

The Treasure of El Dorado

A Reading A-Z Level U Leveled Book
Word Count: 1,307

Connections

Writing

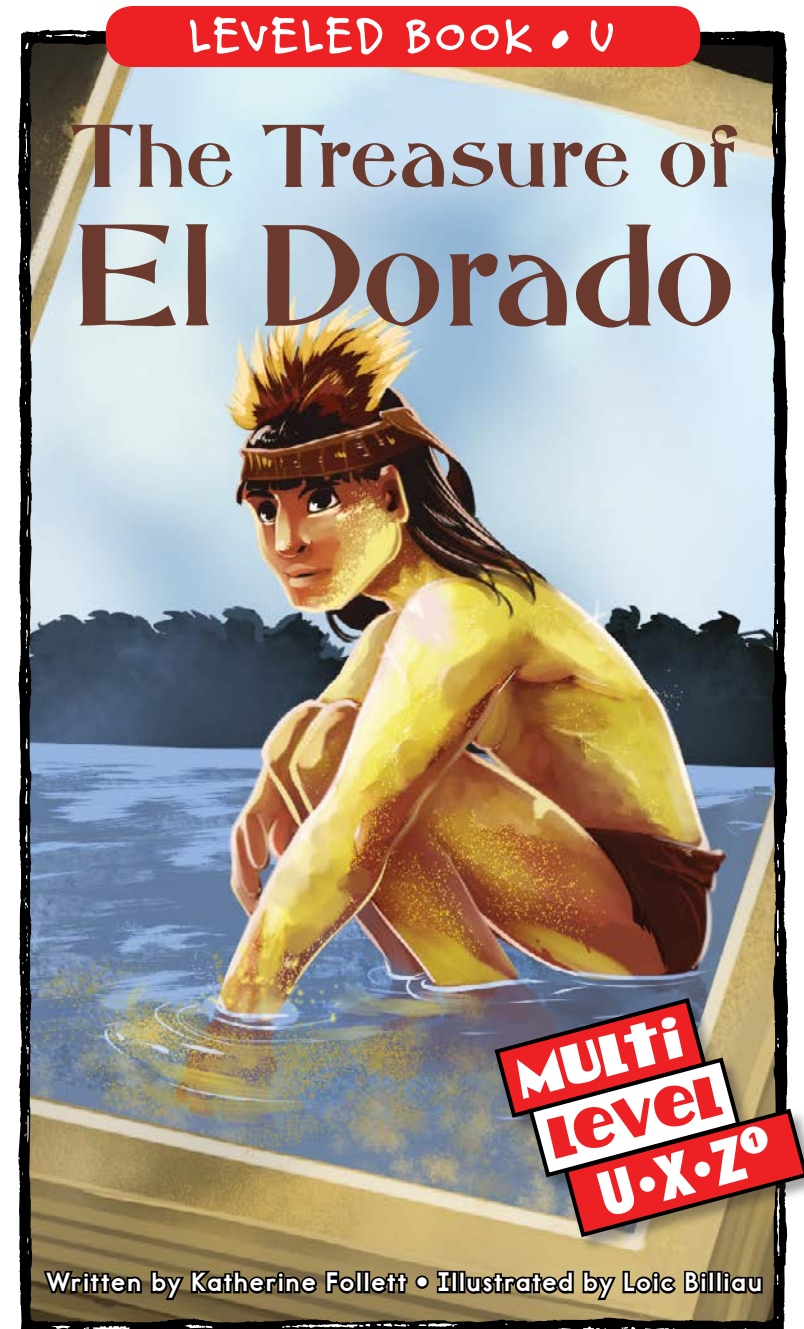
Write a blog entry describing a day in your life that you would like to remember.

Social Studies

Research to learn more about the Muisca people of ancient Colombia. Choose one element of their culture or traditions to present in a diorama to your class.

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The Treasure of El Dorado



Written by Katherine Follett
Illustrated by Loic Billiau

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Focus Question

Andre finds two kinds of treasure in this story. What are they?

Words to Know

| | |
|-------------|-------------|
| ancestors | Muisca |
| archaeology | research |
| artifacts | sacred |
| blog | solstice |
| drone | sonar |
| expedition | submersible |

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Level U Leveled Book
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Correlation

LEVEL U

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| Fountas & Pinnell | Q |
| Reading Recovery | 40 |
| DRA | 40 |



Andre's Personal Blog

Draft Saved June 13, 1:45 a.m.

