

How we assess for humane content

There is a wide range of children and young adult books that deal with animals. Animals take different roles in books. Books that show the human-animal bond and the intrinsic value of animals are the types of books we would like to recommend.

In order to promote animal welfare we ask ourselves these questions when assessing books to recommend.

1. Are the animals anthropomorphized (given human characteristics) or are they realistic?
2. Does the book promote positive or negative attitudes towards animals? (pets as family members)
3. Are the animals well cared for? (kept indoors, positive training methods, etc.)
4. Are animals stereotyped? (i.e. are rottweilers portrayed as mean and vicious)
5. Are the facts about the animals correct?
6. What lessons can be learned from the book to improve animal welfare?

Classroom Activity: Have students answer the above questions about books they read or books you ask them to review.

PICTURE BOOKS



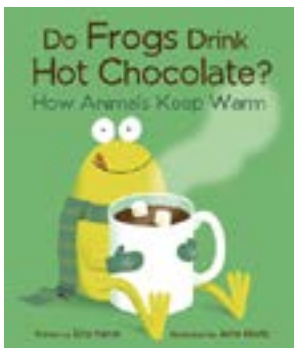
It's a Mitig! by Bridget George (Douglas & McIntyre, 2020)

Reading level: Grades K-2

When giizis – the sun – rises, do you wonder what could be hiding within the trees? *It's a Mitig!* takes young readers on a fun and colourful journey through the forest to observe nature and the animals that live there. Written in a rhyming combination of Ojibwe and English, this picture book guides readers through the beautiful forest and introduces them to the Ojibwe language, encouraging them to identify plants and animals in Ojibwe along the way. With a helpful, illustrated, Ojibwe-to-English glossary, this story is a beautiful introduction to the Ojibwe language for young readers.

Anishinaabe author-illustrator, Bridget George was raised on the Kettle and Stony Point First Nation in Ontario. They created this story for their son so they could reconnect with their culture, learning the Ojibwe language together.

To continue learning, classes might research together to learn more about Indigenous Communities in their area. A nature scavenger hunt can encourage discovery about plants and animals of the area; see if students can apply the Ojibwe words that they have learned from *It's a Mitig!* in a real-world setting.



Do Frogs Drink Hot Chocolate?: How Animals Keep Warm by Etta Kaner, illustrated by John Martz (Owlkids Press, 2018)

Reading Level: K-2

How do animals keep warm in cold weather? Wild animals cannot turn up the heat or add an extra layer as humans might. So, what things do animals do to stay warm instead? Learning about the features and behaviours that wild animals have adapted to survive frigid temperatures can help students to better understand animal behaviour. This understanding can also help students begin to recognize the impact that humans can have on wild animals' survival.

Written by former classroom teacher Etta Kaner, *Do Frogs Drink Hot Chocolate?* uses a fun question-and-answer format to introduce students to cold-weather adaptations for animals around the world. Allow students to shout out the answers to witty questions about possible animal adaptations. Then, read through the answers as a class to discover how wild animals stay warm.

To continue the learning, teachers might discuss the terms adaptation, migration and hibernation with students, then give them examples of some B.C. animals that employ these survival strategies.



Junebug: No Life Too Small by Nicole Daniels, illustrated by Addy Rivera Sonda

Reading Level: Pre-K-Grade 1

Insects make up about 80 per cent of the Earth's animal species. Though they are an essential part of any ecosystem, insects are often unloved and unappreciated. Teaching youth the foundation of respecting even the smallest and arguably most vulnerable creatures will help them develop compassion for all creatures – big or small.

In *Junebug: No Life Too Small*, the main character, June, helps her friends to realize how amazing and important insects are. June teaches her friends about the secret lives of bugs and

compares the insects' needs to her friends' needs. By showing her friends to save insects, rather than squish them, June shares a lesson in compassion.

Empowering youth with the knowledge of insects' roles as pollinators and plant defenders can help them to see these creatures as the crucial parts of our ecosystem that they are.

Different ways to incorporate this book in the classroom include:

- Take your students on a bug nature walk and challenge them to see how many bugs they can find!
- Have your class learn about all of the different jobs that bugs do (e.g., pollinate, protect plants, decompose materials, etc.).
- Do an insect art project with your class, and fill your classroom windows with colourful construction paper bugs! Take this opportunity to support inquiry with your students and talk about insects' different features and **how they help each insect**



Fur, Feather, Fin: All of Us are Kin by Diane Lang, illustrated by Stephanie Laberis

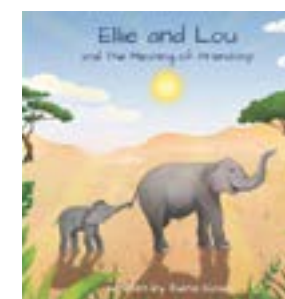
Reading Level: Preschool-Grade 3

In *Fur, Feather, Fin: All of Us are Kin*, readers are taken on a journey through the different species that inhabit the Earth, celebrating what is unique about the diverse taxonomic classes all through fun rhyme. Starting with the big idea that "All animals on Earth are kin, while not the same outside or in," readers learn about the interconnectedness of humans and animals. The

book introduces the idea that some animals depend on us to meet their needs, while others thrive when we leave them alone.

This book's colourful and detailed illustrations are thoughtfully paired with the text to build on and reinforce ideas introduced. An excellent example is the double-page spread where humans are grouped as mammals. Although the text is simple, it is paired with images of humans which show diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, and the many ways that human families are defined, and makes for a great discussion point with students.

For readers and educators wanting to learn even more, the back of the book provides additional information on each class of animal, including tips on how we as humans can help these animals, and sources for further investigation for curious animal advocates.



Ellie and Lou and the Meaning of Friendship by Kiana Sosa

Reading level: Preschool - Grade 2

How do you show kindness? What does friendship mean to you? Author Kiana Sosa from Burnaby, British Columbia was 10 years old when she wrote the book *Ellie and Lou and the Meaning of Friendship*, a heartfelt story that shows how a small act of kindness can have a ripple effect on those around you and change someone else's life for the better.

This book follows Ellie and Lou, a mother-daughter pair of elephants who are experiencing difficulties finding food after becoming separated from their herd. Just when the pair is in on the verge of losing all hope, they're met by Sam, a gorilla who has a reputation of being "too strict and serious." After reflecting on his own past, Sam feels sympathy for Ellie and Lou and decides to offer them his help. Sam's small act of kindness inspires his jungle friends to do the same. Demonstrating the importance of teamwork, all of the jungle animals work together to gather enough food to completely change Ellie and Lou's situation.

Featuring a fun "meet the main characters" page, as well as an author's note detailing what it means to be a good friend, *Ellie and Lou and the Meaning of Friendship* reveals some of the many positive outcomes that can arise when we work together to help our friends.



Little Wolf by Teoni Spathelfer, illustrated by Natassia Davies

Reading level: Grades K-3

Little Wolf is a picture book about a young Indigenous girl's challenges as she adjusts to moving to the city. Little Wolf misses her wilderness home and her connections to family. To top it off, she is the only Indigenous student in her school and is teased by classmates. Her mother helps her build inner strength by connecting Little Wolf with her cultural heritage. Little Wolf also finds strength in discovering the urban wildlife no one else seems to notice and in her connection to her dog adopted from an animal shelter. This renewed confidence inspires Little Wolf and sets

her on a positive life course. *Little Wolf* can be used to help students better understand what it can be like to be from an Indigenous background and should inspire thoughtful discussion on celebrating each person's cultural heritage.



The Cats on my Block by Valerie Sicignano Illustrated by Jane Sayre Denny

Reading level: Grade 3+

The Cats on my Block teaches children about feral and stray cats, often referred to as "community cats." In New York City, main characters Luke and Willow notice cats wandering around their neighbourhood. When Luke asks if the cats are homeless, Willow responds with "no, the outdoors is their home." Luke and Willow learn all about community cats from their neighbor,

Keith, who cares for them including how to support them, trap-neuter-return programs and how, even though they have no guardians, they still need to be cared for. A glossary at the end of the book explains many of the terms used in the story to help readers build their vocabulary around community cats.



