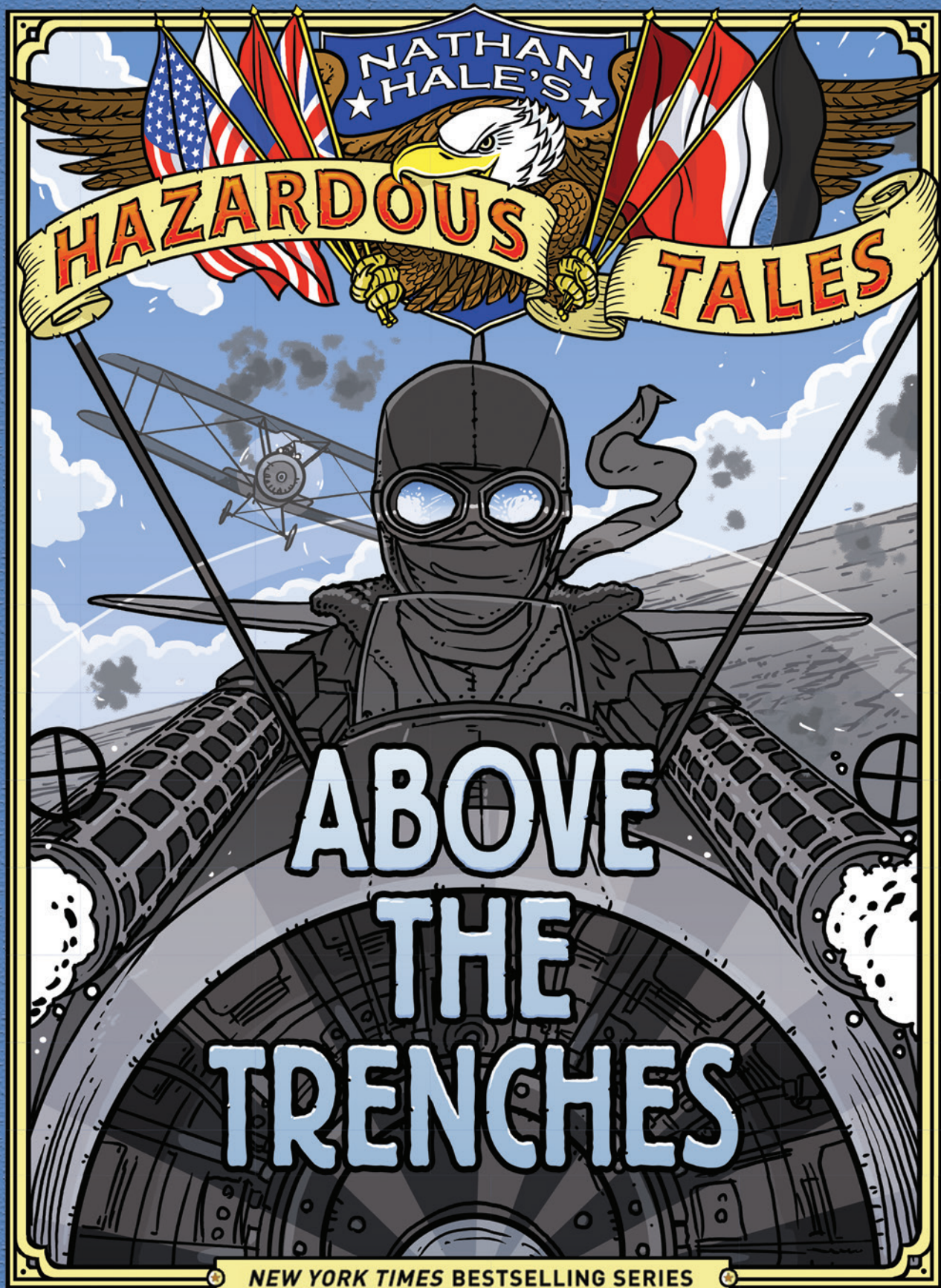


An Educator's Guide to



Ages 8-12



By Nathan Hale

## ABOUT THE BOOK

In *Above the Trenches*, author-illustrator Nathan Hale takes to the skies with the flying aces of World War I to reveal another Hazardous Tale in American history in the #1 *New York Times* bestselling graphic novel series.

When the Great War began in 1914, America had plans to stay out of it. But some young men were so eager to fight, they joined the French Foreign Legion. From deep in the mud and blood of the Western Front, these young volunteers looked to the sky and saw the future—the airplane.

