

Puppy Pals

• Storytime •

by | Lisa M. Shaia



What better subject for storytime than man's best friend? Kids will love to hear these canine stories with their themes of friendship, loyalty, responsibility, and just a bit of doggie disobedience to keep things interesting!

Picture Book Series

The Stanley series by Linda Bailey, from Kids Can Press. PK–3.

Stanley is a dog who just wants to please his people. But in *Stanley's Party*, his people leave him alone at night, and Stanley just can't help himself: he invites his friends Alice, Nutsy, and my personal favorite, Gassy Jack, over for the best dog-gone party ever, to the dismay of his owners, who return early!

Stanley's crew joins him for more adventures in *Stanley's Wild Ride*. After discovering a way out of his backyard one night, Stanley liberates his buddies from their own yards for a night of raucous fun! Things with wheels are the ultimate find for these pooches, who journey through town on a skateboard, a shopping cart, and a roller skate... until their fun comes to a screeching halt.

Stanley at Sea finds our hero at a picnic—and extremely put out. His people are not sharing their food with him, so Stanley sneaks away with Alice, Nutsy, and Gassy Jack. It's not long before the pack is tempted by a delicious smell coming from an unoccupied canoe floating in the river... and pretty soon, the dogs find themselves at sea, face to face with the “end of the outside.”

In the latest Stanley adventure, *Stanley's Beauty Contest*, Stanley's people forget to feed him breakfast. Stanley and his friends try to win the

dog show to get a yummy meal. The humor, the dogs' never-ending quest for food, and Gassy Jack's impeccable timing will have even your reluctant readers wanting to hear more!

Musical Activity with Felt Board

Dogs Rule by Daniel Kirk. Hyperion, 2003. 4–8.

In this collection of exuberant poems by Daniel Kirk, “Chowhound” will especially delight your students. Create felt pieces using the templates provided to display on the felt board as the song from the book's accompanying CD plays, and use a lunch baggie to catch all of the food in the dog's tummy. If you have time for a craft, have each student make his or her own felt piece. Consider using the song to as a way to introduce healthy eating habits to your class.

Picture Book Series

“*Let's Get a Pup,*” *Said Kate* and “*The Trouble with Dogs...*” *Said Dad* by Bob Graham, from Candlewick Press. 4–8.

Bob Graham's “*Let's Get a Pup,*” *Said Kate* introduces readers to a family who wants to get a dog. When they go to the shelter they see all the wonderful choices—how could they possibly decide on just one? The sequel, “*The Trouble with Dogs...*” *Said Dad* describes the family's journey through dog obedience school. The theme of acceptance rings strongly through the stories and the illustrations.

Musical Activity with Stick Puppets

Dogs Rule by Daniel Kirk. Hyperion, 2003. 4–8.

Daniel Kirk's song, "What's So Good About a Cat?" (featured on the *Dogs Rule* CD) can be used in a variety of ways. Relate this stick puppet activity to "Let's Get a Pup," *Said Kate* by distributing the reproducible at the end of this article to each student, along with crayons, colored pencils, or markers. Instruct students to envision their perfect pet pup, and decorate the blank dog accordingly. Then, direct them to cut the dog out, and adhere a craft stick to the back of the oval to create a stick puppet. Repeat the process with the blank cat on the reproducible. When everyone is ready, play the song and have students act out the parts with the appropriate puppet!

Suggestion: You may also consider dividing the class in half—create one dog team and one cat team. Have a competition to see which team sings the chorus "woofier" or "meowier!"

Picture Book

My Father, the Dog by Elizabeth Bluemle. Candlewick Press, 2006.

This book is perfect vehicle for laughs—and the perfect vehicle for introducing students to the concept of a Venn diagram. What do Dog and Dad have in common? Do they both fetch the newspaper? Growl when you wake them from a nap? Enjoy car rides with the wind blowing in their faces? It may take some hard work to come up with differences! This cute, short story will appeal to all of your students with its mischievous tone.

Musical Activity with Puppets

"There's a Dog in School" (Various artists.)

There are different versions of this song in which farm animals come to school to sound out their ABCs. Use puppets to enhance the song with your

students. If you don't have the right puppets, ask your class to bring in stuffed animals from home. They can hold up their friends proudly when their animal makes an appearance in the song.

In Stuart Stotts and Tom Pease's version, a dog, a cow, a horse and a kid sing their way through the alphabet (listen to a sample at www.cdbaby.com/cd/stottspease). If you need a longer tune, use Carole Peterson's rendition in which a dog, a cat, a duck, a bunny, and a child chant their ABCs (listen to a sample at <http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/petersonc2>).

Storytelling Exercise

How and Why Stories: World Tales Kids Can Read and Tell by Martha Hamilton and Mitch Weiss. "Why Dogs Chase Cats." August House, 1999.

