

AMULET BOOKS GRAPHIC NOVEL TEACHING GUIDE



Amulet Books

INTRODUCTION

What are graphic novels? The easiest way to describe them is to say that they are book-length comic books. However, a more complex definition that educators and librarians use is “book-length narratives told using a combination of words and sequential art, often presented in comic book style” (Fletcher-Spear, 37). Graphic novels are not written in just one genre; they can be in any genre, since graphic novels are a format/medium. Graphic novels are much like novels, but they’re told through words and visuals. They have all narrative elements, including characters, plot, conflict, etc.

Middle grade and young adult graphic novels cover a wide spectrum of themes and topics. Some common themes found in graphic novels for this age include the hero’s journey, overcoming hardship, and finding one’s identity. For example, in the *Hereville* series by Barry Deutsch, we meet Mirka, an everyday girl who learns to use her brains and brawn to overcome her foes. In *The Misadventures of Salem Hyde* series by Frank Cammuso, Salem is working on finding out just who she is (both as a witch and as a person) with the help of her feline friend, Whammy. Graphic novels can cross curricular lines. One example is the *Nathan Hale’s Hazardous Tales* series—comical nonfiction that takes historical events and presents them in interesting ways, using graphics and humor that will make students want to learn even more about the historical time periods. In the *Explorer* series edited by Kazu Kibuishi, stories include topics such as animal adaptation, volcanic eruptions, and the fate of humanity. Like prose novels, graphic novels offer opportunities in all subject areas to extend students’ thinking.

Over the past few years, graphic novels have become a hot topic, growing in popularity with both children and educators. While many teachers are beginning to include them in the classroom, there are still teachers, administrators, and librarians who struggle with including this format in their schools. So, why should you use them in your classroom and have available for students?

- **Graphic novels can make a difficult subject interesting and relatable.** (Cohen)
- **Students are visual learners, and today’s students have a much wider visual vocabulary than students in the past.** (Karp)
- **Graphic novels can help foster complex reading skills by building a bridge from what students know to what they still have to learn.** (NCTE)
- **Graphic novels can help with scaffolding when trying to teach higher-order thinking skills or other complex ideas.**
- **For students who struggle to visualize while they read, graphic novels provide visuals that show what good readers do.** (NCTE)
- **Many graphic novels rely on symbol, allusion, satire, parody, irony, and characters/plot and can be used to teach these, and other, literary devices.** (Miller; NCTE)
- **Often, in between panels (called the gutter), the reader must make inferences to understand how the events in one panel lead to the events in the next.** (McCloud)
- **Graphic novels can make differentiating easier.** (Miller)
- **Graphic novels can help ELL (English Language Learners) and reluctant and struggling readers since they divide the text into manageable chunks, use images (which help students understand unknown vocabulary), and are far less daunting than prose.** (Haines)
- **Graphic novels do not reduce the vocabulary demand; instead, they provide picture support, quick and appealing story lines, and less text, which allow the reader to understand the vocabulary more easily.** (Haines)
- **Research shows that comic books are linguistically appropriate reading material, bearing no negative impact on school achievement or language acquisition.** (Krashen)
- **Students love them.**

You can find readers engaging with graphic novels at all reading levels, and graphic novels can truly be a gateway to the joys of reading for reluctant and struggling readers as well as satisfying for the most gifted readers. Reluctant readers often find reading to be less fun than video games, movies, and other media, but many will gravitate toward graphic novels because of the visuals and the fast pace. Struggling readers will pick up graphic novels for these reasons as well but also because the graphic novel includes accommodations directly in the book: images, less text, etc.

All in all, graphic novels can interest your most reluctant and struggling readers and also extend all of your readers, including your most gifted.

RESOURCES

- Cohen, Lisa S. “But This Book Has Pictures! The Case for Graphic Novels in an AP Classroom.” *AP Central*. CollegeBoard.
- Fletcher-Spear, Kristin, Merideth Jenson-Benjamin, and Teresa Copeland. “The Truth About Graphic Novels: A Format, Not a Genre.” *The ALAN Review Winter* (2005): 37–44.
- Haines, Jennifer. “Why Use Comics in the Classroom?” *Comic Book Daily*. N.p., 20 Mar. 2012.
- Karp, Jesse. “The Case for Graphic Novels in Education.” *American Libraries*. N.p., 1 Aug. 2011.
- Krashen, Stephen. *The Power of Reading*. Englewood, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, Inc. 1993.
- McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics*. Northampton, Mass.: Kitchen Sink, 1993.
- Miller, Andrew. “Using Graphic Novels and Comics in the Classroom.” *Edutopia*. N.p., 11 Jan. 2012.
- NCTE, comp. “Using Comics and Graphic Novels in the Classroom.” *The Council Chronicle* September (2005) <<http://www.ncte.org/magazine/archives/122031>>.

A GUIDE TO USING THIS TEACHER'S GUIDE

For each series in this guide, you will find the information set up the same:

- **Series Introduction:** A summary of each book in the series
- **Author:** Biographical information about the author
- **Age Range:** Recommended ages for the series
- **Fun Across the Curriculum:** Activities and discussion questions for the classroom across the curriculum.
- **Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards:** The standards that are met when the books are extended using the activities and discussion questions.

AMULET BOOKS GRAPHIC NOVEL TEACHING GUIDE



SERIES INTRODUCTION

THE MISADVENTURES OF SALEM HYDE BY FRANK CAMMUSO

Spelling Trouble

Salem Hyde just isn't like other kids. She's stubborn, independent, and impulsive. She's also a witch. Salem acts first and thinks later—which means most of her thinking involves coming up with excuses!

It's a good thing that she's been assigned an animal companion, Lord Percival J. Whamsford III. But this over-anxious cat doesn't like Salem calling him "Whammy," and Salem doesn't like listening to his long-winded explanations as to why she shouldn't do something . . . like enter the class spelling bee.

Salem knows she can beat all her classmates at spells, no problem. Too late she realizes that the competition is about spelling words, not magic. And there's nothing like a misspelled spell to cause all kinds of havoc!