This **blog** may seem a bit crazy, but I have to write this down—just in case. I'll be going on an **expedition** to Colombia in a few days to explore Lake Guatavita. We're looking for **artifacts** from the **Muisca** civilization.

That may sound like the crazy part, but it's not. Here it is: I have a treasure map that my grandpa used to show me as a kid. (If you're reading this, sorry for taking it, Abuelo!) There's just a sketchy drawing and this little guide that I translated below:



*On the brightest day, with the shortest night,
the full moon will rise in the keyhole of the crater.
Wade into the waters as far as you can, farther still,
and there you will find the treasure.*

I have reason to believe that this may lead to some clue or perhaps even to El Dorado.

You see, around three thousand years ago, long before the Spaniards came to South America, the native people loved beauty rather than wealth. So they gave all their gold to the goddess of Lake Guatavita. The king would cover his body with gold and jewels, and then rinse himself in the lake. Year after year, all the gold and gems would just settle to the bottom.

This real ritual inspired the legend of a golden city. Many explorers have tried to find it and failed.

My abuelo told me that his grandfather told him stories that contained the secret of where that gold lay. I hope to use Jacques, the **submersible** robot, to explore the lake using this map and find the gold while everyone else is none the wiser.

Andre's Video Blog

2017 Colombia Expedition

June 19, 10:12 a.m.

ANDRE [panting]: Hey guys, Andre here from the Muisca **research** expedition. We've arrived at the lake, and it's beautiful! The video doesn't do it justice.



The water sits in this bowl-shaped crater with a weird notch on one side, almost like a pitcher. It's not hard to understand why it was **sacred** to the Muisca people.

Video Update, June 20, 10:38 a.m.

ANDRE: As you can see, we're loading our rowboat. This box is a **sonar** unit. We'll use it to scan the lake bottom and note anything interesting. That lump there is Jamie, the other research assistant.

JAMIE: Man, I did not sleep well, so go easy. How is it freezing cold in June?

ANDRE: And that scorpion-shaped robot is Jacques Cousteau. He's a sonar- and video-equipped underwater **drone**. I hear he costs more than the entire expedition.

KAT: You'd be right. Jacques will be hanging out until the sonar shows where to send him.

ANDRE: That's our professor, Kat. This part of the process is pretty dull, rowing back and forth to cover the whole lake, so goodbye for now, unless we find something . . .

Video Update, June 20, 11:52 a.m.

KAT: Oh my . . . that's . . . that looks like cut stone. That is very unexpected. Can we mark this on the GPS for Jacques?



JAMIE: There's another one, lined up, like the walls of a building or something!

ANDRE: Looks like we've found something. Tune in tomorrow, when we launch Jacques!

Video Update, June 20, 11:12 p.m.

JAMIE: I can't believe the Muisca just dumped gold into the lake.

KAT: Living in this lovely place, they probably gave it away happily to thank their goddess.

JAMIE: I can see that, just being happy to live under the moon and stars like this.



ANDRE: Tomorrow night is the summer **solstice** and a full moon at the same time. That hasn't happened for almost seventy-five years.

KAT: Is that right?

ANDRE: Is it possible to take Jacques out and explore the site at night?

KAT: He can work in deep, dark water, but we wouldn't paddle out there now.

ANDRE: But he could . . .

KAT: Sure, I suppose. Don't get any ideas, though.

ANDRE: No way.

Video Update, June 21, 5:35 p.m.

KAT: Five meters . . . two meters . . . okay, boys, wrestle him over!

JAMIE: Careful not to hit the side of the boat.

KAT: Lights . . . and we have video feed . . . gosh, this water is so cloudy! Wait, I see something.

It's a jaguar carving . . . and definitely stone!
My goodness . . .

[Thunder claps.]

ANDRE: Are you kidding? Today it decides to storm?

KAT: We should get off the water. I'm bringing Jacques up, boys, so get ready to grab him.



JAMIE: Here comes the wind! Okay—ready, Andre? On three—one, two, LIFT!

KAT: Grab those oars, Andre—row, row!

ANDRE: It looks like someone's shooting into the water. OW!

KAT: It's hail! Jamie, cover the gear—Andre, row, row!

