



**Classroom Guide for  
AMAZING PLACES**

Edited by **Lee Bennett Hopkins**  
Illustrated by **Christy Hale, Chris Soentpiet**

### Reading Level

\*Reading Level: Grades 4–5

Interest Level: Grades 1–8

Guided Reading Level: S

\*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

### Themes

United States Geography, United States History, US States, National Parks, Museums, Natural Environment, Universal Experiences, Home, Cultural Diversity, Cultural Heritage, Poetry, Multiethnic Interest

### Synopsis

In this collection of original poems, acclaimed anthologist Lee Bennett Hopkins brings together fourteen selections that celebrate some of the amazingly diverse places in our nation, including beautiful landscapes, fascinating historical sites, and entertaining cultural destinations. Denali National Park, the Oneida Nation Museum, San Francisco's Chinatown, the Grand Canyon, the Ringling Circus Museum, Harlem, the Liberty Bell, and Fenway Park are some of the places highlighted. The poems as a whole take readers on an exciting multiethnic travelogue around the United States and encourage a positive appreciation of our country's historical, environmental, and cultural heritage.

The inspiring and insightful poems were created by some of the best-known authors writing for children, including Alma Flor Ada, Jaime Adoff, Joseph Bruchac, Rebecca Kai Dotlich, Nikki Grimes, J. Patrick Lewis, Jane Medina, and Linda Sue Park. Captivating illustrations by award-winning illustrators Chris Soentpiet and Christy Hale feature well-researched settings that infuse the poems with vibrant life and atmosphere. Readers of all ages will want to visit each amazing place again and again.

### BACKGROUND

*From the Backmatter:*

*Denali National Park, Alaska:* Established in 1917 as Mount McKinley National Park, Denali was the world's first national park created to protect wildlife.

*Oneida Nation Museum, Green Bay, Wisconsin:* A longhouse was a shelter used through the early part of the 1800s by people of the five original Iroquois Nations, of which the Oneida were one.

*Watkins Museum of History, Lawrence, Kansas:* Langston Hughes (1902–1967), beloved poet, playwright, and novelist, lived in Lawrence, Kansas, from 1903 until 1915.

*Chinatown, San Francisco, California:* San Francisco's Chinatown is the largest Chinese community outside of Asia and the oldest Chinatown in North America.

*Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona:* Established in 1919, Grand Canyon National Park is one of the most important geologic areas in the world, containing rocks and fossils that date back billions of years.

*State Fair of Texas, Dallas, Texas:* The State Fair of Texas, founded in 1886, is one of the largest state fairs in the United States, attracting more than three million visitors each year.

*Mississippi River, Mississippi:* The Mississippi River is one of North America's longest rivers. It flows for approximately 2,350 miles (3,782 kilometers) from its source at Lake Itasca in northwestern Minnesota south to the Gulf of Mexico just below New Orleans, Louisiana.

*The Ringling Circus Museum, Sarasota, Florida:* The Ringling Circus Museum, the first museum in the United States to celebrate the history of all aspects of circus life, was established in 1948.

*Liberty Bell, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania:* The bell was originally installed in the Pennsylvania State House (now Independence Hall) in 1753, and over the next ninety-three years it was rung for various important events, people, and governmental acts.

*National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, DC:* Established in 1989, the National Museum of the American Indian is dedicated to the preservation, study, understanding, and exhibition of Native cultures of the Western Hemisphere.

*Sandy Hook Lighthouse, Fort Hancock, New Jersey:* The Sandy Hook Lighthouse is the oldest standing lighthouse and the oldest operating lighthouse in the United States.

*Harlem, New York City, New York:* For more than two hundred years, 125th Street in upper Manhattan, New York City, has been a major crosstown route, passing through the Harlem neighborhood.

*Fenway Park, Boston, Massachusetts:* Fenway Park, home of the Boston Red Sox since 1912, is the oldest Major League baseball park in the United States, earning it the nickname of America's Most Beloved Ballpark.

*Niagara Falls, Niagara Falls, New York:* Niagara Falls consists of three waterfalls along the border of the United States and Canada: the American Falls, the Canadian Falls, and the Bridal Veil Falls.

