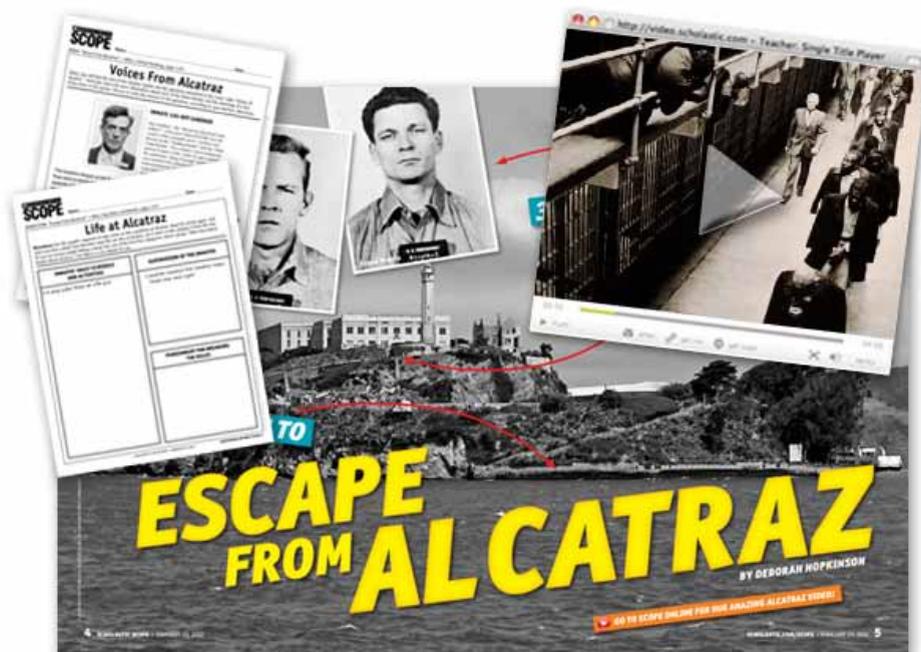


Step-by-step, whiteboard-ready

SCHOLASTIC  
**SCOPE**  
 DIGITAL LESSON

## Exploring Alcatraz



Approximate  
 time to  
 complete  
 lesson: three  
 to four class  
 periods

### FEATURED SKILL

#### Integration of knowledge and ideas:

What was it like to be a prisoner at Alcatraz? What led three prisoners to try to escape?

### SUMMARY

Students will read an article and a poem (optional) about a daring attempt to escape from Alcatraz. After completing a graphic organizer, they will watch and discuss a video featuring quotes from three inmates about life at Alcatraz.

Finally, students will write a reflective essay drawing on these sources.

### MAIN OBJECTIVES

- to identify text evidence and make inferences about the conditions at Alcatraz
- to gather information and ideas from multiple texts and media types
- to participate in class discussion
- to write a reflective essay

## MATERIALS

Click the links below.

- student copies of the article “Escape From Alcatraz” from the February 20, 2012, issue of *Scope*
- *Scope* worksheet [“Life at Alcatraz”](#)
- *Scope* video [“Voices From Alcatraz”](#)
- *Scope* [video companion](#) worksheet
- [answers](#) to worksheets

### 1 CLASS DISCUSSION

**Duration:** 10 minutes

Have students open their magazines to “Escape From Alcatraz” and have them look at pages 4 and 5. What do students already know about Alcatraz? Invite them to peruse the rest of the article, looking at the photos and reading the captions and subheads. Ask a student to read aloud the “As You Read” box on page 6. What do students think conditions at Alcatraz were like? Tell them that after they read the article, they will see a video about prisoners at Alcatraz.

### 2 CLASS READING: NONFICTION

**Duration:** 30 minutes, or one class period

Have students read the article as a class or independently. You may have students read or skip the poem on page 9, depending on their reading level and on whether you wish to have them explore two “text” types or three (article, poem, video).

### 3 “LIFE AT ALCATRAZ” WORKSHEET

**Duration:** 20 minutes

To help students identify and categorize the conditions that may have motivated the escapees, project or distribute the graphic organizer “Life at Alcatraz.” Preview the section headings as a class. Then have students work individually or in pairs to find details in the article about conditions in the prison. Review the answers as a class.

### 4 VIDEO VIEWING AND DISCUSSION

**Duration:** 20 minutes

In our gripping video, students will hear first-hand accounts of what it was like to be imprisoned at “the Rock.” Before starting the video, distribute the companion activity. As you watch, pause the video to discuss the question that follows each quote. The questions and prisoners’ quotes also appear on the activity sheet, which students can refer to in discussion. (Optional: If you prefer to use the video as a listening-comprehension activity, do not distribute the activity sheet.)

Discuss the final question in the video. Then ask: What do the images and sounds in the video add to your understanding of Alcatraz? In what ways are the article, poem, and the video effective in conveying what Alcatraz was like? Do you find one more effective than the other? Why?

### 5 WRITE A REFLECTIVE ESSAY

**Duration:** 20 minutes

Ask students to write an essay in response to the writing prompt on page 9: *What was it like to be an inmate at Alcatraz? How might the conditions have motivated Frank Morris, John Anglin, and Clarence Anglin to risk their lives attempting to escape?* Students should support their responses with details from the article, video, and poem (optional).