Big Birthday Bash

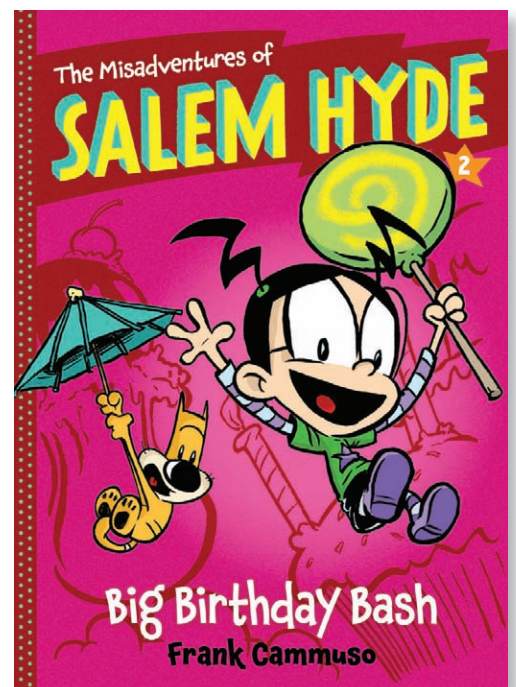
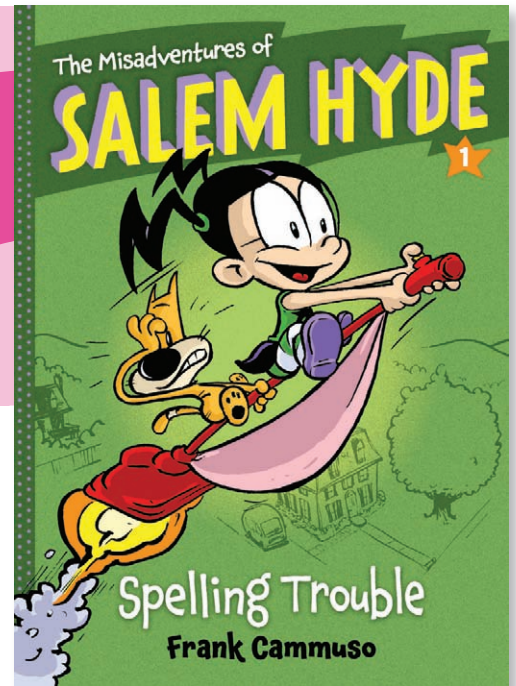
Young witch Salem Hyde is stubborn and impulsive, and she loves flying. Her cat companion, Whammy, is nervous and careful, and he loves staying on the ground. Somehow, though, they're best friends. In this second book in the series, Salem is invited to a birthday party, and she wants to make sure everything goes perfectly. But from the invitations to the presents to the party games, spells go awry. Nothing turns out exactly the way it should, and she needs Whammy's help to sort it all out.



Author

Frank Cammuso is an Eisner-nominated cartoonist, the creator of the popular middle school graphic novel series *Knights of the Lunch Table*, and the illustrator of several beginning reader graphic books, including *Otto's Orange Day*. He lives in Syracuse, New York.

Ages 7 to 9



FUN ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

SPELLING TROUBLE

Language Arts

- Whammy shares a story about the time he sailed aboard a ship looking for a whale. This story is a twist on Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*. Why do you think Whammy chooses to tell this story? What lesson is he teaching Salem?

- The road where Salem's family lives is named Sleepy Hollow. Where does this name come from? Why is it appropriate?
- Salem calls Whammy a scaredy cat. This is an idiom that means someone who is easily frightened. What other idioms are cat-related? What do they mean?
- Whammy almost quits being Salem's animal companion, and Salem is not happy with Whammy, either. However, by the end, they both realize that they are perfect for each other. Why is Whammy exactly what Salem needs?
- Vocabulary: shenanigans (**page 10**), gazillion (**page 11**), companion (**page 13**), potential (**page 17**), impressionable (**page 60**), montage (**page 65**), hospitality (**page 70**), impulsively (**page 81**)
- Whammy uses the words “careless” and “reckless” to describe Salem (**page 63**). Both of these words end with the suffix “less.” What does this suffix mean? What other words end with this suffix?
- Trouble ensues during the spelling bee, because all the contestants are spelling homophones of the word that is being asked of them (whale/wail, boar/bore, bear/bare, moose/mousse, and bald/bawled). What are some other homophones that would have caused trouble if they had been spelled incorrectly during the spelling bee?



Science

- Salem accidentally makes a dinosaur at the beginning of *Spelling Trouble*. What type of dinosaur does she make? Why is this dinosaur particularly dangerous? What dinosaurs would be the safest to have around? What other dinosaurs would be dangerous?
- At the end of *Spelling Trouble*, Salem and Whammy have to rescue a whale, but it is done in a very unconventional way. How would real scientists rescue a whale in distress?

BIG BIRTHDAY BASH

Language Arts

- Whammy shares a story about a time he sold his gold watch to buy a brush for his love, but his love sold her hair to buy him a band for his gold watch. This story is a twist on O. Henry's “The Gift of the Magi.” Why do you think Whammy chooses to tell this story? What lesson is he teaching Salem?
- Shelley tries to make Salem think that Edgar doesn't like her and that they are not friends; however, in actuality, Salem is one of Edgar's best friends. How is Salem a better friend to Edgar than Shelley is?
- Throughout the book, Frank Cammuso uses onomatopoeia to help the reader “hear” the story (e.g., BOOM BOOM BOOM on **page 8**). How does onomatopoeia help you experience the story better? What other examples of onomatopoeia can you find? Are there places he could use onomatopoeia but doesn't?
- Vocabulary: dreaded (**page 24**), keen (**page 25**), humiliated (**page 54**), insignificant (**page 59**), amateurs (**page 64**), recite (**page 86**).

Science

- Salem gets a brain freeze (**page 30**). What causes a brain freeze? How can you get rid of one?

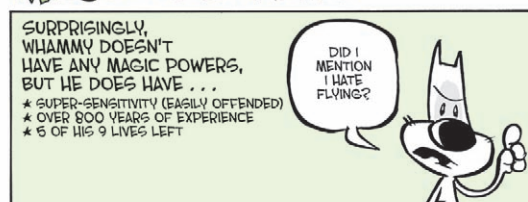
THE MISADVENTURES OF SALEM HYDE SERIES

Language Arts

- Whammy describes Salem as “headstrong,” and Salem describes herself as “independent.” What other adjectives could be used to describe Salem? Use examples from the books to support your answer.
- All of the spells that Salem writes rhyme. Think of something you would like to make happen and write a spell for Salem to cast. Make sure it rhymes!
- To help the reader get to know Salem and the other characters, Frank Cammuso writes “Getting to know . . .” facts (see **pages 12 and 18** of *Spelling Trouble*).
- Pick a character from the *Salem Hyde* series that doesn't have a “Getting to know . . .” box and write one for him or her.



MAGIC POWERS



- What if Whammy wrote Salem's "Getting to know Salem Hyde," or what if Salem wrote Whammy's? Rewrite the "Getting to know . . ." of each character from another character's point of view.
- The author wrote a "Getting to know . . ." about himself to help you get to know him. Write one about yourself.
- Before writing a story, complete "Getting to know . . ." facts about each of your characters to help develop their personality before you begin writing.

History/Social Science

- Salem's first name is the name of a town in Massachusetts that is infamous for events that happened there in 1692–93. What happened in Salem during this time? Why does it make sense that Salem's name is what it is?

