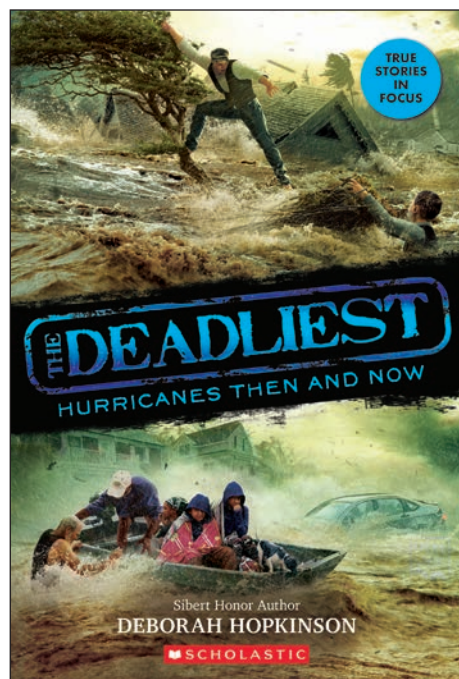
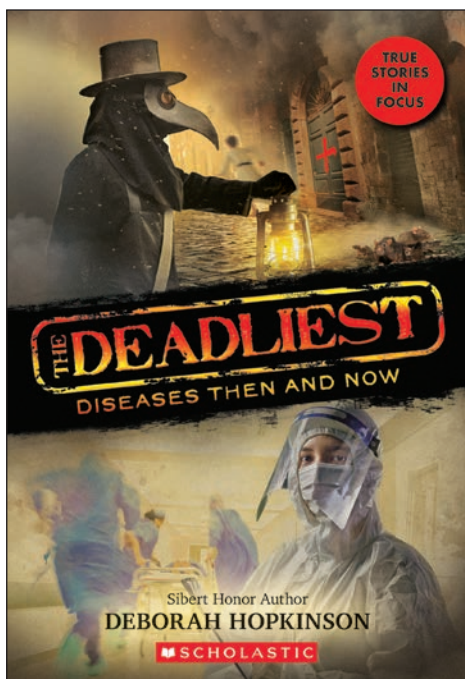


Exploring Nonfiction

WITH

The Deadliest Series

by Sibert Honor Author **Deborah Hopkinson**



Global pandemics, powerful hurricanes, destructive fires—disasters like these have plagued humankind throughout history. In this fast-paced, exciting series for young readers, acclaimed Sibert Honor author Deborah Hopkinson brings voices and lessons from the past to life to expand our knowledge about deadly events then and now—and to explore how we can be better prepared to respond to challenges like disease spread and climate change in the 21st century.

Dear Reader,

Greetings, history detective! I'm Deborah Hopkinson, author of The Deadliest series. Thank you so much for being an awesome reader.

Readers of the Deadliest books are special. They're curious kids, just like you, who love to dig up facts, who wonder about the past, and who are eager to solve big problems in the future.

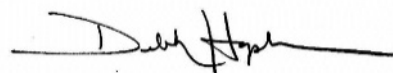
Deadliest readers can imagine living in 1347 when plague struck Europe; they want to understand what it was like to hide from terrifying winds during the Galveston hurricane in 1900; they can imagine fleeing the deadly fire in Peshtigo in 1871.

I'm guessing you're also a reader who likes to look in the back of books. And you're in for treat, because along with the usual features, such as a glossary and index, each Deadliest title includes a special writing focus.

Are you ready for the Deadliest writing challenge? Why not try your hand at all three?

- **Deadliest Diseases Then and Now** has tips for becoming a chronicler, like medieval writers whose words tell us about the past.
- **Deadliest Hurricanes Then and Now** explains how to do an oral history with a friend or family member, to make sure their story isn't lost.
- **Deadliest Fires Then and Now** includes ideas for conducting an interview and being a student reporter.

So, please, keep on writing—AND reading!



Deborah Wiles

Deborah Hopkinson is the author of over 60 books, including NCTE Orbis Pictus Honor and Jane Addams Honor Book *Shutting Out the Sky*; Carter G. Woodson Honor Book *Up Before Daybreak*; Sibert Honor Book and YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction Finalist *Titanic: Voices from the Disaster*; Sydney Taylor Notable Book and Orbis Pictus Recommended title *Courage & Defiance*; *Dive! World War II Stories of Sailors & Submarines in the Pacific*; *D-Day: The World War II Invasion that Changed History*; Sydney Taylor Notable Book *We Had to Be Brave: Escaping the Nazis on the Kindertransport*; and *We Must Not Forget: Holocaust Stories of Survival and Resistance*. Deborah lives with her family near Portland, Oregon.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



