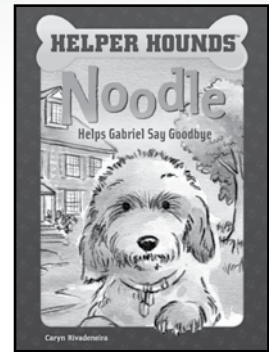


Teaching with *Helper Hounds:* *Noodle Helps Gabriel Say Goodbye*

PREVIEW THE BOOK

Introduction: Read the title of the book and display the cover. Ask students to guess who Noodle and Gabriel are and to consider what the story will be about.

Engage Prior Knowledge: Ask students if they have ever experienced the death of a loved one or someone they knew. Have students share the emotions they felt during the experience, such as sadness and anger. Encourage students to share some of the things that helped them cope with the loss.



Lexile: 660
Words: 7,320

GRL: N

Have students share what they know about dogs. Ask them to describe how dogs make them feel and whether they can think of a time a dog helped them. Students can also consider whether they know of dogs who have helped other people, whether in real life or in books, television, or film.

BEFORE EACH CHAPTER

Vocabulary: Preview the following vocabulary words. Ask students to attempt to define the words in their own terms, then provide them with the actual definition. As you come across each word in the chapter, have students pause and consider whether the author uses it in the same way that they understand it. (For example, students might define *trace* as “to copy a drawing by following the lines.” The definition of *trace* in the context of the book is “a mark left by something that has passed.”) Challenge students to write a new sentence using each word.

- Chapter 1: *campus, wander, jerked, plaque*
- Chapter 2: *kennels, shuffling, plunked, scoot*
- Chapter 3: *squinted, stressful*
- Chapter 4: *ritual, whimpered, shrugged, adjusted, donors, alumni*
- Chapter 5: *whiffs, clenched, draped, shirked*
- Chapter 6: *presence, accepted, trace, tension*
- Chapter 7: *trot, gripped, memorial, raised, legacy*
- Chapter 8: *leapt, miracle, favor*

Predict: Ask students to explore the illustrations and predict what the chapter will be about. Have students support their predictions with evidence from the illustrations and what they read in previous chapters.

DURING READING

Making Connections: Ask students the following questions while reading:

- Chapter 1: Who is narrating the story? Would you describe Noodle as a friendly dog or a mean one? How do Noodle's interactions with Nate support your answer?
- Chapter 2: How do you think Noodle (then named Curly) felt when she had to leave Jimmy? Do you think it would have been easier or harder for her to leave if she'd gotten the chance to say goodbye?
- Chapter 3: What are some of the reasons Mr. Fusilli chose Noodle over the other dogs at the shelter? Have you ever picked out a pet? What made you choose that particular pet?
- Chapter 4: When Mr. Fusilli died, Noodle lost her family for the second time. How do you think losing two people she loved will help prepare Noodle to be a good Helper Hound?
- Chapter 5: What problem is Gabriel having in this chapter? How is this problem making him feel? Based on what you know about Noodle, do you think Noodle can help Gabriel solve this problem?
- Chapter 6: How does Noodle help Gabriel in this chapter? How does Andrea help him? Have you ever had an animal or a person who has helped you in a similar way?
- Chapter 7: In this chapter, Andrea compares Mr. Fusilli's legacy to a noodle. If you know someone who has died, what kinds of "noodles" has he or she left behind? How has he or she changed you as a person?
- Chapter 8: Many of the characters learn lessons in this chapter. Who are those characters, what lessons do they learn, and how will those lessons change them moving forward?

AFTER EACH CHAPTER

Summarizing: Ask students to summarize each chapter after reading. Encourage students to use the Somebody-Wanted-But-So method:

- Somebody: Who is the chapter mostly about?
- Wanted: What does this character want?
- But: What problem does the character have?
- So: How does the character solve the problem?

Compare and Contrast: The book is mainly about how Noodle helps Gabriel, but she helps so many other characters as well. After each chapter, have students identify which characters Noodle helps and how.

REFLECTION

Theme: Explain that one theme of the book is *loss*. Work with students to brainstorm a list of various types of loss people might experience in their lives. For each one, have students explain how that type of loss might affect people.

Have students read “Noodle’s Tips for Grieving” (pp. 62-63). Review each tip and have students find evidence in the text that Gabriel has followed it. Have students think of a time they grieved someone or something they lost. Have students follow tip #3 by writing a letter to the person or thing they lost using the “Letter to My Lost _____.”

Persuasive Writing: Have students read “Fun Facts About Goldendoodles” (pp. 64-66). Based on what they’ve read, have students raise their hands to contribute to a master list of positive traits about Goldendoodles. Have students read the list over and consider what type of home might be best for a Goldendoodle, such as one with a large backyard and a family with kids.



WORKSHEET

Letter to My Lost _____

Directions: Think of a person or thing that you have lost. It could be someone who died, a friend who moved away, a prized possession you misplaced, or anyone/anything else that meant a lot to you. Write a letter to that person or thing using the template below.

Dear _____,

It's been _____ since I lost you.

When you went away, I felt _____.

I wish I could tell you _____
_____.

My favorite memory with you is _____
_____.

Here are some good things about my life now:

_____.

Love, _____