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

Here are a few examples of English Language Arts Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards that can be met by extending *Salem Hyde* with activities.

READING

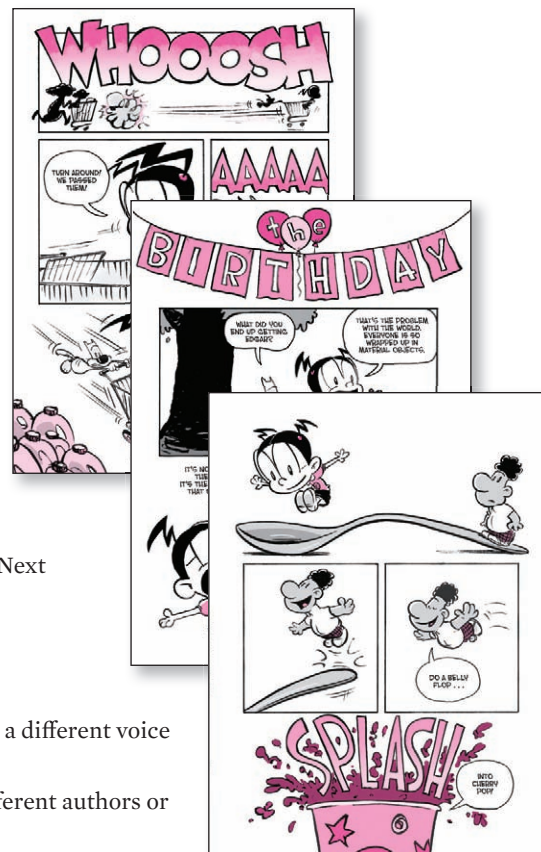
- Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges. **(2ND)**
- Acknowledge differences in the points of view of characters, including by speaking in a different voice for each character when reading dialogue aloud. **(2ND)**
- Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story (e.g., Cinderella) by different authors or from different cultures. **(2ND)**
- Ask and answer questions to demonstrate an understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers. **(3RD)**
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language. **(3RD)**
- Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions). **(4TH)**
- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. **(4TH)**

WRITING

- Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic. **(3RD–4TH)**
- Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters **(3RD–4TH)**

SCIENCE

- All organisms have external parts. Different animals use their body parts in different ways to see, hear, grasp objects, protect themselves, move from place to place, and seek, find, and take in food, water, and air. Plants also have different parts (roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits) that help them survive and grow. **(1ST)**
- Being part of a group helps animals obtain food, defend themselves, and cope with changes. Groups may serve different functions and vary dramatically in size. **(3RD)**



AMULET BOOKS GRAPHIC NOVEL TEACHING GUIDE



BY NATHAN HALE

SERIES INTRODUCTION

NATHAN HALE'S HAZARDOUS TALES BY NATHAN HALE

One Dead Spy

Nathan Hale, the author's historical namesake, was America's first spy, a Revolutionary War hero who famously said, "I regret that I have but one life to give for my country" before being hanged by the British. In the *Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales* series, the author Nathan Hale channels his namesake to present history's roughest, toughest, and craziest stories in the graphic novel format. *One Dead Spy* hit the *New York Times* Graphic Novel bestseller list in March 2014.

One Dead Spy tackles the story of Hale himself; he was an officer and spy for the American rebels during the Revolutionary War. The author Nathan Hale highlights the unusual, gruesome, and just plain unbelievable details of the historical Nathan Hale, from his early, unlucky days at Yale to his later, unlucky days as an officer, and of America during the Revolutionary War.

Big Bad Ironclad!

Each of the books in the *Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales* series has elements of the strange-but-true and is presented in an engaging, humorous format, highlighting the larger-than-life characters that pop up in real history. *Big Bad Ironclad!* covers the history of the amazing ironclad steam warships used in the Civil War.

From the inventor John Ericsson, who had a history of blowing things up and was given only 100 days to complete his project of building an ironclad ship, to the mischievous William Cushing, who pranked his way through the war, this book is filled with surprisingly true facts and funny, brave characters whom modern readers will easily relate to.

Donner Dinner Party

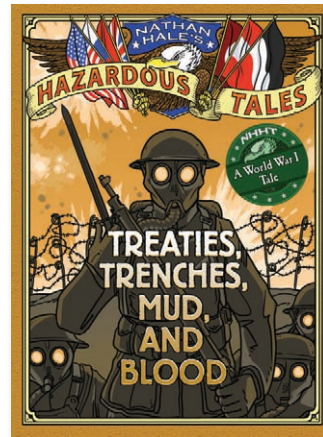
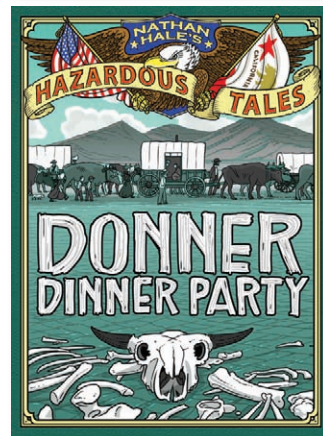
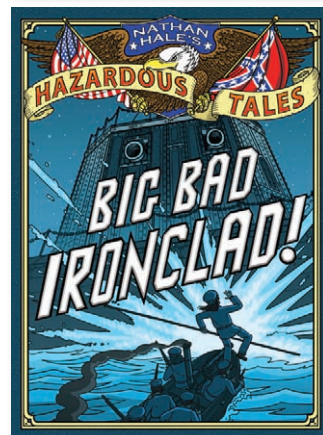
The Donner Party expedition is one of the most notorious stories in all of American history. It's also a fascinating snapshot of the westward expansion of the United States and of the families and individuals who sacrificed so much to build new lives in a largely unknown landscape. From the preparation for the journey to each disastrous leg of the trip, this book shows the specific bad decisions that led to the party's predicament in the Sierra Nevada. The graphic novel focuses on the struggles of the Reed family to tell the true story of the catastrophic journey.

Treaties, Trenches, Mud, and Blood

World War I set the tone for the 20th century and introduced a new type of warfare: global, mechanical, and brutal. Nathan Hale has gathered some of the most fascinating true-life tales from the war and given them his inimitable *Hazardous Tales* twist. Easy to understand, informative, and lively, this series is the best way to be introduced to some of the most well-known battles (and little-known secrets) of the infamous war.

Author

Nathan Hale is author and illustrator of the *Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales* series, which includes titles that were named to the New York Public Library's 100 Books for Reading and Sharing list, YALSA's Great Graphic Novels for Teens list, *School Library Journal's* Top 10 Graphic Novels for Children, and the Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People list. He was also the illustrator of the graphic novel *Rapunzel's Revenge*, which was an Al Roker Book Club for Kids selection.