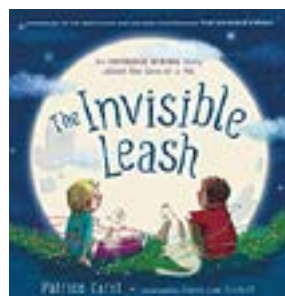
Lessons from Mother Earth by Elaine McLeod, illustrated by Colleen Wood

Reading level: Grades K-1

Five-year-old Tess has never explored her Grandmother's garden, but during one visit, her Grandmother invites her along to explore and learn about her "garden", which is the natural world, and the lessons it can teach us. Following Tess and her Grandmother, as they make their way through colourful scenes of nature, we share in the wisdom that has been passed down through generations and we gain an appreciation for the gifts of Mother Earth, as well as an understanding of our responsibility to care for the natural world.

Through the knowledge that has been passed down by women in her family, Tess discovers that nature bears an abundance of gifts, each coming to us in their own time, and the responsibility she and her family share in taking care of these precious gifts. The blueberry bush, if trampled and over picked, will not grow again. However, the fruits it bears, if left unharvested, will slowly wither away. Tess learns that in this delicate balance we must be mindful and respectful of Mother Earth if we are to be nourished by her, and the presence of animals throughout the illustrations reminds us that we humans are not the only ones sustained by nature's generosity.

Lessons from Mother Earth is a delightfully illustrated picture book celebrating teaching and nurturing through the inter-generational relationships we share with both our family and with our natural world. The author is a member of the Na-Cho Nyak Dun First Nation and wrote the story so her children could understand their own history and roots, and in doing so shares with a wider audience a valuable message about how nature can sustain us and provide for us, but only when we respect it and care for it.



The Invisible Leash: A Story Celebrating Love After the Loss of a Pet by Patrice Karst, illustrated by Joanne Lew-Vriethoff

Reading level: Grades K-3

When a child loses a beloved pet, it is hard to explain why their fur friend isn't there to snuggle with anymore. Stories can help open the door to talking about the emotions and day-to-day changes that come with loss. *The Invisible Leash* is a recent entry into the list of excellent picture books talking about pet loss. This book comes from the author of a series of books about how an invisible, magical string connects us to everyone we love, even if they move away or die.

When Zack loses his dog Jojo, he doesn't know how to handle his sadness. His friend Emily talks about losing her cat and how she is still connected heart-to-heart with her fur friend by an "invisible leash." Knowing that others go through the same feelings can help, and if you are into the "rainbow bridge" idea of what happens to pets this can be a more connected way to talk about it. The only blunder with this book occurs when Zack's parents try to make him feel better by talking about getting another dog, when he clearly feels there is no replacement for Jojo. The overall story is lovely, however, with beautiful illustrations that are comforting in their depiction of pet "spirits."



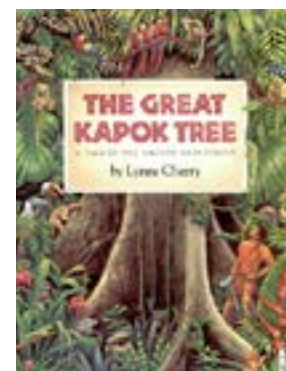
Friends in Fur Coats by Claire Buchwald and Sarah Buchlaw, illustrated by Rebecca Evans

Reading level: Grades K-3

This beautifully illustrated story highlights the importance of cherishing and protecting our fur-bearing animals. Looking at his various stuffed toys, Noah goes to bed wishing that he too could have a beautiful, soft coat like them. As he drifts off to sleep, Noah's bedroom begins to fill with trees and grass as we enter the world of his dreams. In his dreams, Noah's bear Bella and his other stuffed friends come alive, and alongside them, he explores their natural habitats, and how their unique fur coats allow each animal to thrive in the wild.

Noah awakens the following morning with an appreciation for these wild animals, their beautiful coats and how vital fur is for bears, seals, foxes and other wild animals. Arriving at the conclusion that unlike him, animals need a fur coat, Noah has a deeper understanding of what it means to cherish and respect fur-bearing animals.

This book is a gentle introduction for young readers to the importance of respecting and protecting fur-bearing animals. It handles a difficult topic at an age-appropriate level, engaging the reader with beautiful, vivid illustrations and facts about each animal. The publisher offers a classroom guide to complement the book, providing suggestions for group reading and prompts to deepen the discussion.



The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry

Reading level: Grade K+

When a man falls asleep in the Amazon rainforest after exhausting himself trying to chop down a Kapok tree, the residents of the forest see this as the perfect opportunity to enlighten him. One by one, the creatures come to whisper into the man's ear, asking him to spare their home. With each plea it becomes clear that the Kapok tree is central to the existence of many creatures in the rainforest, whether this is through its great branches and foliage providing a home or its extensive root system that holds the soil in place during heavy rainstorms. But it is also clear that the Kapok tree is dependent on the creatures of the forest, as "all living things depend on one another." When the man awakens, he understands this interconnectedness and his responsibility to help preserve this unique environment for future generations, for "what happens tomorrow depends upon what you do today."

Featuring beautiful illustrations by author Lynne Cherry, *The Great Kapok Tree* speaks to the importance of preserving the world's rainforests, through highlighting the unique complexity of these ecosystems. Readers are sure to feel its heartfelt message and respond to its call to action to save our rainforests.



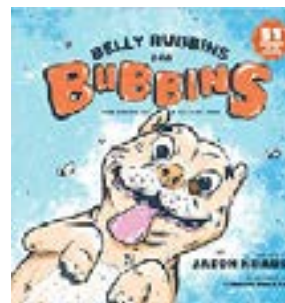
Hello Goodbye Dog by Maria Gianferrari, illustrated by Patrice Barton

Reading level: Preschool - Grade 2

We love our pets, but do they really love us? This book explores the special relationship between humans and animals, and introduces the topic of therapy animals as well as the benefits of reading to pets programs.

Zara, a young girl in a wheelchair, and her pet dog, Moose, are separated when she starts school for the first time. But Moose decides that he doesn't like "goodbye" and instead does whatever he can to be with Zara, causing a lot of mischief in the process. Zara also finds comfort in having Moose to help her with her reading. Finally, it's decided that Moose is not just a pet, so he is taken to become a "therapy" dog and now he can spend all day at school with his companion.

This touching story explains to young children the difference between pets and therapy animals, as well as that some animals can help us when we are nervous or in need of comforting.

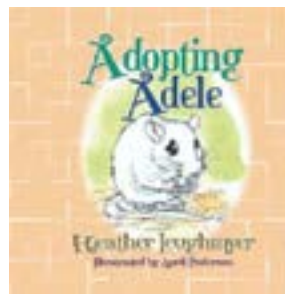


Belly Rubbins for Bubbins: The Story of a Rescue Dog by Jason Kraus, illustrated by Connor Dehaan

Reading level: Grades K-3

Belly Rubbins for Bubbins is the beautiful true story of a senior pit bull whose life was full of hardship and neglect. Bubbins spent nearly a year in the shelter after spending the previous 10 years of his life living outdoors with little human interaction. The scars all over his body tell the story of hardships he endured. Through all his struggles, Bubbins never gave up hope that he would one day find a loving family. This book highlights the true unconditional loving nature of dogs, and the resilience they have to put their past behind them.

This story is written by first time author, Jason Kraus based on the real life 'Bubbins' named Gibson. Gibson lives with Jason and his wife, Michelina and receives belly rubbins every single day. Jason donates 51% of all the proceeds of this book to various dog rescues. He wrote this book to educate youth about the true loving nature of rescue dogs and the value of a second chance. If you'd like to continue to follow Bubbins story, you can follow him on Instagram @the.real.bubbins.



