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A COMPLETE TEACHING KIT

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JANUARY

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MARCH

APRIL

MAY

Adventure Awaits You and Your Students!

I recently had a conversation with a teacher who told me how much she loves giving her students stories about places they have never seen—stories of the ocean, the mountains, farms, or big cities. Such stories can inspire enormous curiosity and offer a powerful connection to the broader world, particularly for students who have not had the opportunity to travel beyond their own communities.

That is a big reason why this issue's cover story holds a special place in my heart. The setting is Death Valley National Park, a spectacular desert wilderness of rugged beauty. It's a place where prospectors once roamed looking for gold. Where a rare spring rain will produce a rainbow of wildflowers that bloom gloriously for a few days before they wither in the brutal heat. Where an 11,000-foot peak holds dominion over valleys that dip hundreds of feet below sea level.

We hope that our story "Lost in Death Valley" will spark your students' imaginations (as it did mine!) and inspire deep thinking about our relationship with the natural world.

As the year comes to a close and summer lies on the horizon, know that you and your students are in our thoughts. In fact, our team is already dreaming up new content for next year.

Have a wonderful summer!



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Let's keep
in touch
over the
summer!

DON'T MISS THIS!

Don't miss our fascinating Behind the Scenes video about Death Valley. It's the perfect companion "text" to the cover story.



That's me with the amazing Chet Pohle, a geophysicist who took me on an unforgettable tour of Death Valley.

STEVE LEWIS



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YOUR MAY ISSUE AT A GLANCE

ARTICLE	SUMMARY	PRIMARY SKILL(S)
Grammar, pp. 2-3 “Grammar Goes Surfing”	Students practice using <i>less</i> and <i>fewer</i> while reading about big-wave surfing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conventions of standard English
Literary Nonfiction, pp. 4-9 “Lost in Death Valley”	This riveting story follows three women who find themselves stranded and lost in one of the most dangerous places on Earth: Death Valley. The article is packed with sensory details, descriptive writing, and fascinating information about Death Valley National Park.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Featured Skill: Descriptive writing • Author’s craft • Mood • Key details • Text structure • Inference
Paired Texts, pp. 10-15 “The World’s First Superstar” and “Say Goodbye to the Elephants”	Students explore how attitudes about wild animals have changed over time by reading a nonfiction article about Jumbo, celebrity elephant of the 1800s, and an essay about the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey circus’s decision to stop using elephants in their shows.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Featured Skill: Synthesis • Analyzing the development of an idea • Key ideas and details • Inference • Tone • Critical thinking
Drama, pp. 16-22 <i>Light</i>	Our fascinating play is a fictionalized portrayal of the events leading up to Thomas Edison’s invention of the incandescent light bulb. We’ve paired the play with a narrative essay about life in the 1820s.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Featured Skill: Drawing conclusions • Metaphor • Inference • Character • Literary device • Text structure
Fiction, pp. 23-27 First Line Contest Winner! “The Secret Ingredient”	Award-winning author Lemony Snicket brings beloved characters from his series, <i>All the Wrong Questions</i> , to the pages of <i>Scope</i> , with all the dark humor that made Snicket famous. This delightful story is based on this year’s winning line from our First Line Contest.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Featured Skill: Point of view • Character • Alliteration • Word choice • Simile • Foreshadowing • Inference • Tone
Debate, p. 28-29 “Is It Wrong to Photoshop Celebrities?”	Cora, Katie, and Isabella want the magazine <i>Teen World</i> to ban Photoshop. <i>Teen World’s</i> editor thinks they shouldn’t let the photos in magazines make them feel bad. Who makes the best argument? Your students decide.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting an argument • Central ideas and details
You Write It, p. 32 “I Woke Up My School”	Students turn our interview with 18-year-old Jilly Dos Santos, who got her school to push back its starting time, into an article.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarizing • Central ideas and details