FUN ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

ONE DEAD SPY

Language Arts

- The Provost (a British soldier) and Nathan Hale disagree about the cause of the Revolutionary War. Based on *One Dead Spy*, what events caused the Americans to revolt? Do you agree with the Provost or with Nathan Hale about the causes of the war? (This could also be used as a debate question in class.)
- Compare and contrast the American militia with Britain's army as it is portrayed in *One Dead Spy*. Which of the two armies seems likely to win the war? Why do you assume that it will? How was the outcome different from your assumption?
- Compare and contrast America's views in 1776 of the Declaration of Independence with the British views. Also, compare and contrast the two different American views (pages 64–65).
- How would this story be different if it were told from the British point of view?

History/Social Studies

- On the day that Nathan Hale was hanged, those present didn't care about a spy; they wanted to hang the arsonist of the Great Fire of New York. Not much about the fire is told in this book, but using what is said, what do you think happened? Research to find out if your conclusions were correct.
- Nathan Hale's last words landed him in history books. What other famous last words are archived?
- There are many different accounts of the Boston Massacre, and there are still debates over what actually happened. Nathan Hale shares one account on pages 124–26. However, what do other accounts say? What is consistent in all accounts? What is debated?
- On page 110, the Hangman wonders what happened to George Washington and Henry Knox. Then on pages 115–17, Nathan Hale provides short histories of many of the historical figures mentioned in the story. Choose one of the historical figures and research his life. Then write your own "Hazardous Tale" about that person.
- Anti-British propaganda was used during the Revolutionary War (as described on page 126). From Nathan Hale's story, what aspects of the British occupation would the Americans have used in their propaganda? Create your own piece of anti-British propaganda, trying to convince colonists to be on the side of independence and revolution. Then research anti-British propaganda from the Revolutionary period to see if you used some of the same ideas they did.

Science

- On page 51, Henry Knox needs to figure out a way to get across the river and ends up using water to strengthen the ice. Why does adding water to the top of the ice make it stronger? Was there another solution he could have used?
- Henry Knox jumps into the river to save a cannon (page 52), but it is not known *how* he saved the cannon. How do you think he did it? How did he not get hypothermia?

Math

- The statistics for the British army when they invaded Long Island are given on page 69. What percentage of their fighters were sailors? Soldiers? Hessians?

BIG BAD IRONCLAD!

Language Arts

- Based on the information on page 9, how was Scott's military plan "The Anaconda" like an actual anaconda?
- How do Hale's drawing of and nickname for Stephen Mallory help portray him as a bad guy even without you knowing anything about him? Do you think this shows the bias of the author?
- On page 35, Will Cushing is dismissed from the Navy for the second time. (The first time is on page 16.) Do you agree or disagree with his



[illegible]

- On **page 64**, the *Congress* surrenders to the *Virginia*, but the captain of the *Virginia* orders the firing of weapons to continue. Was this decision ethical? (This could also be used as a debate question in class.)
- Bits and pieces of Cushing’s story are presented throughout *Big Bad Ironclad!* Some parts seem farfetched. Research Cushing and determine if all of it is true. Also, is there more to the Cushing story than what is presented here?
- Based on the Cushing stories you’ve heard and the timeline on **pages 124–25**, how did keeping Cushing in the Navy benefit the North?
- On **page 114**, the Hangman and the Provost wonder what happened to William Cushing, Abraham Lincoln, and others. Then on **pages 120–23**, Nathan Hale gives short histories of many of the historical figures mentioned in the story. Choose one of the historical figures and research his life. Then share details of his life by writing your own “Hazardous Tale” about him.

- Iron sinks when placed in water. However, an ironclad boat does not. Why is this?

Language Arts

- How valid would you feel a pioneer book was if you found out it was written by a lawyer, not an explorer or an expert pioneer? How does what the lieutenant says in Fort Laramie (**page 25**) sway your thoughts about how valid this book is? Based on what happens to the Donner Party, does the book include accurate and true information?
- The Hangman and the Provost disagree about who is guilty when it comes to the Reed/Snyder argument that ends in Snyder's death. Which of the two characters do you agree with? Why? Use evidence from the text to back up your opinion.
- How does the decision to take Hasting's Cutoff cause the tragedy that ensues for the Donner Party? How might the outcome have been different if they had not taken the shortcut?
- The author chooses to make James Reed sillier than he was in real life. Why does he do this? Does it change the tone and mood of the story? Does it change the outcome? Do you feel that it makes the book less valid?

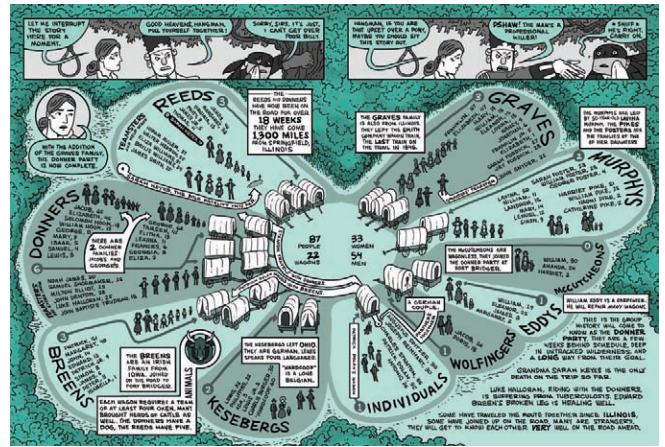
- Abraham Lincoln makes appearances here in *Donner Dinner Party*, but as a lawyer and soldier. How does Lincoln progress from this book to become president, as he is in *Big Bad Ironclad*?
- The journey that the Reed family and the rest of the Donner Party set out on is very daunting, but the dream of California was extremely tempting for many. Why did so many pioneers want to reach California?
- Using the Correction Baby's survival flow chart on **page 125**, would you have survived the Donner Party? What about your family members?

- Napoleon Bonaparte sold French Louisiana (which became the Louisiana Territory) to America for a sum of \$15 million, or about three cents per acre. How many acres were in the territory? (In 2013, the same territory was worth \$234 million, approximately forty-two cents per acre.) [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louisiana_Purchase]
- If the Donner Party had had the rocket car mentioned on [page 52](#) that can go 630 miles per hour, how fast would they have been able to get from Springfield, Illinois, to Sumter's Fort, California?
- On [page 76](#), we learn that the Donner Party went 2,000 miles in five months. Let's assume they traveled twelve hours a day. Approximately what speed were they traveling?
- What percentage of the Donner party survived? What percentage died? What percentage died of starvation/exposure? Of old age? What percentage was cannibalized after death? What percentage of the deaths could have been easily avoided?

