Starting the year off with a BANG!

Hello dear teachers and friends,

We welcome you back with open arms—and a fantastic nonfiction story about the deadliest (and least known) volcanic event in history: the eruption of Mount Tambora in 1815. It disrupted the global climate, inspired Mary Shelley to write *Frankenstein*, and drove thousands of New England farmers west. Talk about a story with CONNECTIONS!

We have a fabulous September issue for you, plus some exciting new changes to announce.

MORE GRAMMAR
Check out our new grammar activity on pages 2-3 of the issue. Our goal: to present grammar in context while delighting your kids.

OUR NEW FICTION “KIT”
We have overhauled our approach to fiction. Now, kids will explore fiction elements like plot, character, and setting while they read. What do you think?

AN EXPANDED TEACHER’S GUIDE
You’ll notice this Teacher’s Guide is longer but airier and easier to read. Plus, it has more tasks for struggling and advanced readers.

We are so happy to be back. We missed you!
Lauren, Rebecca, Lauren M., Allison, and Albert
The Volcano That Changed the World
An 1815 eruption caused weather disasters across the planet

- **Preview:** A behind-the-scenes video about research leads into a thrilling science article!

- **Learning Objective:** Students will read closely to identify cause-and-effect relationships while learning about a little-known volcano.

- **Content-Area Connections:** science: natural disasters, climate; social studies: western migration, geography

- **Other Key Skills:** domain-specific vocabulary, author’s craft, text evidence, text structure, drawing conclusions, evaluating, explanatory writing

**Step-by-Step Lesson Plan**

**1. Preparing to Read**

*Set a Purpose for Reading* (5 minutes)
- Read aloud the Up Close box on page 4.
- Give students a few minutes to look over the photos, captions, map, and chart.

*Watch a Video* (10 minutes, activity sheet online)
- Distribute the video discussion activity for students to preview.
- Show our “Behind the Scenes” video, which delves into the research process behind this article.
- Have students complete the activity in groups.

*Domain-Specific Vocabulary* (10 minutes, activity sheet online)
- Project or distribute the vocabulary activity to preview words that are often used when talking about volcanoes.
- Highlighted words: droughts, dormant, plumes, pyroclastic surge, climate, dissipate, stratosphere, migrations

**2. Close Reading**

*First Read: Get to Know the Text* (20 minutes)
Have students read the article in small groups, or play our audio version as the class follows along.

*Second Read: Unpack the Text* (30 minutes)
As a class or in small groups, students should read the article again, answering the close-reading questions, followed by critical-thinking questions.
Close-Reading Questions
(activity sheet online)

• Read the first four paragraphs. What problem do the Hoisingtons face? (identifying a problem) A strange snowstorm in June threatens to kill all their crops, leaving them with nothing to eat.

• In the sixth paragraph, why does the author ask the question “Were witches to blame?” referring to the strange weather? (author’s craft) The question shows how limited people’s scientific understanding of the weather was in 1816. They came up with supernatural explanations for the unusual weather.

• On page 7, what does the author mean when she says, “Tambora woke up”? (figurative language) She means that the volcano became active and erupted. She uses personification, speaking of the volcano as a person who wakes up.

• What happened to the island of Sumbawa and its people as a result of the eruption? (cause and effect) At least 12,000 people died instantly. Ash and lava destroyed the soil and poisoned the waters, so people could no longer grow crops or fish for food. More than 90,000 starved to death.

• Why didn’t people around the world know about the eruption? (text evidence) Mount Tambora was far away, and news traveled slowly.

• In “Solving a Mystery,” why does the author explain what happened when Mount Pinatubo erupted? What is the main idea of the section? (text structure) The author compares what happened at Pinatubo with what happened at Tambora. The main idea of the section is that a volcano’s eruption cloud can change Earth’s climate by blocking the sun’s light.

• What happened to the Hoisingtons? How is this similar to what happened to many others? (key idea) The Hoisingtons moved to Ohio, like tens of thousands of others who migrated to Ohio, Illinois, and Indiana after their farms were destroyed by the strange weather.

