Vanished
What happened to Amelia Earhart?

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

Learning Objective:
to evaluate the evidence for various theories about Amelia Earhart’s disappearance and to write an essay explaining which theory is most convincing

Key Skills:
author’s craft, text structure, interpreting text, evaluating evidence

Essential Questions:
• What is a trailblazer?
• What is the appeal of a mystery?
• What drives humans to attempt dangerous feats?

Standards:
This article and lesson support these Common Core anchor standards:
R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.7, W.1, 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: Behind the Scenes: “Vanished”
Audio:
• The article (English and Spanish)
• Vocabulary Slideshow

Differentiated articles:
• Lower-Lexile version (printable)
• Spanish version (printable)

Literature Connections: ideas for connecting to curricular texts

Skill Builders to print or project:
• Video Discussion Questions
• Close Reading and Critical Thinking
• Preparing to Write: What Happened to Amelia Earhart?

• Core Skills Workout: Summarizing*, Text Features, Text Structure, Central Ideas and Details*
• Quiz*
• Nonfiction Elements*
• Contest Entry Form
*Available on two levels
Step-by-Step Lesson Plan
Close Reading, Critical Thinking, Skill Building

1 Preparing to Read

Do-Now: Analyze a photo. (5 minutes)
Project pages 4-5 of the article or another photo of Amelia Earhart with this prompt:
Take three minutes to write down everything you notice about this photograph. What can you infer about the time period? Why do you think so? Invite volunteers to share with the class.

Watch the video. (15 minutes)
Project or distribute the Video Discussion Questions and preview as a class. Then watch the Behind the Scenes video and discuss the questions.

Preview vocabulary. (8 minutes, activity sheet online)
Project the Vocabulary Slideshow. Highlighted words: aviators, beacons, circumnavigate, daunt, expeditions, plausible, sonar, uninhabited

2 Reading and Discussing

Read and discuss the article. (45 minutes, activity sheets online)
• Have a volunteer read aloud the As You Read box on page 5.
• Play the audio at Scope Online while students follow along in their printed magazines.
• Have students work in groups to discuss the following close-reading questions.

Close-Reading Questions
In the introduction, what do the details about what Earhart saw as she flew around the world help readers understand? (author’s craft) The details help readers understand how wondrous it would be to fly an airplane around the entire globe. These details also help readers understand just how far Earhart had come: She had crossed over many parts of the planet and was nearing the end of her long journey. That she was at the doorstep of fulfilling her dream makes her demise all the more tragic.

Why does author Mackenzie Carro include the section “The Risks”? What does this section add to the article? (text structure) Carro likely includes this section to help readers understand how dangerous Earhart’s attempted circumnavigation was. The information in this section explains how easy it would have been for something to go wrong with Earhart’s plane, which in turn helps the reader understand why Earhart might have crashed. The information about the risks of flying over an ocean also helps establish that Earhart was courageous and daring.

Consider Earhart’s quote on page 7: “I want to do it because I want to do it. Women must try to do things as men have tried. When they fail, their failure must be but a challenge to others.” In your own words, explain what Earhart meant. (interpreting text) Earhart meant that she didn’t think she needed any reason to attempt a circumnavigation beyond her desire to do it. She meant that just as it was considered normal for men to try difficult things, it should be considered normal for women to try difficult things. She was also saying that if one woman does not succeed at something, other women should take that failure as a call to get out there and try it themselves.

Why do you think Carro included the information about the Great Depression? What does this information add to the article? (text structure) Carro likely included
this information to help readers understand why Amelia Earhart was so beloved at the time and why her disappearance was so devastating. During the Great Depression, many people were suffering and, as Carro writes on page 7, Earhart was a “welcome distraction.” This information also provides readers with context about what was happening in Earhart’s day.

How does Carro build suspense in the section “Starting to Worry”? (author’s craft)

Carro builds suspense by describing how dire the situation was: The radio didn’t seem to be working, Earhart and Noonan were lost, and the plane was running out of gas. Carro also draws out the action, telling readers what the crew heard at 7 a.m., 7:42 a.m., and 8:45 a.m. This helps readers understand the growing anxiety of the Itasca’s crew as time ticked by and Earhart failed to appear.

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

Critical-Thinking Questions
Why do you think people continue to be so interested in the story of Amelia Earhart? Answers will vary but may include the following ideas: It’s a suspenseful and dramatic tale. Because Earhart and Noonan’s fate is still unknown, the story remains a mystery—and it’s human nature to want to know the endings to stories. Plus, Earhart was greatly admired, which may increase people’s desire to know what happened to her. Perhaps some hope to learn that she survived after her disappearance.

A trailblazer is a pioneer or leader—usually someone willing to take risks or do something never done before. What makes Earhart a trailblazer? Earhart was a trailblazer because she broke into a male-dominated field and was able to achieve things that many people at the time didn’t think women were capable of achieving. The way she lived her life paved the way for future generations of women to become pilots and to be treated with respect and dignity.

3 Skill Building and Writing
(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

Have students work in small groups to complete Preparing to Write: What Happened to Amelia Earhart? This activity will prepare them to respond to the writing prompt on page 9. For alternate culminating tasks, see the box below.

Differentiate and Customize

For Struggling Readers
Choose one explanation for what happened to Amelia Earhart. In a well-organized paragraph, explain how convincing the explanation is.

For Advanced Readers
Write a dialogue between two historians debating what happened to Amelia Earhart. Draw on information in the article, the video, and one additional source.

For Creative Writers
Imagine that Amelia Earhart survived after her disappearance and her long-lost journal has just been discovered. Write her journal entries about the events of her life after July 2, 1937.

For Detectives
In a well-organized essay, explain the present-day efforts to solve the mystery of Amelia Earhart’s disappearance. Draw on information in the article as well as your own research.