The Power of Connection

As I work on an issue of Scope, I like to imagine a giant web of silky threads that reach from story to story, issue to issue, school community to school community. How incredible to think that every month, more than 1 million students sit down with the same article—that the entire Scope community is connected through the shared experience of reading.

Even more incredible? The conversations and ideas that will flow from that reading will be as unique as each student in your classroom.

I am particularly excited to imagine your students reading this issue’s showstopping nonfiction feature, “Blood, Smoke, and Freedom” (pages 4-9), by Lauren Tarshis. It’s the powerful true story of Joseph Plumb Martin, who joined the American army during the Revolutionary War, when he was just 15 years old. It’s one of those evocative stories that will help your students connect to young people from the past—and that will stick with your students long after they leave your classroom. The nonfiction also comes with a special video, in which Lauren takes your students on a virtual field trip to the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia to learn more about Joseph and other young people who were part of America’s fight for independence.

Drop me a line and tell me how it goes!

Kristin Lewis, Editorial Director
Twitter: @_KELewis

Lauren at the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia

Lauren Salisbury, Associate Editor

Sari Wilson, Contributing Editor

Mackenzie Carro, Associate Editor

The Short Read takes a complicated topic—artificial intelligence—and makes it accessible and fascinating. Thanks, C-3PO!”

The paired texts make a great compare-and-contrast activity about farm life past and present. And I will NEVER look at a grasshopper the same way again!”

I love how the details and art in the play create a sense of wonder and inspire appreciation for the natural world.”
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MAURICE R. ROBINSON, 1895–1982, FOUNDER

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- **Star Wars Ever Exist?**, pp. 26-27
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- **Into the Deep**, pp. 19-25
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- **Growing Up on a Farm**
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- **Swarms of Terror** and **Sneakers?**
  - Two Texts Explore Farming Life Past and Present
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- **Freedom**
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*To find grade-level-specific Common Core standards as well as Texas State Standards, go to Scope Online.*
Blood, Smoke, and Freedom
The incredible true story of a teenage soldier in the American Revolution

About the Story
Lexile: 940L
For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective:
to draw on one nonfiction text and one primary document to write from the point of view of a historical figure

Key Skills:
author's craft, text structure, compare and contrast, inference, interpreting text, supporting details, key details

Essential Questions:
• How are wars fought?
• What is life like for soldiers?
• Why is it important to study the past?

Standards:
This article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.8, W.3, SL.1, L.4, L.5, L.6
For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.

Your Teaching Support Package
Find your full suite of materials at scope.scholastic.com.

Video: Virtual Field Trip: The Museum of the American Revolution
Audio:
• The article
• Vocabulary
Differentiated article:
• Lower-Lexile version (printable)
Literature Connections: ideas for connecting to curricular texts

Activities to print or project:
• Vocabulary
• Close Reading and Critical Thinking
• Video Discussion Questions
• Prepare to Write: Joseph's Letter
• Core Skills Workout: Central Ideas & Details*, Summarizing*, Text Features
• Quiz*
• Nonfiction Elements*
• Contest Entry Form
*Available on two levels
Preparing to Read

Watch the video.
(15 minutes, activity sheet online)
- Project or distribute the Video Discussion Questions for students to preview.
- Watch the video about author Lauren Tarshis’s trip to the Museum of the American Revolution.
- Discuss the questions as a class.

Preview vocabulary.
(8 minutes, activity sheet online)
Project or distribute the Vocabulary Words and Definitions. Review the words as a class. Highlighted words: audacious, cacophony, commenced, dispatched, fledgling, laden, motley, utopia

Reading and Discussing

Read and discuss the article.
(45 minutes, activity sheet online)
- Have a volunteer read aloud the As You Read box on page 5. Then read the article as a class.
- Have students work in groups to discuss the following close-reading questions.