The first American pilots to fight in World War I flew for the French military. France created a squadron of volunteer Americans called the Lafayette Escadrille (named after the great Marquis de Lafayette).

This book is about that volunteer squadron: How they got into the French military. How they learned to fly. How they fought—and died. And how these American pilots would go down in history with other legendary flying aces like the Red Baron and his Flying Circus.

## ABOUT THE CREATOR



**Nathan Hale** is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author and illustrator of the Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales series. He also wrote and illustrated the graphic novels *One Trick Pony*, *Apocalypse Taco*, and *The Mighty Bite*. Hale lives in Utah, and you can find him online.

## PRAISE FOR THE *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLING SERIES

**“THESE BOOKS ARE, QUITE SIMPLY, BRILLIANT.”**

—*New York Times* Book Review

**“A KILLER COMBINATION** of history and jokes and comics and weirdness.”

—Jon Scieszka, bestselling author and national ambassador for children's literature emeritus

★ **“Accurate historical facts are made fun and palatable through the ACTION-PACKED** graphic format and a humorous lens.”

—*School Library Journal*, starred review of *Lafayette!* (Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales #8)



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### EDUCATOR TIP:

Use *Above the Trenches* alongside *Treaties, Trenches, Mud, and Blood* (Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales #4) to complete your classroom unit on World War I.

**For a full list of the Hazardous Tales series, see the last page of this guide.**

*Above the Trenches* (Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales #12) By Nathan Hale

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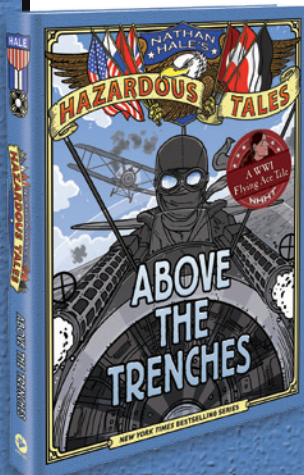
# HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

- In the **Fun Across the Curriculum** section, opportunities to have discussions and complete activities across different content areas are shared. Activities and discussion questions are split into subject areas and are written as if they are being asked of a student.
- At the end of the guide, **Common Core State Standards** are listed that can be met when the books are extended using the activities and discussion questions.

## FUN ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

- Each country is represented by an animal in *Above the Trenches*. Why do you think the author chose to do this? Did you find it helpful in being able to tell the countries apart? Why was each animal chosen for its country? Would you have chosen a different animal for that country?
  - Create a classification chart showing each animal and the country it represents to help you while reading the book.
- Why were the practice planes named penguins (page 22)? If you were going to give each of the planes in the book the nickname of an animal, what animal nickname would you give each of them and why?
- Why do you think the author chose to tell the story primarily from the point of view of the Americans fighting for France? How would telling the story from a different point of view have changed the book?
  - Choose a section of the book and rewrite it from a different point of view.
- On page 58, and then throughout the book, we see pilots painting various symbols on their planes. What would you choose to put on your plane and why?
- How did the author use aspects of the soldiers' appearances to design the animals that represented them (on page 61)? What similarities do you see between each person and his animal character?
- On page 81, the Hangman points out that there are “too many main characters in this book.” What are some strategies you could use to keep track of the different characters? Utilize the strategy of your choice (graphic organizer, list, drawings, etc.) to keep track.
- After learning about Seeger’s death on page 96, visit his poem “I Have a Rendezvous with Death” on page 124.
  - Why type of poem has Seeger written?



