Saving America’s Wolves
The story of the amazing comeback of a species from near-extinction

About the Article

Levels
Lexile Range: **700L-800L**
Guided Reading Level: **T**
DRA Level: **50**

Learning Objectives
Students will identify cause-and-effect relationships in an article about America’s wolf population. They will learn wildlife-related vocabulary.

Content-Area Connections
Social studies: geography
Science: ecosystems, wildlife conservation

Key Skills
Cause and effect, vocabulary, author’s craft, key details, delineating arguments, interpreting text, drawing conclusions, text features, narrative and explanatory writing

Standards Correlations
This article and lesson support the following Common Core anchor standards:
R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.6, W.2, W.3, SL.1, L.6
Check our website for more standards information.

Your Teaching Support Package
Here’s your full suite of materials, all of which you’ll find at storyworks.scholastic.com:

Audio:
• On-level version  • Lower-Lexile version

Differentiated article:
• Lower-Lexile version (printable)

Activities to print or project:
• Vocabulary
• Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions*
• Cause and Effect
• Core Skills Workout: Text Features, Summarizing, * Inference*
• Research Kit—Great for Project-Based Learning!
• Comprehension Quiz*
• Questions for English Language Learners

Vocabulary Slideshow  Great visual support!
*Available on two levels
hunt, using their powerful teeth, jaws, and sense of smell; that wolves live in packs and are at the top of the food chain; and that humans have hunted wolves almost to extinction.

- According to “The Big, Bad Wolf,” how did pioneers in America feel about wolves? What happened as a result? (cause and effect) Pioneers were scared of wolves, thinking of them as killers. As a result, they killed as many wolves as they could, with guns, traps, and poison. Wolves disappeared in most of America.

- Reread “Not a Monster.” In what way had people’s ideas about wolves been wrong? (key detail) Wolves do not aim to kill humans. In fact, they try to stay away from people.

- How did the disappearance of wolves affect elk? How did that, in turn, affect other animals and plants? (cause and effect) The number of elk increased greatly without wolves hunting them. The elk then ate so much of the grass and trees that other animals, like birds and beavers, couldn’t get what they needed to survive. When beavers didn’t build dams, the types of plants that could grow near rivers changed.

- In “Once Again Howling,” why did scientists set 31 wolves free in Yellowstone National Park? (cause and effect) The scientists realized that killing so many wolves had been a mistake and wanted to restore balance to the ecosystem. They were hoping the wolf population in Yellowstone would grow—and it did!

- Reread “A Fierce Debate.” What are the two sides of the debate? (delineating arguments) Today, some people think there are too many wolves; the wolves kill farm animals and target the same prey as hunters. Others believe America’s wolves should be protected so they don’t start to disappear again.

- The last section returns to the wolf’s point of view, using their powerful teeth, jaws, and sense of smell; that wolves live in packs and are at the top of the food chain; and that humans have hunted wolves almost to extinction.

1. Preparing to Read

Preview Text Features and Vocabulary
(40 minutes, activity sheets online)
- Invite students to make a prediction: Is the number of wolves in the U.S. going up or down? Students should then look at the article’s headline, subhead, section headers, photos, and captions. Do they think the article confirms or refutes their predictions?
- Ask a student to read aloud the Up Close box on page 4.
- This article contains numerous domain-specific terms related to wildlife and ecosystems. Project the vocabulary slideshow to preview words. Follow up with the vocabulary activity. Highlighted terms: predators, pack, stalk, apex predator, extinction, keystone species, habitats, ecosystems, endangered, prey, conservation, species

2. Close Reading

Read and Unpack the Text
(45 minutes, activity sheet online)
- Read the article as a class or play the audio version at Storyworks Online. Have students read it a second time in small groups, answering the close-reading questions. Regroup to discuss the critical-thinking questions.

Close-Reading Questions
- In the first section, author Kristin Lewis writes as if you are a gray wolf and she’s describing your life. Why do you think she does this? (author’s craft) Lewis probably wants readers to relate to wolves by imagining what it would be like to be one. By taking on the wolf’s point of view, readers can more easily understand the wolf’s power and fear.
- What details do you learn about wolves in the first section? (key details) You learn how wolves
view. How is the human in this section different from what the wolf expects? (interpreting text)
The wolf thinks the human is chasing it to try to kill it. Instead, the human wants to help the wolf by putting a radio collar on it so scientists can learn more about wolves and how to help them.

Critical-Thinking Questions
• Based on this article, what do you think people need to consider before taking action to change how or where a kind of animal lives—or even whether it lives? (drawing conclusions) Answers will vary, but students might suggest that people should consider how much they know about the animal and whether what they believe about it is true. Perhaps more research is necessary. Students will probably suggest that people should consider how a change to one kind of animal would affect the other animals and plants in its ecosystem. Making one change can lead to other, unexpected changes.

• Why do you think the first and last sections of the article are in italics? (text features) They are in italics because they are told from a different point of view. They ask you to understand the wolf’s situation as though you were a wolf. Also, the last section picks up where the first section left off. Having them both in italics helps you understand that they are connected.

3. Skill Building
Featured Skill: Cause and Effect
• Distribute the cause and effect activity, and have students complete it in groups. Then ask them to respond to the writing prompt at the bottom of page 9.

• Ideas to Engage and Inspire
• Make a Connection Go to Storyworks Online to access the paired texts “The Amazing History of Dogs” from the September 2017 issue. The first article is “How the Wolf Became the Dog.” Project the article and read it together as a class. Invite students to discuss how dogs and wolves are similar and are different, using details from both articles. Go to Storyworks Online to get more great ideas!

Differentiate and Customize

For Struggling Readers
In a small group, read aloud the first section of the article followed immediately by the last, to help students connect the two. Look at the article together and point out what you just read. Explain that the sections in between will discuss what happened to wolves in general, not just one wolf.

For Advanced Readers
Have students reread the section “A Fierce Debate.” Ask them to do research on each side, then hold a debate on whether wolves should be protected even where their numbers are high. You might assign roles such as farmer, scientist, etc.

For ELL Students
This article mentions many places in the United States that newcomers might not be familiar with, such as Montana, New England, the Rocky Mountains, Wyoming, and Idaho. Help students locate these places on a large map.

For Partner Reading
Pair stronger and weaker readers to take turns reading sections of the article aloud to each other. Encourage them to pause to discuss any words or sentences they don’t understand, as well as parts they find interesting.