Critical-Thinking Questions
(activity sheet online)

• What can you conclude from this article about how a change in the climate can affect the planet? Use text evidence in your answer. (drawing conclusions) You can conclude that a change in the climate can cause a variety of unexpected consequences. The drop in Earth’s temperature caused snowstorms, monsoons, floods, and Arctic melting, which in turn caused crop failure, famine, disease, and migration. Some students might extrapolate that the changes in 1816 suggest that current climate change could also have severe and unexpected consequences.

• Scientists have only recently discovered that disasters around the world were caused by one event—Tambora’s eruption. What do you think is one reason this discovery is important? (evaluating) Answers may include that it shows how different parts of the world are connected and can affect one another, even if the connections are hard to see at first.

3. Skill Building
Featured Skill: Cause and Effect

• Print and distribute our cause-and-effect activity sheet, which will prepare students for the writing prompt on page 9.

Core Skills Workout

• Use any or all of our core-skill activities to build students’ key reading skills!
Online Resources

Video: “Behind the Scenes” and “Cause and Effect”

Differentiation: Lower-Lexile version of this article; audio recordings of on-level and lower-Lexile articles

Activities to print or project:
- Video Discussion Questions
- Domain-Specific Vocabulary
- Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions
- Cause and Effect
- Core Skills Workout: Text Features, Text Evidence, Summarizing, Making Inferences, Text Structures
- Comprehension Quiz—Now on two levels!

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Complexity Factors

See how this story will challenge your students.

Purpose: The article aims to illustrate, through one striking example, the profound effects that a volcanic eruption can have on weather conditions worldwide.

Structure: The structure is nonlinear; the text includes narrative and informational passages.

Language: The article contains similes and personification, as well as challenging domain-specific vocabulary, such as pyroclastic surge and stratosphere.

Knowledge Demands: Some knowledge of global geography (such as an idea of the distance between Indonesia and Switzerland) will help readers to comprehend the scope of the volcano’s effects.

Lexile Level: 960L
Guided Reading Level: T
DRA Level: 50

Common Core State Standards

This article and lesson support the following College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards:
R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.7, R.9, R.10, W.2, W.4, W.10, SL.1, L.4, L.6
Go online to find specific grade-level correlations for grades 3 through 6.

Differentiation

For Struggling Readers
Have students go through the article and underline each effect they find of Mount Tambora’s eruption. Then ask them to write a paragraph explaining three effects.

For Advanced Readers
Have students choose one of the volcanic eruptions listed at the top of pages 8 and 9, and research the effects it had on people and on the planet. They should display their findings in a PowerPoint presentation.

Tip from Lauren: “I used so many different kinds of research materials for this story. Our fantastic ‘Behind the Scenes’ video reveals them all.”

LANCE LUMMER
Talen’s Got Talent

Two texts explore the challenges—and triumphs—of kids who stutter

• **Preview:** A compelling article about a boy who stutters and a text about human speech give insight into the not-so-simple act of talking.

• **Learning Objective:** Students will synthesize information about stuttering from a narrative-nonfiction article and an informational text.

• **Content-Area Connections:** science: the human body, animal behavior; character education

• **Other Key Skills:** vocabulary, close reading, author’s craft, text evidence, tone, inference, analyzing, explanatory writing

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**Step-by-Step Lesson Plan**

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, and Skill Building

1. **Preparing to Read**
   Preview vocabulary (10 minutes, activity sheet online)
   • Project or distribute the vocabulary activity to preview highlighted words.
   • Highlighted words: disorder, inherited, tendency, humiliated, self-conscious, uttered, bellow

   **Set a Purpose for Reading** (2 minutes)
   • Have a volunteer read aloud the Up Close box on page 10.
   • Ask the class what they think could make it difficult to talk. Do they know what stuttering is? Prompt them to look for an explanation in the first section.

2. **Close Reading:** Narrative Nonfiction
   Read and Unpack the Text (30 minutes)
   • Have students read “Talen’s Got Talent” in small groups, pausing to discuss parts that are surprising or difficult to understand.
   • Groups should then answer the close-reading questions, rereading the text to find answers.

