



Leroy Ninker Saddles Up

DiCamillo, K.

Leroy Ninker dreams of being a real cowboy with a horse of his own. His dreams come true when he meets Maybelline, and the two form a special bond. But when Maybelline gets lost, Leroy must find her, also learning some important lessons about having a plan as opposed to being spontaneous, and about the responsibilities that come with owning a pet. Lovable characters and fun visuals may engage both primary and intermediate-level students, and in particular, those interested in cowboys and books that highlight the relationship between people and their pets. This humorous book may be suitable as a class read-aloud, part of a literature circle, or an individual novel study to explore its themes of chasing your dreams and connecting with animals.

Subjects: English Language Arts, Career Education

Grades 4-7

Evaluation Date: Dec 2020



Social Considerations

Resource Evaluation

CURRICULUM FIT

Does the resource support BC curriculum?



Extensively

This resource supports the intermediate-level Language Arts curriculum because "language and text can be a source of creativity and joy." Also, "using language in creative and playful ways helps us understand how language works," and "exploring stories and other texts helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world." The resource also supports primary and intermediate-level Career Education curriculum because "confidence develops through the process of self-discovery," and "family and community relationships can be a source of support and guidance when solving problems and making decisions."

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM USAGE

The story could be used as a read-aloud, in both a primary or intermediate classroom, as an individual novel study, or as part of a literature circle. Students who are interested in cowboys, horses, the responsibilities of pet ownership, or the relationships between people and their pets might be interested in this story. As well, the book could be used for a whole class activity or amongst groups of students as a starting or endpoint to debate the pros and cons of formulating plans, as opposed to making spontaneous decisions.

SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Language

Cowboy slang such as "yippie-i-oh," "dang nib it," and "gol'dang it" is used extensively and may be confusing for some students, such as second language learners, for example.

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



Extensively

Although the cowboy-specific language could be difficult for some English language learners, it adds to the humour of the story and the lively nature of Leroy's character. Leroy's cowboy dreams and the female horse's need to be admired could be classroom discussion points about gender-role awareness and stereotypes.

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 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

The story would appeal to intermediate students in that the themes of chasing your dreams and connecting with animals are both accessible to children in this age range. The characters are lovable and the language and visuals are engaging and fun.

Does the resource make effective use of the medium?

Extensively

Is the resource easy to use?

Extensively

Is the location of illustrations appropriate?

Extensively

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

Extensively

Are extraneous elements/illustrations kept to a minimum?

Extensively

The font is easy to read, with italics and bold print used on occasion for emphasis. Cute, black-and-white illustrations are included on every few pages, with compelling facial expressions for both people and animals. Horseshoes added to the numbers at the bottom of each page are a nice touch that helps highlight the cowboy theme throughout.

PRINT NOVEL

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



Extensively

Does the text broaden students' experiences and understanding?



Extensively

To what degree is this text stylistically rich?



Extensively

Plot description

Leroy Ninker longs to be a real cowboy, complete with a real horse. Along comes Maybelline, the horse of his dreams. She requires some particular care, including a lot of food, a lot of compliments, and a lot of attention. Maybelline immediately gets lost, and Leroy must search for her in a storm. He eventually finds her and a friendly neighbourhood where they are both welcomed.

Genre

- Illustrated novel

Literary Highlights

- Well-developed themes

Type

- Novel

Visual Highlights

- Other (specify)
- Novel

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Reading Level

- At intended grade level(s)

This story fits into the author's "Tales from Deckawoo Drive" companion series to her Mercy Watson stories.

GRADES AND SUBJECTS**Subjects**

- Career Education: K-5
- English Language Arts: 4-7

ADDITIONAL INFO**Copyright**

2014

Primary identifier (ISBN)

9780763680121

<https://focusedresources.ca/k-12-evaluated-resource-collection/leroy-ninker-saddles>

© 2026 Focused Education Resources. All rights reserved.