MAURICE R. ROBINSON, 1895-1982, FOUNDER

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ONLINE RESOURCES (scope.scholastic.com)		COMMON CORE ELA ANCHOR STANDARDS*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PW More practice with <i>less</i> and <i>fewer</i> 		L.3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio: Hear the article read aloud • Video: Behind the Scenes • PW Descriptive Writing • PW Close-Reading & Critical-Thinking Questions • PW Read, Think, Explain (two levels) • PW Vocabulary: Definitions & Practice • PW Video Discussion Questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IW PW Quiz (two levels) • PW Contest Entry Form • PW Core Skill: Text Structures • PW Core Skill: Summarizing (two levels) • PW Core Skill: Mood 	R.1, R.2, R.4, R.5, R.7, W.2, SL.1, SL.2, L.3, L.4, L.6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PW Changing Attitudes • PW Close-Reading & Critical-Thinking Questions • PW Vocabulary: Definitions & Practice • IW PW Quiz (two levels) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PW Contest Entry Form • PW Core Skill: Central Ideas and Details • PW Core Skill: Text Evidence (two levels) 	R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.9, W.2, W.9, SL.1, L.4, L.6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PW Drawing Conclusions • PW Close-Reading & Critical-Thinking Questions • PW Vocabulary: Definitions & Practice • PW Literary Elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IW PW Quiz (two levels) • PW Contest Entry Form • PW Core Skill: Making Inferences • PW Core Skill: Text Features 	R.1, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.9, W.2, W.9, SL.1, L.4, L.5, L.6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PW Point of View • PW Close-Reading & Critical-Thinking Questions • PW DIY Vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PW Literary Elements • IW PW Quiz (two levels) • PW Contest Entry Form 	R.1, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.6, W.3, W.4, SL.1, L.3, L.4, L.5, L.6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PW Essay Kit • PW Scavenger Hunt • PW Core Skill: Tone 		R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.6, R.8, R.9, W.1, W.4, W.7, SL.1, L.1, L.2, L.3, L.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PW Guide to “You Write It” Activity • PW Model Text for “You Write It” Activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PW Contest Entry Form 	R.1, R.2, R.7, W.2, W.4, W.7, SL.1, L.1, L.2, L.3

* To find grade-level specific Common Core standards as well as the Texas State Standards, go to Scope Online.

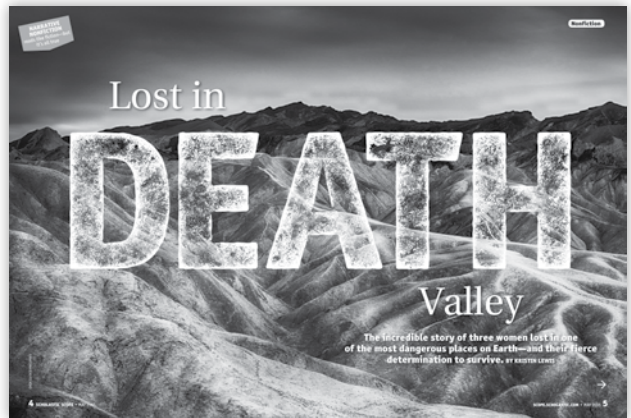
Lost in Death Valley

An evocative true story of three women stranded in the hottest place on Earth

Preview: On July 22, 2010, 17-year-old Gina Cooper took a trip to Death Valley, California, with her mother and a friend. After a series of mishaps, they became stranded with no gas, no food, very little water—and not a soul around to help them.

Learning Objective: to analyze how descriptive writing adds to the reader's understanding of the setting and events in a nonfiction text

Key Skills: author's craft, mood, key details, text structure, inference



Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

1 Preparing to Read

Watch a video.

(10 minutes)

Tell students they are going to read an article about Death Valley. Ask what images the name “Death Valley” evokes. Distribute the **Video Discussion Questions** for students to preview, then show our **Behind the Scenes Video**, which will introduce students to this incredible place and offer insights into the writing process.

Preview vocabulary.

(5 minutes, activity online)

Project or distribute our **Vocabulary Definitions** and preview them. Highlighted words: *desolate, doggedly, giddy, inferno, notorious, oppressive*

2 Reading the Article

- Give students a few minutes to preview the text features and read the As You Read box.
- Have students read the article independently.
- Break students into groups to read the article again and discuss the close-reading questions.

- Regroup as a class to discuss the critical-thinking questions.

