
- 3. Why do you think the author put the dialogue in italics instead of quotation marks?** (author's craft) *Later in the story, it is revealed that Zak and Alia communicate telepathically; they do not speak to each other aloud. This is likely the reason the author put the dialogue in italics instead of quotation marks; quotation marks are traditionally used for spoken language. Perhaps the author used the italics as a subtle hint that Alia and Zak are not human.*
- 4. How does the line "Zak's fear filled the air like fog" contribute to the mood of the story?** (figurative language) *Fog is a weather phenomenon where moisture in the air creates a dense, hazy, and disorienting atmosphere. Instead of saying that Zak was afraid, the author describes Zak's fear as though it were physically present and hanging in the atmosphere as fog does. This simile conveys the idea that Zak's fear is thick, enveloping, and obscuring. This line contributes to the mood of unease and uncertainty in the story around who or what is in the pod and what the right thing to do is.*
- 5. What does Alia mean by "just like us"? What does Zak mean by "just like us"?** (inference, character) *When Alia asks, "What if they're just like us?," she is suggesting that the beings in the pod might have a lot in common with her and Zak; that they might have similar emotions, thoughts, or behaviors, and that because of this, Alia and Zak should treat them with the same kindness and compassion that they would treat members of their own species. When Zak says, "Exactly. What if those awful-looking things are just like us?," he means that the creatures may*

share the dark side of Zak and Alia's kind—the side that wants to destroy others' homes and colonize their planets. He sees the aliens as a threat—just as those on his planet are a threat to other intelligent life—and therefore doesn't want to interact with them, let alone help them.

6. **Where does this story take place? What details reveal the setting?** (setting, genre) *The story takes place on a planet that is not Earth. The details that reveal the setting include: Mip, which readers are likely to have assumed is a dog, turns out to have antennas and a horn; Alia has wings and an antenna; Alia and Zak communicate telepathically; and most revealing of all, the pod from another planet has the word Earth written on it.*
7. **Who are the creatures in the pod? How do you think they would answer Alia's questions?** (inference, critical thinking) *The creatures in the pod are human beings from Earth. These humans would likely answer that they do indeed dream of holding star scraps in their hands, like Alia, and that they do dream of meeting someone like Alia. Like Alia, humans are naturally curious beings. For as long as we have walked the earth, we have gazed up at the sky and wondered what might be out there.*

“Desert Eclipse”

- Read the essay as a class. Optionally, have students listen to the essay being read 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.
- As a class, discuss the following **Critical-Thinking Questions**, some of which apply to both the story and the essay. Optionally, have students respond to these questions using a “graffiti wall” conversation:
 - Cover tables, boards, and/or walls with large pieces of butcher paper.
 - Post one question in the center of each paper. Give each student a marker. (Having students write in marker will make the boards easier to read from a distance than if students write in pencil or pen.)
 - Students should remain silent as they visit each “graffiti wall” and respond in writing to the questions. Encourage them to respond to ideas that other students have written with questions, comments, and pictures.

Critical-Thinking Questions

(20 minutes)

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

1. **What motivates Alia to stay as the watchers arrive at the end of the story? Predict what you think will happen after the watchers arrive.** *Answers will vary.*
2. **Which details does the author include to lead readers to assume Zak, Alia, and Mip are Earthlings? What is the purpose of waiting until the end of the story to reveal that they are not Earthlings? Zak and Alia go to school, have parents who set rules, and have a**

brother-sister relationship that is like that of many human siblings. Mip has a damp nose and a furry head that Zak scratches, she pants, and she sniffs things she is curious about; these details could all be used in the description of a dog. The author likely leads readers to believe Alia and Zak are human to help readers relate to Alia and Zak—and to think of the creatures in the pod as grotesque, possibly dangerous aliens. Up until almost the very end of the story, readers think of Zak and Alia as “us” and the creatures in the pod as “them.” When it’s revealed that the creatures in the pod are actually humans, readers are surprised and have to rethink who is “us” and who is “them.” This gives the story an interesting twist and makes readers consider how people treat those who are different or who they see as outsiders.