## **BEFORE READING**

### **Prereading Focus Questions**

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strands 4–5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

1. Take a look at the front and back covers. Take a picture walk. Ask students to make a prediction. Do you think this book will be fiction or nonfiction? What makes you think so? What clues do the author and illustrators give to help you know whether this book will be fiction or nonfiction?
2. What do you know about poetry? What are the typical text features of poetry? Are all poems written in the same format? Do all poems have to rhyme? What are some things that you might not find in poetry?
3. Why do you think some authors write books using poetry? How do you think their reasons differ from authors who write prose?
4. What do you know about museums? Have you ever been to a museum? If so, where? What did you see there? What are some different types of museums? Why do you think they are important?
5. What do you know about national parks or historic landmarks in the United States? Have you ever visited a national park or national landmark? If so, where? What makes these places special?
6. What makes a place special? Describe a place that has special meaning to you and why.
7. Why do you think I chose this book for us to read today?

### Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

Read and talk about the title of the book. Ask students what they think the title, *Amazing Places*, means. Then ask them what and who they think this book will most likely be about. What places or situations might be talked about in the text? What do you think might happen? What information do you think you might learn? What makes you think that?

Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, map, dedications, acknowledgments, title page, illustrations, additional information in the backmatter, and sources of information.

### Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out about:

- the diverse cultural heritage of the United States
- how different places bring people together
- the historical and cultural significance of locations around the United States
- United States geography and history
- poetry forms of storytelling
- the range and features of poetic formats
- to what the book title, *Amazing Places*, refers

Encourage students to consider why the editor and poet Lee Bennett Hopkins would want to share these poems with young people and why he paired these writers and places together. Encourage students to also consider why the participating writers would want to contribute their poems about special places to this anthology for young people.

### VOCABULARY

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below. Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or

phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

## CONTENT SPECIFIC

grasshopper	longhouse	hooves	plows
tractor	elm bark	sapling	reams
dim sum	Chinatown	firecracker	Fourth of July
<i>quinceañera</i>	echo	limbs	cross-country
gorge	Colorado River	rapids	hawks
eagles	horizon	incense sticks	barge
canyon	Ferris wheel	magician	St. Louis
New Orleans	reins	statehouse	Indiana
Oklahoma	Oregon	moccasins	buffalo hide
veneer	centuries	clam chowder	bazaar
Magic Johnson	Apollo Theatre	double play	shoals
sabers	Fenway	Major League	Great River Road
New York Harbor	riffraff	<i>Onguiaahra</i>	

## ACADEMIC

rustling	luscious	throb	heartless	embrace	rootless
clinging	suspended	swoop	swirl	stitched	endless
waterfalling	flurries	bubbling	swirling	twirling	sparkling
clanging	dangling	rumbles	tumbles	hauls	becalmed
eddies	churns	ample	pratfalls	vibrating	frowned
crumbled	crazed	crouched	waded	reclaim	soundlessly
crackles	deters	pierce	treacherous	crisp	cascading
plunging	tumbling	ancestral	ragged	gawk	respite
majestic					

**AFTER READING****Discussion Questions**

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.**

**Literal Comprehension**

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3 and Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strand 4)

1. What are some of the different forms of poetry used in this anthology?
2. Which poems in the book use rhyme? What is the rhyme pattern in each poem (every two lines, every other line, etc.)?
3. What is an example of a verse, or stanza, in the book? What is an example of a line in a verse?
4. Select one of the poems in the book and identify the line and syllable count that the author followed.
5. For each poem, what is the poem about? What is the main point or message of the poem?
6. Several of the poems are told with first person narration. Do all the poems have the same narrator? What clues indicate who the narrator is of each poem?
7. List the city (if provided) and state location for each poem. How many states are featured?
8. What is a *quinceañera*?

9. Find and list at least three examples of metaphors used in the poems. What images do these words and phrases bring to mind?
10. Find and list three or more examples of personification that appear in the poems.
11. Select one or more poems in the book and focus on the description words. What adjectives, verbs, and adverbs are used to describe the place? How do these words make you feel? What images do they bring to mind?
12. List all the alliterations in the poem "Midway Magic."
13. List all the descriptive verbs that the author Prince Redcloud uses to describe Niagara Falls in the poem "Niagara."
14. From what perspective are the poems "Tree Speaks" and "Sandy Hook Lighthouse" told? Who is speaking or telling the poem?
15. Which poems are about or take place in United States National Parks? Which poems are about museums in the United States? Which poems are about the environment?
16. What is different about the way the poem "Sandy Hook Lighthouse" looks? What is this type of poem called?
17. Describe the main idea of the entire collection of poems in *Amazing Places*.

### Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1 and 3, Craft & Structure, Strands 4–6, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

1. Why do you think the editor, Lee Bennett Hopkins, chose the adjective "amazing" for the title of this book?
2. In the poem, "Campfire," what does the phrase, "the fire is spitting ready," mean? What image does the phrase bring to mind?
3. What is the metaphor in "Longhouse Song?" To what does the author, Joseph Bruchac, compare a longhouse?
4. Why do you think the narrator's gift to herself in "A Sunday Trip to Chinatown" is to learn to speak Chinese?
5. In "Tree Speaks," the author, Nikki Grimes, describes humans as "rootless." What does this word mean and how is it an appropriate description for this particular poem?
6. In "Midway Magic," what does the phrase "waterfalling with lights" mean?
7. In "On the Mississippi," what does the phrase "becalmed by turns" mean?
8. How does word choice make a difference in the poems "Midway Magic" and "Niagara?" How does the sound of a spoken word help emphasize the meaning of the poem?
9. How is a lighthouse like a "sentinel of the sea?"
10. Why do you think Joan Bransfield Graham, author of the poem "Sandy Hook Lighthouse," chose to arrange the words in a specific shape? How is this shape significant to the poem? How does this shape contribute to the meaning of the poem?
11. In "Niagara," the poem is formatted so that the reader reads just one or a few words per line from top to bottom. Why do you think the author, Prince Redcloud, chose to arrange the words this way? How does the shape help convey action?
12. Each poem explores a different place in the United States. How are places connected to the history and culture of the country? How do places such as those highlighted in the book bring diverse groups of people together?
13. What emotion do you think each author feels toward the special place she or he wrote about?
14. After reading all fourteen poems, think about why the editor, Lee Bennett Hopkins, included these places together in the collection. What do all the poems have in common? How do they complement one another?
15. What does this book teach us about the importance of protecting our national parks, landmarks, and other cultural institutions? How does preserving places such as

those featured in the poems help connect and bring people together across the United States?

### Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1 and 2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strand 1 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. Suggest that students respond in reader's response journals, essays, or oral discussion. You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. If you could visit one place featured in the book, which would you choose? Why? What would you want to see or do there?
2. Which other places described in the book are most interesting to you? Why do you find them interesting? Write a short passage about what you like about the places you chose.
3. Have you ever visited another state in the United States? If so, where did you go? What did you see or do? How was the state you visited similar to or different from your home state?
4. Each poem features historically and culturally significant places and destinations from across the United States. Have you ever been to or know anything about one or more of the places featured in the book? If so, which one(s)? Do you think the poem about each place describes it well? Why or why not?
5. There are many places around the United States that have historical, environmental, and cultural significance. What are some additional places in the United States or within your own state that you think could also be featured in this book? Describe how each place highlights and is important to United States culture.
6. The poem "The Moccasins" is about a pair of moccasins in the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, DC. What objects from the time we are living in now would you put in a museum for people of the future to see and learn about? Why do you think these objects are important?
7. Do you think it is important to preserve United States national landmarks, national parks, and other cultural institutions? Why or why not? Is there another place you could recommend for national landmark designation? Where would it be and why do you think it should be a national landmark?

### ELL/ESL Teaching Strategies

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the book with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the text. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
  - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
  - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of one of the poems or key details.

Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.

4. Have students give a short talk about the poem and place in the book they identify with the most and explain why. Additionally, have students present a place they would want to see included in the book and explain why.
5. The story contains some content-specific words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

### INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Student who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)  
Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

#### Science/STEM

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9 and Range of Reading & Level of Text Complexity, Strand 10)  
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–5)

1. Have students research the importance of national parks to preserving the environment. Why do we have national parks? What effect do they have on biodiversity? What threats are faced by plant and animal species in some of the parks? How can humans help protect these areas and the living things in them?
2. In a graphic organizer, ask students to examine the cause and effect of threats facing one of the national parks in the United States. Then have students examine different types of environmental action people can take or are taking to protect and conserve these lands.

#### Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)  
(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1 and 2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)  
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. Using the map at the beginning or end of the book, have students trace the path from place to place following the order of poems in the book. Challenge students to research notable geographic features of the area surrounding each place and chart how the geography changes as they move from one region of the country to the next.
2. Ask students to select and research a national park or an historic place in their state and create an informational poster. When did the place become a national park or historic place? Where is it located? Why is it important to United States history and culture? Based on students' research, students can create a tri-fold brochure advertising the unique aspects of this place and why people should visit.
3. Review the information about the United States locations in the back of the book. Then have each student select one place to research further and create a postcard using the [Postcard Generator](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/postcard/) from ReadWriteThink.org.<sup>1</sup> Ask students to write a

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/postcard/>

postcard to a friend as they pretend they are visiting their chosen places. In what city/state is the place located? What is there to see or do there? What is the weather/ climate like? In what region of the United States is it located? What is unique or special about the place?

4. Provide students with an outline map of the United States that includes state outlines. Ask students to label the fifty states and mark the location of each place featured in the book on the map. (Students may use the map at the beginning or end of the book as a guide.) Then ask students to research and label the state capital and one national landmark in each state. In addition, have students identify the five regions of the United States (west, southwest, midwest, southeast, northeast) using five different colors, and label the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. Students should also mark their home location on the map and star any states they have visited. Discuss what a compass rose is and the purpose it serves on a map. Finally, encourage students to test their United States geography knowledge with a [U.S. State Labeling Quiz](#).<sup>2</sup>
5. Ask students to select a state featured in one of the poems to research further and create a state fact card or a travel brochure using the [Travel Brochures](#) lesson plan from ReadWriteThink.org, encouraging people to visit.<sup>3</sup> Have students include state facts: state size, motto/nickname, capital, population, region, and climate/geography. What is there to see or do? What national landmarks or parks are located here? What is the culture like? Students should include pictures, maps, and interesting facts and details about the state.
6. Provide students with paper bags and assign each student a different state to research and present. On the outside of the paper bag, have students include state fact information, such as the state name, capital, and motto, and a cutout of the state. Inside the paper bag, ask students to include six items that describe and represent the state based on the following topics: history, food, sports, tourism, geography, and economy. Then have students present their state bags to the class, describing how the items in the bag represent and relate to their states.
7. In groups, have students work to research a well-known place in their city that is important to the community history and culture. What is the place? Where is it located? Why is it important to the local community? How is it also important to United States history and culture? What is being done to protect the place or how can people help protect it? Have students share their research with the class and together create a map of the places in their community.
8. Ask students learn about national parks with lesson plans from the [National Park Foundation](#)<sup>4</sup> and [National Park Service](#)<sup>5</sup>, and have students research the process for how a park becomes a national park.

## Mathematics

(Mathematics Standards, Grade 4, Measurement & Data, Strands 1 and 2)  
(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7) (Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 2 and 3) (Writing Standards, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strand 9)

1. Using the United States map from Social Studies/Geography activity no. 4, have students measure the distance between different places labeled on the map using the scale that accompanies the map. What are the distances between places? How

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.sporcle.com/games/g/states>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/travel-brochures-highlighting-setting-961.html?tab=1#tabs>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nationalparks.org/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.nps.gov/teachers/index.htm>



much farther is one place than another? Which place is the furthest from and closest to students' home location?

- Using the distances calculated from Mathematics activity no. 1, ask students to determine how many hours it would take to drive to the different places featured in the book. If you start at \_\_\_\_\_ and travel at 55 miles per hour (mph), how long will it take to arrive at \_\_\_\_\_?

