

POPPET FINDS A HOME

Classroom Study Guide

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Introduction

Poppet Finds a Home is an excellent resource for teaching the basic concepts of responsible pet ownership to a variety of ages and in a variety of classrooms. It can also be used as a tool for teaching a language arts/creative writing unit that fosters the skills and tools needed to produce quality writing in the elementary classroom.

Listed below are concepts that can be presented to all age groups as a part of an animal/pet ownership themed unit.

1. Teaching responsible choices when confronted with the circumstance of an unwanted, lost or abandon pet.
2. Awareness of Humane Associations, their mission and purpose.
3. The delight in adopting a variety of pets from a shelter.
4. Discussion to understand what a responsible pet owner provides to a pet for the duration of its life.
5. Creating opportunities to organize fund raising for a non profit organization.
6. Compare and contrast pure breed dogs and mixed breed dogs.
7. Discuss all the different animals available to families as pets.
8. Invite representative of local Humane Association to visit your classroom.
** For older students only*
9. Discuss puppy mills and the issues that surround the breeding conditions that exist there. What constitutes a responsible breeder?

Poppet Finds a Home can also be used in developing a creative writing unit using personification. * See Extend Learning

Lesson One

Activate Prior Knowledge

1. Gather students together and explain they will be discussing the topic of responsible pet ownership. Begin by asking the children how many of them have pets. Spend time allowing each child to share what he or she has as a pet.
2. Ask students how they came to own their pet. Write their responses on the board. Examples; it was given to me, we bought it at a pet store, we found it along side the road, it wandered into our yard, we went to the home of the breeder, we went to a local humane association.
3. Divide students into groups. Ask the groups to discuss what they would do if they either had a pet they didn't want any longer or if they found an unwanted or lost pet. After five minutes, each group will share their ideas with the class while the teacher writes their thoughts on the board. Students should begin to see categories of actions they could take as the responses are collected. Identify categories and choose the top three that demonstrate the best ways to responsibly deal with helping the animal.
4. Discuss the findings of the class, steering the conversation towards the importance of responsible choices and the humane treatment of animals.

ASSIGNMENT

List four things a person must do to be a responsible pet owner.

Example of possible ideas:

1. provide food
2. provide water
3. take them to the veterinarian
4. provide shelter
5. give them attention and love
6. daily exercise
7. keep them and their environment clean

Lesson Two

1. Have students share what they wrote as the four important things necessary for being a responsible pet owner. Write ideas on board and make tally marks under each idea that is repeated.

2. Add tally marks and write the top four ideas on the board. Discuss.

3. Tell the students you will be reading the story Poppet Finds a Home which is based on the true story of a litter of abandoned puppies.

4. Review vocabulary before reading to the class.

On the board write:

-blaring

-gritty

-mutter

-flutter

-calloused

-scurried

-careen

-adopted

6. Allow students to share ideas for the meaning of each word.

Teacher will guide students towards the correct definition and write it next to each term.

** Students can also work in groups to brainstorm and define the words and then come together as a class to discover the correct definitions.*

7. Prior to reading the story-

-Ask students to listen for vocabulary words in the story.

-Ask the students to listen for examples of irresponsible pet ownership as well as examples of responsible pet ownership.

POPPET FINDS A HOME
VOCABULARY REVIEW

Name _____

Draw a line to the correct definition.

- | | |
|-----------|--|
| blaring | to move in quick, irregular motions |
| gritty | to tip to one side while going forward |
| mutter | a very loud sound |
| flutter | tiny bits of dirt or sand |
| calloused | speaking in low quiet tones, mumbling |
| scurry | patches of hard dry skin |
| careen | take into your home and family |
| adopted | to move or run quickly |

Choose two vocabulary words. Write a complete sentences for each word you chose using the word correctly.

1. _____

2. _____

Lesson Three

1. Review story with students. Ask how the children felt about Poppet's journey. Remind them it was based on a true story and that there are many unwanted pets that benefit from the help of local humane associations today.

2. Discuss and clarify what a humane association or shelter is. Ask how many of the students have been to a shelter and what their experiences were.

* Arrange to have a representative from a local shelter come and give a talk to the class about the mission and purpose of humane associations.

ASSIGNMENT

Have students draw a picture of Poppet in their favorite scene of the book.

POPPET FINDS A HOME
DRAWING

Name _____

Draw and color a picture of Poppet in your favorite scene from the book in the space below. Be sure to use as much detail and imagination as possible.

Lesson Four

Understanding Similes and Metaphors

In the story Poppet Finds a Home, you will find several similes and one metaphor.

