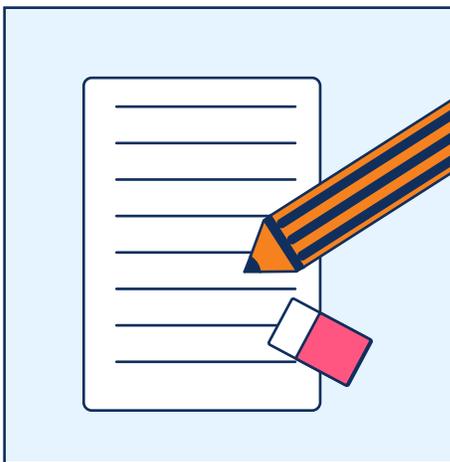
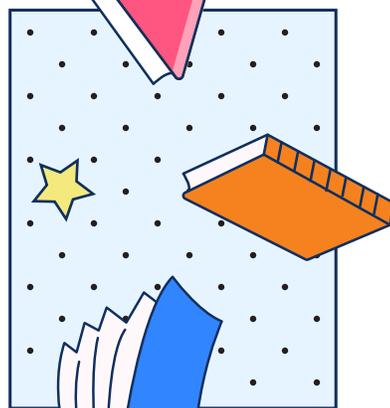
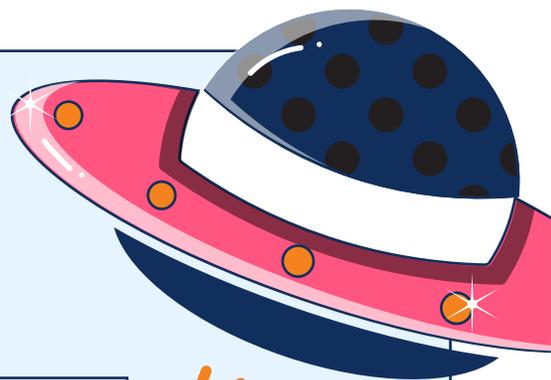


3RD GRADERS

TEACHER GUIDE

READ TOGETHER



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2024 OTTER Award Nominees



[Aven Green, Sleuthing Machine](#)

by Dusti Bowling,
illus. by Gina Perry

OTHER BOOKS IN THE AVEN GREEN SERIES:

- Book 2: [Aven Green, Baking Machine](#)
Book 3: [Aven Green, Music Machine](#)
Book 4: [Aven Green, Soccer Machine](#)



[Planetary-YUM](#)

Written and illus. by
Drew Brockington

OTHER BOOKS IN THE WAFFLES AND PANCAKE SERIES:

- Book 2: [Flight or Fright](#)
Book 3: [Failure to Lunch](#)
Book 4: [Best Friends Fur-Ever](#)



[Blast Off!](#)

by Andrea J. Loney,
illus. by Fuuji Takashi

OTHER BOOKS IN THE ABBY IN ORBIT SERIES:

- Book 2: [Space Race](#)
Book 3: [All Systems Whoa](#)



[Awesome Orange Birthday](#)

by Mitali Banerjee Ruths,
illus. by Aaliya Jaleel

OTHER BOOKS IN THE PARTY DIARIES SERIES:

- Book 2: [Starry Henna Night](#)
Book 3: [Top Secret Anniversary: A Branches Book](#)

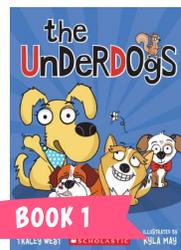


[My Kingdom of Darkness](#)

by Susan Tan,
illus. by Wendy Tan Shiau Wei

OTHER BOOKS IN THE PETS RULE! SERIES:

- Book 2: [The Poodle of Doom](#)
Book 3: [Kittens Are Monsters!](#)
Book 4: [The Rise of the Goldfish](#)
Book 5: [Invasion of the Pugs](#)
(coming soon)



[The Underdogs](#)

by Tracey West,
illus. by Kyla May

OTHER BOOKS IN THE UNDERDOGS SERIES:

- Book 2: [We're Not The Champions](#)
Book 3: [Unhappy Campers](#)



Thank you for participating in Third Graders Read Together!