Close-Reading Questions

(10 minutes, activity sheet online)

- ▶ **What mood does the first paragraph evoke? How does the author create this mood?** (author's craft, mood) *The first paragraph creates a dire mood. The author vividly describes Death Valley as a place where people suffer and die. The phrases “hottest place on Earth,” “sucks the air out of your lungs,” and “scorches the bottoms of your feet” show the intensity of the heat. By stating that at least one person dies in Death Valley each year, the author emphasizes the risk of entering the area.*
- ▶ **The author calls Death Valley a place of “devastating extremes.” Which details support this description?** (descriptive writing) *Death Valley has extreme land features and temperatures. The author says “snowcapped mountains jut thousands of feet into the sky” and describes “vast salt flats.” The temperature can rise to more than 120 degrees.*

► **What factors contributed to the women getting lost?** (key details) *They took a wrong turn at Teakettle Junction; small roads, which you can infer they were on, were not on their map; their GPS was ineffective because Death Valley is so remote; everything looked the same, so they couldn't find their way back.*

► **The section “What Went Wrong?” includes almost no description of the women's feelings, yet their emotions are easy to detect. How does the author achieve this?** (author's craft) *By describing the situation the women were in, the author lets you infer their feelings. For example, she writes, “They drove. And drove. And drove,” on separate lines to create the frustrating and scary feeling of becoming lost. After reporting that their car ran out of gas, the author cuts away to describe how worried about them Donna's daughter Sky was. This creates a sense of panic about their situation.*

► **In the section “The Search Begins,” why does the author include the paragraph that starts “The human body is not made to withstand . . .”?** (text structure) *This paragraph provides information about the effects of heat on the body. It also helps readers understand what Donna, Gina, and Jenny were going through.*

► **What can you infer about how the three women helped one another to survive?** (inference) *You can infer that they worked as a team to help and encourage one another. Gina went to look for signs of life while Donna and Jenny gathered pine needles and cacti. Gina got her mother to start the car again. None of them gave up. Donna cared for Gina when she got sick with dehydration and exhaustion.*

Critical-Thinking Questions

(10 minutes, activity sheet online)

► **What roles did both luck and ingenuity play in the women's survival?** *The women were extremely lucky to find the campsite, which provided enough food, water, and shelter to keep them alive. They were lucky*

that Tyler Johns and Scott Steele decided to make one more pass in their helicopter before giving up. But they also took numerous steps to survive. Donna had stocked the car with supplies, showing that she knew to plan for the unexpected. They gathered nutrient-rich pine needles. They managed to break into the trailers using tools from the car. They left their car in the road so it could be seen, which it was.

► **How do the photos and map add to your understanding of this story?** *The photo on pages 4 and 5 immediately establishes the harsh and surreal environment of Death Valley. The photos on page 8 help you envision the campsite and what a great surprise it must have been to find it beyond the trees. The other photos as well as the map help place you in Death Valley.*

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What is wilderness?
.....
What is the allure of wild places?
.....
How do humans cope with disaster?

► **What crucial role did other people play in helping the women to survive?** *The women would not have survived if not for the intervention of people outside Death Valley. Donna's daughter Sky suspected something was wrong and managed to figure out where her mother was. Sky contacted the California Highway Patrol, which ultimately found and saved the women.*

3 Skills Focus: Descriptive Writing

Distribute the **Descriptive Writing** activity sheet to help students analyze descriptive passages in this article. It will help prepare them to respond to the writing prompt on page 9.

► **MENTOR TEXT.** Have students use this article as a mentor text to write their own descriptions of an environment that has affected them in some way. Ask them to underline sentences or paragraphs in the article that create strong images, then have students try to use the author's techniques in their own writing.

Differentiation

For Struggling Readers

Find details in the text that explain why Death Valley is a difficult place in which to survive. Use the photos and captions as well. Then write a paragraph explaining why Donna, Gina, and Jenny's situation was so serious.

For Advanced Readers

This article presents a classic conflict of humans versus nature. What important lessons, if any, do you think you can draw from it? Write an essay responding to this question. Consider factors that led to danger and survival in your answer.

Complexity Factors

See how these texts will challenge your students.

Purpose: The article has dual purposes: to captivate readers with a suspenseful story, and to provide fascinating information about the hottest place on Earth.

Structure: The text relates a story in chronological order but also includes informational passages and a good deal of descriptive language.