Close-Reading Questions

Describe the introduction of the article on page 5. Why might the author have chosen to begin the article this way? (author’s craft) The introduction of the article is a suspenseful battle scene in which a teenage soldier is “struggling to stay alive.” The scene is evocative—the author describes the thick smoke and the sounds of wounded men and cannon explosions. The author likely chose to begin her article this way to hook the reader. Readers will want to keep reading to find out what happens.

What does the section “A New World” on page 6 contribute to the article? (text structure) The section “A New World” explains how Joseph came to live in the colonies and how the colonies came to exist. (Europeans wanted to start new lives in America because they could be freer there.) This section contributes important historical context to the article because it provides background information about the roots of the American Revolution.

How does author Lauren Tarshis characterize the American army in the section “Seeds of Courage” on pages 6-7? (author’s craft) Tarshis characterizes the army as inexperienced and unprepared. She calls them “ragtag” and explains that most had no experience in battle. They were shop owners and farmers and butchers—not soldiers. George Washington, as Tarshis points out, had no experience leading an army.

Compare how the American and British forces prepared to fight in New York. What do their preparations convey about the relative abilities of each army? (compare and contrast; inference) The Americans prepared by training—practicing shooting and marching. The British prepared by strategizing the launch of a surprise attack and by massing ships, troops, and weapons. These preparations reveal how outmatched the Americans were. The British were experienced and powerful; the Americans were trying to learn the basics of fighting a war.

In the excerpt from Joseph’s diary on page 8, what does the Lieutenant Colonel mean when he says, “eat this and learn to be a soldier”? (interpreting text) The Lieutenant Colonel is telling the soldier to toughen up—that being hungry is part of the job and the soldier must learn to deal with it.

What made Washington’s plan to save his army “audacious,” as Tarshis describes it? (supporting details) Audacious means...
“extremely bold and daring.” Washington’s plan was extremely bold and daring because it involved sneaking past some of the world’s most fearsome soldiers—the redcoats. It also required mobilizing a force of civilians in New York to carry thousands of Americans silently across the river. They could easily have been caught, which would have been a disaster for the revolution.

• Have students discuss the following critical-thinking questions in small groups.
• Afterward, have each group share and discuss its responses with the rest of the class.

**Critical-Thinking Questions**

Do you agree with Tarshis that the war would have ended on the “blood-soaked fields of Brooklyn” if Washington had not been able to get his army out? What additional information could help you assess her claim?

Answers will vary. Students may say yes, they agree, because the American army would have been destroyed and there would have been no one left to fight. Additional information that could help readers assess Tarshis’s claim includes details about other battles fought during the war, how many total soldiers there were, where soldiers were stationed at the time of the Battle of Brooklyn, and whether munitions and other supplies were available elsewhere.

A David and Goliath story is one in which someone small and seemingly powerless takes on someone far more powerful and strong—and wins. (The original story of David, a young man, and Goliath, a cruel giant, appears in the Bible.) How could the Battle of Brooklyn be described as a David and Goliath story?

The Battle of Brooklyn could be described as a David and Goliath story because the American army was like David—small and inexperienced. The British army, with its highly trained redcoats, massive ships, and powerful weapons, was like Goliath. Yet the American army took on the British, and though they lost the Battle of Brooklyn, they prevailed in the war.

**3 Skill Building**

**Featured Skills: Key Details, Inference**

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

Break students into pairs to complete the activity sheet *Prepare to Write: Joseph’s Letter*. This activity will help students prepare to respond to the writing prompt on page 9. For alternate culminating tasks, see the box below.

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**Differentiate and Customize**

**For Struggling Readers**

In a well-organized paragraph, explain what it was like to be a soldier in the American army during the Revolutionary War. Use text evidence from “Blood, Smoke, and Freedom” and the diary excerpt “Learn to Be a Soldier.”

**For Historians**

Why was the Battle of Brooklyn important in the American Revolution? Answer this question in a well-organized essay. Use information from the article, the video, and at least one additional source to support your ideas.

**For Advanced Readers**

In a well-organized essay, explain what it was like to be a soldier in the American army during the Revolutionary War. Use details from the article, diary, and video to support your answer.