### English Language Arts/Writing

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9)

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9)

- The poems in this book offer a good opportunity to teach about/review different poetic devices. Ask students to make a chart with a column for the following literary techniques: metaphor, personification, imagery, rhyme, repetition, and alliteration. Review or teach what each of these literary devices is and its purpose. On the chart, have students record an example of each device that they find among the *Amazing Places* poems. For definitions of the literary devices, check out [Literarydevices.net](http://literarydevices.net)<sup>6</sup> or the [Poetry Glossary](http://www.poets.org/poetry-glossary)<sup>7</sup> from Poets.org.
- Have students analyze the different poetic forms used throughout the book. What features make these poems, in fact, poems? How are the poems different from one another? What does the collection demonstrate about the diversity within the poetry format? In a paragraph, have students describe what makes a poem and how someone can identify they are reading a poem. In an additional paragraph, have students argue which poem they like the most based on its particular features.
- Have students work in pairs to select one of the contributing poets in the book to research further. What other books have this poet written? What types of topics and characters does this poet usually write about? What awards has the poet won for his or her work? From what or whom does the poet draw inspiration for his or her work? Based on their findings, what advice would students give to someone who wants to become a poet or writer? Help students get started with poet bios at [Poetry Foundation](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/).<sup>8</sup> For book suggestions, try:
  - Joseph Bruchac's [Crazy Horse's Vision](https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2380)<sup>9</sup> and [Jim Thorpe's Bright Path](https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2411)<sup>10</sup>
  - Alma Flor Ada's [Let Me Help! / ¡Quiero ayudar!](https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2801)<sup>11</sup>
  - Nikki Grimes' [Poems in the Attic](https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2881)<sup>12</sup>
- Ask students to write a free verse or concrete poem about a national landmark, park, museum, or a place in their local city that they believe is important to United States culture, history, or environment. Have students create or bring in pictures to accompany their poems and then present their poems to the class.
- Use the poems "Tree Speaks" and "Sandy Hook Lighthouse" as mentor texts to teach perspective and personification. Then have students write a poem from the perspective of an object in a historically or culturally significant place in the United States. What is important or special about this place? What do you see or do there? How would you describe it from this perspective?
- Just like objects in a museum, many different objects in our homes tell a story. Ask students to think of or find an object in their homes with an interesting history and write a poem about that object from their own point of view or from the object's perspective. How would you describe the object? What is its purpose? What is it

<sup>6</sup> <http://literarydevices.net/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/onteaching/poetry-glossary>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2380>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2411>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2801>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2881>

- used for? What significance does it have? Students can get inspiration from the poem "The Moccasins."
7. Have students write a persuasive letter to the editor, Lee Bennett Hopkins, recommending another place he could feature in the book. Students should make a case as to why this location should be in the book and how it is significant to United States history, culture, or environment.
  8. Ask students to imagine that United States national parks and historic landmarks were in danger of no longer being protected by the government. Have students select a national park or an historic landmark and write a persuasive letter to the president of the US about why it is important to preserve this location.
  9. Have students read *Poems in the Attic*<sup>13</sup> and *Water Rolls, Water Rises*,<sup>14</sup> which are poetry texts that feature different places around the world. As students reflect on each book, ask them to compare and contrast the forms of poetry and how poetry is used to tell a story. What form of poetry is used in each book? What is the central idea of each book? How do these books compare to *Amazing Places*?
  10. Have students read *Amazing Faces*,<sup>15</sup> a sixteen-poem anthology, also collected by editor Lee Bennett Hopkins, about universal emotions and feelings, and ask students to compare and contrast this book to *Amazing Places*. What is the central idea of each book? How are the books connected? What themes or ideas do they share? Have students create a written proposal for Lee Bennett Hopkins for another book in the "Amazing" series. What should the unifying topic be? Which writers should be included? What other features will the book need to include in order to fit into the Amazing series?

### Art/Media

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3)

1. Ask students to watch the *This is America* film from PBS about the history of the United States' national parks and complete the accompanying lesson.<sup>16</sup>
2. Take students on a virtual field trip to the amazing places featured in the book, and to other places, if you wish, using [Google Earth](https://www.google.com/earth/) or other virtual tours.<sup>17</sup> Check out [10 of the Best Virtual Field Trips](https://globaldigitalcitizen.org/ten-of-the-best-virtual-field-trips)<sup>18</sup> and [360 degree aerial panoramas](http://www.airpano.com/)<sup>19</sup> from around the world for more ideas. Have students compare and discuss what they see in these virtual tours with the illustrations by Chris Soentpiet and Christy Hale in *Amazing Faces*.
3. Have students sketch, draw, paint, or collect images of important landmarks and places in their home state and create a large state map to which the images can be affixed. Ask students to create a brief, informative caption for each image, describing the place and its significance.
4. Ask students to create a scrapbook of amazing places they have visited in their community, state, other states, and around the globe. Encourage students to include pictures, postcards, and other mementos they collected from their trips along with brief captions and descriptions. Have students share their scrapbooks with the class and explain why these places are amazing.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2881>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2865>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2713>