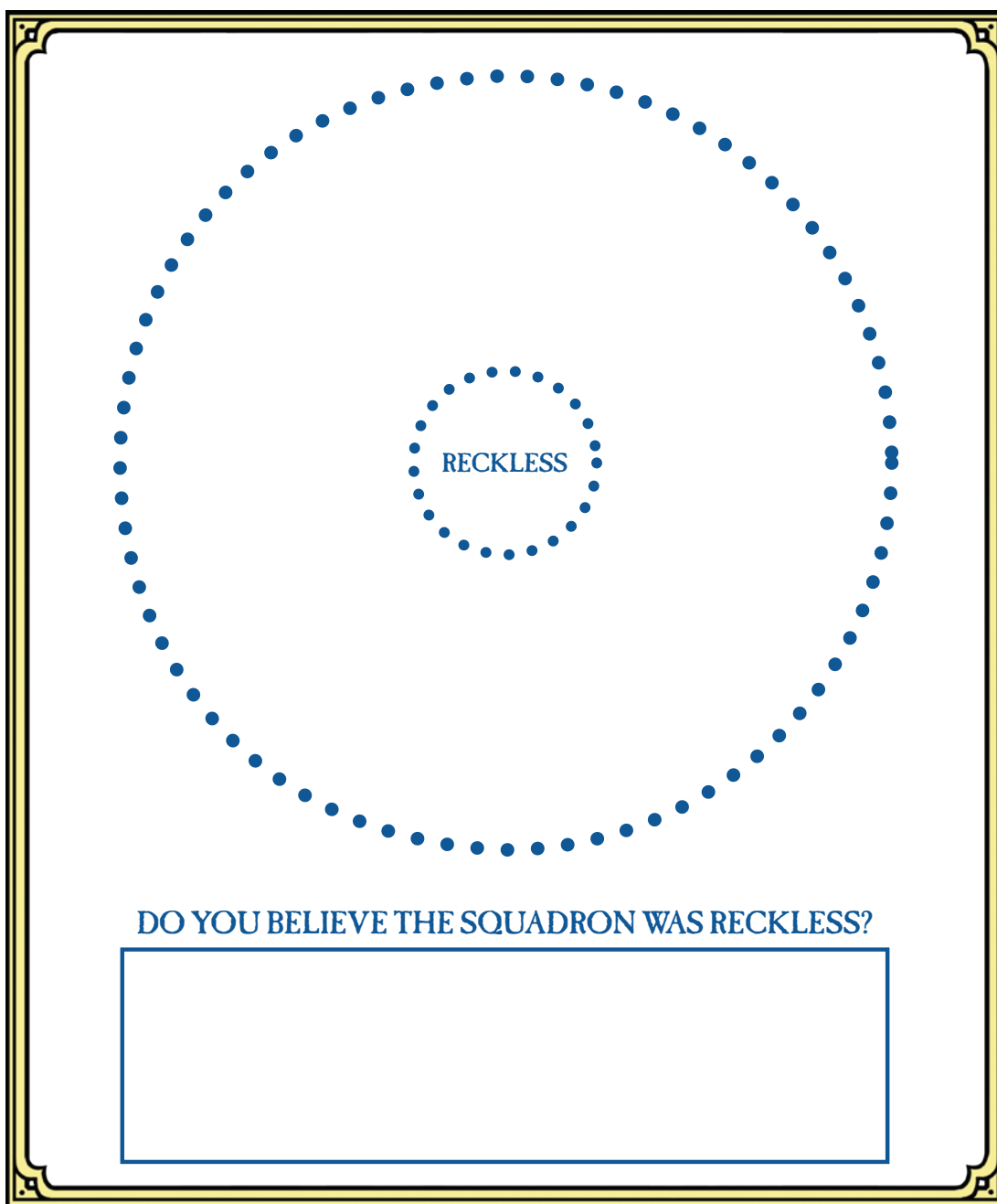
- Personification is writing about a non-person object as if it is a person. How does Seeger personify Death in the poem?
- Why do you think the poet combines positive imagery like “apple-blossoms” and “Spring . . . blue days” with the idea that he will die on the battlefield?
- What mood do the details of the poem convey?

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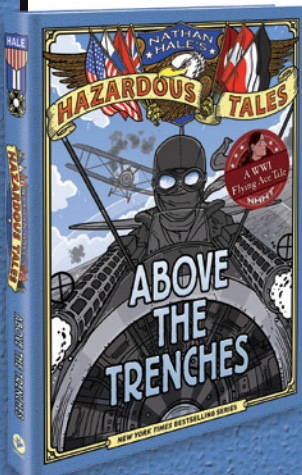


- On **page 116**, the Provost describes the Lafayette Escadrille as “reckless.” Complete a circle map showing text evidence to support the Provost’s opinion, and then state if you believe the squadron is reckless as well, and why or why not.