3. **Why do you think the title of the story is “They Might Be Dangerous”?** *The title reflects Zak’s fear of creatures he doesn’t know. It refers to an assumption that what is unknown is scary or dangerous.*
4. **Consider this line: “And yet, if that were her inside the pod, she’d hope someone would choose courage over fear.” What does it mean to choose courage over fear? Can you think of examples of other characters in literature who choose courage over fear? Can you think of examples of real people from history who chose courage over fear?** *Students may offer that choosing courage over fear means making a conscious decision to act despite feeling afraid or apprehensive. People who choose courage over fear face challenges or potentially dangerous situations with bravery in hopes that their actions can lead to positive change—for themselves as individuals, for a community, for the world. Students might offer examples of characters from literature such as Katniss Everdeen from the Hunger Games series, Harry Potter and Hogwarts students from the Harry Potter series, August Pullman from Wonder, Liesel Meminger from The Book Thief, and Starr Carter from The Hate U Give. They might mention people from history such as Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman, Martin Luther King Jr., Malala Yousafzai, Ruby Bridges, and Anne Frank.*
5. **What connections can you make between what the author describes in the essay “Desert Eclipse” and the story “They Might Be Dangerous”?** *The author camped out to view a lunar eclipse in the Anza-Borrego Desert, and Alia and Zak live on a desert planet; the author describes an experience involving a stink bug, and like stink bugs, Alia and Zak have wings and antennas; the author relates observing a celestial event with wonder, just as Alia is fascinated by the stars and the secrets of the galaxy; the author explains that the stink bug in the desert appeared gross to a young boy, just as the aliens appear grotesque to Alia and Zak; Joe, the desert guide, protected the stink bug and its home, just as Alia wants to protect and help the Earthlings.*
6. **What message do you think the author wants readers to take away from “They Might Be Dangerous” and “Desert Eclipse”?** *Answers will vary, but students may offer ideas along the lines of “We should not assume that what is unfamiliar is harmful.”*

3. Write Your Sequel (60 minutes)

- Have students use the **Featured Skill Activity: Character** to help them to respond to the writing prompt on page 31 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story page:

Consider the last line of the story: “She knew what she had to do.” What does Alia have to do? What happens after the watchers arrive? Write a sequel to the story that answers these questions. Be sure to stay true to the characters.

- Alternatively, have students choose a task from the **Choice Board**, a menu of culminating tasks. (Our Choice Board options include the writing prompt from the magazine, differentiated versions of the writing prompt, and additional creative ways for students to demonstrate their understanding of a story.)

Other stories from the Scope archives that address the question “Are we alone?”:

- Narrative Nonfiction: [“Are Those Aliens?”](#)
- Short Read: [“The Day We Sent a Message to Aliens”](#)
- Fiction: [“What We Saw”](#)

Ode to El Molcajete

A lively and evocative poem about family and food

About the Poem

Learning Objective: Students will analyze a poem, then use it as a model to write their own.

Featured Skill: analyzing and writing poetry

Essential Questions:

- What role does food play in culture and identity?
- What is the role of family in our lives?
- Why are memories important?

Standards:

The article and its suite of support materials support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.4, W.4, W.5

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:

- Poem Read-Aloud
- Text-to-speech

Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Poetry Analysis
- Featured Skill: Poetry Planner

Video:

- Poet Read-Aloud
- Using a Molcajete (clip)

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

1. Prepare to Read (10 minutes)

Do Now: Introduce the Molcajete (10 minutes)

- If your students are likely to be unfamiliar with molcajetes, kick off your lesson with a quick primer. Explain that a molcajete is a traditional Mexican tool for grinding spices, chiles, seeds, and nuts, and is used to prepare salsas, guacamole, and mole (a type of sauce). A molcajete consists of a bowl—usually with three short legs—and a grinding tool, both carved from volcanic rock. Show students the **Using a Molcajete video clip** (available in your Resources tab), or, if you happen to own a molcajete, you might bring it in for a quick demonstration! (Alternatively, you could arrange in advance for a student to do a short demonstration of how to use a molcajete.)

