



**RedRover Readers Program**

**Discussion and Activity  
Guide for**

***Lucky Boy***  
**By Susan Boase**



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### **Concepts**

- What does a dog need to be “lucky” or fortunate?
- Why would a dog move from one family to another family?
- In what ways could a dog be a companion (friend, good company) to a person?

Write the question, “What do you think a dog needs to be fortunate or lucky?” on the board before reading, and ask students to think of this question while they listen.

### **Before Reading**

Ask students if they have ever *seen* a pet dog alone in a yard.

Share the front cover and title with the students. Ask, “Where is the dog?” “What might the dog be thinking?”

Share the back of the book cover with the students. Ask, “How do you think the dog feels?”

Ask, “What do you think this book is going to be about?”

Ask students to explain their responses by asking, “Why?” or “Why not?” Allow students to form their own ideas; they can revise their ideas as you read the story.

### **During Reading**

On the page that starts, “He was just Boy...” ask, “How do you think the dog feels in this picture?”

On the page with the picture of Lucky Boy on the bed, ask “Why is Lucky Boy ‘making sound of bliss’?”

After reading the page that starts, “After breakfast, Mr. Miller...” ask, “Why do you think Lucky Boy makes Mr. Miller happy?”

Pause to discuss the front cover illustration when it appears again in the story. Compare the man’s yard with the illustration of the Gustin family’s yard. In both illustrations the dog is alone in the yard. Ask how each illustration shows the dog’s view of the yard (how they think he sees the yard)?

### **After Reading**

Ask:

- What specifically does Mr. Miller provide that the Gustins could not provide?
- Why wasn’t the Gustin family able to provide what the dog needed?
- Who is “lucky” or fortunate in the story?
- What do you think a dog needs to be “lucky” or fortunate? What do you think a person needs to be lucky or fortunate?

- If students talk about the dog or Mr. Miller being lonely, ask, “What does it mean to be “lonely?” “When have you felt lonely?” “Did you do anything when you felt that way? If yes, what did you do and why?”
- In what ways could a dog be a companion (friend, good company) to a person?

**Activity: Compare and Contrast**

Draw the chart below on a white board or chart paper. Review the chart together, referring to pictures in the story.

**1. Compare and contrast the dog’s life with the Gustin family and with Mr. Miller**

How are the situations different?

Gustin family “He didn’t start out lucky.”	<b>The Dog’s Situation</b>	Mr. Miller “You and I are lucky to have found each other, Boy!”
	<b>Dog’s name</b>	
	<b>Yard</b>	
	<b>Time and Attention</b>	
	<b>Words</b>	
	<b>Friends</b>	
	<b>Food</b>	
	<b>Exercise</b>	

**2. Ask**

What does a dog need to be “lucky” or fortunate?

## **Extensions: Choose one or more**

### **A. Wordless Story**

“Re-read” *Lucky Boy* with the students, showing the illustrations but not reading the text. For each illustration ask students to describe how the dog feels. Focus on the dog. Write the descriptive words on a white board or chart paper. (For the illustration of Mr. Miller on the porch swing, ask students how Mr. Miller feels and why.) When finished, discuss the words the students provided. Ask students: “Do dogs have feelings?” “How do we know?” Ask what situations would make dogs feel the emotions they list.

### **B. Illustrate a lucky dog**

Have students draw a picture or describe in words a lucky dog. Encourage students to refer to the chart you created. Students can illustrate or describe a dog they have known or one they imagine. Students may also want to work as a class or in pairs. Ask students to explain their pictures to you or read their writings to you or another student.

### **C. Imagine a conversation**

Show the story’s final illustration of Mr. Miller and Lucky Boy on the porch swing. Ask students to imagine a conversation between Mr. Miller and Lucky Boy (if Lucky Boy could talk in words). What would Lucky Boy say to Mr. Miller? What would Mr. Miller say to Lucky Boy? This conversation can take several forms:

- Ask two students to volunteer to role play each character in front of the class. After the role play (two minutes) ask the class what they would add to the conversation.
- Ask students to form pairs and role play.
- Ask students to write down a conversation working individually or in pairs.
- Write the conversation as a class with you or another adult writing on the white board or chart paper.
- Have students pretend to be Mr. Miller’s voice and you pretend to be Lucky Boy as you respond to their statements and questions.

### **D. Companion and Friend**

What qualities make a person a good companion or friend for another person? Share ideas as a class. Write the ideas on a white board or chart paper. How can a person be a good companion or friend for a dog? Share ideas as a class. Circle ideas in common (a person’s companion or friend and a dog’s companion or friend). How do the qualities of a good companion or friend apply to both a person a dog? Why are these qualities similar?

Provide each student with large paper cutouts of a person and of a dog, or a copy of the drawing of the dog (see next page). Have students fill the paper figures with 5 to 10 words describing a good companion or friend.

## **E. Animal Behavior Observation**

Visit a real shelter to observe animal behaviors for dogs and cats. Some animal shelters may offer virtual tours or be willing to Skype with your class to show off their animals and the facility if a field trip to the actual building is not possible.

Encourage children to choose one animal to focus on and record what they notice about the animal's behavior and body language. Use the form below or create your own to capture the students' responses. A sketch sheet to draw what they observe can also be added.

## **F. Design a Dream Animal Shelter**

Invite students to think about how an animal shelter keeps animals happy, healthy and safe during their stay. Brainstorm as a group some of the things that are needed. (Possible answers include soft beds, food, water, a way to keep animals separated, water bowls, food bowls, an area to play, balls to play, blankets, toys, music, caring staff and volunteers, collars, etc.) If possible, include a visit to a real animal shelter so they can make observations.

Tell students to imagine they have community support and all of the money in the world to design their dream animal shelter. If they have visited a real animal shelter, ask how their dream shelter might be different from the animal shelter they visited and if there are ways their dream shelter would be the same. Invite students to get creative and design their own dream animal shelter. Ask students to draw their shelter and label what they decide to include in it. Before they begin drawing ask the following questions:

What will your dream animal shelter look like? (How big is it? How many animals can stay there at one time?)

Where will your animal shelter be located?

What types of things will it have in it? What will make animals like it?

(How will it keep them healthy, happy and safe?)

What will make people like it? (How will you get people to visit and adopt animals?)

Why is it a dream animal shelter?

Have students share their designs with a partner or in front of the class.

## **At the End of the Lesson**

Ask students to reflect on the questions, "What did you learn from today's book and discussion that you didn't know before?" You can do this with the whole group, in a sharing circle or related class meeting format, by having students fill out index cards, or other formats as you choose. We recommend that you have a variety of formats. After getting a sense of what the students learned, reinforce key themes that they mentioned and add perhaps one or two that you would like them to keep in mind from the key concepts. Also discuss any follow up assignments or take home materials. Remember the students' responses to the question, "What did you learn?" to add to your report about this reading.



## Shelter Animal Behavior Observation

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Species/Type of Animal: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

What was the animal doing before you came up to him or her?

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Did the animal's behavior change when you came up to him or her? Yes or no? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, what changes did you notice?

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Describe the animal and his or her environment:

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What do you notice about the animal's ears? (Are they up, down, forward, back or flat against the animal's head?)

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What do you notice about the animal's eyes? (Are they bright, open and alert or dim and partly closed?)

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What do you notice about the animal's body?

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What do you notice about the animal's tail?

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Based on your observations above, what do you think this animal is communicating and how do you think he or she is feeling?

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