

# Teaching Guides for Penny and Rio books For 1<sup>st</sup> – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

## *Penny and Rio: The Mysterious Backyard Meeting*

### **Teaching Guide:**

Written by author, Jennifer Swanson, M.S. Ed., this guide is targeted for grades 1-2. 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](mailto:pennyandrio@yahoo.com).

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

Available online at [www.pennyandrio.com](http://www.pennyandrio.com), Amazon, Barnes & Noble  
Read aloud Kindle versions through Amazon, [www.RippleReader.com](http://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 1-2)**

- Provide an enjoyable reading experience that demonstrates how plot is the result of the character's actions
- Encourage vocabulary development through introduction of larger words and concepts

### **Pre-Reading:**

Read the first chapter. Ask the students what they think is going on in the backyard. Is there something happening? How do you think Penny will try to figure this out?

### **Curriculum Suggestions:**

#### **Language Arts:**

**Discussion:** What did Penny learn about Buster? How did she feel when she discovered she'd be wrong about him? What does this teach you about forming first opinions?

**Role-playing:** Assign different characters to each student. Have them act out how they behave and what they are feeling.

**Writing:** Make a text connection with the story. What does Penny do that you do in real life? How are you like the character Rio or Buster?

**Illustration:** Have students draw a new adventure for Penny and Rio to go on

### **Readers Quiz:**

Have students answer chapter questions provided on next page. Use them all, or just some of them as a review of what they learned.

Other books similar to Penny and Rio to read:

*Some Dog* by Mary Casanova

*Nate the Great* by Marjorie Sharmat

*The High Rise Private Eyes: The Case of the Missing Monkey* by Cynthia Rylant

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

# *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 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

3. 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
4. Where does Penny think is the best place to hide at night so she can't be seen?
  - a. Behind a bush
  - b. In the garage
  - c. In the house
  - d. In the planter that she has dug out

### Chapter 3

5. 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
6. 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

7. 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
  
8. Why is Buster trying to rescue Sammy?
  - a. So Sammy won't have to go to the dog pound
  - b. Because Sammy can't get down from the drawer
  - c. Because Sammy is scared to be alone
  - d. So Sammy will like him.

## Chapter 5

9. How do Buster and Sammy get out of the yard?
  - a. Feathers the owl flies them out
  - b. Shadow the groundhog digs them a tunnel
  - c. They use the hole in the fence Penny and Rio made
  - d. They open the gate and go out
  
10. What does Penny learn from this mystery?
  - a. That Rio loves to sleep a lot
  - b. That sometimes things aren't always as they seem.
  - c. That Fifi the dog loves to go on walks
  - d. That she loves to dig holes

Answers to Questions:

1. c
2. b
3. d
4. d
5. b
6. c
7. d
8. a
9. c
10. b