

Nonfiction Activities Bundle

10 ARTICLES TO ENGAGE RELUCTANT READERS



Articles & Activities

"Abandoned Places"

vocabulary, creative writing from nonfiction

"Double Trouble: The Fascination with Twins"

multiple-choice questions

"Off-Track: Train Heists and Outlaws"

creative writing from nonfiction

"Demystifying Fear"

vocabulary in context

"Lizard Make-up Tutorial"

procedural writing

"Dying Around the World"

multiple-choice questions,
critical thinking prompts

"Codes and Codebreakers"

creative writing from nonfiction,
procedural text

"The Rise of Skateboarding"

research & discussion

"Dr. Daniel Hale Williams"

biography, vocabulary in context

"Careers in Video Games"

nonfiction passage with inference practice

Double Trouble: The Fascination with Twins

There are also stories of twins who share a sense when the other twin is in trouble. But is there a psychic power?

It would be pretty cool, but unfortunately, the psychic connection between twins is easily explained. It goes back to the concept of environment. Because twins grow up often wearing similar clothes, attending the same classes, and ultimately sharing the same experiences, they often seem to make the same decisions based on their shared environment. This explains why twins sometimes share thoughts and feelings. So, next time you think twins have a strangely close connection, remember there's a reason that isn't as mystical as it may appear (Davis).

THE DARK SIDE

Even today, although most twins are healthy and balanced, psychologists think the relationships between twins may be because of this.

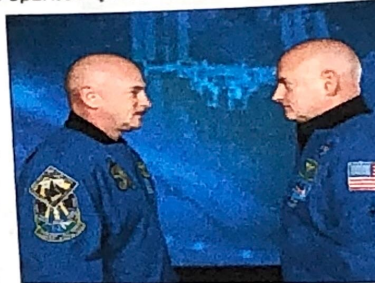
DOUBLE TROUBLE: *The Fascination with Twins*

Our society is captivated by twins. Mary Kate and Ashley Olsen are cultural icons. Tia and Tamara Mowry had an entire show, *Sister, Sister*, centered on their relationship. Some people swear that twins have a psychic connection. There's no doubt that twins, despite sometimes being "identical", prove to be unique and fascinating individuals.

This obsession isn't new. It has traveled through many centuries and many cultures. With twins only accounting for 3% of natural births, their rarity has sparked questions and mysteries throughout history (Openshaw).

SCIENTIFIC GAINS

Identical twins share the same genes. Understanding this key fact has allowed scientists to identify differences based on genetics versus outside factors. That means twins can help us understand how genetics affect diseases, weight gain, eating disorders, and more. Recently, a set of twins even volunteered their services to help us understand how genetics may be affected by space travel. One twin went into space for a year, while the other stayed earthbound. Through samples of blood, saliva, and urine, scientists studied the effects of long-term space travel on humans (Than). Through studies like these, twins have made significant contributions to science.



Mark and Scott Kelly, twin astronauts for

Not all studies were positive. In fact, some were horrific. In the early 1900's, scientists experimented on twins to further the study of eugenics, selective human breeding. Eugenics forced those with "superior" traits to reproduce and forbade those with "less desirable" traits from doing so. Oftentimes, victims were sterilized against their will. Eugenicians hoped that studies proved that "superior" traits were hereditary to justify their beliefs.

The most well-known example of this is Adolf Hitler, who believed blonde-haired, blue-eyed people were superior to other groups. He persecuted and murdered Jewish people, ethnic minorities, the mentally ill, homosexuals, and others. Dr. Joseph Mengele, Adolf Hitler's physician, conducted torturous experiments on European twins. Very few survived (Openshaw).

Fortunately, twin studies disproved eugenics. Twins raised separately showed that upbringing plays a larger role in developing intelligence, strength, and other desirable traits than genetics.

ROBSON & CRANE
IN



"COMEDY OF ERRORS"

In Shakespeare's A Comedy of Errors, two sets of twins leads to trickery, deception, and antics.

TWINS TODAY

Today, science has dissolved and how twins are born. But it's celebrated! Many people go to in which two people dress alike, worshipped or feared, they are the Olsen twins, the aforementioned successful entrepreneurs. If you go to Twinsburg, Ohio, where a think you're seeing double!

Sources:
Bernard
Davis
Encyclopedia
Openshaw



Nouvelle ELA

Each nonfiction article...