RECKLESS

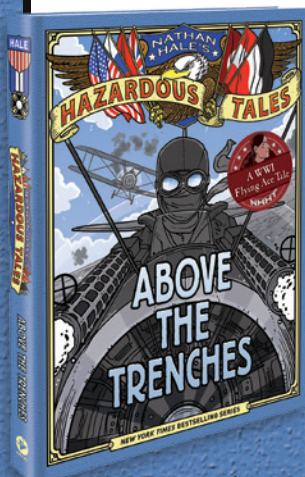
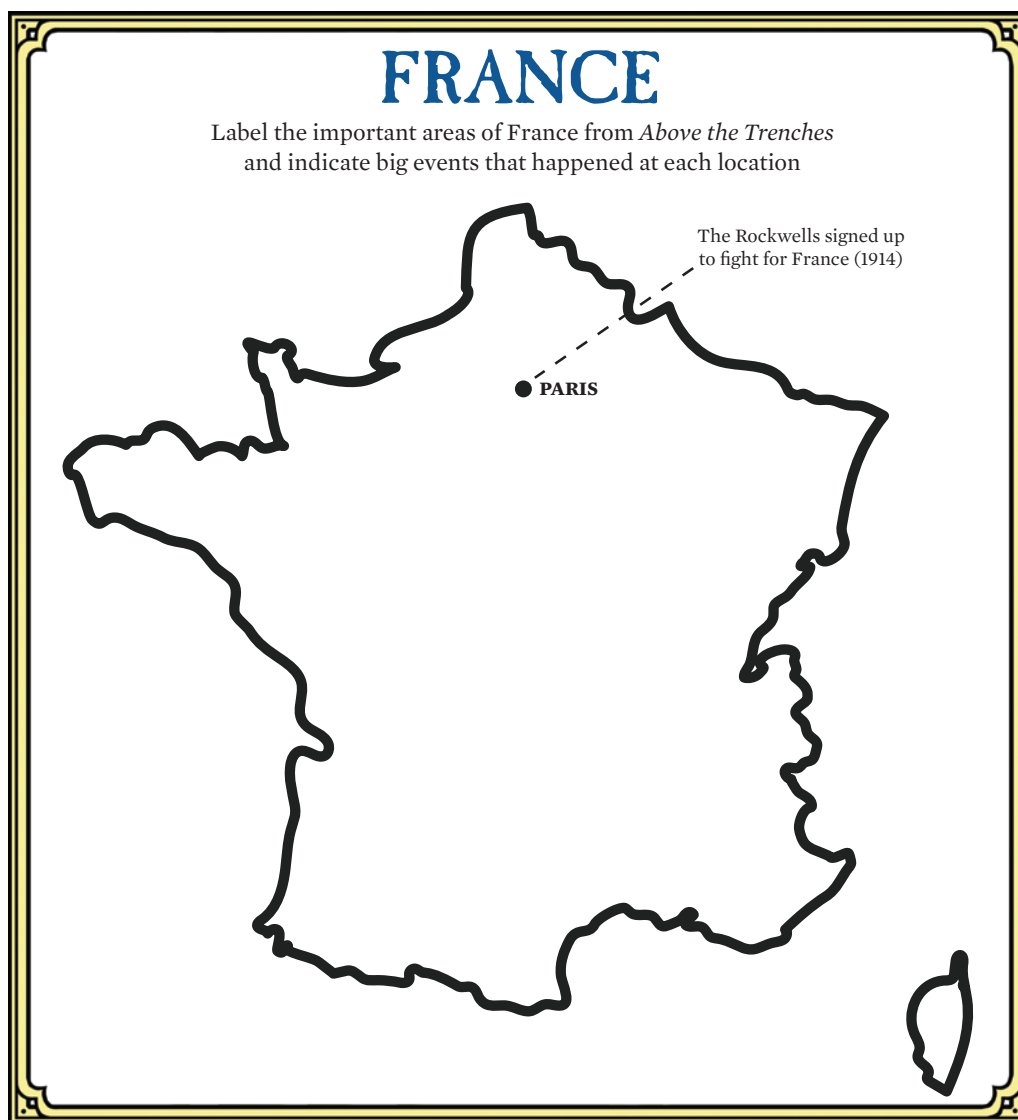
**DO YOU BELIEVE THE SQUADRON WAS RECKLESS?**



- Why do you think the author chose to include so many side stories within the main story of the Escadrille Americaine? How did this extra historical information add to the story?
- Which historical figure or event would you like to learn more about? Conduct research on the person/event and share your found information with your classmates using the medium of your choice.

## HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES

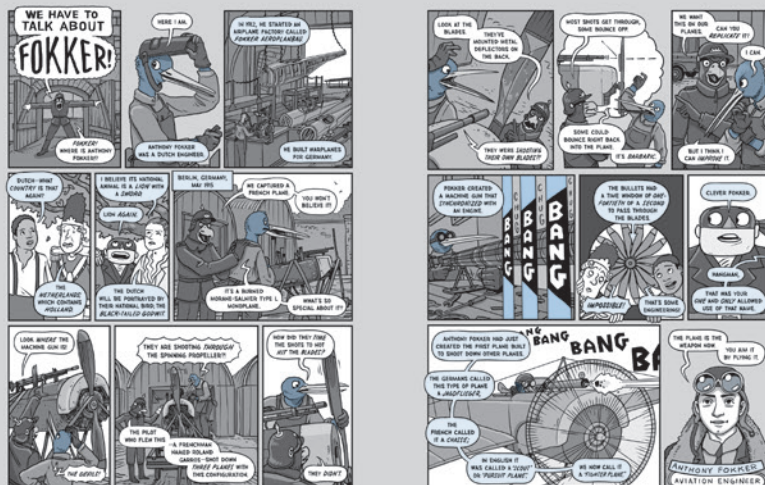
- Create a timeline using information from *Above the Trenches* and other reliable sources showing the timeline of flight from the Wright Brothers through the end of World War I. Looking at the transformation of flight over time, answer the question: “How did the changes in planes and flight change warfare?”
- Throughout the book, Nathan Hale shares pioneers of aviation with us through mini-comics honoring their work (e.g., Igor Sikorsky on [page 68](#)). Do some initial research to find your own pioneer of aviation, and complete an approximate eight panel comic describing their contributions to aviation.
- Using the information in *Above the Trenches* and the internet, create a map of France showing all the locations mentioned in the book and mark important events that happened in each area.



- The Escadrille Americaine renamed themselves after Lafayette. Why? What are the parallels between them and Lafayette?
- Why is the same map found in the endpapers of both *Above the Trenches* and *Treaties, Trenches, Mud, and Blood* (Nathan Hale's *Hazardous Tales* #4)?

## MATH

- If the bullet has a time window of  $\frac{1}{40}$  of a second to pass through the blade and the machine gun is synchronized with the engine (page 47), how many bullets could be shot between the blades in one minute?
- If the Red Pirate has a bounty of 25,000 marks on him and 1 mark is equal to 55 cents (USD), how much was the bounty in United States dollars in 1916? \$1 in 1916 would equal \$28 in 2023, so how much would the bounty be in 2023?



## FRENCH

- Sporadically through the book, the author chose to include French. Looking at the times when he made this choice, why do you think he included French specifically when he did?

# COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

## READING ANCHOR STANDARDS

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3

Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5

Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6

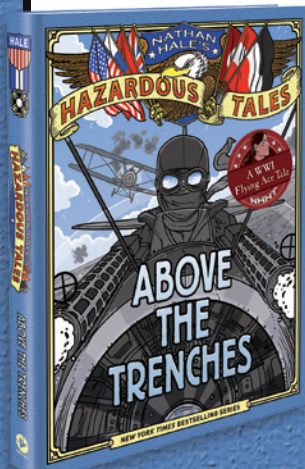
Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.10

Read and comprehend complex literary texts independently and proficiently.



## WRITING ANCHOR STANDARDS

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.8

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

### CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

## READING STANDARDS FOR LITERACY IN HISTORY/SOCIAL STUDIES GRADES 6-8

- Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources (**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.1**).
- Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered) (**CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.3**).
- Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts (**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7**).

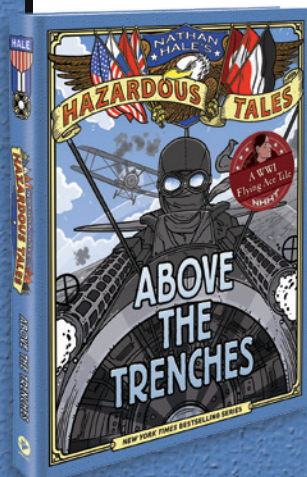
## STANDARDS FOR MATHEMATICS

- Convert like measurement units within a given measurement system (**Grade 5**).
- Apply and extend previous understandings of multiplication to multiply a fraction by a whole number (**Grade 4**).
- Apply and extend previous understandings of multiplication and division to multiply and divide fractions (**Grade 5**).

