“Island of Sorrow”

In the face of these overwhelming obstacles, Salvador felt despair and hopelessness as he heard stories of people across the island who had lost everything and were in a state of crisis, but he decided not to be defeated by these feelings and to instead do something to make a difference. Salvador thought about the needs of people in devastated areas and decided that supplying them with solar lamps and hand-operated washing machines could make a big difference in their lives (8). He created a crowdfunding webpage to get solar lights and hand-operated washing machines into the hands of people who needed them. Salvador continued to work hard, even when he was back in school, to coordinate the logistics of what he called the C+Feel=Hope initiative (8-9).

The way Salvador chose to respond to these obstacles allowed him to make a huge difference in the lives of many Puerto Ricans. He delivered 4,100 solar lamps and 1,100 washing machines to 15 towns around the island (9). His initiative enabled people to have the comfort of light at nighttime and the ability to wash their contaminated clothing to prevent disease (8-9). These items restored hope and dignity to people living in areas that were receiving little government aid and living in a state of uncertainty (8-9), proving that one person can make a difference, no matter the obstacles they face.

In face of these overwhelming obstacles, Salvador felt despair and hopelessness as he heard stories of people across the island who had lost everything and were in a state of crisis, but he decided not to be defeated by these feelings and to instead do something to make a difference. Salvador thought about the needs of people in devastated areas and decided that supplying them with solar lamps and hand-operated washing machines could make a big difference in their lives (8). He created a crowdfunding webpage to get solar lights and hand-operated washing machines into the hands of people who needed them. Salvador continued to work hard, even when he was back in school, to coordinate the logistics of what he called the C+Feel=Hope initiative (8-9).

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Answers will vary. Sample response:

The story of 15-year-old Salvador Gómez-Colón, as told by Kristin Lewis in her article “Island of Sorrow,” shows that one person can make a difference, even in the face of overwhelming obstacles.

In September of 2017, Salvador’s home, the island of Puerto Rico, was completely devastated by Hurricane Maria. Lewis writes that “to Salvador, it looked like an atomic bomb had been dropped” (5). Lewis describes how the storm’s violent winds tore off roofs, shattered windows, and collapsed entire buildings. She explains that telephone poles were snapped, knocking out electricity on the entire island and leaving people without phone service, internet, ATMs, gas pumps, water pumps, sewage treatment, refrigerators, or fully functioning hospitals. Life as Salvador knew it had been destroyed as mudslides, seawater, and winds destroyed homes, cars, roads, parks, trees, and schools (5-7). And as Lewis explains, dozens of people died during the storm and thousands more died in the months to come (7).

Any place would face enormous challenges in its recovery from a hurricane, but Puerto Rico faces additional challenges in its attempt to rebuild after Hurricane Maria. For one thing, the island has high levels of unemployment and poverty (7), making the expensive process of repairing and replacing what was damaged and destroyed particularly difficult. In addition, the island’s infrastructure is ancient and in disrepair (7), which makes restoring the power grid and sewage system extremely difficult. Plus, FEMA, the U.S. government’s main relief organization, has been accused of providing inadequate support to Puerto Rico in Hurricane Maria’s aftermath (9).
ANSWERS TO ACTIVITY SHEETS

KEY IDEAS AND DETAILS:
MAKING A DIFFERENCE
Answers will vary slightly.

1. • The storm’s violent winds tore off roofs, shattered windows, and collapsed entire buildings (5-7).
   • Telephone poles were snapped, knocking out electricity on the entire island. This left people without phone service, internet, ATMs, gas pumps, water pumps, sewage treatment, refrigerators, or fully functioning hospitals (5-7).
   • Mudslides, seawater, and winds destroyed homes, cars, roads, parks, trees, and schools (5-7).
   • Dozens of people died during the storm and thousands more died in the months to come (7).

2. • Puerto Rico has high levels of unemployment and poverty (7), making the expensive process of repairing and replacing what was damaged and destroyed particularly difficult.
   • The island’s infrastructure is ancient and in disrepair (7), which makes restoring the power grid and sewage system extremely difficult.
   • FEMA, the U.S. government’s main relief organization, has been accused of providing inadequate support to Puerto Rico (9).

