

# Teaching with *Helper Hounds:* *Robot Helps Max and Lily Deal with Bullies*

## PREVIEW THE BOOK

**Introduction:** Read the title of the book and display the cover. Ask students to guess who Robot, Max, and Lily are and to consider what the story will be about.

**Engage Prior Knowledge:** Have students think of a time that they or someone they know was bullied. Have students share the emotions they or this other person felt during the experience, such as sadness and loneliness. Ask students to consider some of the things they can do to help stop bullying.

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.



Lexile: 640 GRL: N  
Words: 7,843

## BEFORE EACH CHAPTER

**Vocabulary:** Preview the following vocabulary words. Allow students to share their understanding of the words, then provide them with a definition. As you come across each word in the text, have students identify the context clues that help them figure out the word's meaning. Ask students to think of synonyms for each word.

- Chapter 1: *rumbled, foster, prison*
- Chapter 2: *raid, kennels, breeders, humane, rumbling, cushy*
- Chapter 3: *stubby, heel, snout*
- Chapter 4: *warden, retired, nuzzled*
- Chapter 5: *stoop, scowl, perched*
- Chapter 6: *cushy, stressful, litter*
- Chapter 7: *whipped, chomped, nature*
- Chapter 8: *clank, skidded, halt,*
- Chapter 9: *file, podium, cowards*

**Predict:** Allow students to explore the illustrations. Ask students to 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? What do we learn about Robot in this chapter? What words would you use to describe him?
- Chapter 2: What do you think it was like for Robot to live at Flowerbrook Kennels? How do you think he felt when he was rescued? What made Julia believe Robot would make a good service dog?
- Chapter 3: What was the author’s purpose for writing this chapter? What do we learn about the steps a dog has to take to become a Helper Hound? Do you think it’s easy or hard for a dog to become one?
- Chapter 4: What are some experiences Paul had that led to him becoming a bully? Mr. Tuttle saw “something extra” in Paul, and Paul saw “something extra” in Robot. What do you think that “something extra” is for each of them? What is *your* “something extra”?
- Chapter 5: Why do you think Lily is so unfriendly towards Robot? What are some clues that tell you how she is feeling?
- Chapter 6: Why do you think Samuel tells Max and Lily the story about Robot’s mom? How does it relate to their experiences with their mom? Do you think it makes them feel closer to Robot?
- Chapter 7: What tips does Samuel give Max and Lily about how to stop bullies? Which of these tips had Max and Lily already done? Are there any tips you would add?
- Chapter 8: What assumptions do Coach Renway and Mike make about Robot when they see him? Are they correct? Have *you* ever “judged a book by its cover”?
- Chapter 9: How do Max and Lily finally find the courage to stand up to their bullies? What are some things we learn about why people might become bullies? Does bullying hurt the person being bullied, the bully, or both? Why?

## 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?

**Characterization:** After each chapter, have students identify any characters that act or have acted unkind. Have them write down who, what, where, when, why, and how: **who** the character is, **what** they did that was unkind, **where** and **when** they were unkind, **why** they acted unkind, and **how** being unkind made them and their victims feel. Then have students determine whether each character learned from their unkind acts and how they changed into better people.

## REFLECTION

**Theme:** Explain that one theme of the book is *kindness*. Ask students to explain what it means to be kind. Work with students to brainstorm a list of small ways and big ways to show kindness. Give each student the opportunity to share one kind thing they did that day.

**Role Play:** Have students read “Robot’s Rules for Dealing with Bullies” (p. 62). Review each tip and have students find evidence in the text that Max and Lily have followed it. Then have students role-play each tip, with one person being the bully and one person being the victim of the bullying. For each tip, role-play the wrong thing to do, and then role-play the right thing to do.

**Persuasive Writing:** Have students read “Fun Facts About Rottweilers” (pp. 63-65). Ask students to determine the physical and personality traits of Rottweilers based on what they’ve read. Then have them fill in the “All About Rottweilers” character web to create a description of Rottweilers.



# CHARACTER WEB

## All About Rottweilers

**Directions:** Draw a picture of a Rottweiler in the box in the center of the page. Use what you've learned about Rottweilers to write down their traits in the surrounding circles. Include both physical and personality traits.

