

Kind News™

Teacher Guide

MAY/JUNE 2019

RECOMMENDED FOR GRADES 3-6

In this issue, we explore the idea of dog breeds and how a dog's breed may (or may not) factor into the decision of what dog to adopt. We'll hear about the Canine Commandos, a student group whose program working with shelter dogs teaches social awareness and responsible-decision making—two key competencies for social and emotional learning! We'll find out why dogs are so good at sniffing things out, hear how a goat overcame adversity, and learn why birds who can't fly have wings.

Can screens build connection?

The Restricted Adventures of Raja app series is on a mission to do just that! This bilingual, interactive series of book and game apps includes questions and play-based learning that educators can use to help students practice the three steps needed for empathy. Download "Raja Book 3" now!

Learn more at RedRover.org/empathyapp

Check out page 3 for a review of *The New Childhood: Raising Kids to Thrive in a Connected World*.

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Spay Neuter Network's North Texas Education Initiative alleviates pet overpopulation by educating future pet owners about responsible pet ownership. Learn more at www.spayneuternet.org

FLIP OVER!



Turn the page for activities to use in your classroom that align to standards.

COMMON CORE AND NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS ALIGNED ACTIVITIES



Third grade: NGSS 3-LS4-3. Construct an argument with evidence that in a particular habitat some organisms can survive well, some survive less well, and some cannot survive at all. After reading Curiosity Corner, “Can All Birds Fly?”, ask students if they think that birds who have wings but do not fly are at a disadvantage compared to other birds. Why or why not? Ask students what advantages wings provide in the examples given of the ostrich and the penguin in their habitats. Allow students time to research one common bird habitat, such as woodland, forest, wetlands, rainforest

or plains and ask them to imagine a penguin or ostrich in this new habitat. Ask students to construct an argument about whether they think the penguin or ostrich would survive in this new habitat. Why or why not?

Fourth grade: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3.C Use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events; CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.3.D Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely. After reading “Boots on the Ground,” ask students to re-read just the first paragraph to themselves. Can they visualize the students going into the kennel? What does it sound like in that scene, and what does it look like? What things help them imagine how the students in the Canine Commando program are working with the dogs (sensory details, transition words)? Then ask students to describe a memorable experience they have had to a partner and challenge them to use sensory details and transition words in their story. Partners can jot down which techniques they hear with specific examples and then students switch roles. Ask students to write their story using the notes their partner took and add additional details they have. Challenge the students to share their stories with the group and show how well their stories “show” and avoid just “telling.”

Fifth grade: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. After students have had an opportunity to guess the Critter Clues answer, read the mystery critter information on the pitbull aloud or project it on a screen for students to read as appropriate for their reading level. How do they think it happened that pitbulls came to be perceived as dangerous? What events contributed to people’s viewpoints on the pitbull? Discuss what a stereotype is and give some examples. Then, allow students to research myths or stereotypes that have been perpetuated about animals and choose one to learn more about. What was believed about the animal, and how did this belief differ from the facts? How did the belief come to be popular? Assist students in finding a variety of reputable sources to back up their research. Discuss why it is so important to base their research on reliable sources. After completing their research, ask them the following questions. Do they believe it is easy for stereotypes to be perpetuated in our society? Why or why not? Did this exercise make them think about how readily they will believe things they hear about animals in the future?

Sixth Grade: NGSS MS-LS4-5. Gather and synthesize information about technologies that have changed the way humans influence the inheritance of desired traits in organisms. After reading “Dreaming of Getting a Dog?”, review with students why people began to breed dogs (to try to control what behaviors and physical traits the dogs would have). What modern scientific phenomena have they heard of that seek to do a similar thing (genetic engineering or modification, gene therapy)? Allow students time to research different technologies in groups. After sharing their findings, ask them what they think about these technologies. Are they beneficial to our society? Why or why not? Do they agree or disagree that we should use science to influence biology? Why or why not? To extend the activity, students can write persuasive essays taking one side of the argument or choose a side to argue in a class debate.



