Teaching with *Helper Hounds: Penny Helps Portia Face Her Fears*

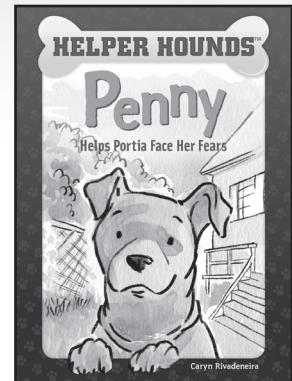## PREVIEW THE BOOK

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

HELPER HOUNDS
Penny
Helps Portia Face Her Fears

Caryn Rivadeneira

Lexile: 660   GRL: TBD

Engage Prior Knowledge:

Have students think of a time they were afraid. Have students share what they were afraid of, and how the fear made them feel physically and emotionally. Encourage students to consider whether overcoming fear is easy or hard and why.

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 terms. Allow students to share their understanding of the words, then provide them with a definition. As you come across each term in the text, pause to reflect on the context clues that help explain the term's meaning. Encourage students to think of synonyms for each term, or to use the term in a new sentence.

- Chapter 1: *pads, launched, snout*
- Chapter 2: *command, case, syndrome*
- Chapter 3: *scruff, guff, tensed*
- Chapter 4: *lapped, slinky, reactivity*
- Chapter 5: *trainer, jittery, relied, aggression, settle*
- Chapter 6: *stoop, scanned, headlines*
- Chapter 7: *breeding, progress, read*
- Chapter 8: *recite, self-control, stiff, mimicked*
- Chapter 9: *wandering, hustled, toppled*

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

Craft and Structure: Ask students the following questions while reading:

- Chapter 1: Who is narrating the story? What is Penny doing? How does the author let you know that Penny is dreaming?

- Chapter 2: What words would you use to describe Penny? How do you know Penny is a nice dog? How does the author let us know what kind of dog Penny is?

- Chapter 3: What is the author's purpose for writing this chapter? What new information about Penny do we learn? Why do you think this information is important?

- Chapter 4: What is the problem in this chapter? How is the problem solved?

- Chapter 5: Who is Mr. Tuttle? What clues tell you how Mr. Tuttle makes Miguel feel? How are Penny's feelings about Mr. Tuttle different than Miguel's feelings?

- Chapter 6: Why is Portia afraid of pit bulls? What does Miguel teach Portia about pit bulls? How does Portia use this new information to compare herself with pit bulls?

- Chapter 7: What are three facts Miguel teacher Portia about dogs? Why do you think the author included these facts in the story?

- Chapter 8: How does Portia feel about Penny at the beginning of the chapter? How do you know? How does Portia feel about Penny at the end of the chapter? How do you know?

- Chapter 9: How is the ending of the book like the beginning? What has changed?

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: After each chapter, have students choose two characters to compare and contrast using a Venn diagram. Challenge students by having them compare the same character in different chapters.

REFLECTION

Theme: Explain that one theme of the book is *bravery*. Ask students to explain what it means to be brave. List the characters in the book and have students state whether each character acted bravely. If students believe a character was brave, have them find at least two pieces of evidence from the text to show why.

Role Play: Have students read "Miguel's Never-Fear Dog Tips" (pp. 56–60). Review each tip and have students find evidence in the text that Portia has followed it. Then have students role play each tip, with one person being the dog and one person being a person interacting with the dog. 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 Pit Pulls" (pp. 61–64). Then, have students imagine they volunteer at an animal shelter and are trying to help a pit bull get adopted. Ask students to use what they learned from their reading to complete the "Pit Bull Adoption Ad." Explain to students that they are trying to persuade someone to adopt a pit bull by writing a description that will appeal to a dog owner.

Name_____

Pit Bull Adoption Ad

Directions: Imagine you are trying to help get a pit bull adopted. Use what you learned about pit bulls to write a descriptive paragraph and draw a picture of a pit bull. Don't forget to name your pit bull and to explain why she or he would make a good pet.

_____
(Title for your ad)

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