- Is approx. 500-800 words
- Introduces a topic
- Shares a perspective
- Makes connections to literature & history

That's So Scary! Demystifying Fear

WORD WORK: Close Reading

DEMYSTIFYING
IN YOUR OWN WORDS
What does this article aim to teach us about fear? Why does fear need to be demystified?

What does the article argue would happen if we were truly afraid of a situation? Do you agree with the idea of self-preservation? Why or why not?

SELF-PRESERVATION
IN YOUR OWN WORDS

DROVES
IN YOUR OWN WORDS
According to the article, why do people go to horror movies in droves?

AMYGDALA

your brain triggers a feeling of fear.

Includes comprehension
check activities:

- Vocabulary in context
- Short answer questions
- Multiple choice quizzes



Some activities include creative writing & research

Abandoned Places

CREATIVE WRITING: *Flash Fiction*

Flash Fiction is a very short story that still has plot, character development, and conflict. Since you don't have pages and chapters to develop your ideas, it can be challenging to draw your audience into the story. The trick is to get right to the heart of what's important to the story you want to tell.

WHAT STORY WILL YOU TELL?

For each **Story Start**, imagine which of the abandoned places you could write about. Write down notes about your reactions and first ideas.

STORY STARTS

1. You are trapped in this place. How do you escape? What obstacles do you encounter?
2. Surprise! You've won a vacation to...one of these creepy, abandoned places! It's time for survival mode. How do you make the best of it?
3. When you arrive in the abandoned place of your choosing, you realize someone is already there...and you aren't welcome. Who is this mystery person, and why are they protecting this place?

WINCHESTER MYSTERY HOUSE



Abandoned places you read about in the article and write a (1 page, handwritten) based on one of these Story Starts.



Nouvelle ELA

You're the Expert: Write a Tutorial

YOU'RE THE EXPERT:

PREWRITE: This activity will help you break a topic into parts. It will also help you think of the introduction, the procedure, and the conclusion.

CHOOSE A NARROW TOPIC: Take two of the activities from your list and think of specific aspects to think of one skill or technique from the activity.

Activity	Idea #1	Idea #2
(example) Dog Training	Teaching a dog to "sit"	Using verbal cues

Circle your choice.

Introduce yourself and your skill:

- What will your readers learn to do?
- What equipment will they need?
- Why are you an expert on this topic?

Break your skill into steps.

Step
(example) Teach your dog to sit on a verbal cue.

YOU'RE THE EXPERT:

TASK: You write for a major blog and have been asked to write a tutorial. You are encouraged to choose something you already know how to do.

Your final article should include an introduction, the procedure, and the conclusion. Additionally, you should include diagrams.

BRAINSTORM

First, analyze the tutorial you were given using the chart below. Then, analyze the videos (and analyze them as well. You don't have to love them all.)

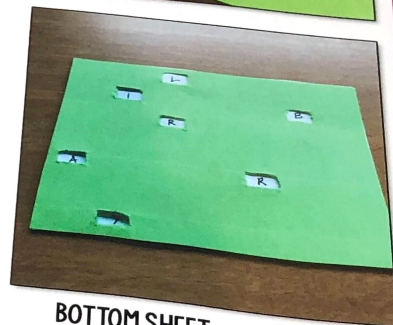
Video/Article Title & Source	How does the "how-to" begin?	How does the speaker use the "how-to" interest?

Codes & Codebreakers

HOW TO: *Make a Fleissner Grille*

Fleissner Grille: bottom message me "windows" you make a copy of yourself, you can messages. turn over and over again to send

1. Decide on your secret message. Keep it short—perhaps one or two words.
2. Write these letters anywhere in the grid. They should be in order like an English speaker reads (right to left, top to bottom), but you can skip squares and rows to make them more random.
3. Cut out the same boxes on your top sheet to make the "windows". Put it over the bottom sheet to make sure you can see all of the letters in your secret message.
4. Now, fill in the rest of the boxes with random letters or meaningless words. These will disguise your secret message.
5. Give the recipient of your message the two parts separately. This will assure that the message isn't intercepted! You can also decide which way the grille should be oriented to make it even more difficult to crack the code.