Language Conventionality and Clarity:

- **Vocabulary:** many challenging academic and domain-specific words including *inferno*, *notorious*, and *desolate*
- **Figurative Language:** metaphors, figures of speech, rhetorical questions

Knowledge Demands: Map-reading skills, as well as familiarity with units of measurement (acres, miles) will be helpful.

Lexile: 950L

Literature Connections

Other curricular survival stories:

- *Blizzard* by Jim Murphy
- *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park
- "The Open Boat" by Stephen Crane

ONLINE RESOURCES

AUDIO: Hear the article read aloud.

VIDEO: "Scope Behind the Scenes: Lost in Death Valley"

ACTIVITIES TO PRINT OR PROJECT:

- Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions*
- Video Discussion Questions*
- Vocabulary*
- Descriptive Writing*
- Read, Think, Explain: Identifying Nonfiction Elements (two levels)
- Quiz (two levels)
- Contest Entry Form
- Core Skill: Mood
- Core Skill: Text Structures
- Core Skill: Summarizing (two levels)

*Supports the lesson plan

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Light

How Thomas Edison changed the world

Preview: This fascinating play is a fictionalized portrayal of the events leading up to Thomas Edison's invention of the incandescent light bulb. The play and its accompanying essay show readers how this invention dramatically changed American life.

Learning Objective: to draw a conclusion, based on multiple sources, about the way incandescent light bulbs changed America

Key Skills: metaphor, inference, text structure, character, literary device, mood



Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

1 Preparing for the Play

Brainstorm, then read the essay.

(15 minutes)

- As a class, discuss the importance of light in our daily lives. Brainstorm different light sources (e.g., flashlights, car headlights, streetlights, refrigerator lights). Ask students to imagine how life would be different without them.
- Read aloud “Life Without Light” on page 22. Ask the class how life in the 1820s was different from life today.

Preview vocabulary.

(8 minutes, activity online)

- Distribute or project our **Vocabulary Definitions** for students to refer to while they read. Highlighted words: *acrid*, *disheveled*, *douses*, *emanates*, *engulfed*, *exhausted*, *flabbergasted*, *noxious*

2 Reading the Play

(30 minutes, activity sheets online)

- Read aloud the “As You Read” box on page 17.

- Choose several students who will read the photo captions that appear throughout the play; these contain useful information about the play's setting.
- Assign parts and read the play aloud as a class.
- Put students in groups to discuss the following close-reading questions.

Close-Reading Questions

▶ **In Scene 1, N2 says of Edison's lab, “The room is a hive of activity.” What idea is the narrator expressing with this metaphor?** (metaphor) *The metaphor compares the lab to a beehive swarming with insects hard at work. The narrator is conveying that the lab is packed with busy workers.*

▶ **At the end of Scene 1, why is Alfred surprised to learn Edison's identity?** (inference) *Edison is described as “disheveled.” You can infer that he doesn't conform to Alfred's idea of a leader or, perhaps, of a brilliant inventor. Also, when Alfred says “Someday I hope to be as good as Mr. Edison himself,” Edison—whether out of playfulness, modesty, or both—doesn't identify himself.*

▶ **When Alfred's mother is introduced in Scene 3, she has a bandage on her arm. Where do you learn the reason for the bandage, and what big idea in the play does this information support?** (text structure)

Alfred's conversation with his father reveals that his mother was injured in a fire started by an oil lamp. The accident supports the big idea that there was great need for a safer light source.

▶ **At the end of Scene 4, Batch tells Edison, "Even if the money stops coming, I will still be by your side." What does this line tell you about Batch?**

(character) *Earlier in the scene, Edison skips dinner and decides to work through the night. The scene highlights Edison's passion for his work. Batch's words show that he feels similarly passionate and also that he is deeply loyal to Edison.*

▶ **Scene 6 includes a flashback to Edison's childhood. How does the flashback contribute to our understanding of Edison and of Alfred?**

(character, literary device) *The flashback portrays the young Edison as an enthusiastic, science-minded kid whose dangerous experiments worried his father. It shows that Alfred and the young Edison are very similar. You can infer that Edison understands Alfred, and that Alfred may grow up to be a great scientist like Edison.*

▶ **What mood does the design of "Life Without Light" create? How does this mood relate to the text?** (mood) *The design is dark, with a single orange candle that has been snuffed out and is still smoking. This design creates a foreboding and somber mood that makes the reader imagine a darker world. This mood helps support the central idea of the text that life without electric light was more dangerous.*

Critical-Thinking Questions

▶ **The play's subtitle states that Edison changed the world. What are some things people do today that would have been difficult or impossible before electric light?** *Answers will vary. Students might say that sports teams can play night games, that students*

can study and people can work more safely and easily at night, or that people can take walks at night.

