

The Salton Sea

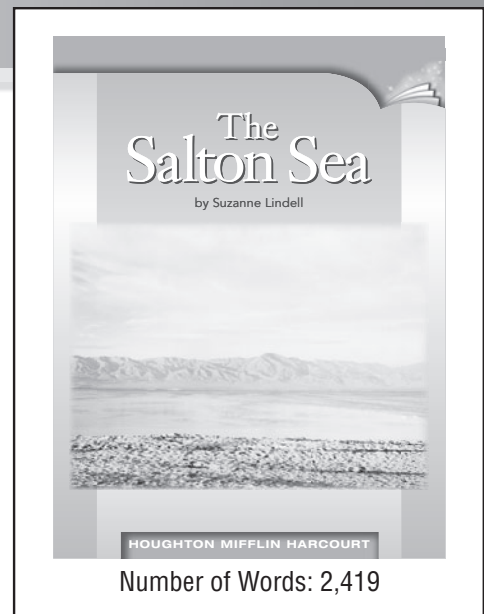
by Suzanne Lindell

Fountas-Pinnell Level V

Narrative Nonfiction

Selection Summary

California's Salton Sea is a lake that has evolved and reemerged over hundreds of years. The Salton Sea has provided a refuge for migrating birds and a home for fish and other water-dwelling species. Now it is shrinking, and officials and citizens must decide what to do about this.



Characteristics of the Text

Genre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative nonfiction
Text Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thirteen sections, some with substantive titles • Information conveyed in various graphics
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description and importance of <i>basins, wetlands, and food chains</i> • Impact of human development of land on the Salton Sea • Awareness of reduced water consumption, animal rehabilitation
Themes and Ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Salton Sea is a unique, endangered body of water. • It is necessary to maintain the landform, despite time and cost.
Language and Literary Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some figurative language: <i>The Salton Sea is fighting for its life.</i> • Much description
Sentence Complexity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complex sentence structure, including shifts in tense to describe history of basin and possible future remedies • Multiple items in a series: <i>pelicans, gulls, and cormants</i>
Vocabulary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical vocabulary related to life and earth science: <i>biologist, species, elevation</i>
Words	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multisyllable words, such as <i>irrigation, migrating, plentiful</i>
Illustrations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical illustrations, such as maps and diagrams, to support science concepts
Book and Print Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eighteen pages of text, with thirteen subsections • Combination of visuals: photographs with captions, diagrams, maps, timelines, and illustrated tips for conserving water
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by Suzanne Lindell

Build Background

Help students use their knowledge about habitats and animals that depend on them. Build interest by asking questions such as the following: *What do you know about the interconnectedness of wildlife and habitats? Why do people get involved in efforts to conserve the environment?* Read the title and author and talk about the photograph on the cover. Ask students to describe what kinds of features they can expect to find in narrative nonfiction.

Introduce the Text

Guide students through the text, noting important ideas and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so they can read the text successfully. Here are some suggestions:

Pages 2–3: Explain that this is a selection about the Salton Sea, a body of water located in an ancient desert basin in California. **Ask:** *What do you think is a basin?* Direct students to the photograph on page 3.

Suggested language: *Look at the photograph and caption on page 3. How is this body of water different than other bodies of water you are familiar with?*

Pages 4–5: Have students look at the subheadings and inset on pages 4–5.

Ask: *What does the inset tell you about the importance of irrigation in this selection? Why might the author have chosen to use so much space on page 5 to define the term irrigation?*

Page 9: Point out the illustration on page 9. Ask students to notice that the different animals are shown in a series. **Ask:** *What do phytoplankton and zooplankton have to do with a food chain?*

Now go back to the beginning and read to find out what problems the Salton Sea is facing.

Expand Your Vocabulary

epidemic – outbreak of contagious disease that spreads widely and rapidly, p. 12

habitat – the area where an organism normally lives, p. 4

migrating – moving out of one region to live in another, p. 2

phytoplankton – small, free-floating aquatic plants, p. 9

salinity – the state of containing salt, p. 11


sump – a place where farmers are allowed to drain excess water off irrigated land, p. 8

wetlands – lowland areas such as marshes or swamps, containing moisture, p. 4

zooplankton – animals including corals, rotifers, sea anemones, and jellyfish, p. 9

Read

Have students read silently while you listen to individual students read aloud. Support their understanding of the text as needed.