   **Close-Reading Questions**
   (activity sheet online)
   • What impression do you get of Talen from the first paragraph? Which words give you this impression? (author’s craft) Students will likely say that Talen seems confident and appealing. He
“struts” and “smiles; he dances “effortlessly” and has “a proud twinkle in his eye.”

• In the section “A Puzzling Problem,” what two main challenges does Talen face because of his stutter? (text evidence) It’s sometimes difficult for him to say what he wants, and he feels embarrassed because of his stutter; it makes him not want to talk.

• Why does the author describe Talen’s life at home? (author’s craft) She wants readers to understand that Talen is a normal kid who does the same things as many other kids.

• What is the goal of SAY? What evidence shows that the group has met its goal with Talen? (text evidence) SAY’s goal is to help build confidence in kids who stutter. Evidence that Talen feels confident is that he performs in front of hundreds of people, he has made lots of friends, and he now speaks up in class.

• What is the tone of Talen’s quote at the end of the article? What does the quote tell you about Talen? (tone) The tone is happy and self-assured. The quote tells you that he feels comfortable with himself, even if he stutters.

3. Close Reading: Informational Text
Read and Unpack the Text (20 minutes)
• Read “The Incredible Power of Speech” together as a class.
• Answer the close-reading questions as a class, then put students in groups to answer the critical-thinking questions.

Close-Reading Questions
(activity sheet online)
• Based on the section “Key to Survival,” how is communicating different from speaking? (inference) Communicating means sending a message in some way. Speaking is a specific kind of communication that uses sounds and language. Only humans can speak.

• What parts of the body are used in speech? What does this tell you about why speech problems can be hard to solve? (inference) Your lungs, larynx, vocal chords, tongue, lips, jaw, teeth, and brain are used in speech. Because so many different parts have to work together, it can be difficult to understand the causes of problems.

Critical-Thinking Questions
(activity sheet online)
• Talen advises that listeners should “wait patiently for a person who stutters to finish.” Why do you think this is the best thing to do? (analyzing) Waiting patiently shows that you want to hear what the person is saying, even if it takes a little longer. Becoming impatient could make the person feel nervous or as if his or her words aren’t worth waiting for.

• According to the informational text, what happened in 2013? How might this affect kids like Talen? (synthesizing) Scientists pinpointed the areas of the brain that control some parts of the speech process. This might help them figure out what happens in the brain when people stutter, and lead them to find cures for the disorder.

4. Skill Building
Featured Skill: Synthesizing
• Print and distribute our synthesizing activity sheet, which will help students find information from both texts to respond to the writing prompt on page 13.

Core Skills Workout
• Use any or all of our core-skill activities to build students’ key reading skills!
Differentiation

For Struggling Readers
Have students make a list of the ways participating in SAY has helped Talen. They can use their lists to write a paragraph with supporting details about how SAY has helped.

For Advanced Readers
Ask students to brainstorm in small groups to list reasons speech is important to humans. Have them use their lists and information from both articles to write letters to scientists, stressing the importance of finding ways to help people like Talen.

Rebecca’s tip: Get students to think beyond the articles: How does what they learned about Talen apply to kids with other disorders?

Online Resources

Differentiation: Lower-Lexile version of this article; audio recordings of on-level and lower-Lexile articles

Activities to print or project:
• Vocabulary
• Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions
• Core Skills Workout: Synthesizing, Summarizing, Main Idea and Supporting Details
• Comprehension Quiz—Now on two levels!

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Complexity Factors

See how this story will challenge your students.

Purpose: “Talen’s Got Talent” has dual purposes: to describe a boy’s experience with stuttering and to explain stuttering to readers. “The Incredible Power of Speech” discusses why speech is complex and uniquely human.

Structure: Both texts are nonlinear and include cause-and-effect and compare-and-contrast passages.

Language: Both texts include some challenging vocabulary, such as self-conscious and uttered. Students will also encounter some figurative language while reading.

Knowledge Demands: Experience with people who stutter may aid in comprehension of “Talen’s Got Talent.”

