

The Hottest Place/Coldest Place on Earth

Two fascinating articles compare the world's most extreme environments

About the Article

Levels

Lexile Level: 550L

Guided Reading Level: P

DRA Level: 38

Learning Objective

Students will love learning about life in Dallol, Ethiopia, and Oymyakon, Russia, which have some of the most extreme temperatures on Earth. The story has a special emphasis on compare and contrast.

Content-Area Connections

Social studies: world cultures

Science: weather, environment

Key Skills

Compare and contrast, text features, vocabulary, close reading, main idea and supporting details, cause and effect, informational writing

Standards Correlations

This article and lesson support the following standards:

Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.5, R.9, W.2, SL.1, L.4, L.6

TEKS: 3.2, 3.4, 3.13, 3.20a, 3.20c, 3.29, 3.30

For more standards information, check our website.



Your Teaching Support Package

Here's your full suite of materials, all of which you'll find at scholastic.com/StoryworksJr:

Activities to print or project

- Vocabulary
- Close-Reading and Critical-Thinking Questions
- Quiz
- Nonfiction Reading Kit: It will help build key reading skills, including our featured skill: compare and contrast; and identifying main idea and supporting details

Audio versions (both read by the author)

- On-level version
- Lower-Lexile version

Differentiated article

- Lower-Lexile version

Step-by-Step Lesson Plan

Close Reading, Critical Thinking, and Skill Building

1. Preparing to Read

Explore Text Features/

Set a Purpose for Reading (10 minutes)

- Point out the opening spread on pages 16-17.
- Direct students to the labels in the upper left corner that say “Paired Texts” and “One topic, two stories.” Ask students what the one topic is. (*extreme weather*)
- Looking at the photos on the opener, ask the question in the white circle: Where would you rather live? Have students predict what would be difficult about living in each place.
- Every story in the magazine has a **Think and Read** box at the beginning. It gives students a question or an idea to focus on as they read. Call on a volunteer to read the Think and Read box on page 16 for the class.

Preview Vocabulary

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

- Project or distribute the first page of our **vocabulary activity** to preview the terms in bold in the feature. Complete the “before reading” section as a class or in small groups. Have students complete the second section after they’ve read the article.
- Highlighted words: *acid, salt mines, environment, gold mines*
- **Word Study!** Ask students which two terms have something in common. (*salt mines, gold mines*) Ask students what word is also bolded in the Big Read nonfiction feature. (*environment*)

2. Close Reading

Reading and Unpacking the Text

- **First read:** Students should read the articles through one time for general comprehension.
- **Second read:** Distribute the **close-reading** and **critical-thinking questions**. Preview them as a class.
- Have students read the story again, as a class or in small groups, pausing to answer the questions.

“The Hottest Place on Earth” Close-Reading Questions

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

- **Which details tell you why it is hard to live in Dallol?** (main idea and supporting details) *Dallol is very hot, water is hard to find, and acid comes up from the ground. Also, there are no schools, stores, doctors, or crops.*
- **What do men and boys do in Dallol? Why?** (key details) *They go to Dallol to mine salt. They sell the salt to make money.*

“The Coldest Place on Earth” Close-Reading Questions

(15 minutes, activity sheet online)

- **What could happen to your body if you’re outside in Oymyakon?** (key details) *The inside of your nose could freeze, and your eyelashes could turn to icicles.*
- **Why did people go to live in Oymyakon in the 1930s?** (cause and effect) *They went to live there because gold was discovered, and they wanted to make money from the gold.*
- **What are people in Oymyakon like?** (key details) *They are friendly. They take care of each other.*

Critical-Thinking Questions

(10 minutes, activity sheet online)

- **What are two ways in which Dallol and Oymyakon are alike?** (compare and contrast) *Both places are very hard places to survive in because of extreme temperatures. In both places, the people who live and work there stick together and help each other. Both places have mines where people work.*
- **What are two ways in which Dallol and Oymyakon are different?** (compare and contrast) *Dallol is very hot, and Oymyakon is very cold. Nobody lives in Dallol, and some people live in Oymyakon.*

Turn the page for
differentiation and more!



3. Skill Building

Compare and Contrast

- Distribute our **compare/contrast activity**. On your whiteboard or chart paper, make a table like the one in our activity.
- Divide the class into three groups. Assign one row of the table to each group, and have them find details from the articles to fill in their section. Have them fill in the table on their activity sheets as they work.

- Call on one student from each group to fill in the table for the class. Have students follow along and fill in the rest of their activity sheets.
- As a class, discuss the finished product to see if students would add or change anything.
- Have students complete the task in the **Think and Write** box on page 19 in class or as homework.

Customize Your Class

For Independent Readers

Preview text features and vocabulary before letting students read on their own. Distribute the **close-reading and critical-thinking questions**, and have students answer some or all of them as they read.

For Small Groups

- Follow step 1 of the lesson plan: Preparing to Read.
- Put students in small groups to take turns reading the article aloud, paragraph by paragraph. Give them the option to pause and discuss points they find interesting, surprising, or confusing.
- Assign each group two of the **close-reading and critical-thinking questions** to discuss and answer together.

Differentiate Your Teaching

For Struggling Readers

Read the articles aloud as students follow along in their magazines. Pause at the end of each paragraph and ask students to summarize what happened. Send the magazines home for students to read the article again; encourage them to read it aloud with a parent or caregiver.

For Advanced Readers

Have students use the prompt in the **Think and Write** box to write an essay about whether they would rather live in Dallol or Oymyakon. For an additional challenge, have them research the wettest, driest, or otherwise extreme place on Earth and make a poster about it.

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Differentiated article

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