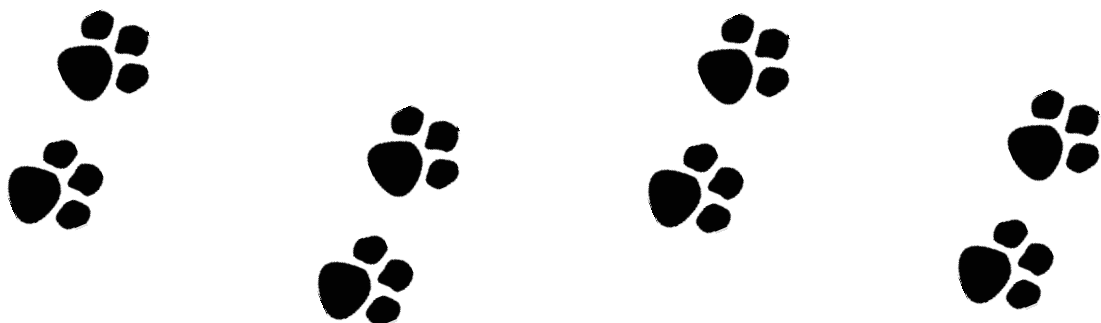




Murphy's Miracle
One Dog's Wild
Journey

Teacher Guide
for Middle School



Dear Teacher,

Thank you so much for teaching *Murphy's Miracle – One Dog's Wild Journey* to your class. We hope you all enjoy the book.

Murphy's Miracle was analyzed by the Lexile Framework for Reading, and awarded a level of 1010.

Feel free to make as many copies of this guide as you like. Make sure you also download the accompanying answer key from the publisher's or author's website.

Author – www.JulieSamrick.com

Publisher – www.MotinaBooks.com

Murphy's Miracle was inspired by the true story of a golden retriever who was lost in the Eldorado National Forest in the fall of 2012. Her family spent many months searching for her, without any luck. Miraculously, she was found and reunited with her family in June, 2014.

The book is a combination of fact and fiction. The author, Julie Samrick, created the story of how Murphy may have survived two winters in the wilderness. The author and Murphy's family speculated that there must have been some human intervention at some point, in order for her to have survived. Also, Murphy had been wearing a collar when she was lost, which she no longer had. This is how the stories of Paj and Drake came to be.

In the story of Murphy's Miracle, she runs off because she is scared by gunfire when the camping party is skeet shooting. She begins her journey by eating a Bachman Sparrow that has fallen from its nest.

She encounters a black bear, and then a family of Hmong people. Paj is a young girl who falls in love with Murphy, and would love to keep her as a pet. But her parents, Anh and Riam, see animals as workers and not family members. When the family leaves the campsite, Murphy is alone once more.

She is accepted by a family of coyotes, and survives the winter with them. Murphy meets many other animals during her time in the wilderness including wolverines, pikas, and a mountain lion.

Throughout this time, her family is searching for her, driving all through the Eldorado National Forest and beyond.

Murphy was found by a park ranger in June, 2014, and reunited with her family. She was thin, her coat was faded, and she had developed a new fear of water. But she was home with her family where she belonged and her camping days were over.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or suggestions.

Thank you!

Diane Windsor, Publisher
Motina Books, LLC

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The Theme of Murphy's Miracle

A book's theme is a main idea or feeling that runs throughout a story. There may be major and minor themes. Choose one of the following themes from "Murphy's Miracle" and explain whether it was a major or a minor theme and connect it back to your own life and experiences.

Hope

Appearance

Sibling Relationships

Courage

Kindness

Perseverance

Survival

Cooperation

War

Honesty

Compassion

Acceptance

Love


Jealousy

Loyalty

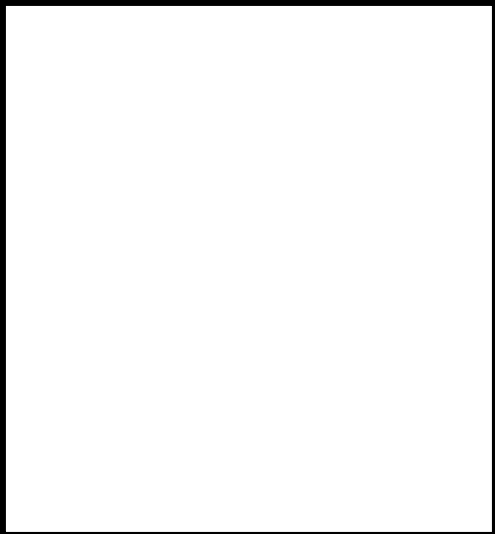
Characters in Murphy's Miracle

Draw what you perceive each character might look like in the box. List some of the character's physical and personality traits and any other clues from the text to support your conclusion.