**For Writers**

Imagine that Joseph Plumb Martin has been asked to give a speech for George Washington’s inauguration as the first president of the United States. Write that speech.
About the Story

Lexile: 1080L (informational text)
For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective:
to explore an idea through the lens of a play and an informational text

Key Skills:
character, inference, text structure, close reading, critical thinking, synthesis

Essential Questions:
• What makes the ocean mysterious?
• What drives humans to explore?
• What is the relationship between science and science fiction?

Standards:
The texts and the lesson support these Common Core anchor standards:
R.1, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.9, W.2, W.9, SL.1, SL.2, L.4, L.6 For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.

Your Teaching Support Package
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Audio:
• Informational text
• Vocabulary (play)
• Vocabulary Slideshow (informational text)

Activities to print or project:
• Vocabulary
• Close Reading and Critical Thinking
• Synthesis: The Deep Ocean
• Quiz*
• Literary Elements: Theme
  Anticipation Guide, Character Thinking Tool, Genre Exploration
• Core Skills: Mood*, Inference
• Contest Entry Form
*Available on two levels
1 Preparing to Read
Do-Now: Theme Anticipation Guide
(5 minutes, activity sheet online)
Project or distribute the Theme Anticipation Guide and have students indicate whether they agree or disagree with each statement.

Preview vocabulary.
(7 minutes, activity sheet online)
Project or distribute the Vocabulary Words and Definitions. Review the words as a class. Highlighted words: deftly, gnashing, justified, menacing, renouncing, skewer, torrent, unfurls

2 Reading and Discussing the Play
(30 minutes, activity sheets online)
• Read the “As You Read” box on page 20.
• Assign parts and read the play as a class.
• Discuss the following questions as a class.

Close-Reading Questions
In Scene 3, Nettie steals a map of the Nautilus. What does this detail reveal about Nettie? (character) The detail shows that Nettie is clever, quick-thinking, and brave. Seeing everyone, including Nemo, distracted by the view of the ocean, Nettie takes advantage of the opportunity to scan the study for information. Once she spots the map, Nettie doesn’t hesitate to take it even though Nemo is nearby.

In Scene 4, why does Captain Nemo walk away without saying anything? (inference, character) It is likely that talking about his family is too painful. In Scene 7, it is revealed that Nemo’s wife and children were killed. Also, Nemo may not want Nettie to know what happened to his family because it relates to his mission on the boat, which he wants to keep secret.

In Scene 5, Nettie questions whether Aronnax would take his freedom if Nemo were to offer it to him. What lines in the play reveal that Aronnax might not want to leave the boat? (inference) In Scene 3, when Nemo reveals the windows in his study, Aronnax whispers “Magnificent” as he stares out at the ocean. In Scene 5, SD2 describes Aronnax as “enthralled” by Nemo’s collection of specimens. In the same scene, Nettie says they must escape and Aronnax responds, “Escape? This place is full of wonders” and begins to list all the amazing things they’ve seen onboard. These details show that Aronnax is enamored of Nemo’s vessel.

Consider the conversation between the two crew members in Scene 7. What purpose does their dialogue serve? (text structure) The dialogue between the two crew members reveals the mission that Nemo has been keeping secret. It also helps confirm Nettie’s suspicions about Captain Nemo and helps her convince Aronnax that they must escape.

Critical-Thinking Questions
In your opinion, is Captain Nemo a villain? Explain. Some students may say yes; Captain Nemo keeps Nettie, Aronnax, and Conseil on his boat as prisoners. Nemo also mercilessly attacks other ships at sea, which results in the deaths of many men—including members of his own crew. Other students will say no; Nemo is a man in great pain because of the loss of his family, and his mind has been warped by grief. Also, if Nemo were a real villain, he would not have rescued Nettie, Aronnax, and Conseil.

If you were Aronnax, would you choose to remain on the Nautilus? Answers may vary. Some students might say yes; Aronnax is a professor of natural history. The wonders
of the ocean that he would be able to observe and study while on the Nautilus would be too tempting to give up. Other students might say no; even though it would be tempting to stay on the Nautilus to learn about the sea, it would not be worth it to Aronnax to leave his life behind and be part of Nemo’s plan for revenge.