The books in this program are 2024 OTTER Award nominees. As with the Washington Children's Choice Picture Book Award and the William C. Towner Award, the OTTER Award is given by the Washington Library Association. This award is designed to spotlight titles that are both engaging and developmentally appropriate for readers transitioning into chapter books.



In this guide, you will find discussion questions, vocabulary, author/illustrator fun facts, and read-alike suggestions for each title. Additional activities and promotional resources can be found at wla.org/otter-promotion.

Schools use the OTTER books in a variety of ways. Do what works best for you! Here are a few ideas from educators:

- Create a book club using all or some of the titles.
- Read the books aloud to your class.
- Craft a display inspired by the selected titles.
- Make books available in your classroom or library.
- Encourage students to vote for their favorite book in May!

Save the dates for our online author/illustrator events:

- Tuesday, Feb. 27 at 10:30 a.m. with Andrea J. Loney
- Tuesday, March 12 at 10:30 a.m. with Drew Brockington

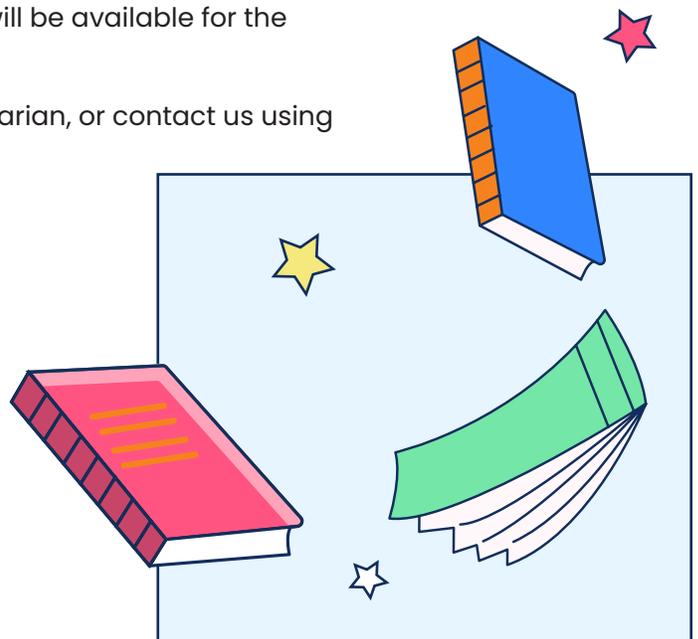
Additional details will be sent via email. Recordings will be available for the remainder of the school year.

If you have any questions, reach out to your local librarian, or contact us using sno-isle.org/school-support.

Happy reading!

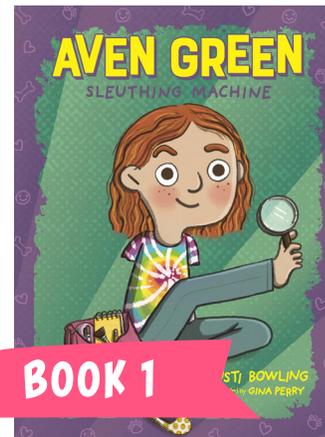


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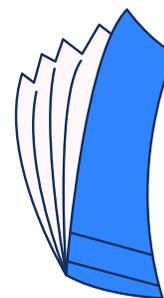
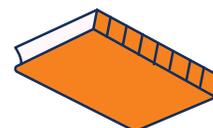
Aven Green, Sleuthing Machine

by Dusti Bowling, illus. by Gina Perry



Discussion Questions

1. Why do you think Aven does not like the question, "What happened to you?" What are some of her responses to that question? [p. 2-3](#)
2. How does Aven organize her mysteries? [p.6](#)
Hint: All 5 categories start with 'W'.
3. Why does Aven think she has extra brain cells? [p.13-14](#)
4. How would it make you feel if someone accused you of a crime like stealing the teacher's lunch when you know you are innocent? [p. 17-18](#)
5. Why does Aven make lists of pertinent information? How would making lists help her solve mysteries? [p.27](#)
6. If you are solving a mystery, why is it important to ask where someone or something was last seen? [p.36](#)
7. What was the clue in the teachers' lounge that helped Aven solve the mystery of the school food thief? [p.96](#)
8. What do you think are important qualities to being a detective?