THE DEADLIEST: Diseases Then and Now

- Compare and contrast two diseases described in the book: one from the past and one from the present day. How are the diseases spread? What are their symptoms? How are the infected treated?
- Disease detectives have access to the news and medical research connected to current diseases and can use this information to understand the nature of the disease. How can they understand illnesses of long ago, such as the Great Mortality? What types of things would be considered primary sources for research into diseases from ages past?
- Though germ theory was not fully accepted until the late 1800s, even during the Great Mortality of the 14th century people understood that, somehow, diseases spread. Now, centuries later, we are still discovering new information about how plague moved through the medieval world. Give examples to support the statement, “Diseases go where people go.”
- Lack of scientific knowledge and fear left room for prejudice to creep in when diseases like plague spread. Can you point to incidences where prejudice caused some people to turn against others? Why do you think this happened? Is it still happening in our time?
- Outbreaks of the flu, malaria, polio, cholera, and the plague have challenged many populations over time. Though each deadly disease has left its scars on humankind, some positive outcomes have resulted as well. Discuss how the work of epidemiology pioneers like Dr. John Snow in 19th century England and Dr. Wu Lien-teh in 20th century Manchuria helped the world understand the COVID-19 pandemic of the 21st century.
- Your family or friends are having a discussion about the COVID-19 pandemic. What facts, perspectives, and historical evidence from this book can you bring to the conversation?



THE DEADLIEST: Hurricanes Then and Now

- This book begins with Harry Maxon’s experience during the hurricane in Galveston, Texas, in 1900. Why do you think that the author chose to begin the story of the devastating hurricane in Galveston with a first-hand account of the disaster?
- Since the hurricane in Galveston happened over one hundred years ago, the author had to rely on news articles and first-hand accounts of the disaster. Think about whose story tends to be told in history and the reasons behind the selection of these stories. What hurdles did the author face in finding the stories of survivors?
- Natural disasters know no boundaries among cities, states, and countries. What factors prevented hurricane warnings from reaching the people of Galveston?

- There are always those who arrive after a disaster to help those in need. Compare the support offered to the people of Galveston after the hurricane in 1900 to the support that is in place today to help people trying to rebuild after a natural disaster.
- In addition to the hurricane itself, storm surges put many of the people of Galveston in extreme danger. Describe the different strategies survivors used to stay alive during the hurricane. What factors influenced the survival strategies people chose?
- What three facts or stories about hurricanes resonated most with you from this book?



THE DEADLIEST: Fires Then and Now

- The relationship between people and the land can influence the frequency and intensity of natural disasters. Compare how Native Americans and white settlers related to and cared for forests. How did these different ways of looking at forests and the natural world affect what happened in Peshtigo, Wisconsin, in 1871? How have they affected fire suppression policies since then?
- Bessie Bradwell, Fannie Belle Becker, and Alexander Frear all provided first-hand accounts of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. What do these primary sources reveal about the city of Chicago and how its citizens were affected by the fire?
- In retrospect, the effects of many natural disasters could have been lessened or avoided through better safety practices. What role did attention to safety protocols play in many of the fires described in the book?
- How did prejudice and discrimination affect how firefighters and rescuers responded to fires in some cities, factories, and schools?
- Climate change plays a critical role in fires in the twenty-first century. Describe the chain of factors that contribute to more forest fires and that accompany an increase in population. Brainstorm ways in which people could mitigate the influence of climate change on the number and the intensity of fires.
- Select one fact, story, or event in this book that sparked your curiosity. How will you go about learning more about it?

A Word about Source Notes from Deborah Hopkinson

“Source notes may seem boring—but they’re actually really cool. They are a bit like the evidence that a detective collects to make a case. Source notes tell us where an author got a fact or a quotation. For instance, a source note should let us know if the quotation was from a letter, a book, a newspaper article, or an oral history.”

— *The Deadliest: Diseases Then and Now*

Source Notes Sleuthing

Find the Source Notes section in one of the books in *The Deadliest* series. Pick an entry and use the Bibliography to determine the original source. Find that book or article in the library or online and look at the page number referenced in the Source Note. Can you find the exact quotation that Deborah Hopkinson used in her book?



NAVIGATING THE INDEX

Understanding the various features of a nonfiction book is key to accessing all of the information contained in the text. An index, generally found at the end of the book, contains an alphabetical list of the names, main subjects, and events included in the book, along with the page number/s where they appear. Practice using an index with these two exercises:

Where Can I Find Information About . . .

Thumb through chapters 1–12 in *The Deadliest: Diseases Then and Now* and find eight key words printed in bold font within the paragraphs. Next, look up these key words in the index and record all of the page numbers listed for each one. How does having an index help you understand more about a specific topic or subject?