Lexile Level: 920L
Guided Reading Level: S  DRA Level: 40

Common Core State Standards
This article and lesson support the following College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards:
R.1, R.2, R.9, W.2, W.4, W.10, SL.1, L.4, L.6
Go online to find specific grade-level correlations for grades 3 through 6.
Silverman City
Danny Sanchez gets some help warding off a bully

- **Preview:** In this issue, we introduce our “fiction kit”—a brand-new approach to fiction that includes questions for students right on the magazine’s pages, to help kids develop key fiction-reading skills. Our questions model the kinds of close-reading questions students can ask themselves as they read any story!

- **Learning Objective:** Students will identify the main problem in a story and the factors that lead to its solution.

- **Other Key Skills:** close reading, figurative language, character, inference, plot, explanatory writing

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### Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

**Close Reading, Critical Thinking, and Skill Building**

#### 1. Preparing to Read

**Preview text and questions** (5 minutes)
- Have students look through the pages of the story, or project it for the class.
- Ask: How are the questions in the margins connected to the story? Point out that each question refers to a line in bold; an arrow points from the question to the line.
- Tell students that they will answer the questions the second time they read the story.

**Vocabulary** (5 minutes, activity sheet online)
- No vocabulary words are highlighted, but students will still encounter challenging words.
- Our vocabulary activity will preview five words and give students an opportunity to pick out and define other words that are unfamiliar to them.

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#### 2. Close Reading

**First Read: Get to Know the Text** (20 minutes)
- Have students read the story through one time to generally understand what happens.

**Second Read: Unpack the Text** (30 minutes)
- The questions in the margins serve as the close-reading questions for this story.
- Have students discuss them in groups and answer on their own paper. Answers are on the next page.
- Next, have groups answer the critical-thinking questions.
**Answers to Close-Reading Questions**

- **Figurative language** (p. 16) The simile creates a positive, upbeat feeling.

- **Word choice** (p. 16) “His gang” suggests that Ned and Mickey don’t necessarily like Aaron but hang around with him because they are scared of him or because they want to feel tough.

- **Character** (p. 16) This tells you that Danny is considerate of his mother and doesn’t want to burden her, but perhaps he takes too much on himself.

- **Key idea** (p. 17) Students might argue that events later in the story show that the silverman is real.

- **Inference** (p. 17) Rose is saying she regards Danny as a friend.

- **Character** (p. 18) Danny is used to handling his problems on his own; asking for help might make him feel weak or bothersome.

- **Inference** (p. 17) See the shabby man and his dog makes Danny want to help them. This shows that he is compassionate.

- **Plot** (p. 19) This is a turning point in the story because Danny’s luck starts to change. By helping the shabby man, Danny is rewarded with the man’s protection.

- **Inference** (p. 19) Mrs. Sanchez thinks the brooch is for Rose as a reward for helping Danny; also, it is a silver rose, suggesting it could be for Rose.

- **Character** (p. 19) Aaron treats the shabby man very disrespectfully, as if he weren’t even human. Danny treats him kindly, reaching out to help him.

- **Plot** (p. 20) This sudden action solves Danny’s problem by punishing Aaron for bullying him. Aaron never bothers Danny again after this event.

- **Figurative language** (p. 20) The simile suggests that the man is special and powerful; indeed, he is the silverman.

**Critical-Thinking Questions**

(activity sheet online)

- **Which details suggest that the legend of the silverman is real?** (text evidence) The legend says that the silverman has a dog, carries a bow and arrows, and helps people in need. Danny needs help against the bully, and the shabby man (who has a dog) helps him by giving him a silver brooch and pinning Aaron against a tree with an arrow.

- **Why does the silverman help Danny?** (main idea) The silverman rewards Danny for being kind to him. Also, Danny never asks his mother or anyone else for help; you can infer that the silverman knows Danny needs help and wants to provide it.

- **In real life, magical people with arrows don’t help us out with bullies. Why do you think the author made this happen in the story?** (author’s purpose) Answers will vary, but students might suggest that the author wanted to create a just world in her story, where good people get rewarded for what they do, and bad people get punished. The dramatic ending, in which Aaron gets pinned to the tree, is satisfying to read because each character gets what he deserves.