Adopting Adele by Heather Leughmyer

Reading level: Grades K-2

Written from the perspective of a rat named Adele, this book will give children a unique insight into what it would feel like to be a shelter animal that is misunderstood and unable to find her forever home.

The book is infused with cute and quirky natural behaviours of rats, their unique personalities, and their need for a home environment, while following Adele's journey to find her perfect person and forever home.

This book will spark discussions with your class on how to choose the right pet for your family's lifestyle, how all animals deserve the opportunity to express their natural behaviour and to lead happy, healthy lives, and how sometimes our biases affect how we act towards something or someone. In order to cultivate empathy towards all animals we may need to pause and consider any biases we have, and educate ourselves on ways to overcome this, like in this story of sweet Adele.



Lost and Found Cat: The True Story of Kunkush's Incredible Journey by Doug Kuntz and Amy Shrodes

Reading level: Grade 3+

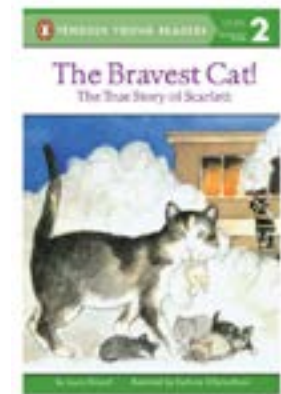
Forced to leave their home in Iraq, a family has to make a perilous journey to safety in Norway, bringing only basic possessions and their cat, Kunkush.

During the long journey, Kunkush escapes his carrier and spends days wondering the streets of Greece before he is picked up by a caring stranger. The stranger brings him to a vet clinic where he is brought back to health, and the search for his family begins. The vet realizes

Kunkush must have had a loving family based off his temperament, so she uses social media to find them. After weeks of searching, the family sees the vet's post with the picture of their cat, and organizes their reunion.

Young animal lovers will read this powerful story of a family who undertakes great obstacles to ensure their cat comes with them as they have to leave their home. It also shows the power a compassionate stranger can have, and how each person can make a difference.

Discussion topics that may arise from this story are the obstacles that many people face when a natural or man-made disaster strikes and they are forced to leave their home. What considerations should we give to our pets during this transition to make them feel safe and protected? Additional topics may include how social media platforms can be used in a positive way to bring attention to situations and issues to benefit animals, and in this case reunite them with families. Lost and Found Cat ends with a collection of real life images from this incredible true story of courage, compassion and perseverance.

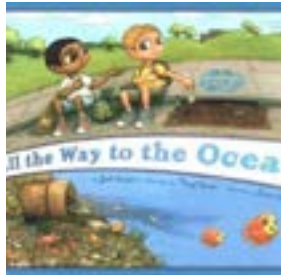


The Bravest Cat by Laura Driscoll, illustrated by DyAnne Disalvo-Ryan

Reading level: Grades 2-3

There's a fire in an abandoned building! The structure, however, isn't as empty as it initially seems. A mother cat runs out of the flames, holding her tiny kitten! To the surprise of the firemen, the cat then runs back into the fire. But why is this courageous mom braving the heat and danger?

Painted lovingly with gentle watercolours, this book tells the true story of how animals can be heroes—and how people, too, can be heroes to animals, by caring for them and giving them loving homes.



All the Way to the Ocean by Joel Harper, illustrated by Marg Spusta, forward by Laird Hamilton

Reading level: Grades K-2

When James throws away a wrapper into a storm drain, his best friend Isaac points out something important: drains lead all the way to the ocean. Illustrated entirely in environmentally-friendly soy ink, this book tells the tale of two friends learning about the importance of the ocean ecosystem, and how our trash can

affect the beautiful undersea world. Marg Spusta's vivid drawings gorgeously represent the rainbow brightness of coral reefs, and the harmful nature of our garbage to marine life.

This book also includes action suggestions for how kids can help their environment, such as cleaning up trash in their neighbourhoods.

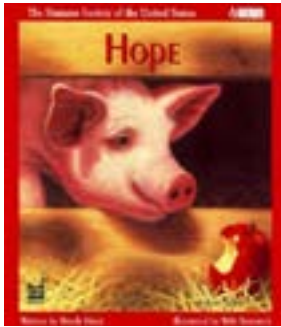


Gwen the Rescue Hen by Leslie Crawford, illustrated by Sonja Stangl

Reading level: Grade 3+

Gwen the Hen has spent her whole life in an egg-laying hen house, unable to even spread her wings. One day, a tornado comes along and displaces the hens and their small cage outside. Breaking out of the cage, she dodges danger at every turn, until she finds safety with a boy named Mateo. With her new friend in this new environment, Gwen learns she can now do all the things a chicken is supposed to be able to do.

This book includes a bonus section, entitled “More about Chickens”, where readers can learn about chickens’ extraordinary eyesight, complex language of 24 sounds, good sense of time, and other fun facts.



Hope by Randy Houk, illustrated by Walt Sturrock

Reading level: Grades 1-3

Hope is an ordinary pig who lives on a factory farm. All she wants is to be comfortable, and to be free to act like a pig! Instead, when she is three weeks old, she is taken away from her mother and littermates, and put inside an uncomfortable cage. It is dark, cramped, and painful, and when Hope injures herself, she is not cared for or given proper vet treatment. What will happen to Hope? Will she ever be able to be happy and comfortable again?

Told entirely in verse, this book demonstrates to kids what life is like for a pig when she is denied the freedoms to be comfortable and to express natural pig behaviours. Drawn with beautifully-textured illustrations, *Hope* helps kids to foster compassion for pigs as well as other farm animals.

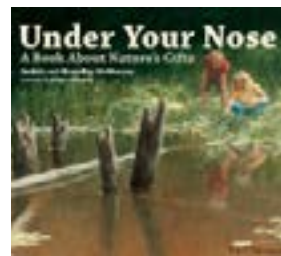
Sometimes I Feel Like a Fox by Danielle Daniel



Reading level: Grades K-1

In this book, inspired by the Anishinaabe tradition of totem animals, children put on different animal masks in order to illustrate and explain why they feel like different animals. By identifying personality traits, emotions, and positive descriptors associated with different species, this book fosters connection and compassion between humans and animals.

Filled with vivid, whimsical paintings, this book teaches children about different animals as well as Anishinaabe culture.



Under Your Nose: A Book About Nature’s Gifts by Judith and Shandley McMurray, forward by Robert Bateman

Reading level: Grades K-3

Siblings Chloe and Zachary face seven days at their grandparents’ cottage in the forest, without technology! They both head outside with the gentle guidance of their grandparents to discover new creatures, environments and self-directed fun.

Beautifully illustrated by artist Robert Bateman and the Tobin Island Artists, this book also offers a look at different artistic styles.

Challenge students to complete the nature scavenger hunt or create some nature artwork of their own.



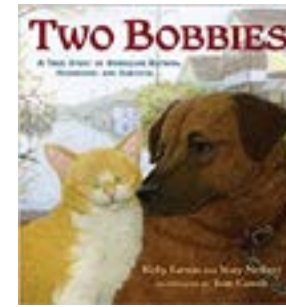
When Anju Loved Being an Elephant by Wendy Henrichs

Reading level: Grade 3+

This story follows a fictional elephant, Anju, who was taken from Sumatra as a calf and sold to a circus. The book begins with Anju being loaded into a truck, wondering where she is being taken.

Throughout the journey (to what is revealed as a sanctuary), Anju reflects on her childhood in Indonesia with her friends and family and her unhappy experiences in the circus world. Will she ever love being an elephant again?