TREATIES, TRENCHES, MUD, AND BLOOD

Language Arts

- Each country is represented by an animal. Why do you think the author chose to do this? Do you find it helpful in telling the countries apart? Why was each animal chosen for the country it represents? Would you have chosen a different animal?
- The Germans try to use a “British” squad to get into Belgium, but it doesn’t work. How is this war tactic similar to the Trojan Horse?
- On [page 68](#), a German U-boat sinks the *Lusitania*, a passenger ship carrying weapons. Should this ship have been a target or not? (This could also be used as a debate question in class.)
- How does the author use the Greek god Ares to symbolize the war? Why did he choose Ares? How does this metaphor help show the intensity of the war?
- On [page 121](#), the author includes quotations from primary sources to describe the true terror of the war. Who are the men who are quoted? Find other quotations about WWI that speak of the horror of the War to End All Wars. How does hearing these quotations shape your feelings and opinion about WWI, as opposed to just reading a secondary account?



History/Social Studies

- Many historical places and documents were destroyed during WWI. What were the effects of this destruction?
- America did not join the war right away. Why not? What events eventually caused America to join the war?
- The war in Europe was fought mostly in trenches. How did the trenches change the way the armies fought?
- In WWI, the armies had larger and more powerful guns. How did these and other technological advances (e.g., chemical warfare, zeppelins, tanks, U-boats, flamethrowers) alter the course of the war?
- How did WWI contribute to the start of the Russian Revolution?
- Unlike the other *Hazardous Tales* books, *Treaties, Trenches, Mud, and Blood* does not include historical portraits in the back of the book with information about historical figures in the story. Choose one of the historical figures from *Treaties, Trenches, Mud, and Blood*, research his life, and write your own historical portrait that includes the person’s birth date and death date, main events from his life, and what happened to him after WWI (if he survived).

Math

- At the Battle of Cer, the Austrian-Hungary army lost 8,000 of its soldiers, and another 50,000 troops were wounded ([page 38](#)). According to [page 13](#), it originally had 450,000 troops, so what percentage of the army was lost in one day?
- On [page 71](#), we learn that one sixth of the Serbian population was killed during World War I. What percentage is this? Do some research on the population of Serbia prior to WWI, and determine how many Serbians perished. Many other countries lost a large portion of their population. Do some research about the size of the other countries and how many of their people died during WWI. Did Serbia have the biggest loss?

NATHAN HALE’S HAZARDOUS TALES SERIES

Language Arts

- How does the Hangman change the tone of the stories? What about the Provost? How would the stories be different without them?
- Should these graphic novels be considered nonfiction or historical fiction? There can be arguments for both sides, but what do you think? Research the two genres; choose the genre you think it is, and then back up your opinion with information from your research.
- Nathan Hale includes many graphs, charts, tables, maps, and other text features in his *Hazardous Tales*. How do these features enhance the text? How do they help the reader understand the historical events? Find one of the text features and explain how it enhances the story.
- At the end of each book, Nathan Hale reveals some additional details about the story and gives some insights into how he wrote the book. Do you agree with the choices he made?



History/Social Studies

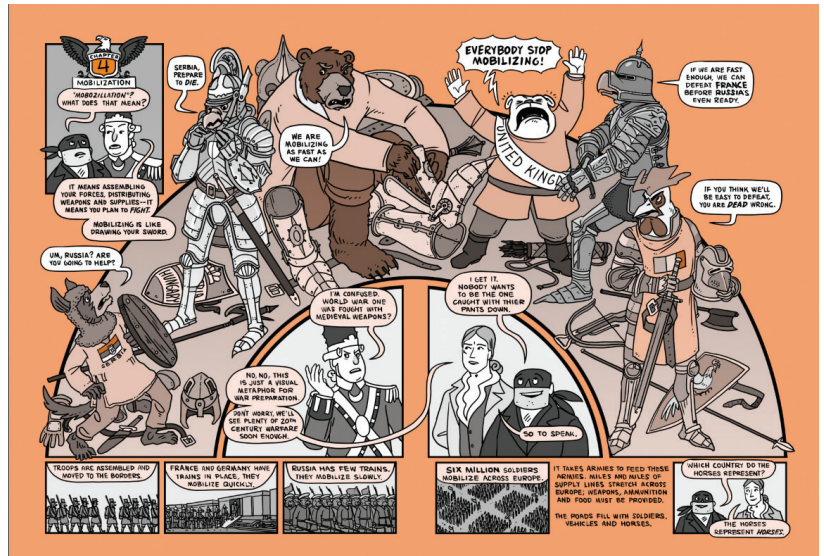
- As you read about the historical events described in the *Hazardous Tales* book you’re reading, keep a timeline of the events.
- Compare and contrast the 1775, 1846, and 1861 maps on the “endpapers” of each *Hazardous Tales*. How has America changed over time? What wars, disagreements, deals, and explorations have caused America to change?

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS ■

Here are a few examples of English Language Arts and Literacy for History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects, and Common Core State Standards that can be met by extending *Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales* with activities.

READING

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. **(4TH)**
- Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text. **(4TH)**
- Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, and problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text. **(4TH)**
- Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided. **(4TH)**
- Analyze multiple accounts of the same event or topic, noting important similarities and differences in the points of view they represent. **(5TH)**
- Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably. **(5TH)**
- Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described. **(5TH)**
- Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text (e.g., graphic novel, multimedia presentation of fiction, folktale, myth, or poem). **(5TH)**
- Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed. **(6TH)**
- Analyze how two or more authors writing about the same topic shape their presentations of key information by emphasizing different evidence or advancing different interpretations of facts. **(7TH)**
- Compare and contrast a fictional portrayal of a time, place, or character and a historical account of the same period as a means of understanding how authors of fiction use or alter history. **(7TH)**



WRITING

- Write informative/explanatory texts that examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. **(4TH—5TH)**
- Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic. **(4TH—5TH)**
- Write informative/explanatory texts that examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content. **(6TH—7TH)**
- Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate. **(6TH)**
- Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation. **(7TH)**

LITERACY STANDARDS

History/Social Studies

- Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, or causally). **(6TH—8TH)**
- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources. **(6TH—8TH)**
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies. **(6TH—8TH)**

Science & Technical Subjects

- Analyze the author's purpose in providing an explanation, describing a procedure, or discussing an experiment in a text. **(6TH—8TH)**
- Distinguish among facts, reasoned judgment based on research findings, and speculation in a text. **(6TH—8TH)**

Hereville

BY BARRY DEUTSCH

SERIES INTRODUCTION

HEREVILLE BY BARRY DEUTSCH

How Mirka Got Her Sword

Spunky, strong-willed eleven-year-old Mirka Herschberg isn't interested in knitting lessons from her stepmother or how-to-find-a-husband advice from her sister or you'd-better-not warnings from her brother. There's only one thing she does want: to fight dragons!