This guide was created by Kellee Moye, a middle school librarian in Orlando, FL. Kellee is the author of various teaching guides for all levels; the co-author of the blog Unleashing Readers; Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of NCTE (ALAN) 2024 President and a member of the 2016-2018 ALAN Board of Directors; a jury member then co-chair of the 2020-2021 Schneider Family Award Jury; a member then chair of the 2012-2014 Amelia Elizabeth Walden Book Award committee; and a member of NCTE, ALAN, AASL, and ALA.

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# Discover THRILLING, GRUESOME, and TRUE stories of history

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—*New York Times Book Review*



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MILLION  
copies sold!



## JANUARY

### Happy New Year

Start the year off by reading the Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales from the beginning with the first book in the series!



**HAZARD  
LEVEL:**  
YELLOW

## FEBRUARY

### Black History Month

Celebrate Black History Month with these stories about the remarkable life of Harriet Tubman and the brave leaders of the Haitian Revolution



## MAY

### Summer Adventure Season

For anyone exploring the country's national parks this summer—pick up the story of John Wesley Powell's epic journey through the Grand Canyon for the trip.



## SEPTEMBER

### Step Back Into History

Get ready for history class with these tales about lesser-known parts of very well-known events: the ironclad warships of the Civil War and the top-secret Doolittle Raid of World War II.



## OCTOBER

### Halloween

Put a historical twist on spooky season by dressing up as a character from any of the books in the Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales series.



## JUNE

### School's Out for Summer

Encourage kids to brush up on their comic-creating skills (and history) with this interactive activity book and companion to the Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales series.



## MARCH

### Women's History Month and Harriet Tubman Day

Celebrate important women in history with these tales about daring female journalist Marguerite Higgins who covered the Korean War and the extraordinary abolitionist Harriet Tubman who risked her life to free enslaved people.



## JULY

### Summer Reading

Commemorate World War I, which began on July 28, 1914, by learning more about the battles and secrets of this monumental event with these two tales. Impress everyone at the beach!



## AUGUST

### For the Hamilton Fans

Fun fact: George Washington first met his close friend Marquis de Lafayette on August 5, 1777. Find out more about their friendship and the Revolutionary War in this hazardous tale.



## NOVEMBER

### Thanksgiving

Read about this ill-fated expedition and shocking "dinner party" during this month's festive feasts—if you dare!



**HAZARD  
LEVEL:**  
BLUE

## DECEMBER

### Holiday Happenings

Give the gift of history with these oversized editions of fan favorite tales featuring 16 pages of bonus material!





**“THESE BOOKS ARE, QUITE SIMPLY, BRILLIANT.”**

—*New York Times Book Review*



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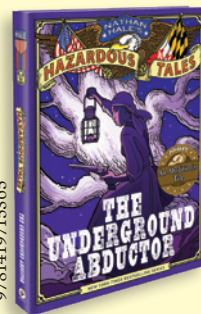
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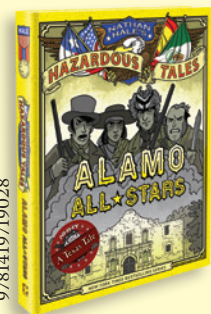
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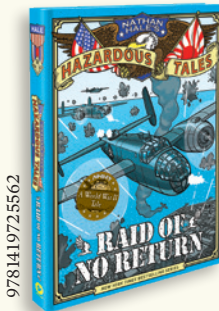
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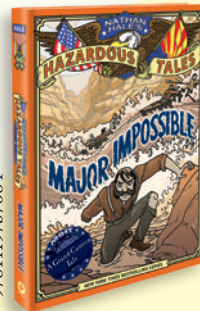
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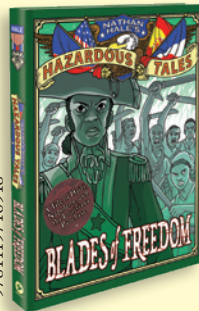
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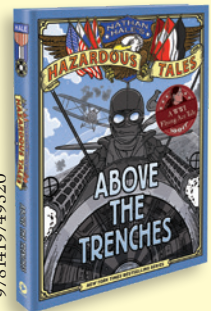
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☆ ☆ ☆ **READ THEM ALL—if you dare!** ☆ ☆ ☆



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## CREATE YOUR OWN COMIC!

In *Let's Make History!*, readers will tackle 71 comic-creating challenges, with help from some of their favorite characters from the series! With each challenge, young cartoonists will learn new skills, from sound effects and character creation to building their own 10-page comic.

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