**3. Skill Building**

**Featured Skill: Problem and Solution**

- Print and distribute our problem-and-solution graphic organizer, which will prepare students for the writing prompt on page 20.
Differentiation

For Struggling Readers
Ask students to imagine they are Danny. Have them write a letter to the silverman, thanking him for his help and explaining how Danny’s life has changed.

For Advanced Readers
The silverman helps Danny a lot—but so does Rose. Divide your advanced readers into two teams to debate which character helps Danny more. They should find details in the story to support their claims.

Discussion starter: Use this story as a starting point to talk about bullying and ways to respond to a bully.

Online Resources
Activities to print or project:
- Vocabulary
- Critical-Thinking Questions
- Problem and Solution
- Comprehension Quiz—Now on two levels!

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Complexity Factors
See how this story will challenge your students.

Levels of Meaning: On the surface, the story is about a bullied kid whose life improves after he makes a friend and has some unusual experiences. More subtly, the text conveys the message that you reap what you sow: kindness and gratitude will ultimately be rewarded, and greed and cruelty won’t be.

Structure: The story is mainly chronological and in the past tense. However, its present-tense opening passage sets a scene that contrasts with the passages that follow.

Language: The language is mainly conversational; however, the story does contain some higher-level words, such as vagrant, withstand, and bewildered.

Knowledge Demands: Some prior exposure to magical realism may enhance appreciation of the story.

Lexile Level: 670L
Guided Reading Level: S  DRA Level: 40

Common Core State Standards
This article and lesson support the following College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards: R.1, R.3, W.2, SL.1, L.5
Go online to find specific grade-level correlations for grades 3 through 6.
Pandora’s Box
Why do we need hope? An engaging Greek-myth play explains it all!

- **Preview:** This classic Greek myth, paired with close-reading questions, is a wonderful way to introduce students to analyzing myths and understanding theme.

- **Learning Objective:** Students will identify the theme of a well-known Greek myth.

- **Content-Area Connections:** mythology, language arts

- **Other Key Skills:** vocabulary, close reading, character, text evidence, author's craft, evaluating, main idea, inference, analyzing, figurative language

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**Step-by-Step Lesson Plan**
Close Reading, Critical Thinking, and Skill Building

1. **Preparing to Read**
   **Set a Purpose for Reading** (2 minutes)
   - Explain to students that they will be studying a myth, then discuss what they think a myth is.
   - Ask students which myths they are familiar with.
   - Have a volunteer read aloud the Up Close box on page 23.

   **Introduce vocabulary** (5 minutes, activity sheet online)
   - Project or distribute our vocabulary activity to preview words often found in Greek myths.
   - Highlighted words: Mount Olympus, defy, eternity, urn, exceptional, chariot, hideous, bearable

2. **Reading the Play**
   Assign parts and read the play aloud as a class. Then arrange students in small groups to answer the close-reading and critical-thinking questions.

   **Close-Reading Questions** (activity sheet online)
   - In the prologue, Zeus refuses to share fire with humans. Why? What does this tell you about him? (character) Zeus refuses to share fire because he believes that fire belongs only to the gods. This tells you that he is selfish, rude, and unhelpful. Zeus does not care about humanity’s well-being; he cares only about the gods.
In Scene 1, Zeus says, “But it’s the least that I could do. And exactly what you deserve!” What does Zeus mean by this? (key idea) Zeus means that Pandora and the rest of humankind deserve to be punished for having fire. His statement foreshadows what is about to happen.

Which lines from Scene 1 show that Zeus is trying to trick Pandora into opening the box? Use examples from the text in your answer. (text evidence) Zeus says that the box is “just a little something special that could change your lives forever” and “It’s something exceptional.” Then he repeats, “You must never open it!” Zeus is tempting Pandora by purposely making her more curious.

Reread the beginning of Scene 2. Why does the author repeatedly start Pandora’s lines with “It can’t hurt just to . . .?” (author’s craft) The repetition of Pandora’s lines builds suspense, which helps readers realize that Pandora is getting closer to opening the box.