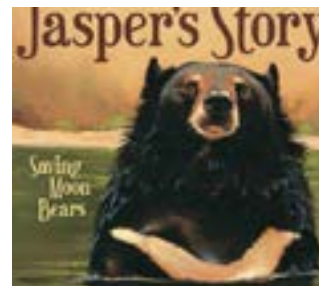
This book will alert young readers to the fact that animals, such as elephants, have feelings and should be treated with respect. A section on elephant facts and advice on how to help them is included.



Two Bobbies: A True Story of Hurricane Katrina, Friendship, and Survival by Kirby Larson & Mary Nethery, illustrated by Jean Cassels

Reading level: Grades K-2

When Hurricane Katrina strikes New Orleans, many people are forced to leave their pets behind – pets like Bobbi and Bob Cat. For months these best friends roam the devastated city, hungry and with only each other as company. The animals are eventually rescued and brought to an animal shelter, where volunteers discover the remarkable bond between this cat and dog. Bobbi and Bob Cat need to stay together – but can their original guardians be found, or will an adoptive family step forward?

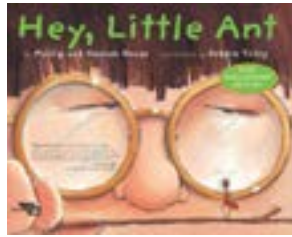


Jasper’s Story by Jill Robinson and Marc Bekoff

Reading level: Grade 5+

Endangered Asiatic black bears, known as moon bears, are the species of bear most commonly used on bear bile farms in China and Vietnam. “Jasper’s Story” tells the true story of a moon bear, rescued from a bear bile farm and brought to the Moon Bear Rescue Centre in Chengdu, China. Despite 15 years of terrible abuse, Jaspers wounds are eventually healed at the sanctuary and he learns to live a more normal bear life. He becomes a symbol of hope, strength and forgiveness as he helps new

bears acclimatize to the sanctuary.

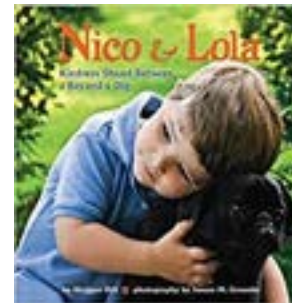


Hey, Little Ant by Phillip and Hannah Hoose

Reading level: Grades K-5

A little boy comes across an ant outside and threatens to squish him. The ant pleads with him not to and asks the boy to think about life from an insect's point of view. Children are left to ponder the question: To squish or not to squish? This conversation between two creatures, large and small, is bound to inspire important discussions about tolerance, bullying, peer pressure and empathy.

This book is adapted from the song "Hey, Little Ant," written by father-daughter team, Phillip and Hannah Hoose

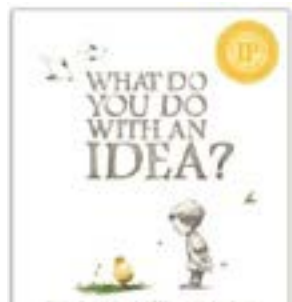


Nico & Lola: Kindness Shared Between a Boy and a Dog by Meggan Hill, photography by Susan M. Graunke

Reading level: Preschool-Grade 2

When Nico's aunt is going away for the weekend, she asks Nico if he will help look after her dog, Lola. Nico is up for the challenge. All weekend long, he finds different ways to be kind to Lola – while Lola also shows kindness to him. Young readers are invited to follow these two friends on their adventures and learn different ways they can be kind, too.

The story explores feelings and helps build empathy for animals by demonstrating the positive relationship and joy pets can bring. Teachers should note there is a photo of Nico hugging Lola. Children should never be encouraged to hug dogs, as it causes some dogs to feel trapped and could lead to a dog bite.



What Do You Do With an Idea? by Kobi Yamada, illustrated by Mae Besom

Reading level: Grades K-3

What Do You Do With an Idea? Follows the journey of a child who has an idea. Written in the first person, the child confides their discomfort and insecurity of having an idea that may be different and ridiculed by some. The child grows more confident throughout the story, working with their idea to make the world a better place. As the story and relationship between the child and their idea evolves, the illustrations become more complex, beautiful and colourful.

What Do You Do With an Idea? Encourages youth to play with, grow and implement their ideas despite being afraid of what others may think. Being able to act on ideas without fear, as we at the BC SPCA try to do, that is what changes the world.



The Happy Tale of Two Cats by Cathy M. Rosenthal

Reading level: Grade K+

It is only when an unhappy cat's guardians move away and leave her that she begins to transition – slowly, and with the help of kind people – into a happy cat herself. From the abandoned house to the animal shelter and eventually her forever home, she finds safety, friendship and love.

The Happy Tale of Two Cats tells a sweet and memorable story of what can happen when caring people in the community all take a part in turning an animal's life around. It addresses the importance not only of physically caring for our feline friends, but also being companions to them.



The Lucky Tale of Two Dogs by Cathy M. Rosenthal

Reading level: Grades K-3

It is only when the unlucky dog escapes from his yard and is picked up by animal control that his life turns around and he becomes a happy dog. From the backyard to the streets, to the animal shelter and eventually to his forever home, he finds safety, friendship and love.

The Lucky Tale of Two Dogs tells a sweet and memorable story of what can happen when caring people in the community all take part in turning an animal's life around. It addresses the importance of social interaction for dogs as well as their physical needs, but also the responsibility of being a pet guardian. The joy and companionship is beneficial to both the guardian and the canine.

Use this as an introduction to pet care, animal abuse or animal shelters.



So, what's it like to be a cat? by Karla Kuskin

Reading level: Grades K-3

With great style, award-winning children's poet Karla Kuskin uses an interview format – between an inquisitive boy and a witty cat – to ask and answer questions about the feline way of life. Do cats like dark hallways? Getting up for breakfast? Dancing? The responses from this cat might surprise readers – and cause them to think differently about their own cats.

Kuskin's fluid verse combines with Betsy's Lewin's delightful watercolour illustrations to wholly capture the cat's personality and movement. *So, what's it like to be a cat?* is a great book to read aloud with a class. After reading, children may like to pose their own questions about how animals think and feel, and observe their pets' behaviour to seek the answers.



KokoCat, Inside and Out by Lynda Graham-Barber

Reading level: Grades K-2

In *KokoCat, Inside and Out*, Lynda Graham-Barber tells the story of KokoCat, an indoor cat who lives a comfortable life with a nice family. So what happens when one day the door opens and KokoCat's curiosity takes her outside to explore? Quickly lost, KokoCat experiences the life of an outdoor cat. Cold, hungry and alone, she must fend for herself for the very first time. Will KokoCat get back home again?

Fast-paced and featuring illustrations that beautifully depict the difference between KokoCat's indoor and outdoor experiences, this story gives young readers an excellent opportunity to consider whether cats are safer inside or outside.



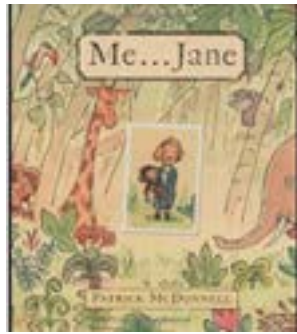
MUTTS Shelter Stories: Love Guaranteed by Patrick McDonnell

Reading level: Grade 3+ (ages up to adult)

MUTTS Shelter Stories Love Guaranteed is a heartwarming collection of “MUTTS” comic strips by Patrick McDonnell. The collection of comic strips is dispersed with real stories of adopted pets from guardians throughout the world.

McDonnell strikes a balance between lighthearted fun and responsible social commentary without being preachy. The comic strips incorporate messages of responsible pet guardianship, animal advocacy and adoption and the sanctity of all life

His characters are emotive and expound the important messages of shelter animals. It is hard not to feel empathy for these characters.



Me...Jane by Patrick McDonnell

Reading level: Grade K-3

In *Me...Jane*, writer and illustrator Patrick McDonnell goes back in time to tell the true story of a young Dr. Jane Goodall, a child intensely curious about and connected to nature.

