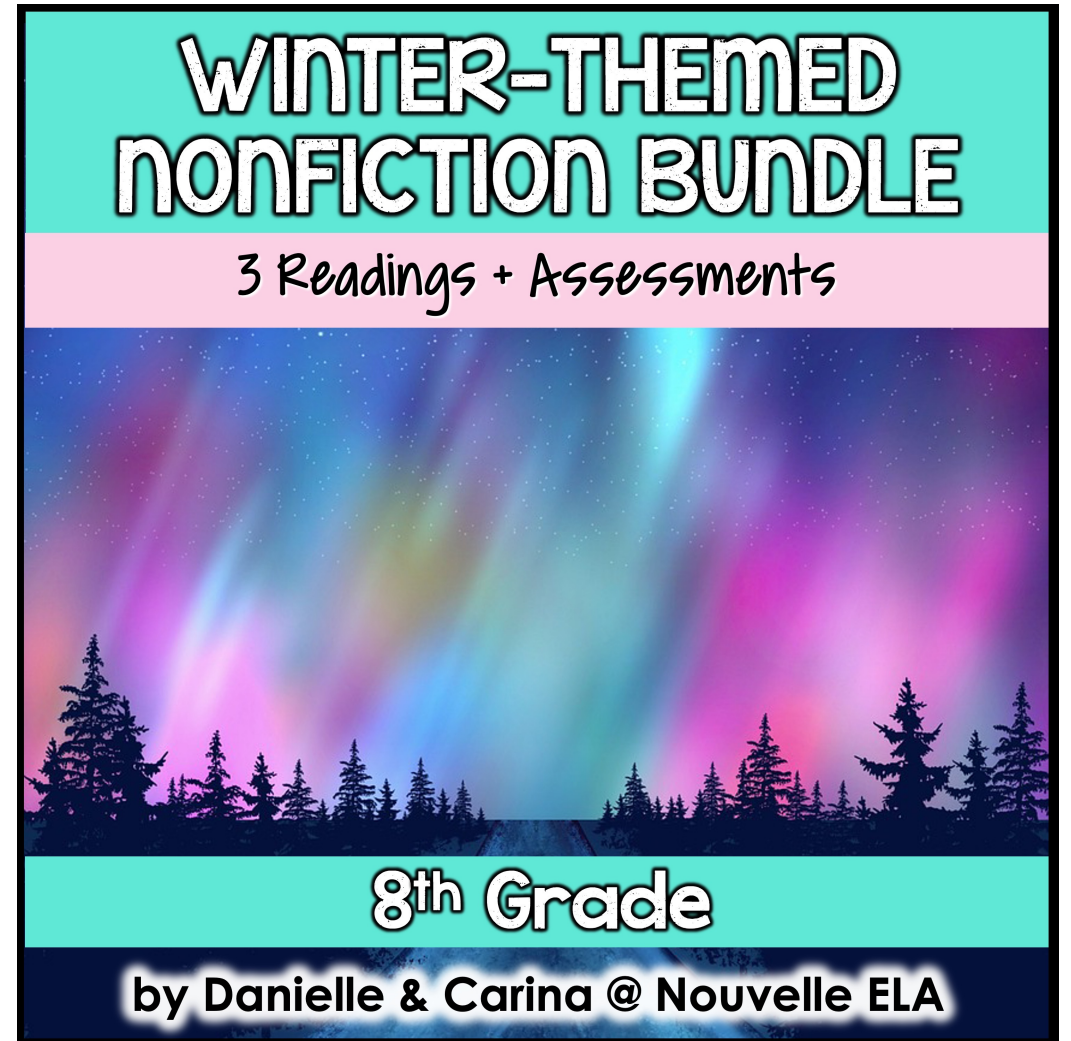


Winter-Themed Nonfiction Bundle

8TH GRADE



3 nonfiction articles written on a range of high-interest, winter-themed topics

"Auroras, Myths, & Legends"

myths about the Aurora Borealis

"The Miracle on Ice"

U.S. ice hockey team's win in 1980 Winter Olympics

"Celebrating Kwanzaa"

the origination & traditions of Kwanzaa



THE MIRACLE ON ICE: The Game that Captured a Nation's Heart

1 February 22, 1980, was a chilly day in Lake Placid, New York. But inside the Olympic Center, the atmosphere was electric with anticipation. The Winter Olympics were in full swing, and a hockey game that would go down in history was about to begin. This wasn't just any game. It was the United States, a team of young, scrappy amateurs, against the Soviet Union, the most formidable hockey team in the world. This was more than a game. It was a moment that would echo in the halls of sports history as the "Miracle on Ice."



