



# Guinea Dog

**Jennings, P.**

Fifth-grader Rufus desperately wants a dog but his father is clear that they are not going to get one. When Rufus's mother brings home a guinea pig as a concession to both of them, it pleases neither Rufus nor his father, but the guinea pig worms her way into the hearts of father and son, and even Rufus friends admire his unusual pet that acts like a dog. This grade 3-6 novel could be used for read-aloud, guided novel study, independent reading, Book Club or Literature Circle. Useful to promote discussions/ writing activities about friendship, family relationships, and pet ownership. The first in a series about Rufus and Fido.

**Subjects:** English Language Arts  
Grades 3-6

**Evaluation Date:** Aug 2022



Social Considerations

# Resource Evaluation

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## CURRICULUM FIT

### Does the resource support BC curriculum?



Extensively

Guinea Dog is a novel that supports the BC English Language Arts curriculum by using humour and the universally-appealing topic of pets to motivate reading for pleasure. It also helps readers understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world. Readers can use personal experiences and prior knowledge to deepen their understanding of the text. As well, they can transform ideas from the text to create their own stories.

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## SUGGESTED CLASSROOM USAGE

This resource could be used as a read-aloud novel for grades three to five. Alternatively, it could be used as a guided novel study or for independent reading. Teachers might choose this novel as a part of a Book Club or Literature Circle activity. This novel could promote discussions and writing assignments that deal with friendship, family relationships, and pet ownership. Readers could benefit from discussion about the impact of poor self-regulation and parental permissiveness as one character faces the risk of failing fifth grade due to tardiness and lack of effort.

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## SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

### Gender Roles, Identity & Sexual Orientation

As Shame is about forced marriage in the South Asian community in Britain, gender roles are fairly rigid, with preference given to males over females.

### Ethical and Legal

One of the characters (Murphy) jokes about continually arriving late for school and neglecting his homework. Even when it is revealed that he may fail fifth grade, he does not change his behaviour until the protagonist steps in and tries to enforce school expectations. Without teacher guidance, readers may perceive only the humour in Murphy's attitude and miss the serious impact.

### Do the social considerations support, rather than detract from, student learning?



Moderately

Near the end of the novel, Murphy's teacher and parent try to get him to take his school responsibilities more seriously, revealing that he may fail fifth grade because of his tardiness and neglect of his school work.

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## GENERAL CONTENT

### Content

#### Is the resource engaging?



Extensively

#### Is the content current for the intended curriculum and grade?



Extensively

#### Is the content accurate for the intended curriculum and grade?



Extensively

#### Is the content relevant and important for student broad understandings?



Extensively

### Audience

~~Is the content appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level~~

**Is the content appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?**



Extensively

**Does the resource provide opportunities for creative and critical thinking?**



Extensively

**Is the level of detail appropriate?**



Extensively

**Is the language use appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?**



Extensively

Although the main character in this novel is a boy, his struggle to convince his parents to buy him a dog is a universal cause for both boys and girls. As well, all children experience the uncertainties of friendships as they are growing up. Some readers may unreservedly enjoy the humour but other readers may find their enjoyment reduced by unrealistic elements such as a guinea pig keeping pace with a cyclist or doing tricks.

**Does the resource make effective use of the medium?**



Extensively

**Is the resource easy to use?**



Extensively

**Is the use of font, text size and presentation suitable?**



Extensively

**Are extraneous elements/illustrations kept to a minimum?**



Extensively

This 186 page novel is broken down into 21 short chapters. Each chapter has a title that accurately reflects what the chapter is about. There are no illustrations in this book.

**Does the text show insight into the complexity of the human condition?**

Moderately

**Does the text broaden students' experiences and understanding?**

Moderately

**To what degree is this text stylistically rich?**

Extensively

**Plot description**

Fifth-grader Rufus desperately wants a dog. His father is adamant that the family is not going to get one. As a concession to both of them, Rufus's mother brings home a guinea pig. Although this pleases neither Rufus nor his father, the guinea pig begins to worm her way into the hearts of both father and son. Rufus tries to keep his pet a secret from his friends, fearing ridicule, but when they discover her, they admire his unusual pet that acts like a dog. Rufus' friend Murphy remains loyal, despite attempts from a classmate who bullies Rufus in order to try to take Rufus' place as Murphy's best friend.

**Genre**

- Other
- Humour, Animals

**Literary Highlights**

- Point of view

**Type**

- Novel

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS****Reading Level**

- At intended grade level(s)

Guinea Dog is the first novel in a series by Patrick Jennings which includes further adventures of Rufus and Fido in Guinea Dog 2 and Guinea Dog 3. The novel is available as an audiobook and an E-Book. A variety of comprehension activities and novel study lesson plans are available online either free of charge or at a cost.

**GRADES AND SUBJECTS****Subjects**

- English Language Arts: 3-6

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