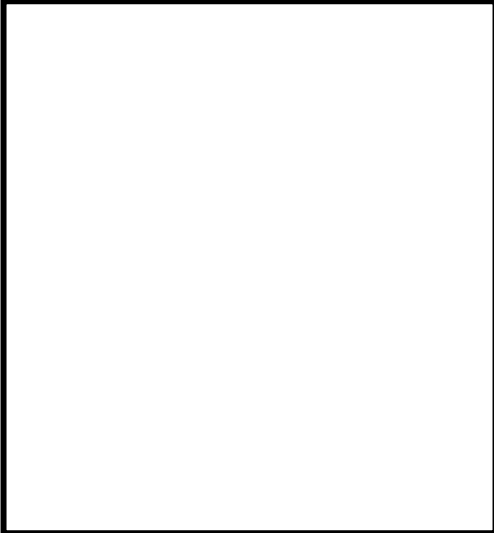
Murphy Braun



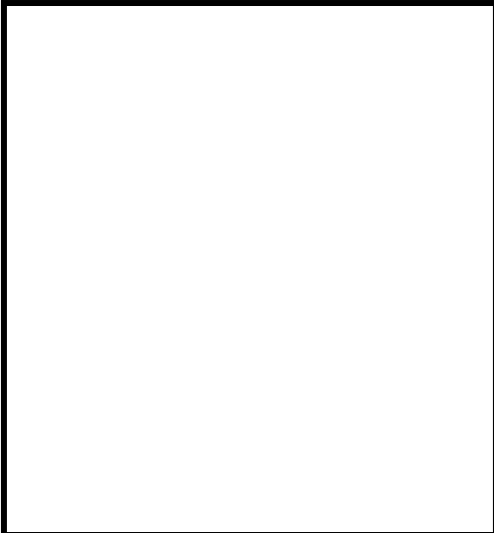
Erin Braun




Nathan Braun



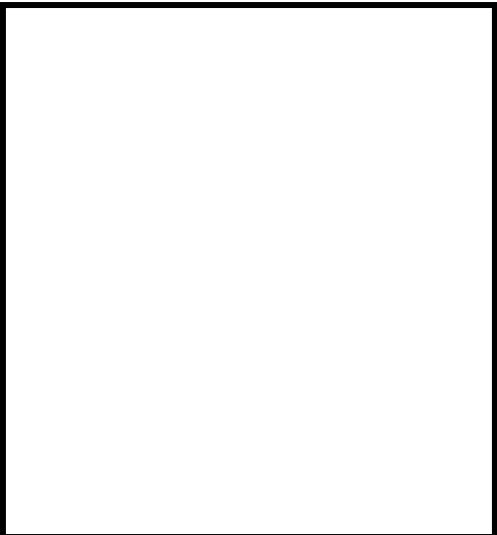
Paj



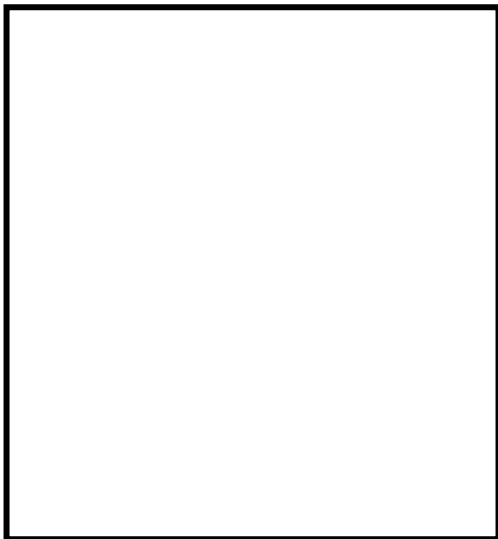
Riam



Anh



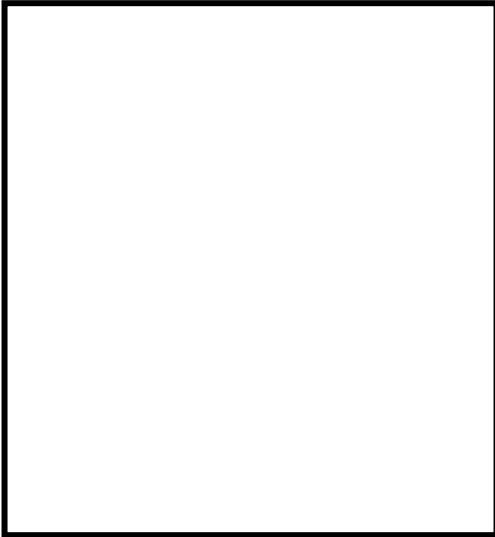
Drake



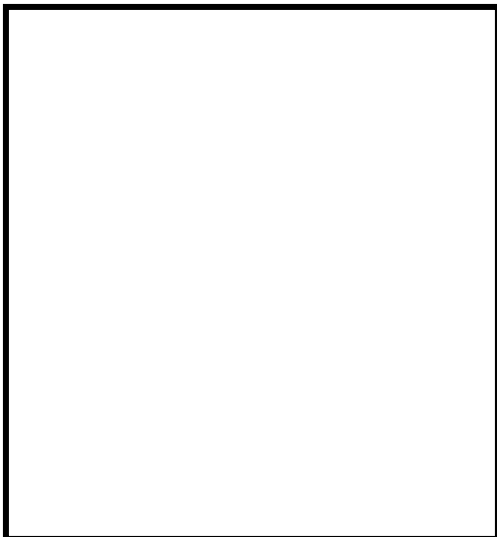
Animals in the Eldorado National Forest

Draw a picture of what you perceive each animal looks like after choosing textual clues to support this image.

