

## **Classroom Guide – Buddy Unchained**

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This classroom guide provides language arts activities that will involve other learning areas such as science. The purpose of this guide is to extend the themes of this story into learning activities that help to reinforce the main ideas of the book and to deepen understanding.

### **Story Summary**

Buddy, a lovable mixed-breed dog, shares his journey of being chained outside every day and sleeping alone in a garage every night to being rescued and adopted into a loving home.

Buddy's adopters treat him like a member of the family, showing the reader that a neglected or abused dog can be saved and live a good life through the efforts of people who care.

### **Lesson One: Who's Your Buddy? Predicting, Comprehending & Discussing Literature**

Grade: 3

Objectives: To practice making predictions, comprehending and discussing fictional text

*Students will be able to:*

1. Make predictions about what will happen in the story, and, after reading the story, compare their predictions to the actual story
2. Use text and illustrations to comprehend a fictional story
3. Share their thoughts and opinions about the text

### **Standards Addressed**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.7

Explain how specific aspects of a text's illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.1

Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1.B

Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1.C

Ask questions to check understanding of information presented, stay on topic, and link their comments to the remarks of others.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1.D

Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

### Materials Needed

- Copy of Buddy Unchained by Daisy Bix
- Graphic organizer for each child or one large piece of chart paper with three columns: What I Predict Will Happen, Why I Think It Will Happen, and What Really Happened

### Lesson Procedure

#### Opening

1. Have students look at the cover of Buddy Unchained. Read the name of the title, author and illustrator aloud. Ask students to carefully examine the cover, including the illustration and point out the two awards the book has received.
2. Ask students to predict the following and record their answers to the first two columns: (Make sure they give you logical reasons as to why they are making their prediction for column 2)
  - What do you think will happen in the story?
  - What things might you learn about in this story?
  - Why might the book be called Buddy Unchained?
  - How do you think the dog pictured on the cover is feeling and why?
  - What characters do you think will be in the story?

What I Predict Will Happen	Why I Think It'll Happen	What Really Happened

#### Body

1. Read Buddy Unchained aloud to the class.

#### Activity

1. Go back and compare the students' predictions to what actually happened in the story. Fill out the What Really Happened column (either as a group or individually).

2. Have a class discussion about the book using the following ideas & questions:
  - Choose an illustration—or ask students to pick an illustration—in the story and have them share how that illustration affects the story’s mood or demonstrates certain aspects of a character or setting. For example, the illustration of Buddy chained in the rain will be meaningful to many students who have found themselves caught in the rain.
  - Ask the students who they think the person is who came and rescued Buddy. How did this person know about Buddy’s situation? (Most likely this is an [animal control officer](#).)
  - Where do you think Buddy’s rescuer took Buddy and how did Buddy find his new family? (Learn more about [animal shelters and adoption](#).)
  - What do you think the central message of this story is and why? Can you think of any other stories you have read with similar messages?

### Closure

When children learn about animal abuse and neglect, they can feel overwhelmed and powerless. Be sure to share the information at the back of the book to provide students with additional resources and ways they can help animals.

### Extension

1. Consider partnering with a local animal shelter on a collection drive or adoption campaign.
2. Have students create flyers or social media posts promoting adoptable animals in the community.

## Lesson Two: Nature & Nurture: Comparing & Contrasting Indoor and Outdoor Dogs

Grades 3-5

Objectives: To practice comparing and contrasting skills and understand the effect of the environment on an animal

*Students will be able to:*

1. Compare and contrast the lives of dogs living outdoors with dogs living indoors by using a Venn diagram
2. Understand how physical (and behavioral) traits of animals can be influenced by their environment

Standards Addressed

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.5.3

Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

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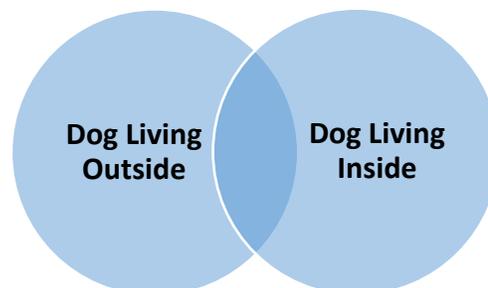
Use evidence to support the explanation that traits can be influenced by the environment. [Clarification Statement: Examples of the environment affecting a trait could include normally tall plants grown with insufficient water are stunted; and, a pet dog that is given too much food and little exercise may become overweight.]