BOTTOM SHEET



Other activities ask students to apply information from the text, either through inferences or creative tasks

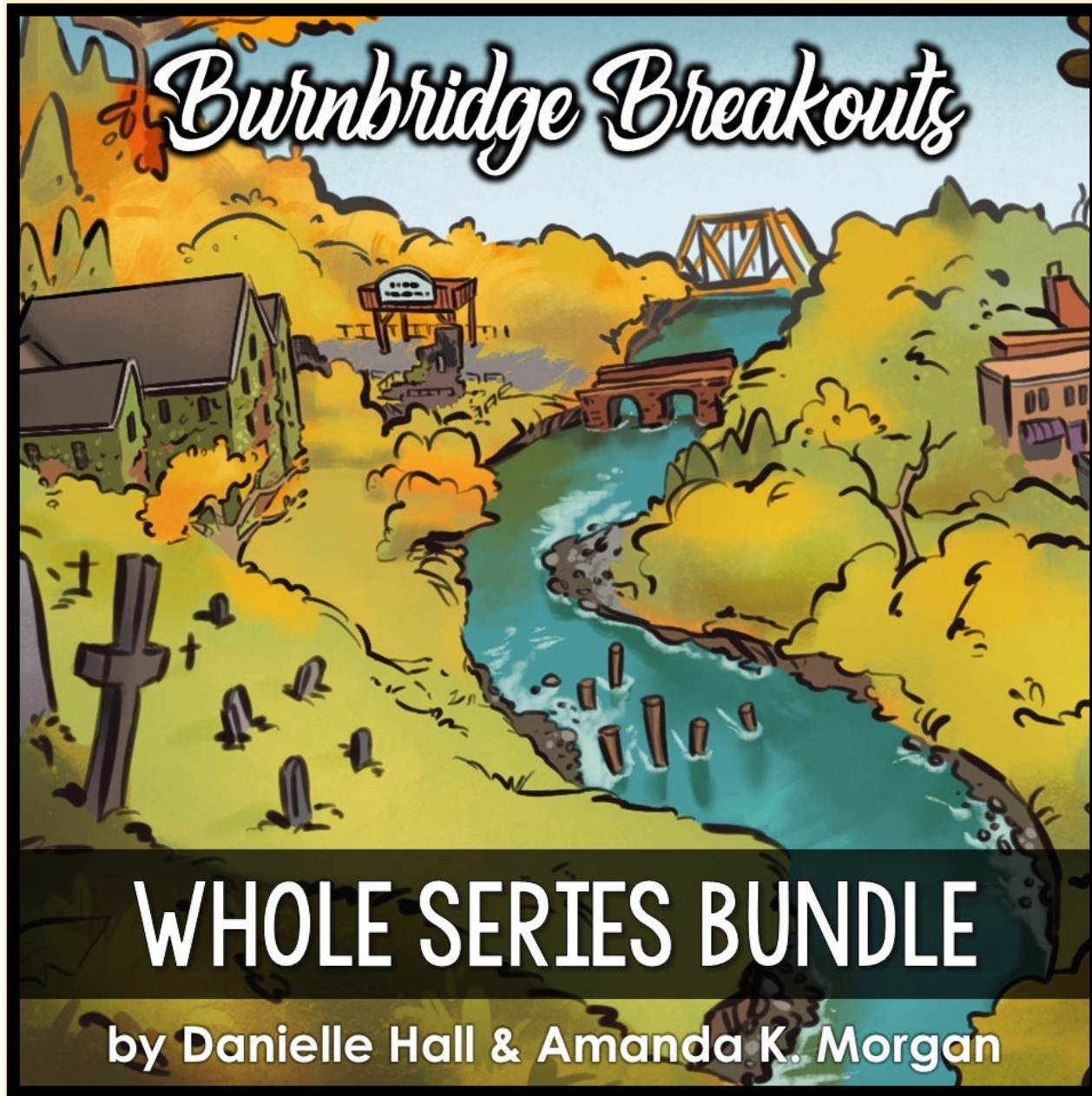
Train Heists & Outlaws



Activities include
DIGITAL versions

Worksheets presented
in fillable Google Slides &
quizzes as Google Forms





Looking for more inspiration?

These readings were originally created to accompany the Burnbridge Breakout series: escape games designed to help reluctant readers work at grade level.

**PERFECT FOR READING INTERVENTION
OR ENRICHMENT**