The Legend of the Lake Monster

Is the legend of the Loch Ness monster fact or fiction?

About the Article

Lexile Range: 600L-700L
Guided Reading Level: P
DRA Level: 36

Learning Objective:
Students will study text features to gain a richer understanding of an article about the search for the legendary Loch Ness monster.

Content-Area Connections
Science: marine animals, underwater exploration
Social-Emotional Learning: responsible decision-making (analyzing situations, evaluating)

Key Skills: text features, vocabulary, supporting detail, key idea, summarizing, compare and contrast, cause and effect, supporting an opinion, opinion writing

Standards Correlations
The story and lesson support the following standards:
CCSS: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.7, W.1, SL.1, SL.6, L.1
TEKS Grade 3: 1a, 1c, 3a, 3b, 6a, 6c, 6f, 6g, 7b, 7c, 7d, 7f, 9d, 10c, 12c
For more standards information, go to Storyworks 3 Online.

Your Teaching Resources

Use these powerful teaching tools for in-class or remote instruction. Find them in this story’s Resources tab.

New: Learning Journey Slideshow! This engaging and easy-to-use slide deck combines the article, video, and interactive questions. Share it with students as is or customize it to your liking.

Video:
- Video Read-Aloud: Lauren Tarshis introduces and narrates her story as it comes to life as a thrilling video.

Audio:
- Author Read-Aloud: Lauren Tarshis reads her story!
- Text-to-Speech

Slideshow:
- Background Builder
- Vocabulary Slideshow

Differentiation:
- Beginner Level (for struggling readers)
- Lower-Lexile Article (in story tab)

Skill Building Activities to share digitally, print, or project:
- Pause and Think Questions
- Vocabulary
- Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions
- Text Features
- Thinking About the Text
- Quiz
- Contest Entry Form
Step-by-Step Lesson
Close Reading, Critical Thinking, and Skill Building

1. Preparing to Read

Watch a Video/Preview Text Features
(20 minutes)
- Help students prepare to read the article by showing the Background Builder slideshow.
- We offer several reading experiences for this article. As a first read, have students watch the Video Read-Aloud, in which author Lauren Tarshis introduces and narrates the article as it comes to life with images; listen to the Author Read-Aloud; or read the article in the magazine or digitally at storyworks3.scholastic.com.
- Look at pages 4-5 with the class. Read aloud the title and subtitle with students. What is happening in the illustration? How does the picture make them feel? Remote learning tip: Invite students to share their thoughts in the chat feature.
- Based on the title, subtitle, and illustration, ask students to predict what this article will be about. Have them review their predictions after they finish reading.
- Point to the map on page 5. Have students locate Scotland, where the events in this story took place. What body of water separates Scotland from the United States?
- Direct students to the photo at the top of page 6. Read aloud the title and caption. Explain that a survey asks people questions about an idea, person, or event. Do students believe that Bigfoot really exists? Why or why not?
- Direct students to the photo at the bottom of page 6. Explain that Komodo dragons are lizards that grow up to 10 feet in length and can weigh 300 pounds. In fact, these reptiles are the heaviest lizards on Earth. For millions of years, they have lived in a group of islands in Indonesia, a country located off the coast of Southeast Asia in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Komodo dragons love to walk and can travel about 7 miles a day. Their food includes deer, pigs, and even huge water buffaloes! source: https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/reptiles/k/komodo-dragon/
**Nonfiction, pages 4-9**  
**Featured Skill: Text Features**

- Direct students to the photo on page 7. Read aloud the title and caption. Explain that they will learn about Tim Dinsdale’s search for the Loch Ness creature in this story.
- Read aloud the photo title and caption on page 8. Ask students to describe what the scientists are doing in the photo. How does the robot help them?
- Ask students to compare and contrast the image in Dinsdale’s photo of the Loch Ness monster with the fake photo on page 9. Which image seems more believable? Why?

**Introduce Vocabulary**  
(15 minutes)

- We have highlighted in bold eight words that may be challenging and defined them on the page. Preview these words by projecting or distributing our Vocabulary Skill Builder and completing it as a class. You may also play our Vocabulary Slideshow, where images help students with comprehension.
- Highlighted words: murky, rippled, legend, fantastic, lurking, trace, sonar, hoaxes

**Set a Purpose for Reading**  
(5 minutes)

Call on volunteers to read aloud the Think and Read box on page 5 and the Think and Write box on page 9. These support the story’s featured skill, text features. Ask students to look for information in the different text features—subheads, photos, and captions—to help them understand why people believe in the Loch Ness monster.

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**2. Close Reading**

**Reading and Unpacking the Text**

- **First read:** Read the story as a class. Use the Pause and Think questions at the end of each section to check comprehension. Page 7 refers to a plesiosaur. Students can view an image on the following website: [https://dinosaurpictures.org/Plesiosaurus-pictures](https://dinosaurpictures.org/Plesiosaurus-pictures)
- **Second read:** Project, distribute, or assign the Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions to the class. Preview them together. Ask students to read the article again and answer the questions as a class or in small groups. (Alternatively, assign all or part of the Learning Journey Slideshow, which contains the questions—along with other activities from this lesson plan and links to the story and Video Read-Aloud.)
Close-Reading Questions

(30 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form from the Resources tab.

1. Read the first section. How did Aldie and John Mackay describe the creature they saw in the lake? (supporting detail) It was a giant black creature with a humped back. It seemed to roll and plunge for several minutes before disappearing in the lake.

