

Book Review—What do YOU think?

After reading a book that features animals, have your students write a review!

Curriculum Connection

Alberta Education Program of Studies:
English Language Arts (2000)

Grade 7

1.1 Discover and Explore

- express personal understandings of ideas and information based on prior knowledge, experiences with others and a variety of oral, print and other media texts

2.2 Respond to Texts

Construct meaning from texts

- compare the choices and behaviours of characters portrayed in oral, print and other media texts with those of self and others

Grade 8

Express ideas and develop understanding

- revise understanding and expression of ideas by connecting new and prior knowledge and experiences

2.2 Respond to Texts

- explain connections between own interpretation and information in texts, and infer how texts will influence others

- identify and describe characters' attributes and motivations, using evidence from the text and personal experiences

Grade 9

1.1 Clarify and Extend

Consider others' ideas

- integrate own perspectives and interpretations with new understandings developed through discussing and through experiencing a variety of oral, print and other media texts

2.2 Respond to Texts

Experience various texts

- compare and contrast own life situation with themes of oral, print and other media texts

Materials

- Books featuring animals (see our [Recommended Reading](#) for a good selection)
- Pencils, paper, computer
- Art supplies (optional)

Activity

This activity can be modified to suit students of varying grades and levels.

Activity Options

1. Select a book as a class and read it together.

Animal Book Review (continued)

OR

- Have students find their own book featuring an animal. Ask them to find a book that features an animal in a realistic light. See *A Realistic Portrayal of Animals in Literature*

What do you think?

Ask students some or all of these questions to help with their book review

Discussion/Journaling Questions:

- Describe what the book is about in a couple of sentences? Who were the main characters?
- Were animals portrayed in a realistic way? How do you know? (Discuss the questions in **A Realistic Portrayal of Animals in Literature*.)
- Do you think the characters in the book were believable? (Use personal experiences to explain your answer)
- Could you relate to any of the characters? How so?
- What did you like the most about the book? What did you like the least?
- Did you have a favorite quote from the book? If so, what was it?
- If you could change something about the book what would it be and why?
- Describe what you liked or disliked about the writer's style?
- Did you learn anything new by reading the book?
- Would you recommend this book? Why or why not?

Write a Review

Students can write a few paragraphs addressing some of the discussion questions. Send their reviews to us and we may feature them on our website!

A Realistic Portrayal of Animals in Literature

- Does the story show dogs or cats who roam or travel without human supervision? *It is unrealistic to expect domestic animals to be able to survive on their own with the same degree of health as those raised as pets. In fact, domestic animals who are abandoned to the wild are a big problem in many parts of Alberta.*
- Does the book glorify the birth or puppies or kittens? *There is a severe pet overpopulation problem, therefore, spaying and neutering is an important part of responsible pet ownership.*
- Does the story portray animals with human characteristics? Books in which animals are presented anthropomorphically (ie: animals that talk, wear clothes, dance, serve tea) should be obvious that it is an imaginary story.
- Does it show wild animals as pets? *Stories about people who adopt and raise wild animals can present false expectations in young people. Also, situations in which people feed or interact with wild mammals present dangers to both people and animals.*

A book not meeting all the above criteria may still be suitable for classroom use, as long as the points above are discussed with the students.