### 3 Reading the Informational Text
(25 minutes, activity sheet online)

- Project our Vocabulary Slideshow and review as a class. Highlighted words: abyss, sediment, submersible, translucent, unsettling, usher
- Break students into groups to read “What’s Down There?” on page 25.
- As a class, discuss the following questions, which draw on both the play and the informational text.

**Critical-Thinking Questions**
- How is the ocean portrayed in the play? How is it portrayed in the informational text? The ocean is portrayed in a similar way in both texts. In the play, the ocean is portrayed as a wondrous, awe-inspiring yet dangerous place. In the play, Nettie, Aronnax, and Conseil see wondrous things like beautiful fish and a giant oyster, but they also encounter giant squid and a deadly whirlpool. In the informational text, the ocean is portrayed as mysterious when the author explains that scientists have mapped more of Mars than of the ocean and as awe-inspiring when she lists the fascinating creatures scientists have recently discovered in the ocean.

What is the relationship between science and fiction in the play? To answer this question, draw on the captions and the informational text as well as your own knowledge. The play draws on real science in the depiction of fictional events. For example, the play mentions sea monsters, deep-sea volcanoes, and giant squid. The captions on pages 22 and 24 reveal that sea volcanoes and giant squid do exist, though the giant squid in the play are exaggerated. The informational text explains that sea monsters do not exist but were believed to have existed by people in the past.

### 4 Skill Building: Synthesis
(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

Break students into small groups to complete the Synthesis: The Deep Ocean activity sheet. This activity will prepare students to respond to the writing prompt on page 25. For alternate culminating tasks, see the box below.

### Differentiate and Customize

**For Struggling Readers**
Mackenzie Carro calls the ocean “a place of great mystery.” How is the idea that the ocean is mysterious developed in the play? Answer in a well-organized essay. Use text evidence.

**For Advanced Readers**
How accurate is the science in the play? Answer this question in an essay, drawing on the play, the informational text, and your research.

**For Graphic Novelists**
Choose one scene from the play to retell in the form of a graphic novel.

**For Storytellers**
Imagine that Nemo and the Nautilus somehow survived the whirlpool, and that Nemo is still alive today. Write a play in which modern-day oceanographers encounter Nemo and the Nautilus at sea.
Lesson 3
Paired Texts, pages 12-18

FEATURED SKILL: integrating knowledge

Swarms of Terror
Two texts explore farming life past and present

About the Story
Lexile: 970L (combined)
For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective:
to integrate information from two texts about farming in America and write an explanatory essay

Key Skills:
text structure, author's craft, key ideas and details, text evidence, close reading, critical thinking, integrating knowledge

Essential Questions:
• How has farming changed over time?
• Where does our food come from?
• What is our relationship with nature?

Standards:
The articles and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards:
R.1, R.2, R.4, R.5, R.6, R.9, W.2, SL.1, SL.2, L.4, L.6
For more standards information—including TEKS—go to Scope Online.

Video: Behind the Scenes:
Swarms of Terror
Audio:
• The articles
• Vocabulary

Literature Connections: ideas for connecting to curricular texts

Activities to print or project:
• Video Discussion Questions
• Vocabulary
• Integrating Knowledge
• Close Reading and Critical Thinking
• Core Skills Workout: Text Evidence*, Text Structures
• Quiz*
• Contest Entry Form
* Available on two levels

Your Teaching Support Package
Find your full suite of materials at scope.scholastic.com.
Preparing to Read

Watch the video.
(5 minutes, activity sheet online)
Project or distribute the Video Discussion Questions and preview with students. Then watch Behind the Scenes: Swarms of Terror as a class and discuss the questions.

Preview vocabulary.
(5 minutes, activity sheet online)
Project or distribute the Vocabulary Words and Definitions and review as a class. Highlighted words: contended, crescendoed, decimated, instilled, lush, plague, ravenous, spindly

Reading and Discussing “Swarms of Terror”
(30 minutes, activity sheet online)
Read the article as a class. Then discuss the following questions.