3. • Salvador felt despair and hopelessness as he heard stories of people across the island who had lost everything and were in a state of crisis, but he decided not to be defeated by these feelings and to instead do something to make a difference (8).
   • Salvador thought about the needs of people in devastated areas and decided that supplying them with solar lamps and hand-operated washing machines could make a big difference in their lives (8).
   • Salvador created a crowdfunding webpage to get solar lights and hand-operated washing machines into the hands of people who needed them (9).
   • Salvador continued to work hard, even when he was back in school, to coordinate the logistics of his C+Feel=Hope initiative (9).

4. • Salvador delivered 4,100 solar lamps and 1,100 washing machines to 15 towns around the island (9).

   • People were able to have light at nighttime and wash contaminated clothing to prevent disease (8-9).
   • These items restored hope and dignity to people living in areas that were receiving little government aid and living in a state of uncertainty (8-9).

“ISLAND OF SORROW”
CLOSE-READING QUESTION

1. Lewis describes Puerto Rico in a mostly positive way, mentioning its “beautiful churches and bright turquoise and pink houses” (4-5) and writing that the island “has long been famous for its beauty and vibrancy,” with “sandy beaches, sweeping mountains, and lush rainforests” (6). In the city of San Juan, she writes, you can eat “mouthwatering” food and watch people dance in the streets to live music (6). She makes the island seem like a beautiful and fun place to be.

2. Students may answer that Lewis’s portrayal of Puerto Rico before Maria makes the storm’s destruction seem extra devastating—that knowing what was destroyed makes you feel the loss more deeply.

3. Cleaning up and rebuilding after a hurricane cost a lot in materials and labor. The fact that so many people are impoverished and that the economy was failing means that neither individuals nor the government had the money needed for recovery. The condition of the infrastructure likely made it more susceptible to damage.

4. The hurricane created dangerous conditions: Hospitals and pharmacies could not operate; food could not be refrigerated; and faucets, toilets, and sewers stopped working. On page 9, Lewis explains that restoring power to Puerto Rico has been challenging and slow; you can infer that many of the dangerous conditions that existed immediately after the storm persisted for months, leading to many deaths.

5. Students may say that Salvador is caring and empathetic; he said that “It was scary thinking about what other people were going through,” and he decided to do something to help (8). Students might also describe Salvador as determined, optimistic, generous, and resourceful for figuring out a way to help those in need, donating his time and energy to the project, believing that he could make a difference, and following through.

section continues >>
“ISLAND OF SORROW”
CRITICAL-THINKING QUESTIONS
1. Answers will vary. Perhaps she sensed that the mission was going to be more difficult than Salvador anticipated, and she was trying to warn him. Or perhaps she was telling him not to get people’s hopes up and then disappoint them.
2. Answers will vary. Students might say that it is human nature to have hope—perhaps because we need it to keep going when times are hard. Students might also connect hope to religious belief. Possible answers about what keeps hope going include: any small sign of improvement, support and encouragement from others, and religious faith.