Author Fun Facts

- ★ Dusti Bowling has had as pets a dozen tarantulas, a gopher snake named Burrito, a king snake named Death Noodle, and a cockatiel named Gandalf the Grey.
- ★ Dusti Bowling spent two years extensively researching people living with limb differences before starting to write her first book about Aven, "Insignificant Events in the Life of a Cactus."



Vocabulary Words

Please see the back of the book.

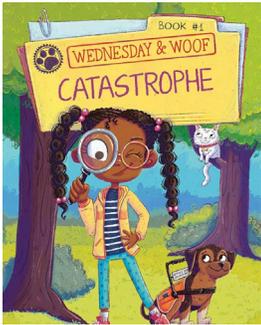


If You Liked... *Aven Green, Sleuthing Machine*

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Fiction



[*Wednesday and Woof: Catastrophe, Book 1*](#)

by Sherri Winston

[*Catalina Incognito, Book 1*](#)

by Jennifer Torres

[*The Chicken Squad*](#)

by Doreen Cronin

[*Inspector Flytrap, Book 1*](#)

by Tom Angleberger

[*Jo Jo Makoons:*](#)

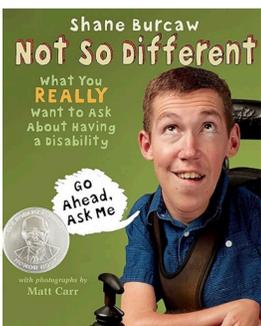
[*The Used-to-be Best Friend*](#)

by Dawn Quigley

[*What Happened to You*](#)

by James Catchpole

Nonfiction



[*Not So Different: What You Really Want to Ask About*](#)

[*Having a Disability*](#)

by Shane Burcaw

[*All the Way to the Top: How One Girl's Fight for Americans with Disabilities Changed Everything*](#)

by Annette Bay Pimentel

[*Secret Agent Training Manual: How to Make and Break Top Secret Messages*](#)

by Elizabeth Singer Hunt

[*How Kate Warne Saved President Lincoln: A Story*](#)

[*About the Nation's First*](#)

[*Woman Detective*](#)

by Elizabeth Van Steenwyk

[*Solve This, Forensics: Super Science and Curious Capers for the Daring Detective in You*](#)

by Kate Messner

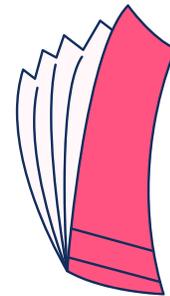
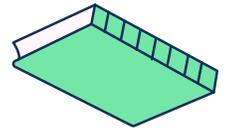
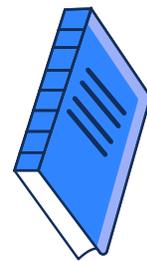
Planetary-YUM

written and illus. by Drew Brockington



Discussion Questions

1. What kind of museum do the cats visit? Have you ever been to a museum? What kind of museum was it? **p. 3**
2. Waffles and Pancake learn about constellations in what part of the museum? Have you seen constellations in the night sky? Which ones? **p. 13**
3. Just like the CatStronauts, real astronauts landed on the moon in 1969. If you went to the moon today, what do you think you would find? **p. 25**
4. Who do Waffles and Pancake ask for help when they lose Dad-Cat? Was it a good decision to ask for help? Why or why not? **p. 36**
5. Draw three things Waffles and Pancake learned about at the museum.
6. Waffles and Pancake are named after food. If you could be named after a food, what would you want your name to be?



Author Fun Facts

- ★ Drew Brockington participated in cheese eating contests while living in New York!
- ★ Drew Brockington loves comics. He has written and illustrated 12 books! He draws in his home studio, while his dog, Leroy, snores next to him.



