

Into the Tunnel

Will Maribel ever be the same?

About the Story

Lexile® Measure 650L

For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective: to explore characterization in a work of short fiction

Featured Skills: character

Additional skills covered in this lesson plan: mood, author's purpose, text structure, figurative language

Essential Questions:

- What makes someone a hero?
- Can friends know us better than we know ourselves?
- What does it take to face our fears?

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.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

Connected readings from the Scope archives:

- "They Might Be Dangerous"
- "Follow the Water"
- "The Cabin"

Activities to print, project, or share digitally:

- Vocabulary: Definitions and Practice
- Double-Entry Journal
- Featured Skill: Character
- Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions
- Choice Board
- Lesson Plan Slide Deck
- Quiz*

*Available on two levels

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Featured Skill

1. Prepare to Read (5 minutes)

Preview Vocabulary (5 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: *ellipsis*, *skittering*, *wafted*. 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 to your LMS and have students preview the words and complete the activity independently before class.

2. Read and Discuss (45 minutes)

- Read the “Spotlight On” box on page 26 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**, 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:

∞ = connection

★ = important

? = I don’t understand

💬 = “I’m thinking . . .” (add words and comments)

❤️ = love this

- 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 three to five lines that jump out at them or feel particularly meaningful. In the right-hand column, have them record their reactions to these lines through

questions, comments, connections, or analysis. You can find both a print and a digital version of our **Double-Entry Journal** handout in the Resources tab.

- 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, use the **Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions** in the Resources tab.)

Close-Reading Questions

(20 minutes)

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

1. **Describe the mood of paragraph 1. Which details help create this mood?** (mood) *The mood of paragraph 1 is mysterious, frightening, and ominous. The line "No one knew how far it went—or when it was built or why" establishes a mood of mystery. The lines "It was said that if you went too far inside, you might never come out. And if you did come out, you would never be the same" create a frightening and ominous mood. The reader can't help but wonder what happens inside the tunnel. Who or what prevents people from leaving, and why would people who do manage to get out never be the same?*
2. **Wondering why Timothy has abruptly stopped texting, Maribel thinks, "Why hadn't he hit send? Was he lost? Was he bleeding? Were spiders crawling in his eye sockets?" What is the author's purpose for including these rhetorical questions?** (author's purpose, text structure) *The purpose of these rhetorical questions is to show Maribel's concern for Timothy's safety. She is troubled by his lack of response and agonizes over what may be happening to him inside the tunnel. The author wants to show us that Maribel cares deeply for Timothy and that he is one of her best friends. By suggesting terrifying possibilities for what happened to Timothy, these lines also create suspense and conjure fear, evoking concern for Timothy in the reader.*
3. **Summarize the difference between the main character in Timothy's *Magnificent Maribel* and the person Maribel sees when she looks in the mirror. Why might the way Timothy sees Maribel be different from the way Maribel sees herself?** (character) *The character in *Magnificent Maribel* is a superhero with extraordinary abilities. We can infer that the Maribel in Timothy's imagination is extremely brave, as she "dangles off cliffs and jumps out of planes." When Maribel looks in the mirror, she sees an ordinary girl, "the kind of kid who always had her Chromebook charged, who always had an extra pen to lend you." In other words, she sees someone practical and dependable but not a hero. Answers to why Timothy sees Maribel differently from how Maribel sees herself will vary. Students may comment that people can be self-critical and are sometimes unable to see the full extent of their talent. Good friends may see us in a more positive light than we see ourselves.*

4. **Explain the meaning of the following lines:** “And maybe that was OK—not to be the one who does the brave thing. Maybe it was OK to be a supporting character and not the main one.” (figurative language) *Maribel is thinking that some people are just braver than others and that not everyone can be the center of attention. Not everyone can be extraordinary—and she is coming to terms with the idea that she is more of an “ordinary” person. When Maribel refers to a supporting character, she is talking about a person who helps others, does not tend to assume leadership roles, or does not usually get a lot of attention; she’s comparing herself to a minor character in a book or movie, saying that she is not the kind of person who would be the protagonist in a story.*

5. **Describing Maribel’s reaction to Timothy’s disappearance, the author writes, “Still, after Timothy went silent, Maribel didn’t hesitate. She hopped on her bike and pedaled as fast as she could.” Then, the author writes, after standing at the tunnel’s entrance and shouting Timothy’s name, Maribel “marched inside.” What do these details tell you about Maribel?** (character) *These details tell you that Maribel is braver than she thinks. She could share her concerns about Timothy with an adult, wait longer to see if Timothy eventually responds, or put together a search party. Instead, despite how frightening she finds the tunnel, she wastes no time and takes it upon herself to save Timothy singlehandedly. The word “marched” is extremely telling. Given the way Maribel perceives herself, the reader might expect her to cautiously creep or tiptoe into the tunnel. Instead, she marches in, which shows great determination and even confidence.*

6. **Consider the last line of the story. How has the tunnel changed Maribel?** (character) *The tunnel has changed Maribel by changing the way she sees herself. When she went into the tunnel, Maribel saw herself as an ordinary girl, someone who “just sort of blended into the background.” She thought of herself as a supporting character, not a main character. After Maribel rescues Timothy and emerges from the tunnel, she realizes that she is in fact very brave and capable. She realizes that she is a main character after all. She understands, thanks to the tunnel, that there is a “Magnificent Maribel” inside her!*

Critical-Thinking Questions

(5 minutes)

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

1. **Do you think everyday people can be heroes? Why or why not?** *Answers will vary.*

2. **Is bravery a trait people must be born with, or can it be developed?** *Answers will vary.*

3. Write Your Monologues (60 minutes)

- Have students use the **Featured Skill Activity: Character** to help them to respond to the writing prompt on page 27 in the printed magazine and at the bottom of the digital story page:

Write two monologues: one from Timothy's perspective and one from Maribel's. Stay true to the characters as they share their thoughts on the events in the tunnel and about each other.

- 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.)

Connected fiction from the *Scope* archives about courage:

- ["They Might Be Dangerous"](#)
- ["Follow the Water"](#)
- ["The Cabin"](#)