READ, THINK, EXPLAIN:
IDENTIFYING NONFICTION ELEMENTS
*Higher Level (HL)
Answers will vary but should be similar to the following:
1. The image of an entire neighborhood flooded with murky water and the headline “Island of Sorrow” create a mood of shock, horror, and sadness.
2. The photographs show beautiful beaches and colorfully painted buildings. The author included the photographs to showcase the beauty and vibrancy of Puerto Rico before Hurricane Maria came ashore. The difference between these photos and those showing the destruction after the storm emphasize how much damage the hurricane caused.
3. The photo helps you understand the type of difficulties the people of Puerto Rico experienced after Hurricane Maria. The photo shows people wading through thigh-deep water after the storm. They are walking amidst fallen power lines and houses that are completely torn apart. This helps you understand how much people lost during the storm, and how much work would have to be done after the storm.
4. I predict this article will be about an island that was devastated by a hurricane and how someone helped people recover after the storm. (Answers will vary.)
5. The mood of the introduction is desperate and downcast. The author creates this mood by describing the destruction that Salvador witnessed after Hurricane Maria tore through his hometown of San Juan, Puerto Rico. She writes that after the storm Salvador saw only, “destruction and hopelessness” (4). The author then goes on to describe how beautiful and vibrate San Juan was before the storm. These bright and colorful descriptions of the city are followed by descriptions of the mess of “tangled power lines,” “wrecked cars,” and “debris-filled water” that now filled the city (5). These descriptions of Puerto Rico before and after the storm intensify the feeling of loss and desperation in the reader. The author then describes a feeling of “creeping hopelessness” that overcomes Salvador as he watches the sun set the day after the storm and imagines families around the island suffering in the dark (5-6). Asking the reader to imagine the suffering Puerto-Rican families makes the reader feel the same hopelessness that Salvador must have been feeling in this moment and intensifies the desperate and downcast mood of the section.
6. A. The author describes Puerto Rico and what kind of a place it is.
B. I know the author uses a description structure in the first two paragraphs of “A Unique Place” because she includes details that help readers picture Puerto Rico and understand what kind of place it is. For example, she explains that Puerto Rico is about 1,000 miles southeast of Florida, famous for its beauty and vibrancy, and is a territory of the U.S. (6). She also uses descriptive words to describe the island, such as “sandy beaches, sweeping mountains, and lush rainforests” (6).
7. The author uses an admiring tone when talking about Salvador in this section. I know the authors use an admiring tone because after describing the challenges that Puerto Rico still faces, she writes, “But Salvador does not dwell on Puerto Rico’s problems. Too much work needs to be done” (9). This shows that the author admires Salvador’s strength, work ethic, and positive mindset.
8. Salvador is determined and resilient. (Answers will vary.)
9. Sample summary:
   On September 20, 2017, 15-year-old Salvador and his family were living in San Juan, Puerto Rico, when Hurricane Maria slammed into the island. The storm’s powerful winds and devastating floods wiped out entire villages, closed roads, and left most of the island without power.
   The damage caused by Hurricane Maria was particularly devastating for Puerto Rico because much of Puerto Rico’s
infrastructure was already falling apart before the storm. The island had also already been facing high levels of unemployment and poverty.

Salvador, who made it through the hurricane with his home intact and family safe, was determined to help. He decided to focus on two major problems people on the island were facing: no power and no way to wash clothes. He set up a crowdfunding website to raise money to buy solar-powered lamps and hand-powered washing machines. Salvador ended up raising more than $140,000 and delivering 4,100 solar lamps and 1,100 washing machines to 15 towns around the island. Though Puerto Rico still faces many challenges, Salvador remains hopeful and focused on the future.

**READ, THINK, EXPLAIN:**

**IDENTIFYING NONFICTION ELEMENTS**

*Higher Level (LL)*

Answers will vary but should be similar to the following:

1. The image of an entire neighborhood flooded with murky water and the headline “Island of Sorrow” create a mood of shock, horror, and sadness.

2. The photographs show beautiful beaches and colorfully painted buildings. The author included the photographs to showcase the beauty and vibrancy of Puerto Rico before Hurricane Maria came ashore. The difference between these photos and those showing the destruction after the storm emphasize how much damage the hurricane caused.

3. The photo helps you understand the type of difficulties the people of Puerto Rico experienced after Hurricane Maria. The photo shows people wading through thigh-deep water after the storm. They are walking amidst fallen power lines and houses that are completely torn apart. This helps you understand how much people lost during the storm, and how much work would have to be done after the storm.

4. I predict this article will be about an island that was devastated by a hurricane and how someone helped people recover after the storm. (Answers will vary.)

5. joyful to sad

6. A. C  
   B. Salvador raised money and organized a program to bring people solar lamps and hand-operated washing machines.

7. A. admiring  
   B. I know the authors use an admiring tone because after describing the challenges that Puerto Rico still faces, she writes, “But Salvador does not dwell on Puerto Rico’s problems. Too much work needs to be done” (9). This shows that the author admires Salvador’s strength, work ethic, and positive mindset.

8. A. Students should cross out Detail #2.  
   B. Detail #2 explains that millions of people stayed in Puerto Rico during the hurricane, which does not support the idea that Hurricane Maria was extremely powerful and destructive.

9. Students should cross out C, D, and F.

**“ISLAND OF SORROW” VOCABULARY**

1. A
2. A
3. B
4. B
5. Speaking in front of a large group of people can be a daunting experience.
6. During the final episode of America’s Got Talent, the TV network was deluged with phone calls from viewers voting for their favorite acts.
7. Our cat, Mr. Pickles, careened around the house, playing with a ball of aluminum foil.