Remind students to use the Analyze/Evaluate Strategy  **TARGET STRATEGY** as they read. Tell them to think about how the Salton Sea’s possible demise will affect both animals and humans.

Discuss and Revisit the Text

Personal Response

Invite students to share their personal responses to the text.

Suggested language: *What do you find interesting or surprising about the Salton Sea? Why?*

Ways of Thinking

As you discuss the text, help students understand these points:

Thinking Within the Text	Thinking Beyond the Text	Thinking About the Text
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Salton Sea is a lake that was reinvigorated by an irrigation mishap in 1905. Its role as wetlands in California is critical.• Despite conventional wisdom, the Salton Basin has cyclically held and evaporated lake water as far back as C.E. 700.• The Salton Sea’s demise could negatively affect both people and animals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Human actions can have far-reaching consequences on the environment.• The Salton Sea is become an especially critical part of the food chain.• The government and citizens can work together to ensure the Salton Sea’s survival.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The narrative describes in detail how the Salton Basin has shifted in ecological importance over time.• There are various text structures used to convey information, including sequence (page 6), cause and effect (throughout), and problem/solution (throughout).

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Choices for Further Support

- **Fluency** Invite students to participate in choral reading. Remind them to pause whenever punctuation calls for it, such as taking full stops at dashes, but short breaths at commas (“ . . . *manmade is misleading—like taking credit for the tide*”; “*In small amounts, it is a beneficial nutrient, but large, frequent doses. . .*”).
- **Comprehension** Based on your observations of the students’ reading and discussion, revisit parts of the text to clarify or extend comprehension. Remind students to go back to the text to support their ideas.
- **Phonics/Word Work** Provide practice as needed with words and word parts, using examples from the text. Have students isolate the word part in the following word family: *state, migrate (-ate)*. Ask a volunteer to think of another word in this word family.

Writing about Reading


Critical Thinking

Have students complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 8.9.

Responding

Have students complete the activities at the back of the book, using their journals. Use the instruction below as needed to reinforce or extend understanding of the comprehension skill.

Target Comprehension Skill

Author's Purpose  **TARGET SKILL** Remind students that authors write for different reasons, or purposes. Point out that the author of *The Salton Sea* gives a lot of information, but she also tries to persuade readers that the sea should be preserved. Model how to add details to the Graphic Organizer, using a “Think Aloud” like the one below:

Think Aloud

I look back at page 13 to find the reasons the author gives to save the sea. She explains that if the sea dries up the dust could ruin nearby farmland. I'll add that detail to the chart to show that the author is writing to persuade readers that it is important to save the sea.

Practice the Skill

Have students identify the author's purpose in other texts they have read recently.

Writing Prompt: Thinking Beyond the Text

Have students write a response to the prompt on Teacher's Guide page 6. Remind them that when they think beyond the text, they use their personal knowledge to reach new understandings.

Assessment Prompts

- Why does the author begin this selection by describing a biologist in the desert?
 - How is this selection like other information texts, such as biography? How is it different?
 - This selection is mainly about
-

English Language Development

Reading Support Have students listen to the audio or online recordings. Make sure the text matches the students' reading level. Language and content should be accessible with regular teaching support.

Cognates The text includes many cognates. Point out the English words and their Spanish equivalents: scientist (*científico*), plants (*plantas*), salt (*sal*), and algae (*alga*).

Oral Language Development

Check student comprehension, using a dialogue that best matches your students' English proficiency. **Speaker 1** is the teacher. **Speaker 2** is the student.