2. Read and Discuss (30 minutes)

- As a class, watch the **Poet Read-Aloud video** in which Gary Soto reads his poem to your students. Find it in your Resources tab.
- For a second read, invite students to read the poem silently to themselves. Then discuss the following questions as a class.

Poetry Analysis (25 minutes)

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

1. **What part of his life is Gary Soto writing about in this poem?** *He is writing about his childhood.*
2. **Explain how this poem about a molcajete is also about the poet's family.** *The memories Soto describes in this poem involve not only the molcajete but also members of his family. He begins by describing his grandmother using her molcajete, her eyes watering from the onion she is smashing. When Soto describes a time he licked a spoon that was resting in the molcajete, he doesn't mention his grandmother, but in a way, she is part of this memory too, as she is likely the*

one who made the spicy food that he licked off the spoon. Soto then describes a time he took the molcajete outside and filled it with dirt—and how his mother reacted when she caught him. And finally, Soto writes about his grandfather eating spicy chiles from the molcajete.

3. **Besides the fact that she used the molcajete, what do we learn about Soto's grandmother in the first stanza?** *We learn that she had a son who went away (we don't learn the reason) and that she watched TV novelas.*
4. **The second stanza is packed with similes and metaphors. Identify them and explain what they help you understand.** *Soto writes that his tongue was "like a red flag." This simile helps you picture him with his tongue hanging out of his mouth in reaction to the spicy food he just licked off the spoon. Soto then uses a second simile to help us picture the way his tongue was hanging out of his mouth, writing that it was "Like the tongue/Of a dog on a hot day." Next, Soto describes drinking from a hose as "a gas station/Of water" that filled up his "one-gallon stomach." This metaphor helps the reader understand that Soto gulped an enormous amount of water—that the water was flowing from the hose into his stomach the way gas flows from a gas pump into a car's gas tank.*
5. **In the third stanza, Soto writes, "But it wasn't the onion/That made me cry,/But my mother/Looking out from the window." Which lines from another stanza do these lines echo? Why might the poet have included this "echo"? These lines echo lines from the first stanza of the poem: "The half moon of onion/Cries sad tears/Into the stone,/And my abuela/Leaves two or three tears,/Not from the sadness/Of a son going away,/Not for the starstruck/Young couples/In TV novelas./It's the onion/That makes her cry." Answers to the second question will vary. Perhaps the poet included this echo to draw a connection between his grandmother and himself (using the molcajete led both of them to cry) while also emphasizing the difference between the two of them (she's an adult who makes spicy food for her family; he's a kid who messes around in the backyard). Or perhaps the poet included this echo simply because there is something enjoyable about it for the reader—there's something fun or satisfying in recognizing the similarity between the two groups of lines. Some students may also find humor in the echo and how it expresses the idea that it was onions that made Soto's grandmother cry and an angry look from his mom that made Soto cry.**
6. **In the first stanza, Soto writes that the molcajete "runs with/The blood of tomatoes." Explain the metaphor Soto is using in this description and how it continues in the third stanza.** *When Soto describes the molcajete as running with the blood of tomatoes, he is comparing the tomatoes being crushed in the molcajete to an animal being killed. In the third stanza, Soto continues this metaphor when he describes the molcajete as a "slaughterhouse" for chiles, tomatoes, and onions.*

7. An ode is a type of poem that expresses the writer's thoughts and feelings about a particular person, place, or thing. Often, an ode is written to praise or celebrate that person, place, or thing. In what way is this poem an ode? *"Ode to El Molcajete" is an ode because it expresses the writer's thoughts and feelings about an object: his grandmother's molcajete. The writer describes his memories of the molcajete and how it was connected to members of his family. He seems to be recounting these memories fondly, celebrating the molcajete and the role it played in his childhood.*

3. Write Your Own (30 minutes)

- Have students complete the **Featured Skill Activity: Poetry Planner**. This activity will help them brainstorm ideas and provide tips for writing their own poem in response to the prompt:

Write an ode to something connected to cooking or eating, using "Ode to El Molcajete" as a model.