

Teaching Guides for Penny and Rio books

For 3rd and 4th grades

Penny and Rio: The Mysterious Backyard Meeting

Teaching Guide:

Written by author, Jennifer Swanson, M.S. Ed., this guide is targeted for grades 3-4. Teachers, media specialists, librarians and homeschoolers are encouraged to download this guide. Jennifer Swanson welcomes your comments. Please submit them via her email at pennyandrio@yahoo.com.

Penny and Rio: The Mysterious Backyard Meeting ISBN 9780982256015, \$7.99

Available online at www.pennyandrio.com, Amazon, Barnes & Noble
Read aloud Kindle versions through Amazon, www.RippleReader.com

Summary:

In *Penny and Rio: The Mysterious Backyard Meeting*, we meet the dynamic canine detective duo, Penny and Rio. They are off to solve their first mystery. A strange meeting of four unlikely animals is taking place at night in their backyard. The inquisitive Penny must discover what is going on. Through an ingenious plan, she discovers their evil plot, but can she get Rio to help her or will Rio decide that sleep is more important? With its surprise ending, this book will help children to realize that everyone needs to be a responsible pet owner and that things are not always as they seem.

Themes:

Sometimes what you think about someone is not always true
Taking care of your pet's is a big responsibility
Solving a mystery take determination and bravery

Reviews:

** 2009 Mom's Choice Award Winner **

“This book is perfect for young people who are almost ready to graduate to chapter books, and an important underlying theme – that one should be responsible for one's current pets and not abandon them to the city pound for a new pet – is also present in the cat's tale. Highly recommended, especially for young dog lovers.”

Midwest Book Review, May 2008

“Go on this first adventure with Penny and Rio. This charming story will become a favorite to any child, especially those with pets. With wonderfully illustrated pictures of the duo's adventure, it is a great book to encourage reading. Children will enjoy following this mystery as the two dogs discover the true reason for the meeting. Dove awards the Dove “Family-Approved” Seal for all ages to this wonderful book. “

The Dove Foundation, March 2009

Educational Goals (Grades 3-4)

- Demonstrate how plot, character development, setting, main idea and theme of story form a cohesive and entertaining story
- Compare and Contrast characters actions and how they are affected by changes in the story
- Use the reading comprehension process skills of summarizing, predicting, visualizing, questioning, and clarifying through supplemental activities based on books read

Language Arts:

Predict: Have students look at the illustrations on the cover and predict what this book is about. Have them read the first chapter to see if they are correct. Predict again.

Speech: Have student's give brief talks from the characters point of view on something they learned about the book. Be sure to include main idea, message or plot of the text.

Text Connection: Have students write or draw a self-to-text connection about something that happened in the book. Or perhaps about a pet they owned. Maybe their pet did some funny things, as well.

Discuss the parts of a story: Beginning, Middle, End. Dissect this story to see where each part is visible. Where is the climax of the story? Where did the author get her idea for this story?

Writing: Have students write a 2-3 paragraphs stating how they would act if they were Penny and came upon a secret meeting. Or about how they would feel if they were wrong about something like Penny was in the book.

Extra Curriculum Extensions:

Compare and Contrast: Have students read *The Tale of Despereaux* by Kate DiCamillo or any *Jigsaw Jones Mystery* by James Preller.

- Compare and contrast the main character's journey with Penny and what she must go through to discover her error in judgement.

Reader Quiz

Take the attached reader quiz, or make up one of your own

Fun Additions: Download the coloring pages, crossword puzzle, seek-a-words or bookmarks for additional enrichment

Artistic: Have students create their own Penny and Rio bookmarks of their favorite character.

Penny and Rio: The Mysterious Backyard Meeting Readers Quiz

Choose the best answer for the following questions.

Chapter 1

1. In the beginning of the book, why does Penny want to get outside so badly?
 - a. She wants to go dig a hole
 - b. She wants to lie on the deck
 - c. She wants to find out what the cat and the owl are talking about
 - d. She wants to go find Rio
2. What does Penny find over by the fence when she is looking for clues?
 - a. An owl feather
 - b. An empty soda can
 - c. A purple hat
 - d. A dog bone
3. What does Rio do most of the time?
 - a. Run around the yard
 - b. Lie around getting a sun tan
 - c. Bark at people walking behind the fence
 - d. Eat grass

Chapter 2

4. What does Penny do first to find clues about the meeting?
 - a. She lies in the sun to get a sun tan
 - b. She walks around the yard barking
 - c. She jumps up and down to try to see over the fence
 - d. She digs a lot of holes
5. How can Penny get out of the garage at night now?
 - a. She can go through the doggie door her owner put in
 - b. She digs a tunnel from the garage to outside
 - c. She gives Rio all her bones and Rio helps her get out
 - d. She doesn't. She sits in the garage all night and misses the meeting
6. Where does Penny hide to spy on the midnight meeting?
 - a. Behind a bush
 - b. In the garage
 - c. In the house
 - d. In the planter that she dug out the day before

Chapter 3

7. Name two of the four animals that are in the midnight meeting.
 - a. Buster the cat and Feathers the owl
 - b. Hannah the mouse and Lilly the squirrel
 - c. Douglas the hamster and Petunia the piglet
 - d. Danny the chipmunk and Karl the hedgehog
8. What is the plan the animals come up with at the meeting?
 - a. To steal all of Penny and Rio's bones
 - b. To break into the house next door
 - c. To store nuts in the tree for the squirrel
 - d. To have a secret party for Penny and Rio
9. What does Rio think when Penny tells her about the midnight meeting?
 - a. She's looking forward to the surprise party
 - b. She doesn't listen because she's asleep
 - c. She tells Penny it's no big deal and to go to sleep
 - d. She tells Penny they have to tell their owner

Chapter 4

10. Who does Penny try to warn about the plan?
 - a. Timmy the turtle
 - b. Sasha the squirrel
 - c. Karl the hedgehog
 - d. Fifi the dog
11. How does Penny get into the yard next door?
 - a. Rio helps her remove the loose board in the fence
 - b. She jumps over top of the fence
 - c. She walks out her front gate
 - d. She pushes the fence over with her head
12. Where does Penny find Buster the cat in the house?
 - a. In the kitchen
 - b. In the living room watching television
 - c. In the child's room going through a drawer
 - d. In the garage
13. Who is Sammy?
 - a. A gerbil
 - b. A kitten who is Buster's brother
 - c. A puppy related to Penny
 - d. A snake

14. Why is Buster trying to rescue Sammy?
- So Sammy won't be given away to animal control
 - Because Sammy can't get down from the drawer
 - Because Sammy is scared to be alone
 - So Sammy will like him.

Chapter 5

15. How do Buster and Sammy get out of the yard?
- Feathers the owl flies them out
 - Shadow the groundhog digs them a tunnel
 - They use the hole in the fence Penny and Rio made
 - They open the gate and go out
16. Where does Buster plan to take Sammy after he rescues him?
- To the park and then to Buster's new family
 - To the zoo
 - To the front porch of Penny's house
 - To climb the nearest tree.
17. What does Penny learn from this mystery?
- That Rio loves to sleep a lot
 - That sometimes things aren't always as they seem.
 - That Fifi the dog loves to go on walks
 - That she loves to dig holes

Answers to Questions:

1. c
2. a
3. b
4. d
5. a
6. d
7. a
8. b
9. c
10. d
11. a
12. b
13. c
14. a
15. c
16. a
17. b