SyncBlasts™ provides reading and writing assignments that present science and current event topics relevant to students’ lives and their world. Providing a variety of rich multimedia—including Preview Videos, connections to case studies, Explainer Videos, and The Point News Show—SyncBlasts is a smart way to engage students. New reading and writing assignments are published weekly. Each SyncBlast challenges students to:

✔ Build vital research, writing, and critical thinking skills while providing an easy entry point for peer review.

✔ Develop informed opinions on high-interest topics of cultural significance.

✔ Express their opinions succinctly, in a familiar format.

✔ Participate in thoughtful discussions with an authentic audience of peers.

Supporting student inquiry and deep discussions, SyncBlasts includes videos with peers modeling academic conversations about case studies, research, and current events.
HOW IT WORKS

Teachers visit content channels to select and assign SyncBlasts—short reading and writing assignments that inspire students to think critically about high-interest topics. Students explore a robust platform of multimedia content to learn about the topic and then complete assignments within our engaging social media-like platform.

PREVIEW VIDEOS
Designed like movie trailers, Preview videos set the stage and provide background information for what is to come. Use these videos as an introduction to the subject and revisit for a big-picture view.

EXPLAINER VIDEOS
Short, fact-based videos focus on explaining an idea in a simple and compelling manner. Clear, concise language is paired with visuals, quickly teaching a concept prior to a deeper dive or discussion.

THE POINT NEWS SHOW
These videos get to the point with news and global issues. Students watch and become engaged with newscasts produced with peer-aged students.

CASE STUDIES
Many SyncBlasts are centered on a particular event, discovery, or issue and include research links to news, articles, and scientific studies that help students make connections between science and everyday life.
ANATOMY OF A BLAST

SyncBlast topics include supporting background articles written at three Lexile®-levels that make content accessible to all learners. The content is standards-aligned with content channels growing regularly with new articles and media.
One million animal and plant species are at imminent risk of extinction due to humankind’s relentless pursuit of economic growth. Scientists said this on May 6, 2019 in a report on the impact of modern civilization on the natural world.

Scientists made appealed to governments and businesses worldwide to confront “vested Interests. These Interests are blocking reforms in farming, energy and mining. The reforms are needed to save the Earth’s ecosystems.

“If we want to leave a world for our children and grandchildren that has not been destroyed by human activity, we need to act now,” said Robert Watson. Watson chaired the study, which was produced by the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). IPBES groups 130 countries, including the United States, Russia and China.

“If we do not act now, many of the million threatened species will become as extinct as the dodo on this tie.” Watson told a news conference in Paris. He gestured to his tie, which bore a design of the flightless bird.

The report found that up to one million of Earth’s estimated eight million plant, insect and animal species are at risk of extinction, many within decades.
Teachers can visit the Science Channels to view SyncBlast topics relevant to their classroom study. New content is added regularly throughout the lifetime of your subscription.
MIDDLE SCHOOL SCIENCE
SYNCBLAST ARTICLES

BREAKING THE SILENCE
How did Rachel Carson start an environmental revolution?

In the early 1960s, thick smoke rose from the stacks of the American chemical company DuPont. A young woman named Rachel Carson was working in the company’s laboratory, examining the effects of a new chemical called DDT. The National Wildlife Federation was concerned about DDT’s impact on wildlife, and Ms. Carson was hired to investigate its effects on the environment.

DDT was used widely in the United States and abroad to control insects and diseases. However, it was found to be toxic to birds and other wildlife. The use of DDT was linked to the decline of bird populations and other environmental problems.

Rachel Carson’s book "Silent Spring" published in 1962, which described the hazards of DDT and other pesticides, helped raise public awareness of environmental issues. The book was a bestseller and helped launch the modern environmental movement.

SCIENCE ON THE RUNWAY
How can technology change the kinds of clothes we wear?

A woman walks down a runway, wearing a sleek, dark suit that looks like something you’d see in a movie. The fabric changes color as she moves, providing a dramatic effect. The “smart” fabric is made from carbon nanotubes, which change color in response to temperature changes.

This technology is being explored by researchers at MIT, who are using it to create materials that can change color in response to temperature changes. This could have applications in fashion, environmental monitoring, and even space travel.

NUMBER CRUNCH

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McGraw-Hill
HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE
SYNCBLAST ARTICLES

SUMMER IN THE CITY
How can cities change their local environments?

The "urban heat island effect" occurs when concrete, roads, and buildings absorb and release heat to the atmosphere, causing temperatures in urban areas to be higher than in nearby rural areas.

The heat island effect can be exacerbated by human activities, such as the construction of buildings and the use of air conditioning.

THE HUMAN COMPUTER
What did Katherine Johnson continue to do after leaving NASA?

Katherine Johnson was an American mathematician who worked at NASA in the 1960s. She was responsible for calculating the trajectories of the Apollo missions, which were used to land humans on the moon.

Johnson's work was critical to the success of the Apollo missions, and she played a key role in bringing women and African Americans into the field of space exploration.

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