Saving America’s Wolves
The story of a feared and beloved predator

About the Story
Lexile: 930L
For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective:
to explore how point of view affects a story

Key Skills:
author’s craft, figurative language, key ideas and details, text structure, text features, text evidence, point of view

Essential Questions:
• What responsibility do humans have to protect wild animals?
• What is the relationship between humans and the natural world?
• How do ecosystems stay in balance?

Standards:
This article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.6, R.7, W.2, 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.

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
• Point of View: You Are the Wolf
• Core Skills Workout: Central Ideas & Details*, Summarizing*, Text Features, Text Structures, Tone
• Quiz*
• Nonfiction Elements*
• Contest Entry Form
*Available on two levels
1 Preparing to Read
Prefer vocabulary.
(8 minutes, activity sheet online)
• Project or distribute the Vocabulary Words and Definitions.
• Review the words as a class. Optionally, play the audio version of the words at Scope Online.
Highlighted words: apex predator, despised, ecosystems, endangered, hierarchy, keystone species, stalk, tranquilizer

2 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 4.
• Read the article and the short informational text on page 7 as a class.
• Have students work in groups to discuss the following close-reading questions.

Close-Reading Questions
Who is the “you” in the article? Does the “you” change? Explain. (author’s craft) The “you” in the article is an alpha wolf who is being chased by a conservationist. The author also uses “you” to refer to all wolves throughout history. For example, she refers to “you” when talking about wolves in previous times and locations, such as those that were hunted by early colonists in America.

In the introduction, what does the author’s use of imagery help readers understand about wolves? (figurative language) The author’s use of imagery helps readers understand the power and strength of wolves. By including sensory details such as “42 razor-sharp teeth can rip flesh and crush bone” and “your bellies swelling with flesh, your faces turning red with blood,” she enables readers to hear, see, and feel the power and ferocity of these impressive creatures.

What factors contributed to the near-demise of the gray wolf in the U.S.? (key ideas and details) Humans used to despise and fear wolves because wolves preyed on livestock and because of stories that depicted wolves as villains. As a result, people shot, trapped, and poisoned wolves to protect themselves and their property.

How did the gray wolf’s disappearance affect the environment? (key ideas and details) The gray wolf’s disappearance disrupted the ecosystem. Wolves are an apex predator, which means they are at the top of the food chain, and a keystone species, which means they are needed to maintain ecosystems. When wolves disappeared, the populations of animals that wolves ate—such as elk—grew too large. This caused a chain of events that affected other plants and animals as well as the ecosystem as a whole.

How does author Kristin Lewis build suspense throughout the article? (author’s craft, text structure) Lewis builds suspense by writing the story in second person, which puts the reader in the position of a wolf. The introduction ends with you, the wolf—the article’s subject—awash in fear and worried that a human is after you. Readers are left in suspense as to what happens to the wolf until the final section of the article. Lewis builds the suspense in this final section by including vivid sensory details that describe what you (the wolf) are hearing, feeling, and seeing, such as a deafening noise and a “flying metal monster” chasing you.
How does the map on page 8 contribute to the article? (text features) The map helps the reader understand the current plight of wolves in America by showing the number of wolves in the lower 48 states.

On page 9, Lewis explains that conservation centers have programs to educate people on how “special and necessary” wolves are. Find two pieces of evidence in the article that support the idea that wolves are special and necessary. (text evidence) Answers will vary. Students will likely say the fact that wolves are a keystone species (p. 8) supports the idea that they are necessary. Students may list any of the impressive features of wolves described in the article, such as their powerful bite or sense of smell, to support the idea that wolves are special.

• Reconvene as a class to discuss the following critical-thinking questions.

**Critical-Thinking Questions**

The subheading (the words right under the headline on page 4) states that wolves need your help. What are some things that you personally can do to help wolves? Ideas may include: Talk to as many other people as possible about wolves so that others know the truth about wolves; encourage others to support wolves; learn even more about wolves by visiting a wolf conservation center or conducting research; support organizations that work to protect wolves; write to political leaders about wolves; encourage adults to vote for politicians who support conservation.

How might the information in “The Wolf Pack,” on page 7, be used to build support for wolves? Answers will vary. Details in the informational text reveal that wolves, much like humans, live in close-knit communities and take care of each other. Many people have likely heard only negative stories about wolves; telling people about this relatable side of wolves might generate compassion for wolves and inspire people to support efforts to save the animals.

### Skill Building

**Featured Skill: Point of View**

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

Break students into pairs to complete the **Point of View: You Are the Wolf** activity sheet. This activity will prepare students for the writing prompt on page 10. For alternate culminating tasks, see the box below.

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**Differentiate and Customize**

**For Struggling Readers**

In a well-organized paragraph, explain how the author’s use of the second person point of view in the introduction affects you as a reader. Support your answer with text evidence.

**For Advanced Readers**

The author writes the article in second person. What impact does that have on you as the reader? How might the article be different if it were written in third person? Answer both questions in a well-organized essay. Use text evidence to support your ideas.

**For Biologists**

There are many subspecies of gray wolf. Choose one subspecies to research, and create a presentation about its appearance, size, habitat, history, current threats, and conservation efforts. Present your findings in a slideshow, short video, or presentation.

**For Conservationists**

Research one way that conservationists are working to help America’s wolves. Present your findings in an essay, slideshow, video, or presentation.