

## ***Jeannie Houdini: A Hamster's Tale***

Written by Mary-Ann Stouck  
Illustrated by Rebecca Evans



### **RedRover Readers Program: Objective 5: Lesson D**

**Goals and Objectives:** Identify and evaluate problems by weighing factors such as safety, responsibility, and impact on others while developing self-motivation and self-reflection skills and applying these skills to various situations.

**Time:** 45 minutes (25 reading and discussion, 20 drawing activity)

**Materials:** Anchor text (“Jeannie Houdini: A Hamster’s Tale”)

#### **1. Before Reading:** As a class, discuss the following topics:

- Who has seen a hamster?
- How do you think hamsters communicate? What could communication look like between a person and a hamster?
- What do you think “behavior” means?
- What might hamster behavior look like?
- What emotions do we experience when we play with our friends? What emotions do you think hamsters experience?

#### **2. During Reading:** Read the book to the class. Pause on different pages and discuss the story.

- On the page where Jeannie is eating a strawberry, ask: What do you think Jeannie does in her cage?
- On the page where Sophia is holding Jeannie, ask: Where do you think Jeannie goes when she escapes? Why do you think she escapes?
- On the page where the twins are pillow fighting, ask: How do you think the twins might feel about Jeannie? How are their feelings similar or different from Sophia’s feelings about Jeannie?
- For those who have siblings, what is it like to have a sibling? For those who do not have siblings, what do you think it’s like to have a sibling?

#### **3. After Reading:** Review the story’s illustrations with students and ask to reinforce and extend their understanding of the text:

- According to this book, what are some hamster behaviors?
- In what ways is caring for small animals different than caring for larger animals?
- How are the children’s reactions to the hamster different from one another?
- What does a hamster need to be happy, healthy and safe?
- How do you think Jeannie and Sophia felt at the beginning of the story? How do you think they feel at the end?



**4. Drawing or Writing Activity:** On a piece of paper or on a tablet or computer screen, have students imagine they just adopted a hamster. What would their enclosure, or habitat, look like? What will keep your hamster happy, healthy and safe? What will your hamster play with? Have students either draw or write about what their hamster enclosure might look like. Encourage students to name their hamster and label their drawing. Allow at least 10 minutes for students to share their drawings or short stories to the rest of the class.

**5. At the End of the Lesson:** Ask students to reflect on these questions. Try this with the whole group, in a sharing circle or ask students to fill out index cards.

- How did you feel about today's book and discussion?
- Did today's book and discussion change how you think about anything in your life?
- What did you learn from today's book and discussion that you didn't know before?