Why does Pandora open the box? Do you think she could have resisted? (evaluating) Pandora opens the box because she is curious about what is inside. Some students will say that she could have resisted if only she had more willpower. Other students will say that she was powerless to resist because Zeus made her curious when he created her.

Why does Pandora help Hope fly off into the world? How is Hope important? (theme) Pandora helps Hope because she notices that Hope seems different from the others in the box; Hope makes Pandora feel better. Hope is important because she is the one being that will make life bearable with the many escaped evils.

Look at the “Myth Talk” article. What do the last two figures of speech mean? (inference) To “make a Herculean effort” means to try with great strength. To “have an Achilles’ heel” means to have one weakness that brings you down.

Critical-Thinking Questions
(activity sheet online)

What does this myth explain? (analyzing) This myth explains how evils and hope were released into the world. The beginning of the myth also explains how humans were created and how they obtained fire.

What is the theme of Pandora’s Box? (theme) The theme of Pandora’s Box is that humans have to face evils like deceit, sickness, jealousy, and many others, but there is always hope. Hope is what makes life bearable in spite of all of the bad things in the world.

3. Skill Building
Featured Skill: Theme
Print and distribute our theme activity sheet. It will prepare students to respond to a writing prompt at the end of the activity.

Literature Connections:
Connect Pandora’s Box to books in which a curious character unleashes trouble!

Coraline by Neil Gaiman
Harriet the Spy by Louise Fitzhugh
Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland by Lewis Carroll
Peter and the Starcatchers by Ridley Pearson and Dave Barry
Online Resources

Activities to print or project:
• Vocabulary
• Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions
• Theme
• Comprehension Quiz—Now on two levels!

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Complexity Factors

See how this story will challenge your students.

Levels of Meaning: In this Greek myth, a woman’s curious actions have devastating consequences. The play concludes with the message that hope can be a powerful tool in the face of difficulties. “Myth Talk” reveals the origins of some popular figures of speech.

Structure: The story is mainly chronological; narrators provide commentary throughout.

Language: The play includes some names, such as Prometheus and Epimetheus, that may be unfamiliar to readers. Words like eternity and deceit may also prove challenging.

Knowledge Demands: Some prior knowledge of Greek mythology will be helpful but not necessary for comprehension.

Guided Reading Level: S  DRA Level: 40

Common Core State Standards

This article and lesson support the following College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards:
R.1, R.2, R.5, SL.6, L.4, L.5, L.6

Go online to find specific grade-level correlations for grades 3 through 6.

Differentiation

For Struggling Readers
Have students find three examples of Pandora’s curiosity in the text, then write a paragraph with details supporting the idea that Pandora’s curiosity led her to open the box.

For Advanced Readers
This play sparks some great thought-provoking questions: Can you blame Pandora for releasing evil? Was it really her fault? Split students into two groups for a debate on whether curiosity is a bad thing.

Dig deeper: Have your students find more expressions that come from Greek myths!

SEPTEMBER 2014
A Punctuation Story
This clever poem brings punctuation to life!

- **Preview:** Commas, ellipses, and more take on fitting characteristics in a poem that’s sure to delight your students.

- **Learning Objective:** Students will study personification and consider the roles of punctuation marks in sentences.

### Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

**Close Reading, Critical Thinking, and Skill Building**

1. **Preparing to Read**
   **Preview the Illustration** (10 minutes)
   - Have students work in pairs to identify as many punctuation marks as they can in the illustration.
   - As a class, go over what they found and briefly review the job of each punctuation mark.

   **Set a Purpose for Reading** (2 minutes)
   - Have a student read aloud the Up Close box.
   - Explain that personification means giving human traits to nonhuman things.

2. **Reading the Poem**

   Call on a volunteer to read the poem aloud for the class, or play our audio version. Then put students in small groups to answer the questions below.

   **Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions** (15 minutes, activity sheet online)
   - What mainly happens in this poem? (main idea) A person (you) wakes up in the morning, goes through a day, and goes to bed at night.
   - What are some things the punctuation-mark characters do in the poem? (text evidence) The exclamation mark wakes you up; a comma lets you pause; a dash directs you in a straight line; and so forth.