This short *pourquois* story describes the deterioration of Cat and Dog's friendship. Their bond ends in betrayal; Cat takes dog's money, and even worse, all the ham, and runs up the tree with it, taunting dog while she polishes off the meat. When cat finally comes down from the tree, dog starts chasing her...and the two haven't stopped since! Have fun with your students when you're finished reading by asking them to come up with other ideas about why dogs and cats don't get along!

Circle Songs

Parakeet Watch Out! by Robert the Guitar Guy. Independent Records, Inc., 2001.

Play the "I'm a Dog" track on this delightful CD and have students act out the motions of wagging, scratching and barking. Select one student to be the "master." When the chorus beckons to put a leash on, have the master student walk around the circle to "catch" a new master. You can set up the rules similar to Duck, Duck, Goose so the class stays in control.

Can You Sound Just Like Me? by Red Grammer. Red Note Records, 1983.

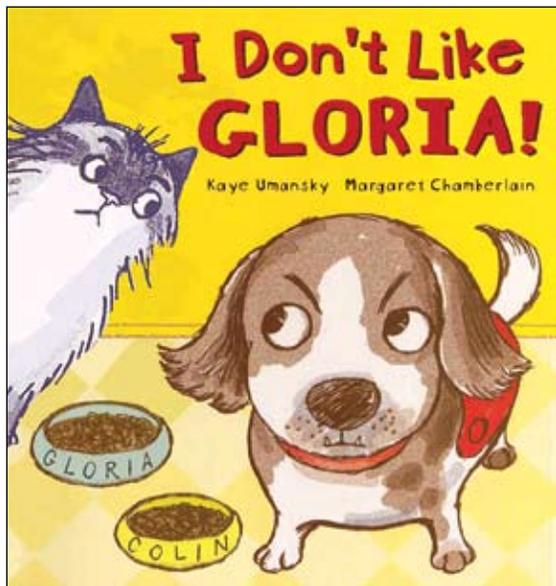
The song "Doggie" on the *Can You Sound Just Like Me?* CD can also be used with circle play. Choose

one student to spend a verse in the middle of the circle and act out the motion as the song plays. Invite the class to mimic that student. When the song shifts from barking to howling, have the student in the middle pick another student to show off his or her marvelous “Awoooooo!”

Additional Reading

Skunkdog by Emily Jenkins. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008. *Skunkdog* tells the tale of Dumpling, a dog whose best friend is a skunk. Dumpling’s lack of olfactory glands creates a difficult life for her people, who have to put up with the stinky smell!

Dog Breath! The Horrible Trouble with Hally Tosis by Dav Pilkey. Scholastic, 1994. Reluctant readers will beg for repeat readings of the story of Hally, and how he saves the day from burglars with his smelly breath.



I Don't Like Gloria by Kaye Umansky. Candlewick Press, 2007. If you need a short story to fill the end of a storytime session, *I Don't Like Gloria* is a perfect choice. Calvin gets jealous when his people get a cat. Gloria gets to eat from his bowl and sleep in his bed—and she never gets yelled at. Calvin and Gloria manage to make amends when their people bring home Jeffrey, a new pet bunny!

The *Walter the Farting Dog* series by William Kotzwinkle, from Random House. 4–8. Great take-home titles for reluctant readers.

Additional Music

Here are a few more of my favorite songs that incorporate dogs.

La Di Da, La Di Di: Dance with Me by The Learning Station. Kimbo. Hug-A-Chug Records, 2004. “If Animals Could Dance” will allow your students to imagine they’re dogs—as well as elephants, sheep, and snakes.

One Little Sound by Hap Palmer. Hap-Pal Music, 2002. For your students who are spelling, use Palmer’s “D-O-G, Walking the Dog.” Listen to Palmer change dog to log, fog, hog, jog...and back to dog.

For a sing-along extravaganza, use “Down on Grandpa’s Farm.” There are various versions of this tune; my favorite is from the *Five Little Monkeys* CD (Kimbo, 2000) or Greg & Steve’s “Down on the Farm” (*We All Live Together*, Young Heart Music, 2000). Students can make farm animal noises and act silly in unison.

Great Big Hits 2 by Sharon, Lois and Bram. Casablanca, 2002. A non-traditional version of “Do Your Ears Hang Low?” exercises your ears, nose, lips and eyes! Or, if you prefer a little rock and roll, try the adaptation off of *Mother Goose Rocks Volume 4* (Lightyear, 2002).

Finally, don’t forget about traditional standbys such as “Bingo,” “My Dog Rags,” “Where, Oh Where Has My Little Dog Gone,” and “How Much is That Doggie in the Window?” to keep your pet unit going long into the winter!

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Stick Puppets

Decorate your “perfect pup” and cat any way you like. Don’t forget eyes, ears, a nose, and tail!