Vocabulary Words

1. **Generator** (*noun*): A machine by which mechanical energy is changed into electrical energy. **p. 10**
2. **Grooming** (*verb*): To clean and keep up the appearance of (like the coat of a cat or dog.) **p. 11**
3. **Compass** (*noun*): A device for determining directions by means of a magnetic needle pointing to the magnetic north. **p. 18**
4. **Bon appétit** (*French phrase*): Good appetite: enjoy your meal. **p. 22**
5. **Feline** (*adjective*): Of or resembling a cat: characteristic of cats. **p. 23**

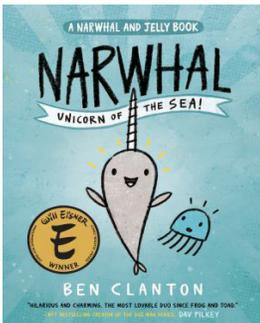


If You Liked... *Planetary-YUM*

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Fiction



[*Narwhal: Unicorn of the Sea, Book 1*](#)

by Ben Clanton

[*Haylee and Comet: A Tale of Cosmic Friendship*](#)

by Deborah Marcero

[*Cranky Chicken, Book 1*](#)

by Katherine Battersby

[*CatStronauts:*](#)

[*Mission Moon, Book 1*](#)

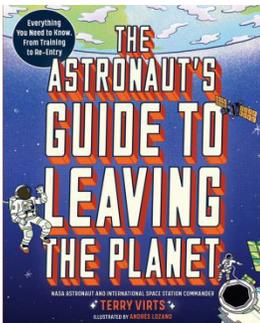
by Drew Brockington

[*Pizza and Taco:*](#)

[*Who's the Best?, Book 1*](#)

by Stephen Shaskan

Nonfiction



[*The Astronaut's Guide to Leaving the Planet*](#)

by Terry Virts

[*1,000 Facts About Space*](#)

by Dean Regas

[*Amazing Night Sky Atlas*](#)

by Nancy Dickmann

[*Space*](#)

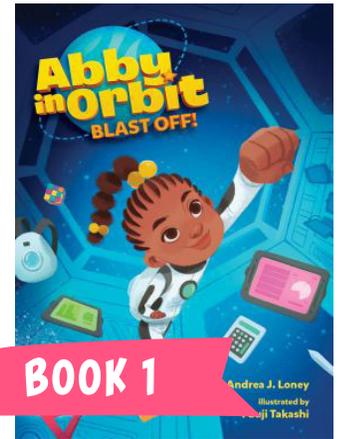
by Joan Marie Galat

[*Cats: Nature and Nurture*](#)

by Andy Hirsch

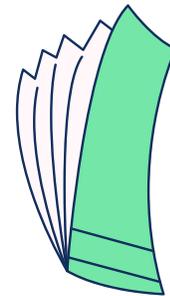
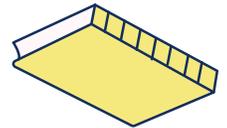
Blast Off!

by Andrea J. Loney, illus. by Fuuji Takashi



Discussion Questions

1. What is it like for Abby to live with less gravity than Earth? Do you think you would enjoy living in a space station? [p. 1-2](#)
2. Abby is starting a new school and making new friends. Have you ever had to start something where you didn't know anybody? How did it make you feel?
3. Abby in Orbit takes place in the year 2051. How many years until we get to the year 2051? What do you think life will be like on Earth in 2051?
4. Have you ever accidentally taken something that was someone else's? How did you handle it? Do you think Abby handled it well? [p. 29](#)
5. Abby's teammate Dmitry exercises in virtual reality by riding a stationary bike and wearing goggles. What do you think he sees through those goggles? [p. 35-36](#)
6. What happens when Abby starts to cry after getting caught? What happens to her tears on the OASIS and how does everyone react? [p. 66-67](#)
7. What does it mean to be part of a team? How does Abby learn about teamwork? [p. 72](#)
8. After Abby gets in trouble, her mother makes her write apology letters to everyone on their space station. Do you think this is fair? Why or why not? [p. 77](#)



Author Fun Facts

- ★ Andrea J. Loney describes her child self as a small, bespectacled girl from a big African-American, Jamaican, and Panamanian family who loved to read and write.
- ★ Andrea J. Loney has two betta fish named Jean-Michel Fisquiat and Frida Fishie Kahlo.
- ★ Andrea J. Loney's favorite animal is the two-toed sloth, and her favorite video game is Animal Crossing.

Vocabulary Words

Please see the back of the book.