ANSWER KEY

Critter Clues FROM PAGE 6



Our mystery critter is a type of dog called a **PITBULL!**

The pitbull is not an official dog breed but is descended from dogs bred in England to bite and hold large animals, such as bulls or bears, for entertainment. When this was outlawed, people began breeding the dogs to fight one another, crossing the “bully” dogs with terriers. 🐾 Pitbulls were also used as working dogs on farms for hunting, protection and herding. After the pitbull was brought to America, it was widely viewed as a loyal, loving family dog. Pitbulls were even seen as “nanny dogs,” because they were considered to be good with children. 🐾 However, in the 1980s, their reputation took a turn for the worse when people again began breeding them for dog-fighting. Although the idea that all pitbulls are aggressive is slowly changing, it still exists. Laws restricting where pitbulls can live is common. 🐾 **However, there is no evidence that pitbull-type dogs are more dangerous than any other dog; dogs of various breeds may bite if they feel afraid or aggressive.** And of course, many myths about pitbulls have been discredited, including the ideas that they have “locking jaws,” or can’t feel pain. Although dogs can be bred to be more likely to carry specific traits, each dog is an individual with a unique personality. What can you do to help change the pitbull’s image? 🐾 In areas where pitbulls are banned, contact your local lawmakers and share research about pitbulls and how laws targeting breeds don’t reduce instances of dog bites. Better alternatives include dog-bite prevention programs in schools that teach animal behavior and help kids understand when and why dog bites happen.



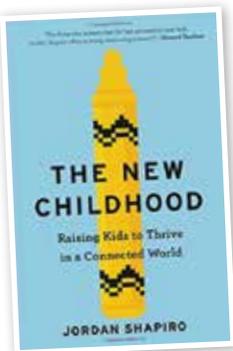
Where’s Raja?

Raja is hiding on page 5!

Book Nook: Can screens build connection?

The New Childhood: Raising Kids to Thrive in a Connected World

Written by Jordan Shapiro | Recommended for Parents and Educators



As a parent who has seen firsthand the ease and enthusiasm with which my own daughter has embraced online worlds and communities, there have been many times when I have been

worried about “screen time.” But I feel far less concerned after reading Jordan Shapiro’s book, *The New Childhood: Raising Kids to Thrive in a Connected World*.

Shapiro makes a strong argument for why screen time isn’t necessarily bad for kids. It is not the screen itself; it is the content and whether kids actively or passively engage in that content. While I still think my daughter should spend more time outside or reading books (like I did), I agree she is growing up in a totally different world, and success in her future will mean communicating well in-person *and* digitally. And she will need to flip seamlessly between the two in ways I can only imagine.

I wholeheartedly believe that in order for parents and educators today to prepare young people for this future, we need to be better guides for our kids. This means joining them online and helping them navigate more successfully in their digital environments, rather than just restricting their time or leaving them alone to figure it out on their own.

There is no doubt that all this makes parenting and educating more complex. In addition to the conversations my daughter and I have about stories in books and on the more familiar screens of my childhood (movies and TV), we interact together through text and social media, and it is really challenging to juggle it all. I ask questions about her school day and classmates, as well as her virtual worlds. I model for her how to converse online, to respond with empathy, warmth, humor, to ask questions. We talk about how online and in-person interaction and identity might be different and how people online and in person might be feeling. I ask questions similar to the integrated questions in the Raja empathy apps to increase her awareness of self and other. I challenge her to think creatively and independently in whatever space she is in. I call attention to the automated algorithms controlling the content she sees.

We work on digital literacy together, and learning and growing with her in this ever-changing, complex new reality, is mind-blowing and humbling.

Digital technology can open doors as much as close them; being an optimist I see them opening, but not without help.

To learn more about *The Restricted Adventures of Raja* app series, visit RedRover.org/Raja.



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Learn how to teach kids the 3 steps to empathy: recognize emotions, share emotions and regulate emotions, at a RedRover Readers online or in-person professional development workshop!



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***Kind News* helps students learn about animals and think critically about their responsibilities towards the wellbeing of others.**

The magazine encourages empathy and critical thinking in students and motivates students to take action to improve the lives of animals. *Kind News* uses articles and short features to introduce issues affecting animals, how to understand animal behavior and how to care for pets. There are questions built into articles throughout the magazine. These questions can be used to guide whole- or small-group discussions with your students.

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