Granted, no dragons have been breathing fire around Hereville, the Orthodox Jewish community where Mirka lives, but that doesn't stop the plucky girl from honing her skills. She fearlessly stands up to local bullies. She battles a very large, very menacing pig. And she boldly accepts a challenge from a mysterious witch, a challenge that could bring Mirka her heart's desire: a dragon-slaying sword! All she has to do is find—and outwit—the giant troll who's got it!

A delightful mix of fantasy, adventure, cultural traditions, and preteen commotion, *Hereville* will captivate middle-school readers with its exciting visuals and entertaining new heroine.

How Mirka Met a Meteorite

Welcome to Hereville, home of the first-ever wisecracking, adventure-loving, sword-wielding Orthodox Jewish heroine.

Mirka is back, and she's still the only sword-brandishing, monster-fighting Orthodox Jewish girl in town. Or so she thinks.

When a misguided troll aims a meteor at the witch's house, the witch grabs hold of the closest thing possible to transform the flying, flaming rock—and that would be Mirka's hair. The meteor is changed, all right: it's now Mirka's identical twin.

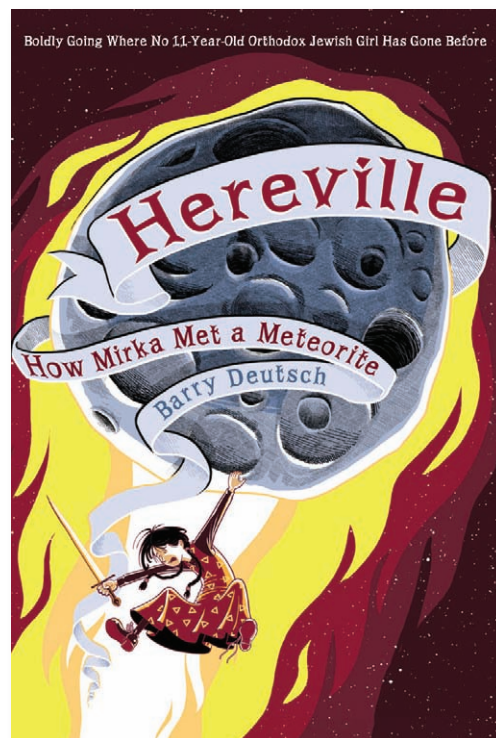
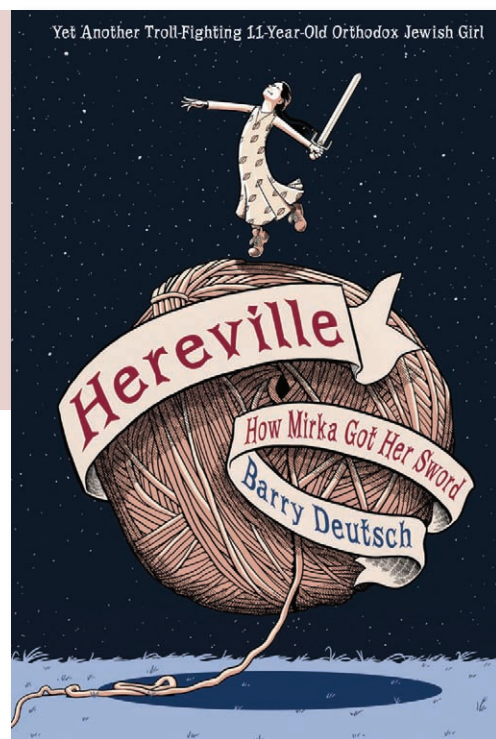
Doppelgänger Mirka, vowing to be a better version of the real girl, sets out to charm all of Hereville, including Mirka's own family. Our heroine challenges the meteor girl to a three-part contest . . . and the loser will be banished from Hereville forever!



Author

Barry Deutsch won the 2010 Sydney Taylor Award and was nominated for Eisner, Harvey, Ignatz, and Nebula awards that year. He won the national Charles M. Schulz Award for Best College Cartoonist in 2000 and was nominated for Comic-Con's Russ Manning Award for Promising Newcomer in 2008. He lives in Portland, Oregon.

Age range: 8 to 12



FUN ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

HOW MIRKA GOT HER SWORD

Language Arts

- Why would Mirka not know what a pig looks like (**page 30**)?
- Compare and contrast how the different types of girls dress at Mirka's school (**page 37**).
- How can Mirka's erratic behavior affect her sisters? Use information from the text to support your answer.
- If you were anticipating not going to be able to do any work for the next twenty-four hours, what type of work would need to be done around your house to prepare? Remember, it is *any* work! Even the toilet paper needs to be pre-ripped.
- Gittel complains about chores not being fair. Look at the chores and work at your house and make a chart about who does what. Is the workload fair? What could you do to make it fairer?
- Mirka wins against the troll, but not in a typical battle. How does she beat the troll? What tactic does she use? Like Fruma says, it ends up being about smarts, not strength. What other stories (in mythology, books, religion, etc.) do you know that use smarts against strength? How are the stories similar? How are they different?
- On **page 136**, the witch lists everything that Mirka has done. Was it all worth it? Use information from the text as well as your personal experience to support your answer.



History/Social Studies

- Before reading, if you're not familiar with Judaism, research the religion to help you understand Mirka and her family better. Mirka's family lives in an Orthodox Jewish community, attends a religious school, and even speaks Yiddish. Researching the religion prior to reading will help you understand the characters and plot.
- During the story, Mirka's family celebrates Shabbos, which is explained in the book. Read more about Shabbos and learn why it is celebrated weekly.

Math

- On **pages 31–32**, Mirka is given a math problem: Three people are splitting a cake, so they cut it into thirds. But then a fourth person shows up. How can they cut the cake so that each person gets an equal amount of cake? (Mirka comes up with a solution, but are there others?) What if two more people had shown up? Three more? Four more?

HOW MIRKA MET A METEORITE

Language Arts

- Fruma and Mirka play chess as a battle. Chess rules were based on military planning. How is the game of chess like a battle?
- The “twin” situation seems like fun at first, but it ends up hurting Mirka. In what ways does Metty's existence affect Mirka's life negatively?
- Mirka is able to be at Shabbos at her sister's house, but Rachel points out that Metty still ruined Shabbos. How did Metty ruin Shabbos?
- Mirka is worried about becoming a selfish adult, so Fruma tells her to stop thinking that she is going to be selfish and she won't be. How does how you act now affect who you become?
- How was the outcome of the bet affected by Metty not reading the contract?

History/Social Studies

- In *How Mirka Met a Meteorite* we learn about Mirka's Bubba, who traveled across the ocean to America. Interview your parents/grandparents/other relatives to find out about your ancestors. When did they come to America? Where did they come from? Do you have any personal property that belonged to your ancestors, like Bubba's candlestick?