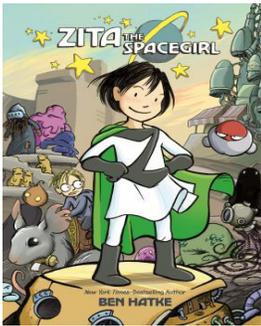


If You Liked... *Blast Off!*

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Fiction



[*Zita the Spacegirl, Book 1*](#)

by Ben Hatke

[*Mission Moon, Book 1*](#)

by Drew Brockington

[*Hilo, The Boy Who Crashed to Earth, Book 1*](#)

by Judd Winick

[*Rock Star, Book 1*](#)

by Kelly Starling Lyons

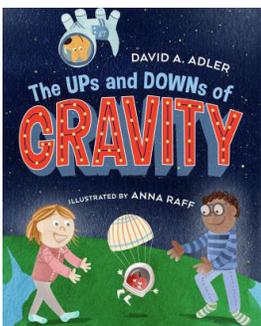
[*The Day You Begin*](#)

by Jacqueline Woodson

[*Mae Among the Stars*](#)

by Roda Ahmed

Nonfiction



[*The Ups and Downs of Gravity*](#)

by David A. Adler

[*The International Space Station*](#)

by Joyce L. Markovics

[*Living in Space*](#)

by Kathryn Clay

[*My Journey to the Stars*](#)

by Scott Kelly

[*Can't Get Enough Space Stuff*](#)

by Julie Beer

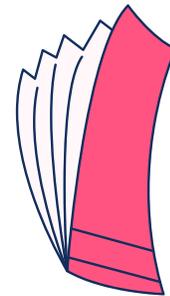
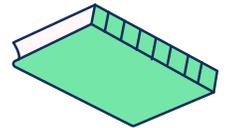
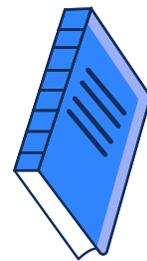
Awesome Orange Birthday

by Mitali Banerjee Ruths, illus. by Aaliya Jaleel



Discussion Questions

1. Priya created a social media account to promote her business online. What are the benefits of using a social media account? **p. 5**
2. Priya identified quokkas as the “world’s happiest animal.” Do you agree? Why or why not? **p. 6**
3. Priya wanted to raise funds to save endangered quokkas. Have you done anything to help save endangered animals or protect the environment? **p. 7**
4. Priya is preparing for a birthday party for her Aunt Layla. Have you ever planned a party for yourself or someone else? What did you do to make it successful? **p. 8**
5. Priya received help from her grandma Dida and called her a volunteer, not an employee. Why? What is the difference between an employee and a volunteer? **p. 12**
6. Priya doesn’t like surprises. Why not? Do you like surprises? Why or why not? **p. 17**
7. Priya felt extremely nervous before the party. Have you ever felt nervous or stressed out before a big event or occasion? Why? What did you do to calm yourself down? **p. 43**
8. Various Indian dishes were prepared at the party. Have you tried any Indian food? What was the name of the dish you tried, and how did it taste? **p. 48-49**



Author Fun Facts

- ★ Mitali Banerjee Ruths dreamed of becoming an astronaut and has worked as a babysitter, an ice cream seller, and a medical doctor. She currently works as a creative director at a software company.
- ★ Mitali Banerjee Ruths’ dream is to orbit the Earth and knit in zero gravity with floating yarn, while watching a sunrise every 90 minutes.

Vocabulary Words

1. **Host** (*noun*): One who receives or entertains guests socially or as a business. **p. 9**
2. **Saris** (*noun*): A garment worn by women in southern Asia that consists of a long cloth draped around the body and head or shoulder. **p. 10**
3. **Launch** (*verb*): To put in operation or set in motion: BEGIN. **p. 33**
4. **Emoji** (*noun*): Any of various small images, symbols, or icons used in electronic communication (such as e-mail) to express the feelings or attitude of the writer or to present information concisely or playfully. **p. 52**
5. **Slogan** (*noun*): A word or phrase used by a party, a group, or a business to attract attention. **p. 68**
6. **Catchy** (*adjective*): Easily remembered. **p. 68**