   • How do the punctuation marks’ activities make them seem human? (personification) They are all doing things that a human would do. They also seem to have emotions. For example, the quotation marks “cuddle” the word goodnight, a loving activity.

   • What is the tone of the poem? How do you think the poet feels about punctuation? (tone) The tone is warm and gentle. The poet seems to appreciate all the different things punctuation can do.

3. **Skill Building**

   **Featured Skill:** Personification

   Go online for an activity to help students explore personification in this poem and write their own!

   **Common Core State Standards**
   R.1, R.4, R.6, SL.1, L.5

   **Online Resources**
   - Audio version of poem
   - Activities to print or project:
     - Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions
     - Personification
     - Comprehension Quiz

   [storyworks.scholastic.com](http://storyworks.scholastic.com)
Infographic, p. 32

Your Very Own Pet Rat!

• **Preview:** Our fun infographic provides plenty of evidence to argue that pet rats are different from wild rats.

• **Learning Objective:** Students will interpret an infographic to compare and contrast two kinds of rats.

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## Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

**Close Reading, Critical Thinking, and Skill Building**

### 1. Reading the Infographic
- Ask a student to read aloud the introduction.
- Ask: What two things does this infographic compare? (*wild rats and pet rats*) After reading the details together as a class, have groups discuss the questions below.

**Discussion Questions**
- What are some reasons people own pets? Which characteristics of pet rats match these reasons? (inference) Students might suggest that people own pets for companionship, fun, or protection. Rats’ social natures make them good companions. Their ability to perform tricks makes them fun.

- Why should you stay away from wild rats? (text evidence) They might bite you, and they can carry germs that cause salmonella infection, plague, or rat-bite fever.

- Does this infographic convince you that rats make great pets? Explain your answer. (evaluating) Answers will vary. Some students might say yes, citing factual evidence, like rats groom themselves every day. Others will say no, that “cute” is an opinion and they don’t find rats cute.

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### 2. Skill Building

Our guided-writing activity will help students respond to the writing prompt on page 32.

**Common Core State Standards**

R.1, R.2, W.1, W.4

**Online Resources**

Activity to print or project:
- Guided-Writing Activity

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**Tip!** Download our “Make Your Own Infographic” activity from our website to guide students to create an infographic on any topic!
Grammar Cop, p. 2
Slow Loris: India, China, Asian, Antarctica
Polar Bear: The Golden Compass, National Geographic, Guinness World Records
Poison Dart Frog: Stay, Keep, Yikes

Debate, p. 28
Answers will vary but should be similar to:
Yes: Homework has become more demanding and time-consuming, which leaves kids with little time for their other interests. Between travel teams, music lessons, and other activities, some kids don’t have time to spend hours on homework. Studies show that kids today are very stressed about school. Help from parents could give these kids the boost they need to do well.
No: Homework is for students to practice what they’ve learned. If parents help too much, kids lose the chance to practice. Also, teachers need to know which students require extra help in finishing the homework. Part of growing up is learning to balance activities with the demands of schoolwork. A recent study has shown that kids who got help from their parents on homework scored worse on standardized tests than those who did homework on their own.

Word Nerd, p. 31
Answers will vary but should be similar to: I was fishing with my dad when he caught a fish that was as big as he was.
### September at a Glance

