

Cricket

THEME

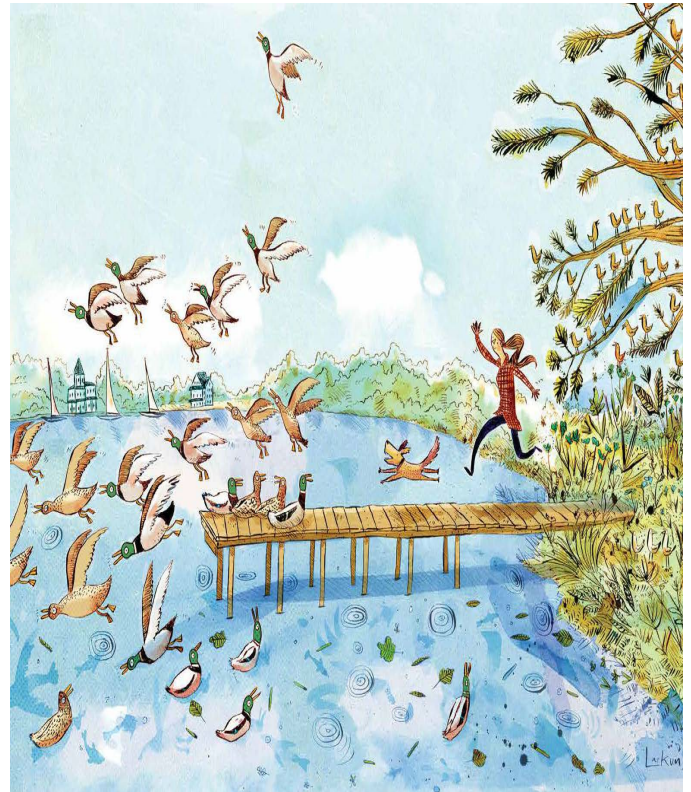
Explore the importance of animals in our lives using the texts, lessons, and activities in this month's *Cricket* Teacher Guide.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

How do animals influence our lives?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will determine themes.
- Students will recognize the genre, key elements, and characteristics of literary texts.
- Students will annotate and discuss a story.
- Students will write narratives to develop imagined experiences.
- Students will conduct short research projects.
- Students will adapt a story to a different form.



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core English Language Arts skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

SELECTIONS

- **Rescue Buddy**
Contemporary Realistic Fiction, ~630L
- **Roxie Laybourne: Feather Detective**
Expository Nonfiction, ~1080L
- **Taking Sides**
Contemporary Realistic Fiction, ~720L

Rescue Buddy

pp. 5–10, Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Use this story about two animal-loving friends to give students practice in identifying theme.

Lexile Score: ~630L

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will determine themes.
- Students will write narratives to develop imagined experiences.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **gargantuan** (p. 6) very large in size or amount
- **adjacent** (p. 8) sharing a border, wall, or point; next to
- **skeptical** (p. 9) having or expressing doubt about something
- **defeatist** (p. 9) a way of thinking in which a person expects to lose or fail

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do animals influence our lives?

Explain that our lives may be influenced by all kinds of animals, in all kinds of ways, such as being woken up by early birdsong in summer, learning to care for and ride horses, being frightened by dogs, feeling love for a pet, and volunteering at an animal shelter. Have students turn and talk with a partner about how their lives are influenced by animals. Then tell students to notice how animals influence the lives of characters—and other animals—in “Rescue Buddy.”

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the following context sentences and underline the vocabulary words. Have students work in pairs to infer the definition of each vocabulary word based on the sentence context. Then reveal the definitions and have students check their inferred definitions.