The story follows Jane, and her toy chimpanzee, as she teaches herself about the world by reading books and studying her own backyard. She pays close attention to wildlife and understands that she is part of the natural world – a “magical world full of joy and wonder.” Young Jane dreams of a life living with, and helping, animals... until one day, her dream comes true.

This true story encourages curiosity and kindness towards animals, and is an inspirational example of following your dreams. Featuring an accompanying biography and special message from Jane Goodall, *Me...Jane* is a wonderful addition to any library.



South by Patrick McDonnell

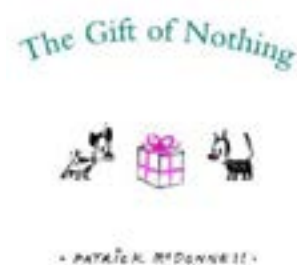
Reading level: Preschool-Grade 1, but may be enjoyed by all ages.

South, by writer and artist Patrick McDonnell, does not include any words – but it says a lot.

Through a series of simple and very effective illustrations, *South* tells the story of a little bird whose flock migrates for the winter, leaving him behind. An unlikely friend, Mooch the cat, notices the little bird’s sorrow and helps him. Together they set out on a journey to catch up with

the flock – they travel until they hear the familiar music of the little bird’s family.

South is a beautifully understated story that uses animal characters to touch on themes of compassion, friendship and the importance of family – no matter who you are.



The Gift of Nothing by Patrick McDonnell

Reading level: Preschool-Grade 1

What do you give a friend who has everything? That’s what Mooch the cat asks himself.

Mooch wants to give his friend Earl a special gift, but Earl already has a bowl, a bed, a chew toy – and everything a dog needs. After a lot of thought, Mooch decides that “nothing” is the best gift for Earl... but “in a world filled with so many somethings, where could he find nothing?” Mooch figures out how to give Earl nothing – and everything – by giving of himself.

A wonderful meditation on friendship and the value of offering our undivided time rather than “stuff,” *The Gift of Nothing* uses animal characters to draw in the reader and make us think differently about the gifts that we give our loved ones, including our pets. Patrick McDonnell’s signature illustrations echo the message of the story; even in their sparse simplicity they fill the pages with tenderness.



Buddy Unchained by Daisy Bix

Reading level: Grades K-3

Before being rescued, Buddy lived his life on the end of a chain no matter what the weather, rain, shine or snow. Now that he has been adopted into a loving home, he shares his story of neglect and rescue. The illustrations capture the expression of a dog who has lost hope and then has his trust in humans restored.

The message of the importance of properly caring for pets and reporting neglect and abuse can initiate a great discussion on preventing cruelty.

Suitable for students aged 5+. If you have older students, consider asking them to read this book to their younger reading buddies.



Are You Ready for Me? by Claire Buchwald

Reading level: Grades K-3

Written from a dog’s point of view, *Are You Ready for Me?* illustrates the responsibilities and joys of adopting a dog into your family. Many children ask their parents for a pet without having any reference or understanding of the commitment it takes to care for another living creature. This book covers the important topics that must be discussed before adopting a dog. There is even a contract at the back of the book that families can sign together to show their commitment to their new family member.



It’s Raining Pups and Dogs! by Jeanne Prevost

Reading level: Grades K-3

For many children the thought of having a house full of puppies sounds like a dream. In this book a young girl named Lauren is disappointed that her dog is spayed, taking away the chance to ever have a litter of puppies. But Lauren’s dad knows that spaying was the right thing to do as responsible pet guardians. He helps Lauren come to the same conclusion by visiting the animal shelter.

While the challenges of the animal shelter depicted in *It’s Raining Pups and Dogs!* aren’t indicative of all shelters, the general message – there are too many animals in need of homes to not spay and neuter – is absolutely true. Straightforward language and realistic illustrations makes this a great way to teach children about this important animal welfare issue.



Max Talks to Me by Claire Buchwald

Reading level: Grades K-3

The bond between a human and an animal can be quite amazing.

Max Talks to Me explores how a boy and his dog communicate with each other and the bond that is created. Max does not speak but, through observation and the relationship that is established, the young narrator can predict Max’s behaviour and appreciate his companion as a real friend.

Anyone who has ever experienced this bond will appreciate the illustrations in which Max’s eyes and expression say it all.

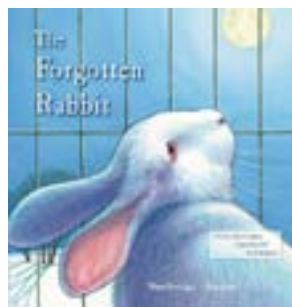


Don't Judge a Book by its Cover by Denise Fleck

Reading level: Grade 1+

Young Mary-Alice likes things to look “pretty,” whether they are the books she reads or the friends she makes. When told she can get a dog, Mary-Alice says she wants the fluffy puppy with pink bow from the pet store. But instead, with the guidance of her parents and a shelter worker, she gives Rico, an adult black Labrador from the shelter, a chance.

By following Mary-Alice and her family as they adopt Rico, the reader learns about some of the common prejudices faced by shelter animals relating to their colour, age or breed. By playing with Rico and realizing that he's different than she first assumed, Mary-Alice learns to be more open-minded in other areas of her life (like with a new girl at school) and carries this lesson with her years later.



The Forgotten Rabbit by Nancy Furstinger

Reading level: Grade K+

What happens when rabbits are bought as gifts, impulsively and without thought to their future care? This is the question addressed in *The Forgotten Rabbit*.

Born on a farm to a loving mother, the rabbit who narrates this tale is purchased as an Easter gift for children. Initially, the rabbit – called Bunny – receives plenty of care and attention. But soon the kids turn their interest to other things, and Bunny's cage is moved to the backyard. As the seasons change and winter eventually sets in, the reader sees how Bunny suffers. Thankfully, a girl named Rosalita adopts Bunny, changes her name to Bella and gives her a good life in her new home.

Though they are the third most popular pet in North America, rabbits are still often viewed as disposable, or relegated to the backyard. *The Forgotten Rabbit* gives attention to the unique care needs of rabbits, highlighting the importance of a loving, indoor home, companionship and exercise. With colourful, full-page illustrations, this is not only a touching story, but also an excellent introduction to rabbit welfare.



Always Blue for Chicu by Karen Dugan

Reading level: Grades K-3

For a parrot named Chicu, the colour blue symbolizes both safety and freedom. Born in Argentina, young Chicu spends time discovering the world around him and learning to fly. One day, Chicu is trapped and taken away to be sold in the exotic pet trade. After initially living on a boat with a sailor named Big Blue, Chicu is passed around for 30 years. From long stretches all alone in his cage to being fed peanuts in a smoky bar and then kissed, cuddled and dressed up, Chicu is often frustrated that he is not able to behave like a real parrot. Eventually, he is taken to a parrot sanctuary where he is reunited with an old friend.

Always Blue for Chicu tells a lively, complex story with colourful, action-filled illustrations while touching on some important animal welfare issues for exotic pets like parrots. Readers can consider the problem of taking a wild animal from his natural habitat and think about ways it may be difficult to provide proper care. The book also includes questions for current or potential parrot guardians to consider, as well as resources for rehoming parrots and learning more about these animals and the challenges they face.

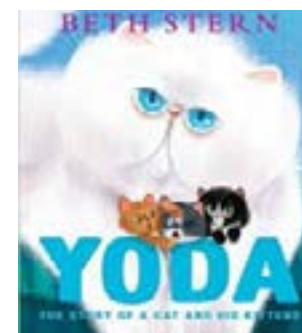


The Big Little Book of Happy Sadness by Colin Thompson

Reading level: Grades K-3

The Big Little Book of Happy Sadness is an evocative story about the importance of family and the role that animals can play in our everyday happiness. George is a lonely little boy who finds a three-legged friend in “the last cage in the last aisle” of the animal shelter. Along with George's grandmother, they embark on a fun-filled life together.