**“ISLAND OF SORROW” QUIZ**

*Higher Level (HL)*

1. A and B (text structure; R.5)  
2. D (vocabulary in context; R.4)  
3. D (text structure, key ideas and details; R.5, R.2)  
4. D (key ideas and details; R.2)  
5. B (text features, central ideas; R.5, R.2)  
6. C and D (key ideas and details; R.2)  
7. Salvador decided to distribute solar lamps and hand-operated washing machines to people in devastated areas because he believed that those two items would, as Kristin Lewis writes, “restore some measure of hope and dignity” to people (8). Hurricane Maria knocked out the power in Puerto Rico, and in many places, the power had not been restored weeks and even months later (8-9). The lamps and washing machines that Salvador decided to give out do not need electricity to operate and therefore
“Island of Sorrow” cont’d

salvador knew, was important because without it, people would begin to get sick (8). (key ideas and details, writing explanatory text; R.1, W.2)

8. Over the course of “Island of Sorrow,” Kristin Lewis develops the ideas that Salvador Gómez-Colón went from feeling hopeless to feeling hopeful, that Salvador has brought hope to the people of Puerto Rico, and that hope is what keeps the people of Puerto Rico going as they face the challenge of recovering from Hurricane Maria. In the article’s introduction, Lewis describes Salvador on the evening after Maria devastated Puerto Rico. As Salvador watched the sun set, Lewis writes, “A feeling of hopelessness crept over him” (6). In the days after the storm, Lewis writes, “...that same creeping hopelessness returned to him...until one night, Salvador had had enough. He would not surrender to despair” (8). Lewis goes on to explain how Salvador decided to help people by giving them solar lamps and hand-operated washing machines. She states that items were “life changing for communities that were receiving little government aid and were beginning to lose hope” (9). In other words, the lamps and washing machines that Salvador distributed gave hope to people who were starting to feel hopeless. At the end of the article, Lewis returns again to the idea of hope, writing: “It’s the hope. Hope that things will get better, hope that helping each other will get us through. Hope that we will persevere” (9). (key ideas and details, writing explanatory text; R.3, R.5, W.2)

7. The lamps and washing machines that Salvador gave out were helpful to people in areas devastated by Hurricane Maria because they could be run without electricity, and in some areas of Puerto Rico, electricity was not restored for weeks or even months after the hurricane (8-9). The lamps were solar-powered and the washing machines were hand-operated (8). These two items helped people with basic needs: light at night and a way to keep clothes clean. The ability to keep clothes clean was important because without it, people would begin to get sick (8). What’s more, Salvador thought, giving people the lamps and washing machines could “restore some measure of hope and dignity” to them (8). (key ideas and details, writing explanatory text; R.1, W.2)

8. In “Island of Sorrow,” author Kristin Lewis develops the idea that Salvador has gone from feeling hopeless to feeling hopeful. In the article’s introduction, Lewis describes Salvador on the evening after Maria hit Puerto Rico, when he overcome by hopelessness. As Salvador watched the sun set, Lewis writes, “A feeling of hopelessness crept over him” (6). In the days after the storm, Lewis writes, “...that same creeping hopelessness returned to him...until one night, Salvador had had enough. He would not surrender to despair” (8). Here, Lewis is describing a turning point for Salvador, when he began to overcome his hopelessness by taking action. Lewis goes on to explain how Salvador decided to help people by giving out solar lamps and hand-operated washing machines. At the end of the article, Lewis shows that Salvador is full of hope. She writes that Salvador, thinking about what is helping him and others face Puerto Rico’s challenges and uncertain future, said, “It’s the hope. Hope that things will get better, hope that helping each other will get us through. Hope that we will persevere” (9). (key ideas and details, writing explanatory text; R.3, R.5, W.2)
“Island of Sorrow” cont’d

80 years. The storm’s powerful 150-mile-per-hour winds tore off roofs, shattered windows, and snapped trees and telephone poles. Rushing water flooded cities and villages and created mudslides that buried cars and destroyed homes. During the storm and its aftermath, thousands of Puerto Ricans died, became homeless, or fled the island.

3. During Hurricane Maria, Salvador and his family were trapped in a small room for hours as the storm battered the island. After the storm, the family was able to move back in to their apartment. Other families in Puerto Rico lost everything.