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.pbs.org/nationalparks/for-educators/lesson-plans/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.google.com/earth/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://globaldigitalcitizen.org/ten-of-the-best-virtual-field-trips>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.airpano.com/>

### Home-School Connection

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3)  
(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 2, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strand 7)

1. Plan a field trip to a nearby national park, landmark, museum, or other important historical or cultural location in the United States. Have students think about why this place is important to United States history, culture, or environment. Encourage students to write a poem about the place and include sensory words to capture how special it is.
2. Explore [Find Your Park](#) from the National Park Service and National Park Foundation to find events and activities happening at local national parks.<sup>20</sup> Encourage students to [volunteer](#) or support their local national parks through different opportunities.<sup>21</sup>
3. Encourage students to interview a parent, a guardian, or an adult mentor about important places around the United States. Have they visited any of the fifty states? If yes, what did they see or do in each state? What places in the country do they think are significant to United States history, culture, or environment? Why did they select these places?
4. Create a family night. Ask parents and guardians to join you with their children at a local poetry event to hear poetry. Poets.org offers the [Poetry Near You](#) database to find local events.<sup>22</sup> Alternatively, host a family night for students to read aloud their poetry about special places to their families.
5. With their families, encourage students to write to a poet—either one of the featured poets in *Amazing Places* or someone from another poetry collection. Poets.org features several resources to help students and families find poets. Check out “[Write a letter to a poet](#)”<sup>23</sup> and “[Dear Poet](#).”<sup>24</sup> In their letters, students may describe which poem they connected with the most and why, how poetry is meaningful in school today, and any questions they are curious about concerning the poet's life and work.
6. Assign students to select a poem of their choice to memorize and present in class. Allow students one to two weeks to practice at home before presenting the poem in school.

### ABOUT THE EDITOR

**Lee Bennett Hopkins**, acclaimed poet and writer, has created numerous award-winning poetry anthologies for young readers, including Lee & Low's *Amazing Faces*. He is the recipient of the 2009 NCTE Award for Excellence in Poetry for Children, which honors his body of work. Hopkins's books have won many accolades, and in 2015, a third award was established in his name: the Lee Bennett Hopkins SCBWI Poetry Award, to “recognize and encourage the publication of an excellent book of poetry or anthology for children and/or young adults.” He lives in Cape Coral, Florida. Visit him online at [leebennetthopkins.com](http://leebennetthopkins.com).

### ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATORS

**Chris Soentpiet** is the illustrator of several highly-praised picture books, including Lee & Low's *Amazing Faces*. He has won many awards for his work, including the NAACP Image Award, Original Art Show Gold Medal, ALA Notable Books, ILA Children's Book of the Year Award, and Texas Bluebonnet Award Masterlist. Soentpiet also promotes children's literature and the arts at schools, libraries, and conferences across the

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<sup>20</sup> <http://findyourpark.com/>

<sup>21</sup> <http://findyourpark.com/support>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poetry-near-you>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/write-letter-poet>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.poets.org/national-poetry-month/dear-poet>

country. He lives in Flushing, New York, with his wife and their two children. Visit him online at [soentpiet.com](http://soentpiet.com).

**Christy Hale** has illustrated many award-winning books for children, including two that she also wrote, *Dreaming Up*, an ALA Notable Book, and *The East-West House*, a *Kirkus Reviews* Best Book of the Year, both published by Lee & Low. As an educator, Hale, teaches an online course in writing picture books at the Academy of Art University in San Francisco. She lives with her family in Palo Alto, California. Visit her online at [christyhale.com](http://christyhale.com).

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### **RESOURCES ON THE WEB:**

Learn more about *Amazing Places* at <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2908>

### **ORDER INFORMATION:**

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