▶ **Reread the photo caption "Living in the Light" on page 21. Do the drawbacks of electric light outweigh the advantages?** *Answers may vary. Most students will likely say that the advantages are many, while the drawbacks are few. Others might say that the drawbacks, such as changes to animals' habits, are too important to ignore.*

▶ **At the end of the play, Edison says to Alfred, "We will find out what the world needs, then try hard to invent it." How does this line relate to**

Edison's invention of the light bulb? What invention do you think the world

needs today? *The play and essay both emphasize the need that existed for a safe, bright, and clean source of light. The "Dangerous Light" caption on page 18 points out the risk of fire that candles and gas lamps presented. The essay describes how activities were limited by dim light after sundown. Edison "was determined to solve these problems" (p. 17) and worked relentlessly to create the electric light bulb. Answers will vary.*

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What does it mean to fail?

.....
How would life be different without electric lights?

.....
How can new technologies be both helpful and harmful?

3 Skill Building: Drawing Conclusions

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

Have students complete the activity **Drawing Conclusions** in groups. This activity will prepare them to respond to the writing prompt on page 22.

DIG DEEPER! Have students research types of lighting available today (incandescent, compact fluorescent, LED, etc.). Ask them to explore the advantages and disadvantages of each type of lighting and prepare recommendations for their families for lighting their homes.

Differentiation

For Struggling Readers

Early in the play, Edison tells Alfred, “When you have exhausted all possibilities, remember this: You haven’t.” What does he mean by this? What does this line tell you about Edison’s character?

For Advanced Readers

How has artificial light affected us, both positively and negatively? Draw on information in the play, captions, photos, and essay, as well as at least one additional source, to support your ideas.

Complexity Factors

See how these texts will challenge your students.

Levels of Meaning/Purpose: This fictionalized account of Thomas Edison’s invention of the incandescent light bulb can also be read as a statement on the value of tenacity, loyalty, and imagination.

Structure: The play is mainly chronological but begins with a scene-setting introduction. It includes a flashback. The essay is written in the second-person point of view.

Language Conventionality and Clarity:

- **Vocabulary:** many higher academic and domain-specific words (*disheveled, filament, flabbergasted*)
- **Figurative Language:** metaphors, similes, figures of speech, colloquialisms, rhetorical questions

Knowledge Demands: The texts refer to scientific concepts that may be unfamiliar to some readers.

Lexile: 910L (essay)

Literature Connections

Other texts related to invention:

- *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* by Brian Selznick
- *The Time Machine* by H. G. Wells
- *The Wright Brothers: How They Invented the Airplane* by Russell Freedman

ONLINE RESOURCES

ACTIVITIES TO PRINT OR PROJECT:

- Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions*
- Vocabulary*
- Drawing Conclusions*
- Literary Elements
- Quiz (two levels)
- Contest Entry Form
- Core Skill: Making Inferences
- Core Skill: Text Features

*Supports the lesson plan

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The World's First Superstar

Two moving and thought-provoking texts take your students on a journey through the history of circus elephants

Preview: Students explore our changing relationship with animals through an article about Jumbo, the celebrity elephant of the 1800s, and an essay about elephants being phased out of the Ringling Bros. circus.

Learning Objective: to draw on two texts in an analysis of how and why attitudes about wild animals have changed over time

Key Skills: analyzing the development of an idea, key ideas and details, inference, tone, synthesis



Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

1 Preparing to Read

Preview vocabulary.

(3 minutes, activity sheet online)

Distribute or project our **Vocabulary Definitions** for students to refer to while they read. Highlighted words: *colossus*, *cultivate*, *distraught*, *enthrall*, *phenomenon*, *scrawny*, *status*

2 Reading and Discussing

(45 minutes, activity sheets online)

• Ask students to read “The World’s First Superstar” in small groups. Have them stay in their groups to discuss the following close-reading questions.