Materials Needed

- Copy of Buddy Unchained by Daisy Bix
- Two Venn diagrams for each child or two large Venn diagrams on chart paper

Preparations

1. Create two Venn diagrams on chart paper or on a whiteboard. One should be blank and the other should have the text below.



## Lesson Procedure

### Opening

1. Make sure the students are familiar with Buddy Unchained. If you have not already read it aloud, you will want to do so.

### Body

1. Demonstrate how a Venn diagram is used by showing students an example using a topic with which they are familiar. For instance, you could fill the Venn diagram out as a class and compare and contrast your school with another school in your town, different restaurants in your community, books you have read in class, etc.
2. Once the students understand how a Venn diagram works, have them complete the Venn diagram for dogs living inside versus dogs living outside. Things to consider are weather conditions, access to food & water, danger from predators, mental stimulation, socialization and other safety concerns.
3. Ask the students which situation they think is better for a dog to live in (indoors or outdoors)? In their opinion would there ever be a situation where they think the opposite living situation would be better? For example, if they think living inside is better for a dog, would they change their mind if the dog was kept in a cage inside all the time?

### Activity

1. Explain to students that the environment can affect the physical and behavioral traits of animals. For example, if a dog is fed too much food, he or she will most likely be overweight.
2. Using the Venn diagram from above, have the students independently fill out a worksheet that predicts some of the traits Buddy might develop if he's kept in the environment that was described in the book:
  - Lack of shelter (heat stroke/sunburn, frost bite/hypothermia, insect infestations, predators, etc.)
  - Lack of food (underweight, malnourished, death)
  - Lack of water (dehydrated, death)
  - Lack of grooming (long nails, insect infestations)
  - Lack of socialization with other non-human animals (lonely, aggression)
  - Lack of socialization with people (lonely, aggression)
3. Discuss their conclusions as a group.

## Closure

Share with students that pets are protected by law in most states and Buddy was being neglected by his owners, which is why he was taken away by an animal control officer. Tell them that neglect can be purposeful or out of ignorance—in other words, the person didn't know any better. In cases where the people didn't know better, we can teach them how to be better caregivers for their pets.

## Extension

- Have students write a letter to Buddy's previous owners. How could they share important information about proper dog care without being too bossy? (People sometimes have a hard time listening if our words are not respectful.) For example, students could start by mentioning something the family did right—they allowed Buddy access to the garage at night. After mentioning a positive thing, they could go on to share ways to make Buddy's life better.
- Share the [Five Freedoms](#) with the students and ask them to consider which animals in our society are guaranteed these freedoms by law (dogs, cats, farm animals, etc.).

## Lesson Three: Learning to Speak Dog

Grades 3-4

Objectives: To understand and apply common English idioms

Students will:

1. Recognize and explain the meaning of common English idioms
2. Develop alternative idioms or synonyms for idioms that portray dogs in a negative light

Standards Addressed

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.5.B

Recognize and explain the meaning of common idioms, adages, and proverbs.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.5.C

Demonstrate understanding of words by relating them to their opposites (antonyms) and to words with similar but not identical meanings (synonyms).

Materials Needed

- Chart paper or white board
- Access to computers/tablets and Internet (optional)

Preparations

1. Become familiar with the meaning and origin of the following expressions and write them on a whiteboard or chart paper:
  - He dogged me all the way home from school.
  - She's dog-tired.
  - A barking dog never bites.
  - If you lie down with dogs, you get up with fleas.
2. Become familiar with the meaning and origin of the following sentences and write them on a different white board or chart paper (do not allow students to see).
  - I'm sick as a dog.
  - It's a dog-eat-dog world.
  - You're a dirty dog!
  - You can't teach an old dog new tricks.

Lesson Procedure

Opening

1. Ask the students if they have heard the expression "under the weather." Ask them what it means.
2. Clarify that the expression means a person is not feeling well and ask students why they think it became an expression. Allow for a range of answers but be sure to include

the most commonly accepted reason for its origin: in the days when the only mode of intercontinental travel was by sea, when the weather got rough, people with sea sickness would head below deck where there was less impact from the rocking boat. Thus, they were getting under the weather.