Science

- A meteorite is coming straight for Hereville. However, the witch stops it. If the meteorite had landed on the witch's house, what kind of damage would it have done? Look into other meteorite hits and estimate the destruction.



AMULET BOOKS GRAPHIC NOVEL TEACHING GUIDE

EXPLORER THE LOST ISLANDS EDITED BY KAZU KIBUISHI

SERIES INTRODUCTION

EXPLORER EDITED BY KAZU KIBUISHI

Explorer: The Mystery Boxes

Seven clever stories answer one simple question: What's in the box?

Funny, fantastic, spooky, and suspenseful, each of these unique and beautifully illustrated short graphic works revolves around a central theme: a mysterious box and the marvels—or mayhem—inside. Artists include middle school favorites Kazu Kibuishi, Raina Telgemeier (*Drama and Smile*), and Dave Roman (*Astronaut Academy*), as well as Jason Caffoe, Stuart Livingston, Johane Matte, Rad Sechrist (all contributors to the groundbreaking comics anthology series *Flight*), and up-and-coming artist Emily Carroll.

Explorer: The Lost Islands

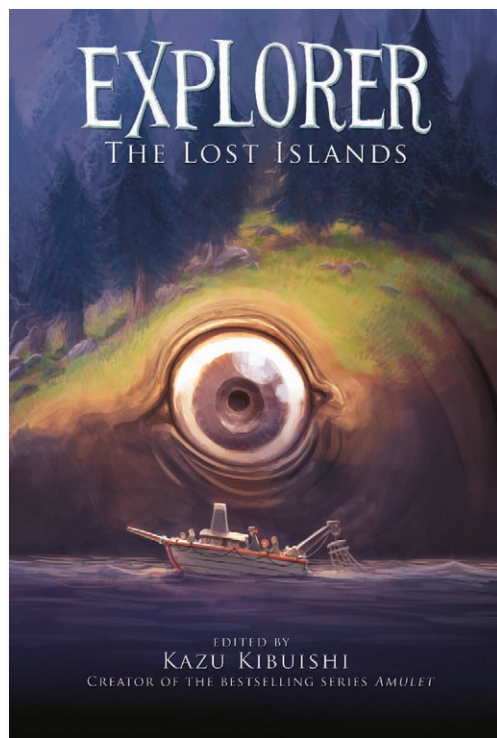
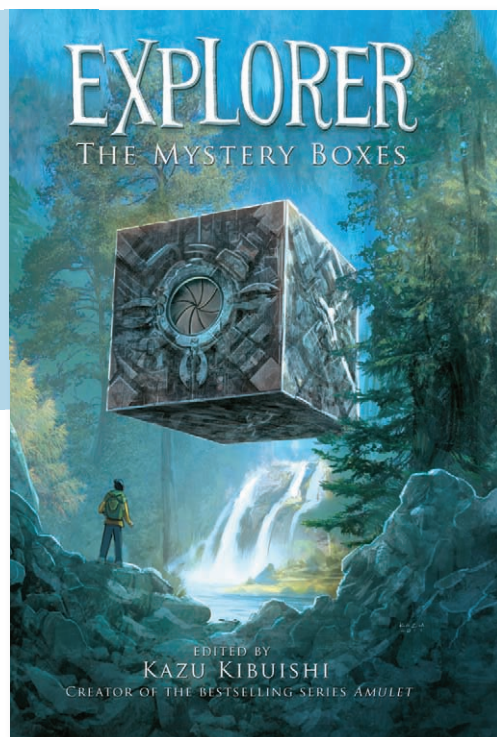
The highly anticipated second volume to the critically acclaimed *Explorer* series, *The Lost Islands* is a collection of seven all-new stories written and illustrated by an award-winning roster of comics artists, with each story centered around the theme of hidden places. Edited by the *New York Times* bestselling comics creator Kazu Kibuishi, this graphic anthology includes well-written, beautifully illustrated stories by Kazu (the *Amulet* series), Jason Caffoe (the *Flight* series), Raina Telgemeier (*Drama and Smile*), Dave Roman (the *Astronaut Academy* series), Jake Parker (the *Missile Mouse* series), Michel Gagné (*The Saga of Rex*), Katie and Steven Shanahan (the *Flight* series), and up-and-coming artist Chrystin Garland.



Editor

Kazu Kibuishi is the creator of the *Amulet* series, the award-winning *New York Times* bestselling graphic novel series, the illustrator of the new covers for the re-release of the *Harry Potter* series, and the editor and art director of eight volumes of *Flight*, the influential Eisner-nominated anthology series. He lives in Bellevue, Washington.

Ages 9 and up



FUN ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

THE MYSTERY BOXES

Language Arts

• In “Under the Floorboards,” the wax doll is quite a help at first; however, it eventually ends up causing trouble. What is the theme of this story?

- How does the wizards' behavior in "Spring Cleaning" cause Oliver to become suspicious and want to hide the box? Do you think he makes the right decision? What would you have done?
- "The Keeper's Treasure." What mythological story takes place in a labyrinth? What mythological creature does the boy probably think he sees in the shadows?
- "The Keeper's Treasure." Would you prefer to get a box full of gold or would you prefer one of the other things the man mentions as possibly being in the box? Explain your answer.
- In "The Butter Thief," why does the girl assume the spirits in the outside world are good spirits? What traits do they have that make them seem good?
- "The Butter Thief." One little mistake can cause a lot of bad to happen. What mistake does the girl make, and what are the effects? Have you ever made a small mistake that ended up having large consequences?
- "The Soldier's Daughter." Clara wants to seek revenge on the man who killed her father. Is revenge ever the best idea? Do you agree with Clara's decision, or do you agree with her brother and father?
- "Whatzit." Do you think Deet should lose his job because a misplaced box is in his section? Support your answer.
- "Whatzit." Deet decides to pull his own prank after finding out who put the Whatzit in his section. Is this the best decision? What could he have done instead?
- "The Escape Option." If you found out that humans were about to go extinct and you had a chance to escape planet Earth with an alien, would you go? Why or why not?



History/Social Studies

- On [page 84](#), in "The Soldier's Daughter," the man says, "War is a dark power." Where in history have we seen the urge to wage war obsess someone? Have there been wars that did not need to be fought? Research past wars and determine if a war was started because of the need for power or if there was a legitimate reason for it.

Science

- "Escape Option." Percy shows James a graphic of Earth 2000 years from now that indicates that humans can no longer live here. Research planet Earth and the studies that have been done about the future of humanity. Does this timeline seem realistic? What factors come into play to determine when/if humans become extinct?