1. Jen was being defeatist when she said, “My poem isn’t very good, so I won’t bother to enter it in the poetry contest.”
2. The gargantuan statue of President Lincoln is almost 20 feet tall.
3. The music room is adjacent to our classroom, and sometimes we can hear the school band practicing.
4. Dad thinks we can paint the barn in one weekend, but I’m skeptical of this.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. Compare Izzy and Letty. How are the girls similar and different?
2. How are animals important to humans and to each other in the story?
3. How does Buddy both cause problems and solve problems?
4. Describe Miss Duff, the Animal Psychoanalyst and Mediator.
5. What emotions do the animals in this story display?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Theme

INSTRUCT: Review theme (message or lesson about life that an author wants to share with readers). Give examples of common literary themes, such as “love is stronger than hate” and “stand up for what you believe in.” Continue by explaining that usually themes are not stated and that students can figure out themes by thinking about information and events in a story, including the problem in the story, how it’s solved, and the lessons characters learn. Discuss themes of familiar books and movies and how they are developed.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to identify at least one theme in “Rescue Buddy” and note the story details that convey this theme. Invite pairs to share their ideas with the class.

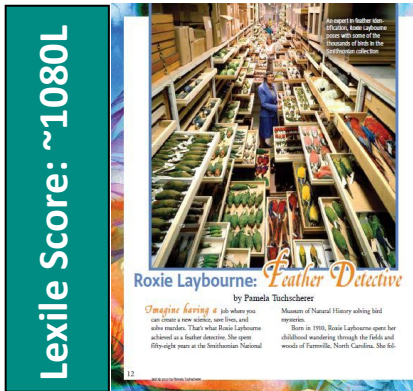
EXTEND

Writing Have students write a version of “Rescue Buddy” from the perspective of Tiger, Titan, or Buddy. Remind students to include details about how the animal character thinks and feels.

Roxie Laybourne: Feather Detective

pp. 12–17, Expository Nonfiction

Use this article about a feather scientist to help students analyze a biography.



RESOURCES

- Elements of Biography

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will recognize the genre, key elements, and characteristics of literary texts.
- Students will conduct short research projects.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **curator (p. 13)** a person who is in charge of things in a museum
- **pinpoint (p. 14)** to find out something with certainty
- **resilient (p. 16)** able to withstand shock without permanent damage

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do animals influence our lives?

Explain that the article “Roxie Laybourne: Feather Detective” is about a scientist who studied bird feathers. Have students turn and talk to a partner to discuss reasons why a scientist might do this—what would she hope to learn? Then have students preview the photos in the article to see if they can come up with more reasons.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and definitions and read them aloud. Have students work in groups of three to write sentences using these words, with each group member assigned a different word. Have groups review their sentences and confirm that the words are used correctly. Invite students to share their sentences. Instruct students to look for these words as they read the article.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the article, use these questions for discussion:

1. In reading about Roxie Laybourne’s life and career, what impressed you the most?
2. What do the details in paragraphs 2–3 tell you about Roxie’s childhood?
3. How did a love of natural history lead to a job for Roxie?
4. What challenges do you think Roxie faced as a woman working in science in the 1940s?
5. How did Roxie’s career change on October 4, 1960?
6. What qualities should a bird detective possess?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Biography

INSTRUCT: Remind students that a biography is a form of nonfiction in which the author communicates ideas about another person’s life. Explain that in addition to facts and quotes, biographers use anecdotes, or brief accounts of interesting incidents, to convey information about a person. Have students work in pairs to identify three anecdotes the author uses to describe Roxie and discuss what the anecdotes help them understand about her. Then distribute the *Elements of Biography* worksheet to students and review the directions.

ASSESS: Have students work in pairs to complete the worksheet chart. Then divide the class into groups to complete the group activity at the bottom of the worksheet.

EXTEND

Science Have students work in pairs or groups to learn more about bird feathers and create posters to share what they learn. Posters should answer the following questions: What are the six types of bird feathers? What are the main parts of a feather? What are some different ways birds use their feathers? Have students include photos or illustrations.

Elements of Biography

Fill in the chart using details from the article that reveal information about each aspect of Roxie's life. If you can't find any details about a particular element, leave the box blank. Then get together with classmates to complete the group activity at the bottom of this page.