Key Word	Pages in text related to key word	Key Word	Pages in text related to key word
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Building Blocks for an Informative Report

Use the index to plan an informative report about Tuberculosis. The index will show every page in the book that references the topic, some of which may or may not be useful in a report. Find Tuberculosis in the index of *The Deadliest: Diseases Then and Now* and read every page referenced. Below, note key facts or information you might use in a report about this disease and write the page number where you found each fact.

page: _____ key fact: _____

page: _____ key fact: _____

page: _____ key fact: _____

page: _____ key fact: _____

page: _____ key fact: _____



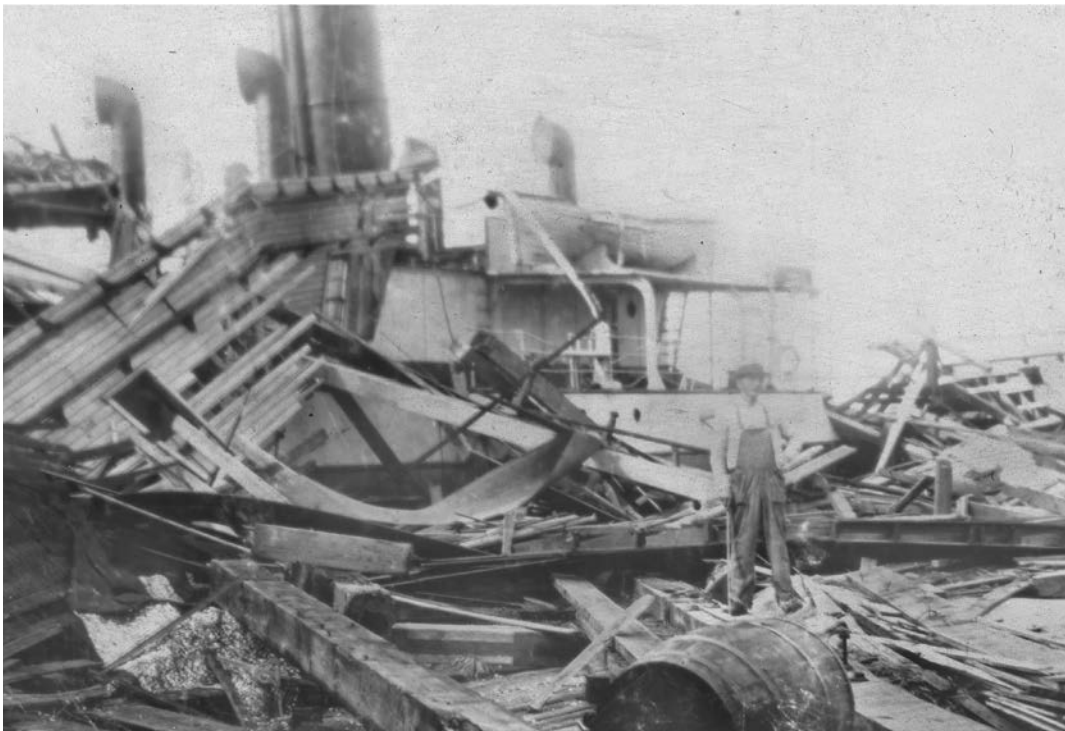
CONSTRUCTING A TIMELINE

The order in which events happen during an epidemic or disaster is important to help us understand how we responded in the past and how we might better face these challenges in the future. Search through *The Deadliest: Hurricanes Then and Now* to find the key events of the Galveston Hurricane in 1900. Using a long strip of paper, such as a section of an adding machine paper roll, arrange descriptions of these events in chronological order by date. Use colored pencils or markers to embellish your timeline of the Galveston hurricane with illustrations and pops of color.



PHOTOS AND CAPTIONS

Photographs and captions are key components of nonfiction texts. Study this photo and caption from *The Deadliest: Hurricanes Then and Now*.



A SURVIVOR AMID THE WRECKAGE. ENTIRE BLOCKS ON THE GULF SIDE OF GALVESTON WERE DESTROYED. MOST BUILDINGS WERE DAMAGED, LEAVING THOUSANDS HOMELESS.

Photo © National Archives

What makes this photo powerful? How does it make you feel? This event happened a long time ago, before TV, when newspapers were the main source of news. Do you think this picture helped other Americans imagine the disaster and act to help? Discuss the role that captions play in relaying information. Repeat this exercise with photographs from other books in *The Deadliest* series, with newspaper and magazine photos, and with photos from other nonfiction books.