Close-Reading Questions

▶ In the first sentence, Lauren Tarshis calls Jumbo “one of the world’s most beloved celebrities” of the late 1800s. How does she develop this idea?

(analyzing the development of an idea) *Tarshis first describes the reaction to Jumbo’s death, stating that it made newspaper headlines, that people wept over it in*

the streets, and that Queen Victoria was “distraught” by it. Tarshis also notes that Jumbo’s image appeared everywhere, from magazines to household products. She repeats the idea that Jumbo was a huge celebrity, calling him “the most famous creature in the world” and “a pop-culture icon.” Other details Tarshis includes: When the London Zoo announced it was selling Jumbo, mobs showed up to protest; a musical and a movie were made about Jumbo after his death.

▶ According to the article, why was Jumbo popular?

(key ideas and details) *According to the article, in the late 1800s, many people were moving to cities and looking for new types of entertainment, which Jumbo provided. Zoos were only just becoming popular, and there was “great curiosity about the natural world.” Jumbo also had appeal, Tarshis explains, because wild animals were seen as status symbols for cities.*

▶ Describe the relationship between Matthew Scott and Jumbo. Support your answer with text evidence. (key ideas, inference) *A strong bond existed*

between Scott and Jumbo. Tarshis writes that they “hit it off right away” and describes how Jumbo would get upset at night if Scott was not there. When Jumbo died, writes Tarshis, he was “clutching Scott’s hand with his trunk.” Scott, devastated, wept for hours and had to be carried away from Jumbo’s side.

- Have students read “Say Goodbye to the Elephants” as a class and discuss the following questions, which refer to both of the texts.

Close-Reading Questions

▶ **What is Adee Braun’s point of view? Is it neutral, or does she show bias either for or against Ringling Bros. decision to retire its elephants?**

Explain. (tone) Braun never outright states her opinion, but you can infer that she supports Ringling Bros.’s decision. She asks, “But is it fair to suggest that any elephant would want to join the circus?” She also describes elephants in a compassionate, admiring way, and draws an unfavorable comparison between life in the circus and life in the wild. In the last section of her article, Braun states, “But perhaps we’ve come to understand that loving animals means setting them free.” You can infer that this is her point of view—that she believes we should set wild animals free.

▶ **Explain the last line of the photo caption on page 15. How, specifically, could people affect the fate of circus animals?** (inference, critical thinking)
The caption means that if the public pressures Ringling Bros. to retire its other animals from the circus, Ringling Bros. will likely do so, because the circus wants to attract customers. If people continue to buy tickets and don’t complain, the circus will get the message that the public wants the animals to stay in the show.

DIG DEEPER! Have students research to learn more about the plight of elephants today. Why are so few left? What threats do they face? What efforts are being made to protect them?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What is our responsibility toward animals?
.....

What shapes our beliefs?
.....

How can we bring about change?

▶ On page 13, Tarshis states that over time, “many scientists and animal lovers began to appreciate that taking animals from the wild can be dangerous and cruel. Today, conservationists are working hard to protect elephants in their natural habitat.”

Does Braun’s essay support these statements?

Explain. (synthesis) Braun’s essay does support these statements. Braun explains that Ringling Bros. is eliminating elephants from its circus because of a public “mood shift” against elephants performing for our entertainment. Braun herself expresses a very similar idea when she writes, “But perhaps we’ve come to understand that loving animals means setting them free.” On the other hand, the photo caption

on page 15 states that Ringling Bros. has no immediate plans to retire its other animals. If more people were opposed to wild animals being kept in captivity, these animals, too, would likely no longer be used in the circus.

Critical-Thinking Questions

▶ **Why might attitudes about wild animals have changed since the**

1880s? Answers will vary. Students might suggest that we’ve come to care more about wild animals as a result of understanding them better. Another reason attitudes have changed is that we have seen the damage we have caused; we now realize that we have the ability to decimate entire species.

▶ **Do you support Ringling Bros.’s decision to remove elephants from its circus? Support your opinion with details from the texts.** Answers will vary. Students may agree that wild animals belong in the wild, or they may agree that circus elephants educate people and create concern for elephants in the wild.