Beginning/Early Intermediate	Intermediate	Early Advanced/Advanced
<p>Speaker 1: What is the selection about?</p> <p>Speaker 2: the Salton Sea</p> <p>Speaker 1: What is the problem?</p> <p>Speaker 2: The Salton Sea might disappear.</p> <p>Speaker 1: What is the solution?</p> <p>Speaker 2: human interaction, reduced consumption</p>	<p>Speaker 1: How does the Salton Sea help animals?</p> <p>Speaker 2: It is a part of the food chain.</p> <p>Speaker 1: What pollutants could harm the Salton Sea?</p> <p>Speaker 2: Selenium and bird diseases are pollutants that could harm the Salton Sea.</p>	<p>Speaker 1: What steps do people need to take to protect the Salton Sea?</p> <p>Speaker 2: Many things need to happen to protect the Salton Sea. There is no one solution. One idea is to build shallow pools to encourage evaporation. A smaller version of the sea could be built. Local communities can conserve water use every day.</p>

Responding

TARGET SKILL **Author's Purpose** What was the author's purpose in writing *Salton Sea*? Copy the chart below. Summarize the author's purpose. Then list details that support that purpose.

Author's Purpose: To persuade readers that the Salton Sea is important and should be preserved

Detail: ?

Detail: ?

Write About It

Text to Text Think of another selection you have read that convinced you to do something about a particular issue. Write several paragraphs explaining why you think the issue is important.

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Name _____ Date _____

Lesson 8
BLACKLINE MASTER 8.9

Critical Thinking

The Salton Sea
Critical Thinking

Read and answer the questions.

- Think within the text** Why is the Salton Sea considered "California's crown jewel"?

- Think within the text** What two major threats endanger the Salton Sea's existence?

- Think beyond the text** Which do you think is more important: the use of excess water by the growing population of southern California or the preservation of the Salton Sea? Explain your answer.

- Think about the text** Do you believe the author has done a good job of convincing readers that the Salton Sea should be saved? Why or why not?

Making Connections List all the things you can think of that you use water for. If there were a water shortage, which things would you choose to go without first? Why?

Write your answer in your Reader's Notebook.

Grade 5 © Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company 7 Lesson 8: The Salton Sea

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Thinking Beyond the Text

Think about the questions below. Then write your answer in two or three paragraphs.

Remember that when you think beyond the text, you use your personal knowledge to reach new understandings.

On page 4, the author writes that more than 90 percent of California’s original wetlands are extinct as the result of human development. Some people view human development of land as progress—that is, new buildings and communities symbolize a step forward and provide necessary comfort. Others view human development as harmful—that is, new buildings and communities eliminate natural resources and are excessive.

What viewpoint do you think the author of *The Salton Sea* would have on this issue? Would she view human development of land as a step forward or as a step backward? Why? Do you agree with the author? What is your viewpoint? Support your thinking with evidence from the book.



Critical Thinking

The Salton Sea
Critical Thinking

Read and answer the questions.

1. Think within the text Why is the Salton Sea considered “California’s crown jewel”?

2. Think within the text What two major threats endanger the Salton Sea’s existence?

3. Think beyond the text Which do you think is more important: the use of excess water by the growing population of southern California or the preservation of the Salton Sea? Explain your answer.

4. Think about the text Do you believe the author has done a good job of convincing readers that the Salton Sea should be saved? Why or why not?

Making Connections List all the things you can think of that you use water for. If there were a water shortage, which things would you choose to go without first? Why?

Write your answer in your Reader’s Notebook.

The Salton Sea • LEVEL V

The Salton Sea
Running Record Form

page	Selection Text	Errors	Self-Corrections
2	<p>The Salton Sea is not easy to describe. It is called a sea, but it's actually a lake—California's largest. This lake is 25 percent saltier than the Pacific Ocean. It lies more than 200 feet below sea level, in an ancient desert basin. This strange and beautiful body of water stretches across 360 square miles. Today the Salton Sea is considered a natural wonder—a unique feeding spot for millions of migrating birds. In fact, this natural wonder was created accidentally in 1905 when the nearby Colorado River broke through a poorly built irrigation canal and flooded the area.</p>		
	Comments:	Accuracy Rate (# words read correctly/100 × 100) _____ %	Total Self-Corrections _____

Behavior	Code	Error
Read word correctly	✓ cat	0
Repeated word, sentence, or phrase	@ cat	0
Omission	̄ cat	1

Behavior	Code	Error
Substitution	cut cat	1
Self-corrects	cut ^{sc} cat	0
Insertion	the _cat	1
Word told	Ⓢ cat	1