#### Major Features

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nonfiction, p. 4</th>
<th>Primary Standards and Skills:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The Volcano That Changed the World”&lt;br&gt;By Lauren Tarshis</td>
<td>• Cause and effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CCR Anchor Standards:</strong>&lt;br&gt;R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.7, R.10, W.2, W.7, SL.1, SL.2, L.4, L.6</td>
<td><strong>Plus:</strong> domain-specific vocabulary, author’s craft, text evidence, text structure, drawing conclusions, evaluating, explanatory writing</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Texts, p. 10</th>
<th>Primary Standards and Skills:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Talen’s Got Talent”&lt;br&gt;By Jane Bianchi</td>
<td>• Synthesizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CCR Anchor Standards:</strong>&lt;br&gt;R.1, R.2, R.9, W.2, W.4, W.10, SL.1, L.4, L.6</td>
<td><strong>Plus:</strong> vocabulary, close reading, author’s craft, text evidence, tone, inference, analyzing, explanatory writing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiction, p. 15</th>
<th>Primary Standards and Skills:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Silverman City”&lt;br&gt;By Jenny Nimmo</td>
<td>• Problem and solution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CCR Anchor Standards:</strong>&lt;br&gt;R.1, R.3, W.2, SL.1, L.5</td>
<td><strong>Plus:</strong> close reading, figurative language, character, inference, plot, explanatory writing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poem, p. 21</th>
<th>Primary Standards and Skills:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“A Punctuation Story”&lt;br&gt;By Rebecca Kai Dotlich</td>
<td>• Personification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CCR Anchor Standards:</strong>&lt;br&gt;R.1, R.4, R.6, SL.1, L.5</td>
<td><strong>Plus:</strong> main idea, text evidence, tone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play, p. 22</th>
<th>Primary Standards and Skills:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pandora’s Box&lt;br&gt;By Jennifer Dignan</td>
<td>• Identifying theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CCR Anchor Standards:</strong>&lt;br&gt;R.1, R.2, R.5, SL.6, L.4, L.5, L.6</td>
<td><strong>Plus:</strong> vocabulary, close reading, character, text evidence, author’s craft, evaluating, main idea, inference, analyzing, figurative language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Language Arts Standards and Skills Development

- **Nonfiction:**
  - Primary Standards and Skills: • Cause and effect
  - **Plus:** domain-specific vocabulary, author’s craft, text evidence, text structure, drawing conclusions, evaluating, explanatory writing
  - **Video Resources:** “Behind the Scenes” and “Cause and Effect”
  - **Close Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions**
  - **Core Skills Workout:** Text Features, Text Evidence*, Summarizing*, Making Inferences*, Text Structures
  - **Comprehension Quiz**

- **Paired Texts:**
  - Primary Standards and Skills: • Synthesizing
  - **Plus:** vocabulary, close reading, author’s craft, text evidence, tone, inference, analyzing, explanatory writing
  - **Video Resources:** Video Discussion Questions
  - **Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions**
  - **Core Skills Workout:** Synthesizing, Summarizing*, Main Idea and Supporting Details*
  - **Comprehension Quiz**

- **Fiction:**
  - Primary Standards and Skills: • Problem and solution
  - **Plus:** close reading, figurative language, character, inference, plot, explanatory writing
  - **Video Resources:** Vocabulary
  - **Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions**
  - **Core Skills Workout:** Synthesizing, Summarizing*, Main Idea and Supporting Details*
  - **Comprehension Quiz**

- **Poem:**
  - Primary Standards and Skills: • Personification
  - **Plus:** main idea, text evidence, tone
  - **Video Resources:** Vocabulary
  - **Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions**
  - **Personification**
  - **Comprehension Quiz**

- **Play:**
  - Primary Standards and Skills: • Identifying theme
  - **Plus:** vocabulary, close reading, character, text evidence, author’s craft, evaluating, main idea, inference, analyzing, figurative language
  - **Video Resources:** Vocabulary
  - **Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions**
  - **Identifying theme**
  - **Comprehension Quiz**

*Available on two levels!

### Online Resources

- **Videos:** “Behind the Scenes” and “Cause and Effect”
- **Video Discussion Questions**
- **Domain-Specific Vocabulary**
- **Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions**
- **Core Skills Workout:** Text Features, Text Evidence*, Summarizing*, Making Inferences*, Text Structures
- **Comprehension Quiz**

### Departments and Skills Pages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grammar Cop</th>
<th>Create a Character Contest</th>
<th>Debate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grammar page 2</td>
<td>Characterization page 14</td>
<td>Opinion Writing page 28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocab Lab</th>
<th>Infographic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary Skills page 30</td>
<td>Main Idea and Supporting Details page 32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Go online for grade-level standards!*