



## EDUCATOR GUIDE

### **VANISHED** True Tales of Mysterious Disappearances

by Elizabeth MacLeod

**GENRE:** middle grade non-fiction, history

**THEMES:** exploration & discovery, curiosities & wonders

**SUITABLE FOR:** Grade 4–7, Ages 9–12

**GUIDED READING LEVEL:** Fountas and Pinnell X

**LEXILE:** 1120L

**COMMON CORE STANDARDS:** SL.6.1,1a,1c,1d,3,4,5,6  
WHST.6-8.1,2,4,6,7,8,9,10  
L.6.3,4,4a,4c,4d,5,5a,5c,6  
RH.6-8.1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10

#### **SUMMARY:**

Gone—without a trace.

Elizabeth MacLeod presents six compelling stories about some of the world’s most bewildering disappearances. Readers will be captivated by such true tales as the Alcatraz prison break, where three dangerous convicts engineered a daring escape. Did they live to see freedom, or did they perish in the icy waters surrounding the prison? And will anyone ever know what happened to the captain and crew of the SS Mary Celeste? In 1872, it set out from New York for Genoa, Italy, but everyone on board disappeared for no apparent reason.

This irresistible combination of suspense and history also serves as an introduction to the advances in technology that may help discover what really happened in each unsolved mystery. Filled with color photographs, sidebars, and maps, *Vanished* is the perfect book for kids who love mind-boggling mysteries.

Please remember that the suggested questions and activities within this educator guide are meant to serve as a starting point. Educators are encouraged to select items from each part of the guided inquiry process that work best for their style of teaching and will help them meet their goals when covering the topics in this book. Activities and prompts should be tweaked and/or reformatted to best fit your students, context, and community to ensure equity and inclusion.

## Classroom Discussion Questions and Activities

1. With a friend, write a conversation as if you are two of the settlers of the Lost Colony of Roanoke watching Governor White's ship disappear. Talk about how you feel and what your worries are for the future. Present your dialogue to the class—wear costumes if you can.
2. Imagine you're the last living member of John Franklin's lost Arctic expedition. Write a letter describing how you feel about being alone and the fate of the rest of the crew.
3. Find out more about some of the technologies described at the end of each chapter in the book.
4. If you were making a film about the legendary ghost ship the Mary Celeste, what would the poster advertising the movie look like? Design a poster to encourage people to see your film.
5. The Amber Room was just one of the many pieces of art that was stolen or went missing during World War II. Find out more about other vanished pieces of art, or about art that has been returned to its original owners. Have two sides debate the following: Be it resolved that the fairest thing to do with stolen art that has unwittingly been purchased by someone else is to return it to the original owners.
6. Do you think the convicts who broke out of Alcatraz Prison survived their escape? Write a short play from the perspective that the convicts survived and how they were lost.
7. If you could meet any of the people mentioned in this book, who would you like to meet and why? What would you ask him or her?
8. Pretend you are one of the first television news reporters to arrive on the scene of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum art theft. File a report describing what has happened and what the police are doing to try to solve the crime.