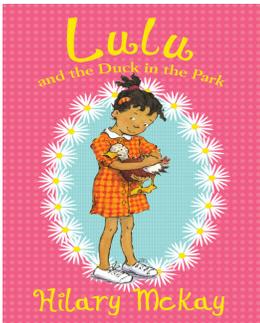


If You Liked... *Awesome Orange Birthday*

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Fiction



[*Lulu and the Duck in the Park, Book 1*](#)
by Hilary McKay

[*Jasmine Toguchi, Mochi Queen, Book 1*](#)
by Debbi Michiko Florence

[*Sadiq and the Green Thumbs*](#)
by Siman Nurali

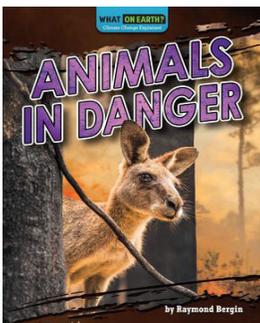
[*Anna Hibiscus*](#)
by Atinuke

[*The Amazing Life of Azaleah Lane*](#)
by Nikki Shannon Smith

[*Marya Khan and the Incredible Henna Party*](#)
by Saadia Faruqi

[*Astrid & Apollo and the Happy New Year*](#)
by V.T. Bidania

Nonfiction



[*Earth-friendly Crafts: Clever Ways to Reuse Everyday Items*](#)
by Kathy Ross

[*How to Throw the Ultimate Slumber Party*](#)
by Jamie Kyle McGillian

[*Let's Get This Party Started!*](#)
by Soleil Moon Frye

[*What Can We Do About Endangered Animals?*](#)
by Suzanne Slade

[*Animals in Danger*](#)
by Raymond Bergin

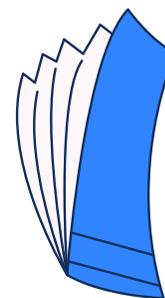
My Kingdom of Darkness

by Susan Tan, illus. by Wendy Tan Shiau Wei



Discussion Questions

1. *From the back of the book:*
 - a. Look-up the definition of the word minion. Why does Ember call the humans minions? What does this tell you about his plans for world domination? **p. 4**
 - b. Who are the three other pets who live in the Chin house? How does Ember feel about the other pets? **p. 18-21**
 - c. What is Ember's plan to destroy the acorn stash? Why doesn't the plan work? **p. 46, 55-57**
2. Why do you think Ember wants to rule the world?
3. Why does Ember pretend he is not afraid of anything?
4. Do you think Ember's name suits him? Why or why not?
5. Who is Ember's favorite person in the Chin family and why?
6. What made Lucy finally confront her bully? **p. 72**



Author Fun Facts

- ★ In eighth grade Susan Tan was named "Most Likely To Be a Children's Book Writer."
- ★ Susan Tan loves to knit and crochet, and makes a crocheted stuffed animal for each of her books!



Vocabulary Words

1. **Magnificent** (*adjective*): Having impressive beauty. **p. 3**
2. **Subject** (*noun*): A person under the authority or control of another. **p.19**
3. **Ember** (*noun*): A glowing piece of coal or wood from a fire. **p. 43**
4. **Steed** (*noun*): A horse. **p. 52**
5. **Realm** (*noun*): A kingdom. **p. 74**

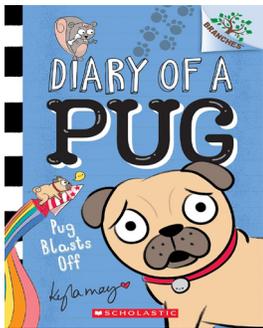


If You Liked... *My Kingdom of Darkness*

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Fiction



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by Kyla May

[*Wedgie & Gizmo, Book 1*](#)

by Suzanne Selfors

[*The World According to Humphrey, Book 1*](#)

by Betty G. Birney

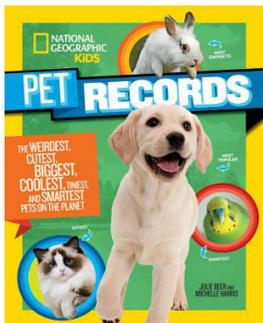
[*A Friend for Dragon, Book 1*](#)

by Dav Pilkey

[*Mad About Meatloaf, Book 1*](#)

by Maureen Fergus

Nonfiction



[*Pet Records: The Weirdest, Cutest, Biggest, Coolest, Tiniest, and Smartest Pets on the Planet*](#)
by Julie Beer