3 Skill Focus: Synthesis

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

Distribute **Changing Attitudes** for students to complete independently. It will prepare them to respond to the writing prompt on page 15.

Differentiation

For Struggling Readers

In a well-organized paragraph, explain how attitudes about elephants in the circus have changed since Jumbo's time. Include information from both articles.

For Advanced Readers

Indian civil rights leader Mahatma Gandhi once said, "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated." Considering Gandhi's statement, are we moving in a positive or a negative direction? Use information from both articles to support your answer.

Complexity Factors

See how these texts will challenge your students.

Levels of Meaning/Purpose: "The World's First Superstar" is the story of the famous elephant Jumbo. "Say Goodbye to the Elephants" examines the announcement by Ringling Bros. that it will retire its circus elephants by 2018.

Structure: The nonfiction jumps around in time and includes narrative and informational passages. The essay includes compare-and-contrast structures.

Language Conventionality and Clarity:

- **Vocabulary:** higher academic and domain-specific vocabulary (e.g., *colossus*, *distraught*, *enthral*, *phenomenon*)
- **Figurative language:** rhetorical questions ("But why did he become so famous?"), hyperbole ("The Greatest Show on Earth"), metaphors ("a Jennifer Lawrence with a trunk")

Knowledge Demands: Familiarity with the aims of animal-rights organizations and conservationists will be helpful.

Lexile: "First Superstar": 1020L; "Say Goodbye": 1220L

Literature Connections

Texts that explore our relationship with animals:

- *Moonbird* by Phillip Hoose
- *Threatened* by Eliot Schrefer
- *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson

ONLINE RESOURCES

ACTIVITIES TO PRINT OR PROJECT:

- Changing Attitudes*
- Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions*
- Vocabulary*
- Quiz (two levels)
- Contest Entry Form
- Core Skill: Central Ideas and Details
- Core Skill: Text Evidence (two levels)

*Supports the lesson plan

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The Secret Ingredient

A delicious story from Lemony Snicket

Preview: Readers might be familiar with Lemony Snicket's “autobiographical” series, *All the Wrong Questions*. In “The Secret Ingredient,” Snicket brings beloved characters from the series to the pages of *Scope*, with all the dark humor that made the author famous.

Learning Objectives: to understand how a narrator's point of view affects a story

Key Skills: character, alliteration, point of view, word choice, simile, foreshadowing, inference, tone

**FIRST-LINE
CONTEST
WINNER!**



Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

1 Preparing to Read

Preview text and questions. (5 minutes)

Allow students a few minutes to look through the story. Have them independently preview the **close-reading questions** written in the margins.

Set a purpose for reading. (5 minutes)

Read aloud the “As You Read” box on page 23. As a class, discuss how the narrator's point of view affects a story's details and tone. Ask students how a few well-known stories, such as fairy tales, might be different if told from the antagonist's point of view. (The antagonist is the main character's opponent.)

2 Reading the Story

Read, discuss, mark. (25 minutes)

- Read “The Secret Ingredient” once as a class.
- Break students into groups to read the story again, pausing to discuss the close-reading questions in the margins. Have each student write answers independently in the margins.

Answers to Close-Reading Questions

- ▶ **Character** (p. 24) *Based on the line in bold, Hungry Hix seems to be a suspicious person with a negative outlook. Based on earlier details (she glares at customers; her nephew does all the work in the restaurant), she seems lazy and unfriendly.*
- ▶ **Alliteration** (p. 24) *The author uses alliteration in Hungry Hix's name, the name of the town (Stain'd-by-the-Sea), and the name of the flower (the Fremunt Flos). In each case, alliteration draws attention to the name and adds a touch of humor.*
- ▶ **Point of view** (p. 25) *Cleo wants to see the Fremunt Flos; Hix wants a good lunch for her guests. Answers will vary: Some students might deem Cleo's priorities more important because her plan can't be rescheduled. Others might consider Hix's priorities more important because she wants to entertain a group.*
- ▶ **Word choice** (p. 25) *Hefted offers a clearer idea of the eggplants' weight; hefted makes the eggplants seem solid and real.*

► **Simile** (p. 26) *The simile shows that Snicket regards Hix as unfeeling and destructive (like a tornado) and himself and his friends as powerless to oppose her. She has destroyed their plans.*