Childhood	
Family members	
Schooling	
Important influences	
Achievements	
Failures and setbacks	
Important contributions	

Group Activity: Based on the information above, identify three of Roxie Laybourne's character traits. Explain which details support your ideas.

Taking Sides

pp. 23–28, Contemporary Realistic Fiction

Use this story about a troubled boy who finds a wolf in the woods by his house to give students practice in annotating and discussing a story.



RESOURCES

- Annotate/Discuss

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a short story.
- Students will annotate and discuss a story.
- Students will adapt a story to a different form.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **muzzle** (p. 24) the usually long nose and mouth of an animal, such as a dog or a horse
- **stealthily** (p. 24) done in a quiet and secret manner to avoid being noticed
- **scoured** (p. 24) searched carefully and thoughtfully
- **scat** (p. 24) animal droppings

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do animals influence our lives?

Have students identify the animal they believe best matches their personality. Then have students gather in pairs or groups to share their animal and their reasons for choosing it. Finally, tell students to think about how the main character in this story is like the animal he finds.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Read the vocabulary words and definitions. Then display the sentences below and have students use the vocabulary words to complete them. Finally, remind students to look for the vocabulary words as they read.

1. I _____ my entire house to find my missing necklace.
2. Liza talked softly to the horse and patted its soft _____.
3. I walked _____ into the kitchen to sneak another cookie.
4. We knew coyotes had been in our yard because we found _____.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion or incorporate them into the story discussion activity below:

1. How would you describe Seth?
2. Describe Seth’s relationship and life with his father.
3. How do you think Seth feels about his father?
4. What do the details in paragraph 4 (“Still, he wondered...”) reveal about Seth and his classmates?
5. Why does Seth react strongly when his father calls Animal Control?
6. What mood does the story convey?

SKILL FOCUS: Annotate and Discuss a Story

INSTRUCT: Distribute the *Annotate/Discuss* worksheet to students and review the directions. Use a think-aloud to demonstrate reading the story, stopping to wonder about a detail, highlighting the detail using the correct color, and making a note about it on the story page. Use another think-aloud to demonstrate marking and noting a connection to the text. Have students gather pencils/pens and highlighters or colored pencils to mark the text. Then have students highlight and annotate as they reread the story.



ASSESS: Have students gather in small groups to discuss the story using the questions on the *Annotate/Discuss* worksheet and any questions they have come up with on their own. After the discussion, have groups choose three thoughts/questions/reactions/connections to share with the class.

EXTEND

Writing/Drama Have students adapt the story to a different format. Students can work individually to create a comic strip version or work in groups to present the story as a play or a short film.

Annotate/Discuss

Annotate the Story What are your thoughts, questions, and ideas about the story? What connections can you make to the story? As you reread the story, use the annotation guide below. For every detail you highlight or mark, make a note to explain your thinking.

Use BLUE to highlight details related to the <u>main character</u> .	
Use GREEN to highlight details related to <u>other characters</u> .	
Use YELLOW to highlight any <u>conflicts</u> in the story.	
Use BLUE to highlight details about the <u>wolf</u> .	
Use ORANGE to highlight details related to <u>setting</u> .	
	Use a question mark to note questions you have as you read. Write your question on the page next to the question mark.
	Use an arrow to show a connection you make to yourself, another story, or something in the world. Write a note on the page to explain the connection.

Discuss the Story Use these questions to guide your discussion of the story. Take turns listening and speaking. Respond to your classmates' ideas. Add your own questions as they come up.

- What surprised you about the characters and events?
- What was confusing or difficult to understand?
- What did you like/dislike about the story?
- What are your thoughts about Seth?
- Why is the wolf important to Seth?
- What feelings do Seth and his father have for each other?
- Do the characters change or stay the same? What does this show?
- What did you highlight in the story?
- What questions do you have?
- What connections did you make?
- What is the significance of the title?
- What themes does the story convey?