ANDRE: Ow, I'm rowing! I'm—

Audio Update, June 21, 6:03 p.m.

[Sound of rain]

ANDRE: Sorry for the bad sound. I'm in my tent, and it's still raining.

Things are a mess here. There's a hole in the boat, and our laptops are totally soaked. Obviously, my camera is shot since it's only recording audio. Jacques may be broken, though he wouldn't be much use without a boat anyway.

People are saying the trip is over.

It's still cloudy, so I won't be able to see the moonrise anyway. Unbelievable . . . I've been dreaming of this since I was ten, and the whole thing gets ruined by the stupid weather.

Maybe it's for the best. Maybe I should give up on the idea of finding El Dorado.

Video Update: June 21, 8:15 p.m.

ANDRE: I got the camera working, and the rain stopped.

Check that out! The moon is lined up in that V-shaped notch in the crater. "In the keyhole of the crater; wade into the waters as far as you can, farther still." Let's do this.



I'm going to set you down on this rock. It's dark, so I'll try to let you know what's happening.

[Splashing water]

I'm in. It's freezing! Going under.

[Splashing water]



So dark down there; I had to feel around. This box was all I could find . . .

It's . . . it's a cheap toy! Just an old jaguar figurine. There's a metal tube in its mouth. It has a screw cap—don't think the Muisca had those.

There's a note inside. It's in Spanish . . . "You have found . . . my greatest . . . treasure . . . of my **ancestors** . . . the symbol . . . from my grandfather, of the Muisca people. On the day June 22, 1954, Mario Fernandez."

Abuelo . . . my grandpa. He was just a kid who buried his "treasure," and I was just a kid when he told me, so I believed him.

El Dorado, indeed.



Video Update, June 29, 4:50 p.m.

ANDRE: We're heading up the walk to my abuelo's house. I figured since you all joined me in finding his "greatest treasure," you might as well see it returned to him.

[Opens door]

Hola, Abuelo? You in the living room?

ABUELO: Who's hiding behind that camera?
Andre, my boy!

ANDRE: No, no—don't get up. I brought you something. I meant to tell you before I left, but my **archaeology** class went to Colombia—

ABUELO: Really? You went to my home!

ANDRE: We were looking for Muisca artifacts, but we ran into some bad weather, so this was all I brought back. We found a big stone jaguar. My professor is going back next year. Let me help you with that bubble wrap. I covered it in tape so it wouldn't break on the trip home.

Don't cry, Abuelo.

ABUELO: How did you ever . . .?! My padre passed this down from his padre, from many generations back. It's jaguar bone, and gold dust from the mountains.

ANDRE: Wait, it's real?

ABUELO: Most of the gold is gone, but as a child it was my treasure—a reminder of how rich our people once were. I couldn't bear to take her from her home when I came to the United States. So I sank her, for Guatavita, like our ancestors did. I thought I would go back, but I never got the chance.

I want you to have it.

ANDRE: You should keep it, Grandpa. It's your treasure.

ABUELO: Our treasure. I pass her to you.



Glossary

| | |
|------------------------------------|--|
| ancestors (<i>n.</i>) | family members from long ago (p. 13) |
| archaeology (<i>n.</i>) | the study of the remains of ancient cultures (p. 14) |
| artifacts (<i>n.</i>) | objects made or used by humans long ago (p. 3) |
| blog (<i>n.</i>) | a website on which someone writes about his or her thoughts, opinions, or experiences (p. 3) |
| drone (<i>n.</i>) | an unmanned aircraft or ship that is operated remotely (p. 6) |
| expedition (<i>n.</i>) | a journey or voyage taken for a specific purpose (p. 3) |
| Muisca (<i>n.</i>) | South American Indians, also known as Chibcha, who lived in the highlands of modern-day Colombia (p. 3) |
| research (<i>n.</i>) | a detailed study of a subject, especially to discover new information or to find facts (p. 5) |
| sacred (<i>adj.</i>) | of or relating to a god, religion, or spiritual purpose; holy (p. 6) |
| solstice (<i>n.</i>) | either of the two times of the year when the Sun is farthest from the equator (p. 8) |
| sonar (<i>n.</i>) | a system that sends high-frequency sound waves through water and registers the vibrations bounced back by an object (p. 6) |
| submersible (<i>adj.</i>) | designed for use underwater (p. 5) |