The Rise of Fandoms
Superfans today have more power than ever. Is that a good thing?

About the Story
Lexile: 1040L
For qualitative complexity factors, go to Scope Online.

Learning Objective:
to synthesize information about fandoms from two nonfiction articles

Key Skills:
author’s craft, text structure, central ideas and details, interpreting text, synthesis

Essential Questions:
• What does it mean to be a fan?
• How does pop culture reflect our values?
• How do the movies, books, and celebrities we love shape our identity?

Standards:
The articles and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.7, R.9, W.2, SL.1, SL.2, 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 articles
• Vocabulary

Skill Builders to print or project:
• Vocabulary
• Preparing to Write: Exploring Fandom
• Close Reading and Critical Thinking
• Core Skills Workout: Text Evidence*
• Quiz*
• Contest Entry Form
* Available on two levels
Preparing to Read

Do-Now: Brainstorm
(7 minutes)
Post the following on the board for students to respond to as they walk into the classroom:
When you think of a superfan, what words come to mind? Invite volunteers to share their ideas.

Preview vocabulary.
(10 minutes, activity sheet online)
Project or distribute the Vocabulary Words and Definitions. Highlighted words: advocacy, canon, cater, discord, disgruntled, divisive, haggard, moderation, primal, savvy

Reading and Discussing
“The Rise of Fandoms”
(30 minutes, activity sheets online)
• Read aloud the As You Read box on page 16.
• Read the article as a class. Optionally, play the audio from Scope Online.
• Discuss the following questions as a class.

Close-Reading Questions
How does author Kristin Lewis draw you into her article? (author’s craft) Lewis draws you into her article by describing a scene that is likely to be familiar and interesting to most readers: fans waiting for the arrival of “America’s favorite celebrity.” Then Lewis surprises readers by revealing that the celebrity is not a current star but Charles Dickens, a writer from the past. This surprise helps create interest and makes readers want to learn more.

In the section “Fans Unite,” the author includes a list of fandoms that exist today. Why might the author have included this list? (author’s craft, text structure) The author likely included this list to support the idea that there are many fandoms.

What text structure does the author use in the section “Tight-Knit Tribes”? What does the author use this structure to show? (text structure) The author uses a compare-and-contrast structure. She compares what it was like to be a fan in the past with what it is like to be a fan today. The author uses this structure to show how the fan experience has changed over time.

Lewis writes that superfans will defend the thing they love “with the ferocity of a mama bear protecting her cubs” (18). What does this comparison help you understand about superfans? (author’s craft) This comparison helps you understand how intense the passion of a superfan can be.

The author includes details about Charles Dickens’s fans in her article as well as details about fandoms throughout time in a sidebar. How do these details contribute to the article? (central ideas and details) The details about Charles Dickens and the fandoms described in the sidebar contribute to the article by supporting the idea that superfans and fandoms are not new. They also contribute to the article by showing how fan culture has changed.

“Is Fandom Good for You?”
(15 minutes, activity sheets online)
• Read the article as a class and respond to the following questions. Some refer to both texts.

Close-Reading Question
On page 19, Lewis writes, “fandoms can be a bright spot in a world that can sometimes seem divisive.” What does she mean? (interpreting text) Lewis means that fandoms
can be a source of joy and relief when the world feels cruel or frightening. Fandoms can lift you up by channeling your energy and focus into something positive.

**Critical-Thinking Questions**

On page 18, Lewis writes, “Thanks to the internet and social media, [finding other superfans] is no longer a problem.” What are some other ways social media has changed fandom? Answers will vary, but students may say that social media has also made it easier for fans to interact with celebrities. For example, fans can now send tweets or direct messages to celebrities—and some celebrities will respond and have conversations with their fans. Social media has also enabled fans to display their passion on a public platform. For example, fans can post fan art and fan fiction that they create.

Lewis writes that “fandom gives you a sense of community.” Do you agree? Have you had an experience where being a fan made you feel accepted? Explain. Answers will vary.

Lewis explains that Star Wars fans signed a petition to remove *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* from the Star Wars canon. Do you think this is acceptable fan behavior? Some may say it’s fine for fans to express their opinions; others may say that the Star Wars fans went too far.

Consider the anecdote about Sonic the Hedgehog on page 18. How much should movie studios and artists take their fans’ opinions into consideration when making work? Answers will vary. Some students may say artists should express themselves however they want, regardless of their fans’ opinions. Others may say that keeping a fan base happy is important to being successful.

Do you think fandoms contribute to society in a positive way? Answers will vary. Students may say that while fandoms do contribute to society in many positive ways, when these groups get out of control, they can also affect society in negative ways.

**Skill Building and Writing**

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

Have students complete Preparing to Write: Exploring Fandom. This synthesis activity will prepare students for the prompt on page 19. For alternate culminating tasks, see below.

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**Differentiate and Customize**

**For Struggling Readers**

In a well-organized paragraph, explain how fandom is affecting the world in both positive and negative ways. Use details from both articles to support your ideas.

**For Advanced Readers**

In a well-organized essay, explain the role that fandom plays in our culture. Use information from both articles as well as from two additional sources.

**For Filmmakers**

Create a documentary about the rise of fandoms and how they affect our culture. Your documentary can be in the form of a written script, a video, or a slideshow.

**For Artists**

Imagine you are planning an exhibit about fandom through time. Make a list of the images and objects you will include. Explain why you would include each item.