Using clear, intelligent language, Thompson does not shy away from complex subject matter; he tells the story of a child's journey through loneliness with grace. The illustrations capture the mood of the story and, along with the characters, become lighter and brighter as the book nears its happy conclusion.



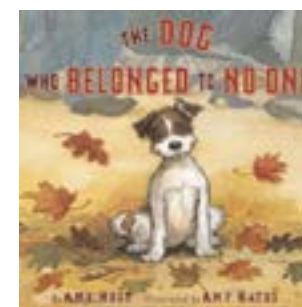
Yoda: The Story of a Cat and His Kittens by Beth Stern

Reading level: Grades K-3

Yoda: The Story of a Cat and His Kittens is a heartwarming tale of a long overlooked shelter cat who finds his calling as a foster mom/dad. Yoda spent months waiting for his forever home, watching other cat pals get adopted and dreaming of becoming a supercat. Little did he know what fate had in store for him. When Beth (wife of Howard Stern and avid kitten foster mom) chose Yoda as her newest furry family member, Yoda thought he was dreaming. But something wasn't quite right. Yoda's heart was sad until he discovered the room full of foster kittens down the hall. Yoda immediately took charge, grooming them, teaching them to be gentle and keeping them safe. He found his purpose and finally became the supercat he'd always imagined he could be.

The illustrations are bright, colourful and fun, helping to tell the true tale of how a special needs rescue cat can defeat the odds and brighten lives every day.

Use this book to introduce students to the concept of fostering animals.



The Dog Who Belonged to No One by Amy Hest

Reading level: Grades 1-3

The Dog Who Belonged to No One, weaves the separate stories of a stray dog with crooked ears and a “wisp of a girl” named Lia, each in need of a friend. Using soft watercolour illustrations, this sweet book paints a world filled with baseballs, bicycles, and a bakery on the edge of town. With lovely parallels drawn between the little dog and the little girl, the story reaches its climax with a terrific storm that sends them both running for the safety and comfort of home.

The Dog Who Belonged to No One is a poetic tale of friendship found that is sure to warm the hearts of children and grown-ups alike.



Stanley's Party by Linda Bailey

Reading level: Grades 2-3

“Stanley knew he wasn't supposed to sit on the couch. But his people went out a lot. And they never came home before midnight.”

So begins *Stanley's Party*. With exuberant illustrations this picture book for primary-aged students follows Stanley, a usually obedient dog who decides to push his luck. First, Stanley ventures onto the couch. When his action finds no consequence, he quickly discovers new ways to misbehave, until he's hosting the entire canine community for a raucous party at his place.

Kids will love this fun and funny book which paints dogs as they are: social animals who need companionship... of both their fellow pooches and their people.



The Bookshop Dog by Cynthia Rylant

Reading level: Grades K-2

The Bookshop Dog, is a colourful story about Martha Jane, a bookshop dog who is loved by everyone she meets. When Martha Jane's guardian becomes ill, she must find someone to care for her pet for a week. This doesn't prove difficult. Everyone in town clamours to become Martha Jane's sitter, with some over-the-top results!

Readers in Kindergarten to Grade 2 will enjoy the descriptions and drawings of the book's characters, especially the townspeople: well-meaning but not always well-behaved folks who



Oh, Theodore! by Susan Katz

Reading level: Grades 2-4

Oh, Theodore! is a vibrantly illustrated poetic story about patience, care and bonding with a new pet. The story is told from a young boy's perspective on getting a guinea pig as a pet. He knows it will take patience and time for Theodore to trust him so he does everything slowly and gently. His reward is a new fuzzy friend that will squeak, nibble and entertain him for years.

This is a great introduction to the care of guinea pigs in a fun, poetic format. Kids will love the poems and illustrations.

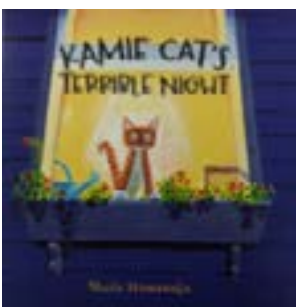


Pablo Puppy's Search for the Perfect Person by Sheila Hamanaka

Reading level: Grades 1-3

Published by the Animal Welfare Institute, *Pablo Puppy's Search for the Perfect Person* tells the story of a stray puppy, Pablo, who ends up at the animal shelter. There, he meets Natasha, an wise older dog who tells him what it means to find the perfect person – someone who will provide everything Pablo needs to be healthy and happy and train him using love, not fear.

Filled with colourful illustrations, *Pablo Puppy's Search for the Perfect Person* is an appropriate book for children in grades 1 to 3. Readers will learn what it takes to provide good care to a pet. "Perfect people" come in all different forms; what they have in common is the understanding that caring for an animal is a very special responsibility.



Kamie Cat's Terrible Night by Sheila Hamanaka

Reading level: Grades 1-3

In *Kamie Cat's Terrible Night*, writer and illustrator Sheila Hamanaka tells the fast-paced story of Kamie's accidental escape from her cozy house with Mr. Wong.

Dodging barking dogs and speeding cars, Kamie runs from house to house trying to get back home, but all she finds are strangers.

Finally, a kind person sees Kamie and takes her to the animal shelter – but without an ID tag, how will she get back to her friend Mr. Wong?

Published by the Animal Welfare Institute, *Kamie Cat's Terrible Night* teaches readers the importance of treating pets well and highlights the bond between cats and their guardians. Children in grades 1 to 3 can read this story and consider what makes a good home for a cat, and what to do in case a pet becomes lost.

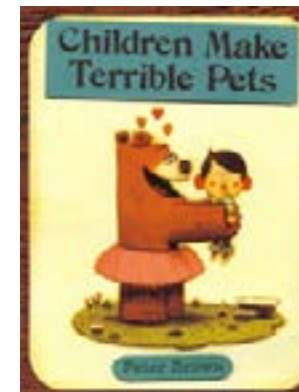


Fred and Pete at the Beach by Cynthia Nugent

Reading level: Grades K - 2

Fred and Pete are pals but Fred is much more cautious and reserved than his adventurous, fun-loving buddy Pete. When their human Ron leaves them behind to go the beach, Pete is determined he and Fred can find their way there on their own. Pete spots a postal truck and quickly hops a ride with Fred scrambling right behind him. This is just the first of several rides they hitch until they finally start to smell the sea air and know they are getting close to the beach.

The illustrations are a combination of photos and paint which make these characters really come alive and steal your heart.



Children Make Terrible Pets by Peter Brown

Reading level: Grades K-1

When Lucy first sees Squeaker in the forest, she can't wait to get him home and ask her Mom if she can keep him. While Lucy and Squeaker have a lot of fun, Lucy also learns that having a pet is a lot of work. Squeaker can be messy, destructive and ill-behaved. When Squeaker disappears one day. When she finally finds him, she learns that some animals just aren't meant to be pets.

Peter Brown creatively explores the responsibilities of pet ownership including suitability, training and empathy in this tale of Lucy the Bear. This is a good book for generating discussions on the needs of pets, the responsibilities of a pet caregiver and why some animals are better suited as pets than others.



Go Home! by Libby Phillips Meggs

Reading level: Grades K-3

Go Home! is the true story of an abandoned cat surviving on his own, though he yearns for a home. He has some recollection of being a household pet but, for the past year or so, he has been forced to scavenge and find place to sleep. When he first encounters a friendly family, they mistakenly think he has a home because he is wearing a collar – albeit much too tight – and tell him to go home. He survives a few seasons on his own until, one night, he is attacked by a dog. The same family recognizes him as he wanders out from under their shed, injured and thin. They take him to the vet, put up posters and eventually welcome him into their home where he gets all of the love and comforts he so long desired.