► **Foreshadowing** (p. 26) *The line foreshadows Jake's plan, which involves "working together secretly" to include dirty gloves as one of the ingredients in the soup.*

► **Inference** (p. 26) *Jake wants Hix to overhear him. He wants to convey one idea to her and another to his friends.*

► **Inference** (p. 26) *Jake tells Cleo, "If we were making sandwiches, I'd tell you to make a double recipe." You can infer that Cleo is using a large bowl because they are in fact going to make sandwiches; Jake still plans to have a picnic.*

► **Tone** (p. 27) *Snicket's tone is mocking. A meatball stuck near someone's ear would be unattractive. Snicket considers the hairstyle to be ugly.*

► **Character** (p. 27) *Answers will vary. Some students might say that Jake's actions were justified because Hix's demands were unreasonable. Others might say that wasting food, or going back on a promise, is never justified.*

► **Inference** (p. 27) *The author is being playful by referring to the Scope reader—Christy R.—whose winning contest entry inspired this story.*

Critical-Thinking Questions

► **Much of Hix's dialogue seems incredibly rude. Is it possible that Snicket is exaggerating her rudeness in his narration? Why might he do this?** *It's possible, though we have no reason to doubt Snicket's credibility. Lines such as "we sit around showing photographs of babies" and "I don't feel like it" could be Snicket's rephrasing of Hix's words to make her and her demands seem more unreasonable.*

► **What are some details that show the differences between the younger characters and the older character in this story? What differences do they show? Why might the author's intention have been in including these details?** *Hix, the adult in this story, is unfriendly (wants Snicket to leave the restaurant), demanding (wants Jake to stay all day), and ignorant (doesn't know what a sous chef is). The younger characters are friendly (Cleo wants Snicket to join the picnic), flexible (Jake plans to cook lunch and then go on the picnic), and knowledgeable (they do know what a sous chef is). It is likely that the author intentionally made the younger characters more appealing and relatable than Hix.*

► **This story includes a secret ingredient, a secret plan, unspoken opinions, and a secret reason for renaming a flower.**

How does having information, as a reader, that some characters don't have affect your experience of reading the story? *Being let in on a secret—knowing what's going on behind Hix's back, or what Jake or Snicket is thinking—gives the reader a cozy sense of kinship with the characters and makes the story more enjoyable to read.*

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What's more important, friends or family?
.....

Why do we like some characters more than others?
.....

How does the narrator affect the tone of a story?

3 Skill Building

Featured Skill: Point of View

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

Distribute our activity sheet on **Point of View**. This activity will prepare students for the writing prompt on page 27.

TIP! This story includes numerous details (such as the kind of car that Cleo drives) that are not directly relevant to the plot. As a class, identify these details and discuss what reasons the author might have had for including them.

Differentiation

For Struggling Readers

At first, Jake intends to make normal, delicious soup for Hungry Hix's gathering. At what point does he change his mind? How can you tell?

For Advanced Readers

Lemony Snicket has a very particular storytelling style. In a short essay, describe the tone of the story as well as how Snicket's style helps create that tone. Use text evidence to support your ideas.

Complexity Factors

See how these texts will challenge your students.

Levels of Meaning/Purpose: "The Secret Ingredient" is rich with verbal irony and subtle humor. Numerous inferences are required to appreciate the text's quirky charm.

Structure: The story is mainly chronological but includes a number of asides and digressions.

Language Conventionality and Clarity:

- **Vocabulary:** higher academic vocabulary (*auxiliary, hobnobbing, pistils*)
- **Figurative language:** personification, similes, irony, rhetorical questions, alliteration

Knowledge Demands: Experience with Snicket's storytelling style (or similar styles, such as that of Pseudonymous Bosch) will be helpful to readers.

Lexile: 920L

Literature Connections

Other texts with interesting points of view:

- *The Call of the Wild* by Jack London
- *Flipped* by Wendelin Van Draanen
- "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" by Ambrose Bierce

ONLINE RESOURCES

ACTIVITIES TO PRINT OR PROJECT:

- Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions*
- Point of View*
- Literary Elements
- Quiz (two levels)
- DIY Vocabulary
- Contest Entry Form

*Supports the lesson plan

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