3. Tell the students that the English language is full of idioms and expressions about dogs—the examples you have listed on the first board/chart paper are just a few of the many examples that exist.
4. Ask students why they think we reference dogs so frequently in the United States. Take any acceptable answer and allow the conversation to flow organically, but make sure students understand that humans tend to talk about things that play a big part in their lives. For example, linguists (people who study language) believe that Eskimos have up to 50 words for the one word Americans call snow. This suggests that dogs play an important role in American society.

### Body

1. Give students 10-15 minutes to work with a partner and come up with a meaning for each of the dog-related expressions on the first list.
2. Come back together as a group and have students share what they think the meanings of the expressions are. Have a few students share their ideas for each expression.
3. Discuss as a class what the origins of each of the expressions might have been.

### Activity

1. Have students come up with the meanings of the second set of sentences on the chart paper or board. They may consult online resources and work with a partner to develop their answers.
2. Bring the students back together for a group discussion of the meanings of the expressions.

### Closure

1. Ask the students if they think any of the expressions inaccurately represent the true nature of dogs. (For example, “dirty dog.”)
2. As a class, brainstorm alternative idioms or synonyms that convey the same meaning and don’t show dogs in a negative light. For example, instead of calling someone a dirty dog, they could call the person a scoundrel or say they were acting rudely.

### Extensions

1. Have students create a classroom book of dog idioms. Ask them to include illustrations that might suggest the origin of the expressions.

2. Share with students that dogs have their own language they use to communicate to each other and humans. Have them watch the video [In the Company of Dogs](#) and have a class discussion about what they learned.

## Lesson Four: Heroes & Villains: Discovering Point of View

Grade 3

Objectives: To understand point of view, motivations and feelings in a story

*Students will be able to:*

1. Describe characters in a story in terms of their motivations and feelings
2. Distinguish between a character's motivations and feelings and be able to compare and contrast their own feelings with those of the characters'

### Standards Addressed

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.3

Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.6

Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.

### Materials

- Copy of The True Story of The Three Little Pigs by Jon Scieszka
- Copy of Buddy Unchained by Daisy Bix (or enough classroom copies for students to read independently or with a partner)

### Preparation

1. Read the story of the Three Little Pigs and be prepared to briefly retell it to students.

### Lesson Procedure

#### Opening

1. Ask students what a hero is. Accept all answers, but make sure to share the dictionary definition: a person admired for achievements and noble qualities (Merriam-Webster)
2. Ask students what a villain is. Accept all answers, but make sure to share the dictionary definition: a deliberate scoundrel or criminal (Merriam-Webster)
3. Briefly retell the story of The Three Little Pigs.
4. Ask students to share who they think the heroes and villains are in the story.

5. Tell students that you are going to share a different version of The Three Little Pigs story.
6. Read aloud The True Story of the Three Little Pigs.

### Body

1. Have a class discussion of The True Story of the Three Little Pigs. Ask students the following questions:
  - Who was narrator? From what point of view was the story told?
  - Who were the heroes in the story who were the villains? Does there always have to be a hero and a villain?
  - Does your opinion of who is a hero and who is a villain change depending on who is telling the story?
  - Can one person's point of view be better than another's? Ask them to think about this as they move into the activity.

### Activity

1. Read Buddy Unchained aloud—or if you have enough classroom copies—allow students to read the book independently or with a partner.
2. Have a class discussion of Buddy Unchained. Ask students the following questions:
  - Who was narrator? From what point of view was the story told?
  - Who were the heroes in the story and who were the villains? Why do you think so?
  - Look at the story from these individual's point of view: Buddy, the animal control officer, the new adopter, Buddy's old owner.

### Closure

Ask students if it's possible to see something from someone else's point of view and still disagree with him or her? Can they think of an example from either of the stories we read of understanding someone's point of view but still disagreeing with them? Is it important to try to see something from someone else's point of view? Why or why not?

### Extension

- Write a new version of Buddy Unchained from the perspective of the animal control officer, his new adopter or Buddy's former owner.
- Have a discussion about anthropomorphism (giving animals human characteristics). Ask students to compare and contrast the two stories from the lesson in terms of anthropomorphism. Was anthropomorphism used in either or both books? If so, how was it used and why do you think the author used it?