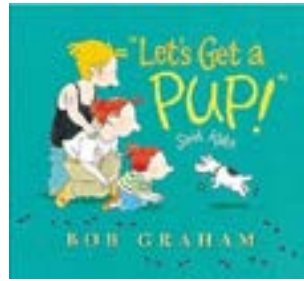


Before You Were Mine by Maribeth Boelts, illustrated by David Walker

Reading level: Grades K-2

Before You Were Mine follows a young boy as he speculates on his adopted dog's previous life. He imagines that his lovable companion's last guardians had to move and couldn't take their dog with them, or left him tied up on a chain outside, or didn't look for him when he was lost. After all his speculation, the boy remembers finding his dog at the animal shelter – and thinks that it doesn't matter what happened in the past, because now his friend has a loving, permanent home.

Before You Were Mine is a touching tale that asks many of the questions people have when adopting a stray animal from the shelter – and could lead to further questions during classroom discussion. Along with the story's gentle encouragement of pet adoption, the book includes an afterward by the author which outlines some of the reasons why adopting an older pet can bring great joy to both the animal and the guardian.



“Let’s Get a Pup!” said Kate by Bob Graham

Reading level: Grades K-2

Karen and her parents are ready to welcome a dog into their family. But what kind of dog will they get? This story follows the family on their visit to The Rescue Center. Which dog will they choose? A big dog? A small dog? A sniffer or sleeper? A cute, brand-new pup named Dave or an old, gray dog named Rosy?

“Let’s Get a Pup!” said Kate is a sweet book that illustrates the debate many animal lovers face when visiting a shelter: What do we do when we want to give them all a home? How do we choose between the boisterous puppy and the senior dog who radiates good intention? And once that choice is made, how is each family member’s life improved by the presence of an animal?



It’s Raining Cats and Cats by Jeanne Prevost

Reading level: Grades 2-4

It’s Raining Cats and Cats is a wonderfully illustrated book that deals with the serious topic of the importance of spaying and neutering a pet – but it does so in a humorous, delightful way.

When Jim asks his mother why they had to prevent their cat from having kittens, she takes him into an imaginary future that depicts the potential number of kittens that would result from not having his cat spayed and all of the headaches that go with it.

This book is the Winner of the ASPCA Henry Bergh Award for Best Children’s Picture Book, Fiction, Companion Animals.



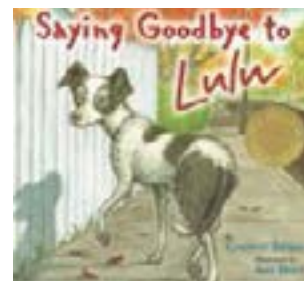
Ginger finds a home by Charlotte Voake

Reading level: Preschool-Grade 2

In *Ginger finds a home*, the author paints a heart-wrenching picture of a scraggly little cat who lives in a patch of weeds and spends his days searching for scraps of food and drinking out of puddles – that is, until a compassionate little girl takes it upon herself to give him a better life.

Using simple watercolour and ink illustrations, *Ginger finds a home* is the prequel to an earlier book by the same author, simply titled *Ginger*, in which the title cat is faced with a new feline addition to his home.

Ginger finds a home may lead to discussions about the lives of homeless cats and how young people can contribute to fixing the problem, even if they are unable to take in strays.



Saying Goodbye to Lulu by Corinne Demas

Reading level: Grades 1+ (best read with an adult for younger children)

Saying Goodbye to Lulu follows a young girl who comes to realize her childhood dog Lulu is very old and will soon pass away. She recounts the good times the pair spent together and goes through an emotional journey from distress to acceptance once Lulu passes. Author Corinne Demas handles pet bereavement in a sensitive and realistic way.



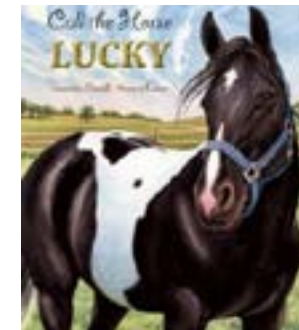
Desser, the Best Ever Cat by Maggie Smith

Reading level: Grades K-3

Desser, the Best Ever Cat is a story about the relationship that a young girl has with her cat as she grows.

It is written from a child’s perspective and illustrates the care and respect that evolves in a good human-animal relationship.

The story deals with the death of Desser in a very gentle, realistic way that portrays the grief one feels as well as the acceptance and ability to move on to give another animal a loving home.



Call the Horse Lucky by Juanita Havill and Nancy Lane

Reading level: Grades 1-3

Call the Horse Lucky, is the heartwarming story of a girl named Mel who notices a sick and neglected horse. She takes action by telling her grandmother, who in turn contacts the local humane society. When the horse is taken to a rescue ranch, Mel decides to name him Lucky. And later, when Lucky goes to live at a horse therapy ranch, Mel learns that while she realistically cannot keep him as her pet, she can still help him by becoming a volunteer.

Filled with positive messages about animal care and soft watercolour illustrations that perfectly portray the feelings of both humans and horses, and including an afterward with practical information on how to help horses, *Call the Horse Lucky* is a wonderful book for primary-grade readers.

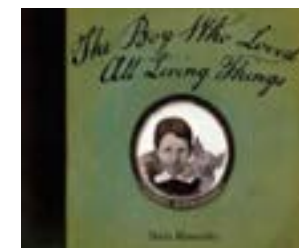


The Tenth Good Thing About Barney by Judith Viorst

Reading level: Grades 1-3

Grieving over the death of a pet is often a child’s first experience with loss. In *The Tenth Good Thing About Barney*, Judith Viorst takes a gentle but realistic approach to death. She captures the emotions and many of the questions children might have after losing a pet.

At a funeral held for Barney, the family cat, the family sings a song and shares good things about him. The child only shares nine good things about Barney but discovers the tenth good thing after he helps his dad plant seeds in the garden.

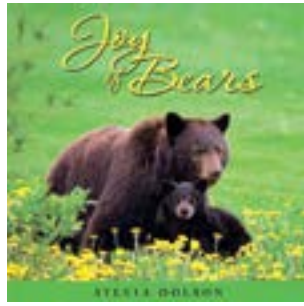


The Boy Who Loved All Living Things by Sheila Hamanaka

Reading level: Grades 2-4

The Boy Who Loved All Living Things is an imagined childhood journal inspired by events in the young life of Albert Schweitzer. Ashamed of some of his own cruel actions towards animals and those of others, Albert reflects, realizes why he acted out and goes out of his way to protect animals that his friends want to harm. In doing so, Albert gains confidence in himself and his beliefs and becomes an animal advocate. He writes, “I do not care anymore what people think about me. I know deep inside who I am.”

The Boy Who Loved All Living Things teaches children to view animals as friends that should be treated with compassion and respect, and to stand up for what they know is right. The illustrations and font depict a time long ago but the message is timeless.



Joy of Bears by Sylvia Dolson

Reading level: Grade 3+

A book by British Columbia's Get Bear Smart Society Executive Director Sylvia Dolson, *Joy of Bears* is a stunning collection of photographs of bears in their natural habitat alongside inspirational quotes about respect for these magnificent creatures and compassion towards all animals.

Readers of all ages will enjoy taking time to pore over *Joy of Bears'* images of black bears, grizzlies and polar bears – and to ponder thought-provoking words from individuals such as Aristotle, Jane Goodall, the Dalai Lama and the author herself. This beautiful book is a love letter to bears in particular, and to nature in general.



Guinea Pigs Don't Read Books by Colleen Stanley Bare

Reading level: Grades K-1

This is a good book to introduce young children to the guinea pig. It reinforces the idea that these small animals are not toys and shouldn't be dressed up but they can be gentle, calm animals that can be a great companion if treated kindly.

The pictures are of real guinea pigs and are very cute. So cute, in fact, you may be tempted to adopt one.