4. When Salvador learned about people around the island who were suffering without homes or power, he set up a crowdfunding webpage and raised more than $140,000. He used the money to buy solar lamps and hand-operated washing machines for people who didn’t have power.

5. Answers will vary. Students may explain that Hurricane Maria was particularly devastating for Puerto Rico because much of the island’s infrastructure, including its power grid, was already in disrepair before the storm. Puerto Rico was also already facing high levels of unemployment and poverty.

Sample Summary:

On September 20, 2017, 15-year-old Salvador and his family were living in San Juan, Puerto Rico, when Hurricane Maria slammed into the island. The storm’s powerful winds and devastating floods wiped out entire villages, closed roads, and left most of the island without power. The damage caused by Hurricane Maria was particularly devastating for Puerto Rico because much of Puerto Rico’s infrastructure was already falling apart before the storm. The island had also already been facing high levels of unemployment and poverty.

Salvador, who made it through the hurricane with his home intact and family safe, was determined to help. He decided to focus on two major problems people on the island were facing: no power and no way to wash clothes. He set up a crowdfunding website to raise money to buy solar-powered lamps and hand-powered washing machines. Salvador ended up raising more than $140,000 and delivering 4,100 solar lamps and 1,100 washing machines to 15 towns around the island. Though Puerto Rico still faces many challenges, Salvador remains hopeful and focused on the future.

CORE SKILLS WORKOUT: SUMMARIZING
*Lower Level (LL)

On September 20, 2017, 15-year-old Salvador and his family were living in San Juan, Puerto Rico, when Hurricane Maria slammed into the island. The storm’s powerful winds and devastating floods wiped out entire villages, closed roads, and left most of the island without power. The damage caused by Hurricane Maria was particularly devastating for Puerto Rico because much of Puerto Rico’s infrastructure was already falling apart before the storm. The island had also already been facing high levels of unemployment and poverty.

Salvador, who made it through the hurricane with his home intact and family safe, was determined to help. He decided to focus on two major problems people on the island were facing: no power and no way to wash clothes. He set up a crowdfunding website to raise money to buy solar-powered lamps and hand-powered washing machines. Salvador ended up raising more than $140,000 and delivering 4,100 solar lamps and 1,100 washing machines to 15 towns around the island. Though Puerto Rico still faces many challenges, Salvador remains hopeful and focused on the future.

CORE SKILLS WORKOUT: CENTRAL IDEAS AND DETAILS
*Higher Level (HL)

1. A

2. B; I chose B because the detail explains how Salvador’s family prepared for Hurricane Maria, but it does not provide any information that shows how powerful and destructive the storm ended up being.

3. Puerto Rico faced unique challenges when dealing with the damage caused by Hurricane Maria. (Answers will vary.)

4. Answers will vary but should be similar to the following: “He imagined families in the pitch-black night stumbling around the broken shells of their homes. What if they fell and hurt themselves?” (p. 6); “I thought, at least I am safe here, but just imagine people who live in wooden homes or have zinc [a light metal] roofs—which would be the first to blow off. It was scary thinking about what other people were going through.” (p. 8); “But the logistics of buying and shipping lamps and washing...”
“Island of Sorrow” cont’d

machines proved to be a huge challenge. . . Yet Salvador refused to give up.” (p. 8)

CORE SKILLS WORKOUT: CENTRAL IDEAS AND DETAILS
*Lower Level (LL)
1. B, C, E
2. Salvador is determined. (Answers will vary slightly.)

CORE SKILLS WORKOUT: TEXT FEATURES
1. The image shows a neighborhood flooded with brown, muddy water. Many of the homes in the photo are damaged and surrounded by downed trees and power lines. The image helps the reader understand the extent of the damage that Hurricane Maria caused in Puerto Rico by showing how vast of an area the floodwaters covered, how deep the water was, and the kinds of damage the storm caused.
2. The photo helps you understand the type of difficulties the people of Puerto Rico experienced after Hurricane Maria. The photo shows people wading through thigh-deep water after the storm. They are walking amidst fallen power lines and houses that are completely torn apart. This helps you understand how much people lost during the storm, and how much work would have to be done after the storm.
3. The author may have chosen to include this information because it provides more information about the recovery effort in Puerto Rico, why so many people lost all that they did after the storm, and why it has been particularly challenging for Puerto Rico to get back on its feet after the hurricane.
4. The subheadings of the first several sections of the article such as, “The Hurricane’s Wrath” and “State of Crisis,” have a fearful, desperate tone. The tone shifts to hopeful and determined with the section headers “A Bold Idea’’ and “‘It’s the Hope.’”

