

NEWS BREAK

Article: **It's raining boxes: Amazon drones overwhelm Texas suburb**

Section: **BUSINESS, C7**

Sunday's News Break selects an article from **Sunday, September 27, 2026**, of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

Feel free to adapt this lesson for your students. For instance, some educators may assign this as a homework task, while others might facilitate the reading and discussion of questions within small groups or larger class discussions.

****Please take a moment to review all NIE content before classroom use to ensure it is suitable for your students.****

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

- Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

- Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Learning Objectives:

After reading the article, students will analyze how Amazon's drone delivery program is changing the way packages are delivered and how this technology could affect communities. Students will be able to explain how Amazon's delivery drones work, why the company is expanding the program, and the potential benefits of faster and more convenient deliveries. Students will evaluate the concerns surrounding widespread drone use, including noise, privacy, safety, airspace, and the impact on neighborhoods, and explain how communities, businesses, and government agencies may need to balance new technology with residents' quality of life.

Pre-Reading Discussion:



- What do you think the article will be about, using this picture?
- Are there any clues? What can you infer?

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted word means using context clues? A **context clue** is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the meaning of the word.

“Richardson city officials gave Amazon zoning approval to start the drone delivery service in December as part of the company’s **nascent** Prime Air program.”

Nascent Guess:

Nascent Definition:

Comprehension Questions:

1. The sound came out of nowhere. It began as an unnerving high-pitched hum, like a _____ flying around a dark room at bedtime, and it grew louder as it drew closer.
2. What was the drone’s mission: delivering an _____ package.
3. It could have been bound for anywhere within a _____-mile radius of takeoff.

4. Richardson city officials gave Amazon _____ to start the drone delivery service in December as part of the company's nascent Prime Air program.
5. It promises customers tens of thousands of items — nail trimmers for pets, ankle bracelets, handcrafted, razor-tipped bread lames for scoring sourdough — in as little as _____ minutes. The delivery could be free or cost up to \$4.99.
6. What agency governs U.S. airspace and gave Amazon clearance to fly its drones?
7. Last month, Amazon announced that Prime Air deliveries would expand to _____ towns and cities by the end of the year.
8. "What's happening in Richardson is about to happen all over the country, and people are finally going to believe us that having all these drones flying around is actually a big, big problem," said Scott Bratcher, who is the president of his homeowner's association in a Richardson neighborhood that residents have called a _____.

Class Discussion Questions:

- What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?
- At first, I thought _____, but now I think _____?

How would you feel about drone deliveries in your community and neighborhood? Would the noise bother you and your family? Why or why not?

Would the benefits of quick deliveries outweigh your right to privacy and increased noise levels? Could allowing this in your community be a slippery slope? Why or why not?

Deeper-Dive "Connect & Explain" Comprehension Questions for Small Groups, Entire Classes or Journal Entries and/or Essay Prompts for Extended Enrichment:

1. The article explains that Amazon's drone delivery program can deliver packages within about 30 minutes and within a 7½-mile radius of its distribution center. How could this technology change the way people shop and receive everyday items?
2. Amazon says that its drones will fly at an average height of about 225 feet, while the FAA allows drones to fly as high as 400 feet. Why might the height of drone flight be important to people living in neighborhoods where the drones operate?
3. Some Richardson residents say that dozens of drones fly over their homes each day and describe the noise as being similar to a lawn mower. Why might the number and frequency of drones be just as important as the volume of each individual drone?

4. The article presents different perspectives on Amazon's drone program. Amazon says that customer response has been "overwhelmingly positive," while some Richardson residents say the drones have negatively affected their neighborhoods. Why might different groups of people have such different opinions about the same technology?
5. Privacy is one of the concerns raised by Richardson residents because Amazon's drones use cameras and sensors for navigation. Amazon says that the images are stored on encrypted drives and are used for safety and customer service. What questions should communities and companies consider when technology collects images or information while operating over private property?
6. The article describes several examples of drone problems, including a package landing in a pool, a drone crashing near a sidewalk, and another drone sitting on a grassy median. Why is reliability important when companies introduce new technology into everyday communities?
7. Richardson already has other forms of technology, including an AI data center and cameras that read license plates and track vehicles. How does the addition of delivery drones contribute to the article's larger idea about how technology is changing everyday life in the community?
8. The FAA is responsible for regulating U.S. airspace, while local governments can establish rules for businesses operating within their communities. Why might it be difficult to decide which rules should apply to drone deliveries, and how might federal and local responsibilities overlap?
9. The article explains that Amazon is expanding Prime Air to 500 towns and cities by the end of the year, while the FAA predicts that the number of drones could grow significantly by 2030. What challenges could communities face if drone use becomes much more common?
10. Some Richardson residents have created drone trackers and attended protests, while others have contacted officials in cities where Amazon plans to expand. What actions are these residents taking to make their concerns heard, and why might community involvement be important when new technology is introduced?

Extended Essay Prompts

- The article describes Amazon's drone delivery program as a technological innovation that offers faster and more convenient deliveries but also creates concerns for some communities. Examine the potential benefits and challenges of drone delivery. In your essay, discuss convenience, noise, privacy, safety, community impact, and the role of government regulation.
- The article presents different perspectives on the growing use of delivery drones. Why might a technology that is considered convenient and innovative by some people be considered disruptive by others? In your

essay, compare the perspectives of Amazon, customers who use drone delivery, and Richardson residents who live near the flight paths.

- The article raises questions about privacy because Amazon's drones use cameras and sensors while flying over neighborhoods. How should society balance the benefits of new technology with concerns about privacy? In your essay, examine the reasons companies use cameras and sensors, the concerns raised by residents, and the importance of creating rules for emerging technologies.
- The article suggests that delivery drones may be only the beginning of a larger transformation in transportation, with air taxis already being tested in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. How could the growth of airborne transportation affect communities in the future? In your essay, discuss potential changes to convenience, jobs, transportation, noise, privacy, safety, and the way people interact with their neighborhoods.

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