READING (And Thinking) LIKE A HISTORIAN

Reading nonfiction is a great way to practice reading and thinking like a historian. Historians are detectives who ask questions about the past. They evaluate evidence and accounts to get the fullest, most reliable picture of events. Historians use special reading skills you can practice too. These same techniques can also help you get more accurate information material on the Internet. Here are the four skills:

SOURCING This means asking, “What is the source?” When you’re reading someone’s account of the past, ask who wrote it and why. What was the author’s perspective? When and where was it written? Is this source reliable? Where did the author get their information?

CONTEXTUALIZATION Looking at the context reminds us to think about when and where documents were created and how this affects them. What was different about that time? We can also ask: “Whose stories are missing and why?”

CORROBORATION Corroboration is a reminder to examine more than one account to try to determine reliability. For example, do all accounts agree? If not, why? What documents might be the most reliable and why? Why might someone write something unreliable?

CLOSE READING When we read closely, we dig in like detectives examining a witness. We can ask: “What evidence does the author use? What claims are being made? What does this account tell us about the person who wrote it and their perspective?”

Historical Thinking Practice

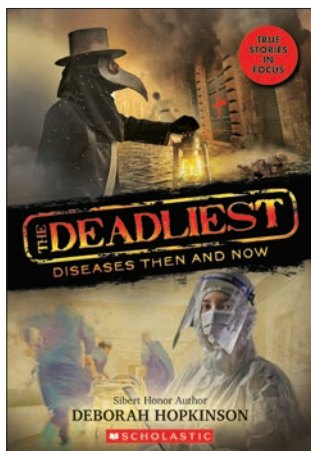
- Using sourcing and corroboration, explain why we shouldn’t take medieval chronicler Gabriele de’ Mussi’s account of plague in Caffa as the truth. (*Deadliest Diseases*)
- Using contextualization, discuss why it’s important that history include the perspectives of Black residents of Galveston (*Deadliest Hurricanes*) and the accounts of residents of Chinatown (*Deadliest Fires*).

NOTE TO EDUCATORS: To find free information, classroom posters, and lesson plans for historical thinking and civic online reasoning, please visit the award-winning Stanford History Education Group at <https://sheg.stanford.edu/>.

The Deadliest Series

Ages 7–10; Grades 2–5

by Sibert Honor Author **Deborah Hopkinson**



THE DEADLIEST: Diseases Then and Now

PAPERBACK: 9781338360202 • \$7.99 HARDCOVER: 9781338360202 • \$25.99
EBOOK: 9781338360219 • \$17.99

As we learn more about COVID-19, we may be curious about pandemics of the past. Knowing how humans fought diseases long ago may help us face those of today. This fast-paced, wide-ranging story is filled with more than 50 period photographs and illustrations, charts, facts, and pull-out boxes for eager nonfiction readers.

“Although simple and reassuring enough for elementary readers, this effort never shirks grim details or skips over important information.”

—KIRKUS REVIEWS

“A timely take on historical pandemics.” —PUBLISHERS WEEKLY



THE DEADLIEST: Hurricanes Then and Now

PAPERBACK: 9781338360196 • \$7.99 HARDCOVER: 9781338360172 • \$25.99
EBOOK: 9781338360189 • \$17.99

As a hurricane gathered in the Caribbean, blue skies covered Galveston, Texas. Scientists knew a storm was coming, but none were able to prepare Galveston for the force of the hurricane that hit on September 8, 1900. Young readers will be fascinated by the eye-witness accounts and extraordinary acts of bravery as this deadly disaster unfolds in great detail.

★ “A memorable account of a disastrous event.” —BOOKLIST, starred review

★ “The superlative backmatter includes a glossary, entertaining activities, oral history prompts, and additional resources for learning about hurricanes.” —KIRKUS REVIEWS, starred review



THE DEADLIEST: Fires Then and Now

PAPERBACK: 9781338360257 • \$7.99 HARDCOVER: 9781338360233 • \$25.99
EBOOK: 9781338360240 • \$17.99

Through the eyes of scientists, witnesses, and survivors of terrible fires alike, Sibert Honor author Deborah Hopkinson brings the horrific history of deadly fires to life, tracing a line from the Peshtigo and Great Chicago fires of 1871 to the wildfires raging in the western United States today.



LOVE NONFICTION? WANT MORE REAL-LIFE ADVENTURES AND HISTORY?

Scholastic Focus brings the best of narrative nonfiction to middle grade and young adult readers. Featuring the work of both established authors and new talents, the books in this imprint are beautifully written, carefully researched, and thoughtfully designed to help young readers explore and understand the world and their place in it. Check out other Scholastic Focus titles for exciting nonfiction about World War II, mountain climbing, compelling memoirs, and more here: [Scholastic.com/Focus](https://www.scholastic.com/Focus)

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