A simile is a figure of speech comparing two things using like or as.
*ex. The sun **is like** a yellow ball.*

A metaphor is a figure of speech comparing two things, saying that one is the other. *ex. The sun **is** a yellow ball.*

On the board write a simile and a metaphor.

Simile - The blacktop is like a hot skillet.

Metaphor - The blacktop is a hot skillet.

Ask the student to identify which is which. Ask the students what they think the simile and metaphor means. What did the author want you (the reader) to feel or understand? Ask the student to come up with another simile and metaphor to express the same feelings.

Have students complete the simile/metaphor worksheet individually or in small groups.

POPPET FINDS A HOME
SIMILES AND METAPHORS

Name _____

Read the similes and metaphor below and explain what you think they mean in the space provided.

1. his beard was a twisted wire brush growing from his face...

2. The worn black tires kicked up clouds of dust and gravel that swirled behind the speeding vehicle like an angry sand storm.

3. Our fur puffed up and felt like soft downy feathers.

4.we fit ourselves together like pieces of a patchwork quilt.

On the lines below, write one simile and one metaphor of your own.

Simile _____

Metaphor _____

POPPET FINDS A HOME ELABORATION

Elaboration in a story provides details that make the story come to life. It uses strong words to depict a scene or feeling. Choosing the right words in a story can make it more powerful and enjoyable to read.

Good elaboration does not use the same word or phrase over and over again. Instead it uses a variety of strong words that have a clear meaning, it uses the 5 senses to create mood and feeling and expands on ideas to create a vivid picture in the reader's mind.

Read the examples below.

Other pups are born in the wilderness, nestled in cool dark dens carved out of dirt and rock where mountain breezes swirl through the pine trees and wolves howl to each other at dusk.

He was wearing tattered, dirty overalls. His eyes were dark and beady, his beard was a twisted wire brush growing from his face and his stale breath smelled like rotten eggs.

The eerie hoot of an owl floated on the cool, night breeze. An animal scurried through the dried leaves around the base of the old oak tree that made a shiver of fear run down my spine. The night sky began to fill with millions of sparkling stars and the silver rim of the moon came out and hung silently over our tiny heads.

ELABORATION ACTIVITY

Name _____

Read the sentences below. On the lines provided, write at least two more sentences that elaborate on the idea, adding detail and creating a stronger picture in the reader's imagination.

The winter air was cold.

The kitty was very cute.

Jordan was sad to see his friend move away.

EXTENDED LEARNING

For advanced readers or upper level elementary students, work on writing a story that uses personification.

* **personification** - the representation of a thing or object in the form of a person with human feelings, abilities, and intellect.

Explain that Poppet Finds a Home uses personification to give a dog human characteristics i.e. Poppet can talk, think or reason at a human level, and tell a story to teach a lesson.

Helpful steps in writing a story

1. Gather ideas, brainstorm
2. Narrow ideas to those that are exciting and have a clear purpose
3. Understand the format of a story;
 - beginning - set the scene, introduce characters
 - state problem/issue to be resolved
 - rising action
 - resolution
 - conclusion

Encourage the use of similes and metaphors, elaboration and meaningful details. Suggest using description incorporating the five senses. * *how does something look, feel, sound, taste, smell?*

Teach the good use of vocabulary, find strong words to take the place of commonly used words or one word to take the place of several adjectives.

Teach elaboration; take one sentence and expand it by writing three more that help to bring in more detail and feeling.

Make sure the story has a strong voice that excites and connects with the reader.

Suggestions for your creative writing experience

- develop a graveyard for overused words in stories (*A word graveyard is used when a student repeats a word too often in a story - examples are "then", "and", "because" plus any other commonly used word that is repeated and could be replaced with a better synonym. The student can take the over-used word, write it on a card and place it in a shoe box marked Word Graveyard symbolizing he/she will not use it again in the story.*)

- help students develop good beginnings and endings

Beginning suggestions

- begin with dialogue
- begin with question
- begin with action/surprise
- begin with a statement/descriptive scene

Ending suggestions

- bring reader back to the beginning
- leave reader in suspense, wanting to read the next story to find answers
- end with dialogue
- end with strong statement/quote
- provide opportunities for peer editing as well as individual teacher editing of each students story
- provide significant amounts of class time for all the steps of the writing process to be used
- create a writer's workshop atmosphere in the classroom
- insist students start with a rough draft that is double spaced for ease of editing/revising
- it is suggested that students hand in their rough draft along with their final copy

Finally and most important - Locate an audience for students to read their completed stories to. Present the students as authors and create an environment that honors all the stories that have been written.