



## RedRover Readers and Early Ages Gathering to Learn Empathy Through Stories (EAGLES) Program

**GRADE(S):** 3-5 **SEL ALIGNMENT:** Self-awareness; Social Awareness;  
Self-management/emotional regulation

### WHAT'S THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING YOU KNOW ABOUT HORSES?

by Richard Van Camp

Illustrated by George Littlechild

**TIME:** 45 minutes (reading and discussion - 25; activity - 20)

**MATERIALS:** Anchor text ("What's the Most Beautiful Thing You know About Horses?")

#### KEY CONCEPTS

- How can thinking about what is beautiful or good about horses, dogs or people help us think about others and feel grateful?
- How can understanding history – of our country, our community (including all of nature), and our family – help us in our lives?

#### LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT:

You may want to do a land acknowledgment before this reading and lesson to determine what land you are on. [Native-land.ca](http://Native-land.ca) is an app to help map Indigenous territories, treaties, and languages.

#### BEFORE READING:

##### Definitions - FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Words about how people find a place to live carry a lot of meaning. Sometimes more than people are aware of. Take some time to define the terms below and write them down on a board or chart paper for the students to see. When asking students questions during the book, refer back to these definitions.
  - Settle: to live somewhere
  - Colonize: to take over an area
  - Relocation: the act of moving something or someone from one place to another

##### Definitions - FOR ALL STUDENTS

- Ask, "How do you describe where you live? Is it one building or structure? Do you include spaces outdoors? Do you include multiple buildings or places? Do you include your community?"
- Now, here are some more words I want to make sure everyone understands the meaning of...
  - Conflict: a serious disagreement, argument, or struggle; can be physical or about ideas
  - Fairness: impartial and just treatment or behavior without favoritism or discrimination

##### Questions Before Reading

- Share the book cover with the students, and ask them to observe the cover artwork. Ask, "What do you notice about the artwork?" "Is this artwork like anything you've seen before?"
- Share, the title of this book is "What's the Most Beautiful Thing You Know About Horses?" Ask, "How many of you have seen or met a horse before?" Ask, "What could the word 'beautiful' mean here?" (Pretty, kind, interesting)
- Then ask, "What's the most beautiful or best thing YOU KNOW about horses?" Write down students' ideas on a board or sheet of paper.

**DURING READING:**

Read the book to the class. Pause on different pages and discuss the story.

- After reading the page that starts “The reason I am asking”: Ask, “What do you think about the author’s “good news” and “bad news” about being ‘half Indian’ and playing ‘guns’?”
- On the page that starts, “My mom was a Dogrib Indian...” after the section ending with “barrenlands”: Ask, “What does respect mean?” and “What does respect for dogs look like?”
- How would you answer the question, “Do horses love?”
- Take a look at the photos of the real people in the author’s life that he describes. Ask: “Why do you think he added these photographs to the book?” “How do you think each person in each photo is feeling?” Discuss the facial expressions in the photographs.
- Pay attention to the artwork as you read. Ask, “What do you think about the artwork on this page?” periodically.

**AFTER READING:**

- Ask, “Who was your favorite family member in this story? Do you remember what that family member said about horses?”
- Go back and look at the illustration on the page that starts, “The reason I am asking”: Ask: “What comes up in your mind or how do you feel when you look at this drawing?” “Have you ever heard of kids playing ‘Guns’ or ‘Cowboys and Indians’?” If you have heard of this before, how do you feel about kids having played this (mostly in the past)?” “Why do you think this game was popular?”
- Go back to the original brainstorming students did with what they thought the most beautiful thing they knew about horses was and see if students wanted to add more ideas to the chart. Then brainstorm the most beautiful things about other animals and people they know. Ask, “What is the most beautiful/great thing about you?” Ask if they want to add that to the chart as well.

Horses	Dogs	Other Animal (have students choose)	Your Family or Friends

**ACTIVITIES:**Write or tell a story:

- How would you describe yourself using characteristics of non-human animals? Are you a “dog person” or a “horse person” or some other \_\_\_\_\_ person?
- Pick a non-human animal you identify with or relate to or an animal you wish you could turn into and write a story about turning into this animal or write about yourself in a way that compares you to your chosen animal
- In what ways are you similar? In what ways are you different? Share why you picked this animal.
- Younger children can draw a picture about which animal they relate to most.
- Pay attention and discuss any emotion words that are shared or drawn throughout the activity. Ask, “How did this make you feel?” “How can we tell when a human feels sad, mad, or happy?”

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**ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED):**

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**FOR OLDER STUDENTS**

Explain how most United States history books in public schools tell early American history from a colonist's perspective. Even the choice of words, like "settlers," assumes the land was not settled or needed settling, but that's not true. Native people had already settled in this land. They had values and beliefs that were not understood and often not respected and even feared by the colonists. If you filled a storybook about Native history, what would it be about? What local history or stories would you share?

**FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS**Alternate extension activity

- Draw and color a picture of yourself or the people you consider family. Add found images, photographs, objects, designs, symbols, animals, or people with you as part of your drawing if you feel they help describe you. Add words to describe what is beautiful about you and/or your family or community. Make sure to include feelings in your drawing and sharing.
- Optional: Share your artwork with another student or the group. Describe the parts of the drawing and how it represents you or your family/community.

**AT THE END OF THE LESSON:**

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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?

**DON'T FORGET TO REPORT YOUR READING:****[RedRover.org/reportreadings](https://RedRover.org/reportreadings)**