Lake Placid, New York. (public domain)

- 2 Gregg Wong, the reporter who covered the game for Pioneer Press, recalls, "Little did I, or anyone, know that what we witnessed that day would be such a defining, memorable moment to so many people for so many years." The nation's attention was glued on the game.
- 3 Imagine being an American hockey player at that time. You're young, passionate about your sport, and you're facing a team that's not just any opponent. The Soviet Union team was a **juggernaut**. They weren't just winners; they were legends. They had claimed gold in six of the last seven Olympics. They played together not just as a team but as a machine, perfectly synchronized and seemingly unbeatable.
- 4 The odds? They were not in favor of the U.S. team. The players were college kids, amateurs in the purest sense, going up against seasoned, professional athletes. This David versus Goliath story was set against the backdrop of the Cold War, a time of tension and rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. The game was more than a battle on the ice; it was a clash of ideologies, a fight for national pride.

5 Now, step into the skates of one of these young American players. Your coach, Herb Brooks, has inspiring words for you: "**You're meant to be here. This moment is yours.** You're meant to be here at this time." The stadium is packed, the air is buzzing with energy, and the eyes of the world are on you. The game starts, and the Soviet Union, true to form, dominates early. They're fast, they're skilled, they're everything everyone expected them to be. The first period ends, and the U.S. is trailing. But there's no giving up, not in this game, not with so much at stake.



Nouvelle ELA

Each article is
approximately 750-
1000 words written for
8th graders

AURORAS, MYTHS, & LEGENDS: Illuminating Cultural Skies

1 As we gaze up at the night sky and witness the **ethereal** dance of the Northern Lights, we become part of a long tradition of wonder and storytelling. In these moments, we're connected not only with the vast universe but also with the countless generations before us who looked up in awe and whispered their own tales into the cold, starry night.



2 Today, we understand that the Aurora Borealis (known as the *Northern Lights*) is caused by particles from the sun interacting with the Earth's atmosphere, creating those mesmerizing colors. But even with this scientific explanation, the myths and legends surrounding the Aurora Borealis continue to captivate our imagination, reminding us of a time when the natural world was a canvas for storytelling and myth-making.

The Enchanting Dance of the Valkyries

3 Long ago, in the lands of the Vikings—warriors known for their bravery and exploration—there was a captivating tale about the Northern Lights. Imagine the dark, cold nights in Scandinavia, where the Vikings lived. On certain nights, the sky would suddenly light up with shimmering waves of green, purple, and red. The Vikings believed these lights were more than just a natural wonder; they were a bridge to a world beyond our own.

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Each article includes a version with photos and one without to suit your printing and display needs



Nouvelle ELA

CELEBRATING KWANZAA

Answer the following questions based on the article "Celebrating Kwanzaa." Choose the best answer for each question.

1. What is the main purpose of Kwanzaa, as described in the article?
 - a. To celebrate the African harvest season
 - b. To promote unity and cultural pride among African Americans
 - c. To commemorate historical events
 - d. To exchange gifts and enjoy festive meals

2. In paragraph sixteen, the word **libations** most likely means:

- a. Drinks
- b. Food
- c. Gold
- d. Milk

3. What is the central message of the Kwanzaa principle, Ujamaa?

- a. Emphasizing family and community relationships
- b. Encouraging people to work together
- c. Promoting the African harvest season
- d. Fostering a sense of unity and cultural pride

4. According to the article, what is the central message of the Kwanzaa principle, Ujamaa?

- a. By exchanging gifts and enjoying festive meals
- b. By celebrating the African harvest season
- c. By commemorating historical events
- d. By promoting unity and cultural pride among African Americans

What is the central message of the Kwanzaa principle, Ujamaa? (RI.8.2)

CELEBRATING KWANZAA

Answer the following questions based on the article "Celebrating Kwanzaa." Choose the best answer for each question.

1. What is the main purpose of Kwanzaa, as described in the article? (RI.8.1)

- a. To celebrate the African harvest season
- b. To promote unity and cultural pride among African Americans**
- c. To commemorate historical events
- d. To exchange gifts and enjoy festive meals

2. In paragraph sixteen, the word **libations** most likely means: (RI.8.4)

- a. Drinks**
- b. Food
- c. Gold
- d. Milk

Each article includes a 10 question, standards-aligned multiple-choice quiz with answer key

(Quizzes are also available as an editable digital Google doc)



Nouvelle ELA

CELEBRATING KWANZAA

SYMBOL	SUMMARIZE YOUR FINDINGS
Mishumaa Saba (Seven Candles)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A colorful mat

AURORAS, MYTHS, & LEGENDS: Short-Answer Questions

There are many "right" answers to the following questions, so it's all about how you support your ideas. Use evidence from the article to support your claims.

1. Compare and contrast how the myths from the Vikings, Finns, and Algonquin tribes each reflect their unique cultural perspectives on the natural world. What does each myth reveal about the values and beliefs of these cultures?
2. Choose one of the myths (Valkyries, Fox Fires, or Ancestral Lights) and explain the symbolism behind the key elements of the myth. How does this symbolism contribute to the overall meaning or message of the story?

Each article also includes:

- * 2-3 short answer analysis-based questions
- * A graphic organizer to scaffold evidence collection
- * Extension ideas