2. Why did so many people who lived near the lake believe the Mackays’ story? (key idea) Many felt the lake was spooky. For hundreds of years, people had told stories of a huge, scary beast that lived in the lake. People who lived near the lake were familiar with these stories. This made them more willing to believe the Mackays’ story about a lake monster.

3. Read “Mysterious Creatures.” What ideas do cryptozoologists have about what the Loch Ness monster could be? (summarizing) They believe it could be an unknown water mammal, a huge fish, or an ancient creature called a plesiosaur that lived alongside the dinosaurs.

4. Read “Finding Proof?” Why do most scientists disagree with the explanations given by the cryptozoologists? (compare and contrast) They believe that fish couldn’t survive in the cold, dark water of the loch. Since fish and most plants can’t grow there, the creature wouldn’t have any food. Also, if a family of huge animals is living in the lake, why has almost no one seen them?

5. How do the photo and caption on page 7 help you better understand the information in this section of the story? (text features) This section describes a film Dinsdale took of a creature during one of his many explorations of Loch Ness. The photo on page 7 shows Dinsdale holding a picture from that film.

6. What did different experts say about Dinsdale’s film? (compare and contrast) Some said the object in the film was probably alive and was 12 to 16 feet long. But others said the dark, blurry blob in the film was not impressive and didn’t convince them.

7. Read the section “No One Knows!” How does the legend of the Loch Ness monster still affect people today? (cause and effect) Thousands of people visit the area every year because they hope to see the Loch Ness monster. The legend is also a big moneymaker for some people who live near the lake.

Critical-Thinking Questions

(10 minutes)

The following questions can be shared in printable or interactive form from the Resources tab.
8. Choose one image in this article and explain how the image, along with its caption, helps prove that the Loch Ness monster does or does not exist. (text features) Answers may vary. Sample answers: The photo of the Komodo dragon on page 6 has a caption that tells you that this creature was thought to be a legend at one time. Maybe the same thing will happen with the Loch Ness monster. One day, scientists might learn that it’s a real animal too. The photo at the top of page 9 shows a hoax. It could be that the other times people thought they saw the monster were hoaxes too.

9. Reread the last paragraph of the story on page 9. Do you think someone in the future will prove that the Loch Ness monster really exists? Explain your answer. (supporting an opinion) Answers may vary. Students may say yes because the monster has been spotted by hundreds of people, and some have even caught it on film. New equipment could take an image that shows what the creature looks like. Others will say no because scientists who study underwater life haven’t been able to prove the existence of the Loch Ness monster in almost a hundred years. This shows that the Loch Ness monster doesn’t exist.

3. Skill and Knowledge Building

Featured Skill: Text Features
- Distribute or assign our Text Features Skill Builder and have students complete it in class or for homework.
- Discuss the writing assignment in the Think and Write box on page 9. Students should sum up the main idea of their paragraph in the first or last sentence. They can complete their paragraphs in class or as homework.

Great Ideas for Remote Learning
- Our new Learning Journey Slideshow is designed to make your life easier. Have students move through it at their own pace or assign smaller chunks for different days. You can also customize the slideshow to your liking.
- Have kids listen to the Author Read-Aloud. Then convene your virtual classroom, choose the Presentation View of the article, and share your screen. Students can take turns reading aloud as they would if together in class.
- Have students complete the close-reading and critical-thinking questions together in a video chat or on a shared Google Doc.
● Schedule a class debate over video chat to argue whether the Loch Ness monster is real or not. Divide the class into teams. Students can wear signs indicating which side they’re on (or change their display names to indicate whether they’re a “Nessie believer” or “Loch Ness doubter”).

**Differentiation and Learning Journey**

**For Struggling Readers**
Read aloud or have students listen to the audio version of the article while they follow along. Ask them to underline, highlight, or otherwise take note of details that show that the Loch Ness monster could be real and details that show it isn’t real. *Remote-learning tip: When students read the article online in Presentation View, they can use the highlighter tool to mark the text.* Discuss what students found, putting details supporting the existence of the Loch Ness monster in one column and details that don’t support it in another column. Students can refer to this pro/con document when responding to the Think and Write prompt on page 9.

**For ELL Students**
Read aloud the lower-Lexile version of the article while students follow. As students read, ask them to look for words and phrases in the text and captions that describe what the Loch Ness monster looked like to Aldie and John Mackay, some of their neighbors, and Tim Dinsdale. *Remote-learning tip: When students read the article online in Presentation View, they can use the highlighter tool to mark the text.* Collect these words and phrases for students to refer to. Then have your students use this list while describing the images of the creature in the pictures on pages 4, 7, and 9.

**For Advanced Readers**
Have students reread the article (or the higher-level Storyworks version) and look for details that explain what the Loch Ness monster could be. Ask them to write a two-paragraph newspaper article about what the Mackays saw in 1933, including possible explanations for the monster based on the details they found. Their article can incorporate made-up quotes from other people who lived near the lake. Remind students to add an exciting headline. They can share their writing in pairs.

**For School or at Home**
Instruct students to reread the third paragraph on page 9 about different items for sale to Loch Ness tourists. Have students study the photo of some of these products. Ask them to
design their own T-shirt, toy, or book based on the Loch Ness legend and draw a picture of it. Each picture should include a name and description.