THE LOST ISLANDS

Language Arts

- In "Rabbit Island," what causes the robot to break? What traits do the rabbits have that ultimately lead to the robot's demise? What are the effects of the rabbits acting the way they do? What do they learn from the experience?
- In "The Mask Dance," how does the mask man convince the merchant's daughter to come with him?
- In "The Mask Dance," is there any foreshadowing that tells reader that the merchant's daughter is going to run into trouble? Give examples from the text where you see hints that she's making a bad decision.
- In "Carapace," the boy lands on a fantastical island. What fantastical islands from other stories/movies does it remind you of?
- In "Desert Island Playlist," who do you think the old woman is? Who is the baby? What clues did you use to make these conclusions?
- If you were stranded on a desert island, as in "Desert Island Playlist," what three songs (and three only) would you want with you? Which book would you want?
- "Loah." What makes Loah different from the other fish in her pond? How does she use this difference to save them all? Would the other fish have survived without her? Why did Loah choose to save her fellow fish?
- In "Radio Adrift," Wiya is going to school to be a mage and has to complete a big year-end project. What other stories does this remind you



of? What other characters have had to go to school or be taught to use their magic more efficiently?

- In “The Fisherman,” the captain is on a mission and will not listen to any of his crew—especially not Grandpa. How does this captain compare with Captain Ahab from *Moby-Dick*? How does this captain’s stubbornness almost get his crew killed? What decisions could he have made differently to keep his crew safe?
- Which island out of the anthology would you like to live on? Which would you avoid? Why? Use examples from the text to support your decision.

History/Social Studies

- “Rabbit Island.” Vincent is the inventor rabbit. What inventor was Vincent named after? After determining his namesake, do some research about this amazing man. What inventions did he make? How did he change the way our lives are led?

Science

- “Carapace.” If you are stuck on a desert island, what do you need to do to help you survive? Where would you most likely find water? What could you eat? How would you build shelter?
- “Carapace.” The boy learns about ways the animals have adapted to life on the island. What are some strange ways that animals have adapted to their environment? Are there any animal adaptations that humans have “borrowed” to help us survive better? The boy borrows an animal strategy to make water rush down trenches to get the body out to sea. What is the animal, and what strategy did the boy use?
- In “Loah,” the fish must escape when the island turns out to be a volcano and begins erupting. Luckily, they survive. However, often animals do not survive when a volcano erupts near them. Research animal reactions to volcanic eruptions and how/if the animals escape.

EXPLORER SERIES

Language Arts

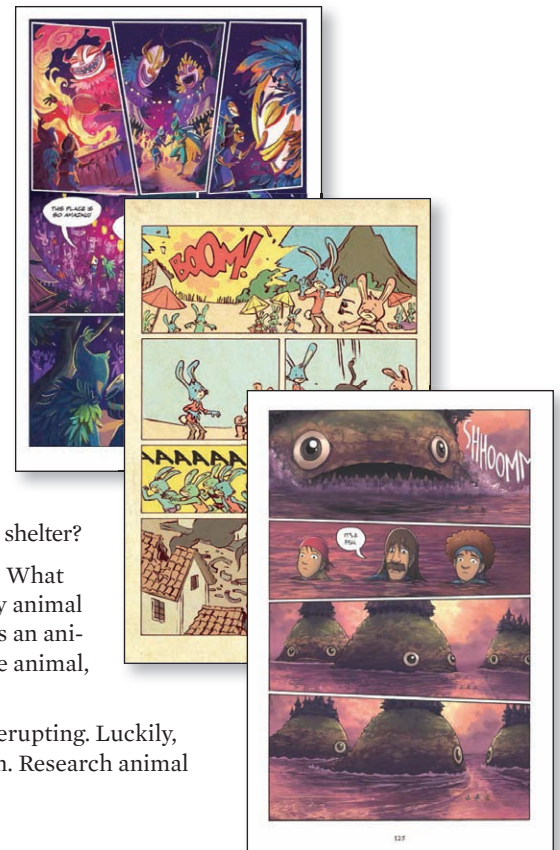
- Which story was your favorite from the anthology? Why?
- How did the different illustrators/authors affect how much you liked a story? Which artistic style did you like the best? Which plot?

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

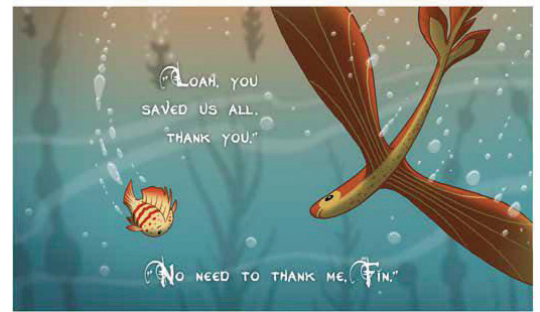
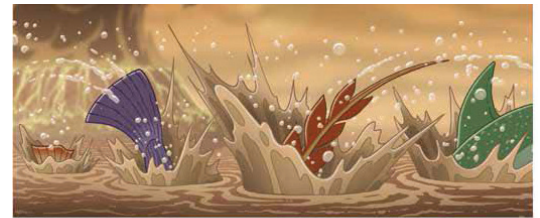
Here are a few examples of English Language Arts and Literacy for History/Social Studies, Science and Technical Subjects, Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards that can be met by extending the *Explorer* series with activities.

READING

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. (4TH)
- Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text. (4TH)
- Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character’s thoughts, words, or actions). (4TH)
- Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. (5TH)
- Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact). (5TH)
- Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text. (5TH)
- Analyze how visual and multimedia elements contribute to the meaning, tone, or beauty of a text (e.g., graphic novel, multimedia presentation of fiction, folktale, myth, poem). (5TH)
- Compare and contrast stories in the same genre (e.g., mysteries and adventure stories) on their approaches to similar themes and topics. (5TH)



- Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. **(6TH-10TH)**
- Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot. **(6TH)**
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments. **(6TH)**
- Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres (e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics. **(6TH)**
- Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot). **(7TH)**
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text. **(7TH)**
- Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision. **(8TH)**
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text. **(8TH)**
- Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts and analyze how the differing structure of each text contributes to its meaning and style. **(8TH)**
- Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme. **(9TH-10TH)**
- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. **(9TH-10TH)**
- Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain. **(11TH-12TH)**
- Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed). **(11TH-12TH)**



WRITING

- Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic. **(4TH-5TH)**
- Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate. **(6TH-8TH)**
- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation. **(9TH-12TH)**

NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS

- Tectonic processes continually generate new ocean sea floor at ridges and destroy old sea floor at trenches. **(6TH-8TH)**
- Construct an argument that plants and animals have internal and external structures that function to support survival, growth, behavior, and reproduction. **(4TH)**
- Adaptation by natural selection acting over generations is one important process by which species change over time in response to changes in environmental conditions. Traits that support successful survival and reproduction in the new environment become more common; those that do not become less common. Thus, the distribution of traits in a population changes. **(6TH-8TH)**

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