[*125 Pet Rescues: From Pound to Palace : Homeless Pets Made Happy*](#)

by National Geographic Kids

[*Hero Dogs: True Stories of Amazing Animal Heroes!*](#)

by Mary Quattlebaum

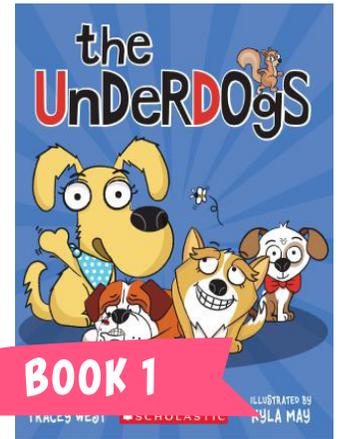
[*A Little Spot of Courage: A Story About Being Brave*](#)
by Diane Alber

[*I'm Gonna Push Through!*](#)

by Jasmyn Wright

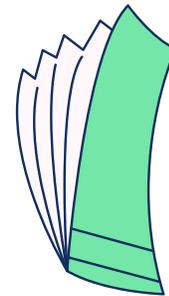
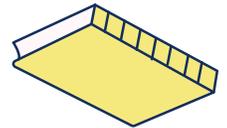
The Underdogs

by Tracey West, illus. by Kyla May



Discussion Questions

1. Nova was never bothered by failing the agility exam in the last three years, but she wanted to pass the exam this time. What motivated her? **p. 2**
2. Nova set up the practice course for the Underdogs instead of using the agility course at Barksdale Academy. Why did she do this? **p. 12**
3. The team consisting of Nova, Duke, Peanut, and Harley is called the Underdogs. Why do you think they got this team name?
4. What does the Goldenfur spirit of Nova's granny refer to, and how did it benefit Nova? **p. 48**
5. What do you think is the reason behind the consistent failure of the Underdogs in the agility test for the past three years? What do you see as their primary issues? **p. 82**
6. Why did Peanut wear a plastic suit for the agility test? Do you think it's fair to wear a special outfit? Share your opinions. **p. 128**
7. Nova attempted various approaches to help the Underdogs pass the exam. What would you do if you were Nova to assist Harley, Duke, and Peanut in passing the agility exam?
 - a. How would you help Duke overcome his fear of heights?
 - b. How would you help Peanut overcome his fear of getting dirty?
 - c. How would you help Harley focus on the agility course?
 - d. How would you help Nova avoid knocking things down?



Author Fun Facts

- ★ Tracy West has four rescue dogs and a bunch of chickens living with her at home.
- ★ Tracy West loves writing books based on cartoons, video games, and movies, such as Lego Ninjago, Poptropica, Club Penguin, and Star Wars.
- ★ Tracy West has written more than 300 books for children!

Vocabulary Words

1. **Agility** (*noun*): The quality or state of being agile: NIMBLENESS, DEXTERITY. To move with quick, easy grace. **p. 1**
2. **Primp** (*verb*): To dress or arrange in a careful or fussy manner. **p. 21**
3. **Runt** (*noun*): An unusually small person or animal. **p. 25**
4. **Plumes** (*noun*): Something that resembles a feather (as in shape or lightness). **p. 67**
5. **Hoist** (*verb*): To raise or become raised into position, especially by mechanical means. **p. 103**

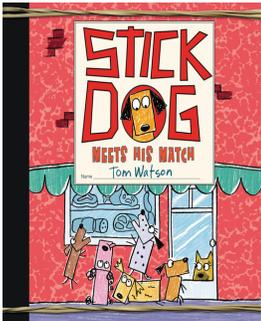


If You Liked... *The Underdogs*

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Fiction



[*Stick Dog Meets His Match*](#)

by Tom Watson

[*Bad Kitty Takes the Test*](#)

by Nick Bruel

[*Dog Diaries*](#)

by James Patterson

[*Two Dogs in a Trench Coat*](#)

[*Go to School*](#)

by Julie Falatko

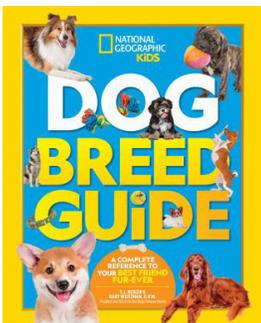
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