Close-Reading Questions
Describe the purpose of the introduction—the article’s opening section. (text structure)
The purpose of the introduction is to draw the reader in through the mystery of the strange shimmering cloud that Laura Ingalls sees in the distance. The first section also serves to provide context for the events of the story.

In the section “Whir, Click, Buzz,” many paragraphs are very short—some are only one sentence long. Why might the author have chosen to use such short paragraphs here? (author’s craft) The author, Lauren Tarshis, likely chose to use short paragraphs to heighten the drama and suspense. By putting only one or two thoughts in each paragraph, Tarshis stretches out the story, leaving readers on edge as they come to the end of each paragraph. The way Tarshis breaks up the text in this section also helps readers imagine themselves in Laura’s place, experiencing moment by moment what Laura is experiencing.

Why did the locust swarms lead to ruin for many families? (key idea) As Tarshis explains in the section “Millions of Chomping Jaws,” the swarming locusts devoured crops. Farmers—and the majority of people living in the western U.S. at that time were farmers—relied on their crops both for food to eat and for income, so when the locusts destroyed a family’s crops, a family was left with nothing to eat and no way of earning money.

How does Tarshis characterize pioneer life in the American West? (key ideas and details) Tarshis characterizes pioneer life as extremely difficult. On page 13, she refers to “the grim realities of pioneer life”—the endless work and ever-present dangers. As an example, she describes life for the Ingalls family, writing that they rose early to care for their cows, that Mrs. Ingalls cooked, scrubbed, and sewed, that Mr. Ingalls often worked in their fields until after sunset, and that Laura hauled water and raked hay. Tarshis also lists the “constant threats” the family faced, including fevers, lightning strikes, and wildfires.

“Growing Up on a Farm”
(30 minutes, activity sheet online)
Break students into groups to read the personal essay and respond to the following questions.

Close-Reading Questions
The introduction states that “surprises from nature can be uncontrollable and devastating” to farmers. How is this idea developed in the essay? (text structure) On page 18, Ryder Staples says, “Crazy hailstorms and windstorms have taken out some of our fields.... But think about all the hard work we put into those crops, only to see them ruined by one storm.”
What technology used in modern farming does Ryder mention? (text evidence) Ryder mentions that his family uses a machine called a combine to harvest crops and that his dad and uncles use computerized mapping tools to plan their planting and use of herbicides. He also mentions that his family uses electric fences to keep animals away from the corn crops.

Critical-Thinking Questions
What is the purpose of “Growing Up on a Farm”? How is it similar to or different from the purpose of “Swarms of Terror”? The purpose of “Growing Up on a Farm” is to give readers a sense of what it is like to be a kid growing up on an American farm today. The purpose of “Swarms of Terror” is to describe an event from history—the locust swarms of the late 1800s—while also providing information about the lives of farmers during that period.

The introduction to the essay explains that farmers make up a far smaller percentage of the labor force today than they did in 1870. Why do you think this is? Answers will vary. Students might say that it’s because there are more people today and many live in cities, where they don’t have space to farm, because there are many other jobs to fill that didn’t exist in 1870, or because technology makes farming more efficient so fewer farmers are needed to produce food.

What are the rewards and challenges of being a farmer? Base your answer on information in the article, the essay, and your own ideas. Among the rewards of being a farmer, students may list knowing that your work is important, being outside, having physical activity be part of your work, working closely with family, and developing a strong character through hard work. Among the challenges, students may name long hours, hard physical labor, low pay, having to be outside even when it is cold or raining, and vulnerability to forces beyond your control, such as weather events and insect invasions.

Skill Building
Featured Skill: Integrating Knowledge (15 minutes, activity sheet online)
Have students work in groups to complete the Integrating Knowledge activity. This will prepare students to respond to the prompt on page 18. For alternate culminating tasks, go to Scope Online.