CORE SKILLS WORKOUT: FINDING AND USING TEXT EVIDENCE
*Higher Level (HL)
1. A, C
2. B; I chose B because it shows that a large amount of people visit Puerto Rico each year, which means that it is a popular destination for tourists.
3. A, C, E; Evidence B does not support the statement because it explains how Salvador was feeling as he listened to reports about the storm before it hit Puerto Rico. This detail does not show how devastating the storm was for Puerto Rico.
4. A; Choice B does not use quotation marks or cite a source for the information. Choice C uses paraphrase.
5. C; Choice B does not provide a source for the information being paraphrased and Choice A uses a direct quote and does not include a sentence explaining why the information is relevant.

CORE SKILLS WORKOUT: FINDING TEXT EVIDENCE
*Lower Level (LL)
1. A, C
2. B; I chose B because it shows that a large amount of people visit Puerto Rico each year, which means that it is a popular destination for tourists.
3. Answers will vary, but may include: “He heard stories of destroyed villages and of families losing all their belongings.” (p. 8); “Large chunks of mud careened down from the mountains, burying cars and smashing homes.” (p. 7); “The deluge swelled rivers and canals, sending water gushing into neighborhoods and bursting a dam.” (p. 7); “After the storm, there was virtually no power on the island.” (p. 7)
“Island of Sorrow” cont’d

4. Puerto Rico faced unique challenges when dealing with the damage caused by Hurricane Maria. (Answers will vary.)

CORE SKILLS WORKOUT: TONE

*Higher Level (HL)

1. Answers will vary. One possible selection:
   “A feeling of hopelessness crept over him. He imagined families in the pitch-black night stumbling around the broken shells of their homes. What if they fell and hurt themselves? With hospitals barely functioning—if at all—and no way to call for help, what would happen to people?
   ‘To me, that sun setting was hope leaving,’ Salvador says. But what could he do?” (p. 6)

2. critical; Lewis sounds like she thinks FEMA could have done a better job supporting Puerto Rico after the storm. By pointing out how long it took to get tarps to people and the negative results of that delay, and by comparing the slow response in Puerto Rico to the swift response in Houston, Lewis sounds like she agrees with those who think FEMA’s response was inadequate.

3. Answers will vary. Responses may include: admiring and impressed.
   Support: Lewis describes Salvador’s significant accomplishments and calls the work Salvador did in bringing people the lamps and washing machines “life changing.” She sounds like she greatly admires what Salvador did and is impressed by his efforts.

VIDEO DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. I can infer that Salvador’s experience during Hurricane Maria was frightening and stressful. The gym is very small and from the description that Salvador provides of all of the people who were waiting in it with him, you can infer that it must have been rather cramped. The narration also explains that all of the people in the room had to wait there “for hours” (1:37). Waiting in a small and crowded room for hours while a dangerous storm rages outside would likely be a very stressful and anxious situation. Salvador also explains that flood waters were threatening to enter the gym and that eventually the winds got so strong that the doors were barred to prevent them from flying off (1:57-2:12). From these details you can infer that the storm was very powerful and dangerous and that waiting it out in the gym must have been frightening.

2. The segment of the video in which Rubén and Salvador talk about distributing lamps after the storm is hopeful and positive. Uplifting music plays as the narration explains that Ruben and Salvador were able to distribute solar lamps to over 200 homes in the neighborhood (4:13). The visuals also add to the hopeful mood by showing Rubén and Salvador hugging and smiling.

3. When Salvador says that he wanted the people of Puerto Rico to know that they would “metaphorically” see the light at the end of the tunnel, he means that he wanted people to know that even though times were difficult, they would make it through their suffering and be OK in the end. When Salvador says he wanted people to “literally” see the light at the end of the tunnel, he means that he wanted to give lights to people in Puerto Rico who had lost power and that he wanted them to remain positive and know that one day that their power would be restored.