Second Chance: A Tale of Two Puppies by Judy Masrud

Reading level: Grades 3-5

Second Chance tells the parallel stories of two dogs from the same litter who end up in very different homes. Andrew and Matt, boys from separate families, both want a dog. Before Andrew's parents allow him to adopt a puppy, he proves that he is ready for the responsibility by dog walking and dog sitting for neighbours. Matt, on the other hand, learns nothing about caring for or training a dog before adopting; his parents simply give in to his pleading for a pet.

Over the next year, Andrew trains his dog, Boomer, using positive reinforcement for good behaviour. Matt sends mixed signals to his dog, Chance, by encouraging bad behaviour at certain times, then scolding it later; Chance becomes confused and Matt begins to see him as a "bad" dog.

Featuring useful training tips interspersed with the narrative, *Second Chance* is a terrific book for anyone thinking about getting a pet in general, and a puppy in particular.



Belle's Journey by Marilyn Reynolds

Reading level: Grades 1-3

The only job Belle does is carry Molly back and forth from her piano lessons once a week.

When Father considers getting a new horse, Molly is excited at the thought of a young horse. Then one winter day on the way home from piano lessons, Belle and Molly are caught in a blizzard. Molly is frightened but Belle ploughs on until she brings Molly safely home.

After this heroic deed, Father never talks about selling Belle again.



Norman, Speak! by Caroline Adderson

Reading level: Grades 1-5

A young boy and his family adopt a scruffy little dog called Norman from a local animal shelter. Norman has lots of energy but appears to lack any training, leading the family to think Norman isn't very bright. It turns out Norman was trained using Chinese commands. Once the family learns the Chinese equivalent commands they discover Norman is a smart, well-behaved dog after all. The story illustrates the importance of not judging someone until you really get to know them.



The Stray Dog by Marc Simont

Reading level: Grades K-3

The Stray Dog by Marc Simont is a Caldecott Honor Book about a family that encounters a stray dog at a park.

Short, simple sentences tell this emotional, appealing true story. After playing with a dog, whom they fondly name Willy, all day at a park, the family leaves him behind thinking he must belong to someone. But as the days go by they can't stop thinking about him. The next week they see Willy at the park but he is being chased by the dog catcher. Quick thinking and talking convinces the dog catcher that Willy is their dog. This time Willy goes home with them and becomes part of the family.



Unknown by Colin Thompson

Reading level: Grades K-3

Unknown is the story of an unlikely hero – a shelter dog called, for lack of a name, Unknown. Though she's always blended into the shadows of her kennel, when a fire threatens her and her fellow shelter residents, this normally nervous little dog takes action.

Along with culminating in an action-packed rescue, this story takes time to illustrate the many types of dogs who find themselves, for reasons beyond their control, without a permanent home. Each character is named after his or her circumstance, such as Owner-Gone-Abroad or Unwanted-Christmas-Gift. Read in the classroom, this book provides excellent opportunity for discussion around the ways animals arrive at shelters. It can also serve as a springboard to lessons about responsible pet guardianship and why every animal deserves a chance. *Unknown* serves as a reminder that all shelter dogs are special.



Angel in a Dog Suit by Mary Giuffre

Reading level: Grades 3-5

Created in support of the Ontario SPCA's budding humane education program for grade schools, *Angel in a Dog Suit* tells the story of Ruby, a dog rescued from a puppy mill. Told in rhyme, this ultimately uplifting tale follows Ruby through her first six years in a cage, to her rescue and time at the animal shelter, followed by her adoption and adjustment to her new home, family and life.

Based on a true story, *Angel in a Dog Suit* is careful not to oversimplify the journey of a dog who spends half a dozen years suffering and is then introduced to a more humane life. While her circumstances have improved, Ruby is still unsure of life outside of a cage. As the story progresses, we see how her new guardians' love and patience helps Ruby come out of her shell.

While it is important to recognize that not all dogs rescued from puppy mills or other abusive situations may thrive as fully or as quickly as Ruby, this particular account gives readers a sense of how it is possible for an animal to overcome adversity with the right care.



This How We Do It: One Day in the Lives of Seven Kids from Around the World by Matt Lamothe

Reading level: Grades K-5

This amazing book chronicles an average day in the life of seven children from seven different countries across the world, giving a window into other people’s lifestyles and traditions. Join these seven kids and learn how, although their appearances, cultures, and customs may differ from Japan to Russia to Peru, they all are connected in their common humanity.

Although this book does not feature animals heavily, it is a wonderful book that teaches kids to respect each other’s differences and appreciate their similarities as well. The illustrations are beautifully detailed, and may spark wanderlust! This book is easy to read but may be of interest to older students due to the subject matter.



Manatee Blues by Laurie Halse Anderson

Reading level: Grades 3-6

Brenna, a volunteer at the Wild at Heart Animal Clinic, is thrilled when she is invited to Florida by Dr. Mac, where she will get to visit a manatee rescue center. But the visit to the Gold Coast Rescue Center is not all fun and games—Brenna soon learns that manatees are in grave danger, as boat strikes in manatee habitats have been injuring and endangering the curious creatures. On top of this, the Gold Coast Rescue Center is quickly running out of money... if the centre is forced to close, who will care for the poor gentle giants?

This exciting and fascinating story features a compassionate protagonist who wants to make a difference in animals’ lives. Her bravery and passion for animals also leads her to educate others about humans’ capability to either harm or help wildlife. This book, one of a larger series of novels, will help kids become aware of their impact on the environment and how humans must be mindful of animals in the wild.



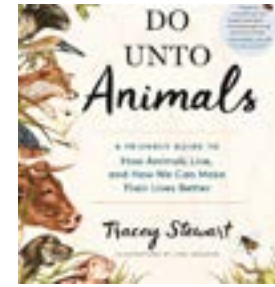
Soapstone Porcupine by Jeff Pinkney, illustrations by Darlene Gait

Reading level: Grades 2-5

Atim the dog arrives suddenly one day at the home of a Cree boy and his family. Almost instantly, she becomes part of the family. But trouble arises when Atim come across a porcupine in the woods. The porcupine defends itself against Atim, leaving the poor dog in pain. The Cree boy’s brother wants to punish the porcupine for the damage inflicted by her quills—but the whole family soon learns why it is important to respect the tough, prickly creature.

Illustrated with beautiful pencil drawings, Soapstone Porcupine is written with a deep respect for wildlife and nature, and helps kids to empathize with animals in the wild while also educating them about Cree language and culture.

Note to Educators: in the novel, the family decides to take the porcupine quills out of their dog’s face on their own. This should be done by a veterinarian.



Do unto Animals: A friendly guide to how animals live and how we can make their lives better by Tracey Stewart

Reading level: Grade 5+

When you see Do unto Animals on a library or bookstore shelf, the first thing that pulls you in is the beautiful cover. The gorgeous illustrations by Lisel Ashlock continue throughout the book – they are impressively realistic portraits that truly capture the intelligent and emotional expressions on animals’ faces.

In addition to these beautiful pictures, this book is full of fascinating information and food for thought to really inspire adults and youth alike to think more deeply about the creatures around us. Author and animal advocate Tracey Stewart is truly knowledgeable about animals, covering topics ranging from backyard wildlife to companion animal body language and farm animal welfare to respect for nature, all in an empowering way. Young animal lovers will also find plenty of inspiration in this book which includes project ideas such as building bee houses, crafting cat and dog toys and baking healthy treats. They will also discover information about animal shelters, animal welfare issues, the importance of spaying and neutering and so much more.

Stewart has a wide range of sources for her information from groups like the ASPCA, the Jane Goodall Institute, and the National Wildlife Rehabilitators Association. Do unto Animals will make a beautiful addition to your classroom library. It is more than a pretty package, one that will entice students to care more, learn more and DO more for animals.