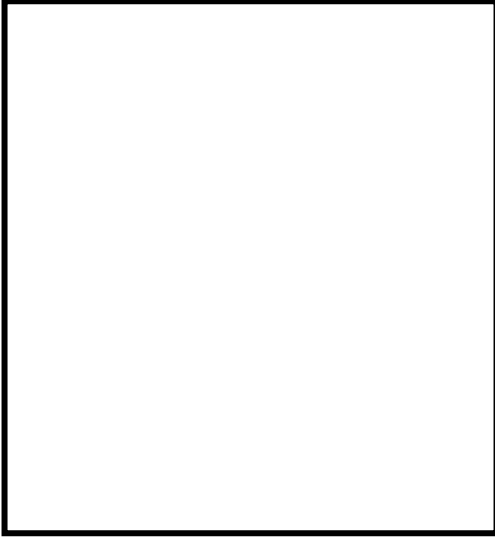
Black Bear



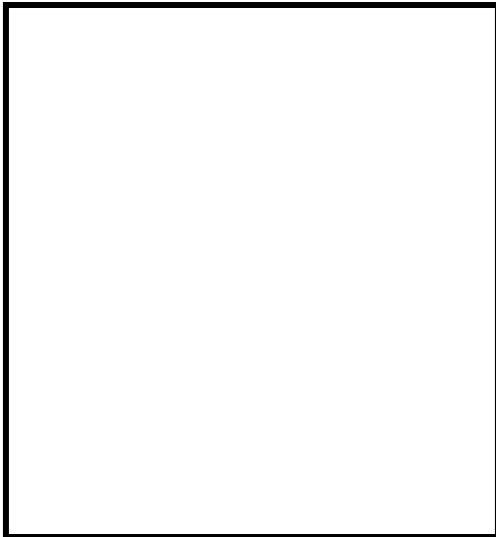
Pika



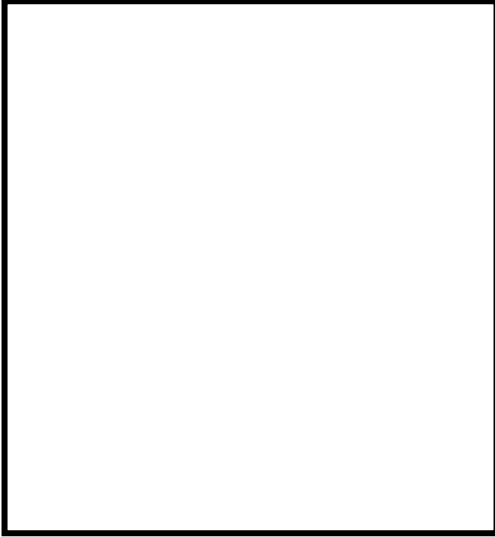
Porcupine



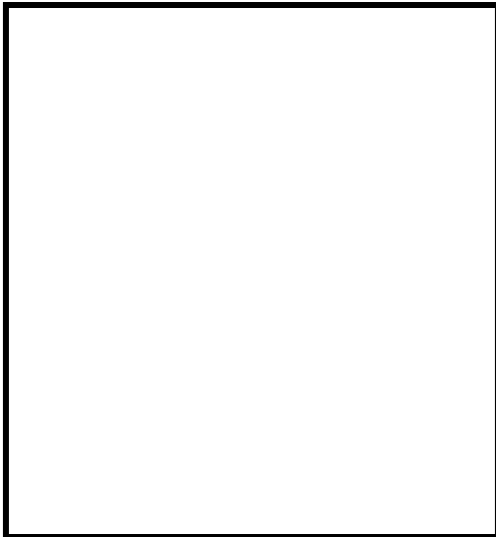
Coyote



Wolverine



Mountain Lion



Who Said What?

These are summaries of what some of the characters have felt during the book. Identify who said each thought.

“I wish I could keep Murphy as my own pet. I love her so much. I need to find a way to convince my family to let me keep her.”

“It’s hard for me to concentrate on my job since Murphy was lost. I feel like I should be out there searching for her all the time.”

“Dogs are not meant to live inside with people. They are supposed to work and hunt, but that’s all.”

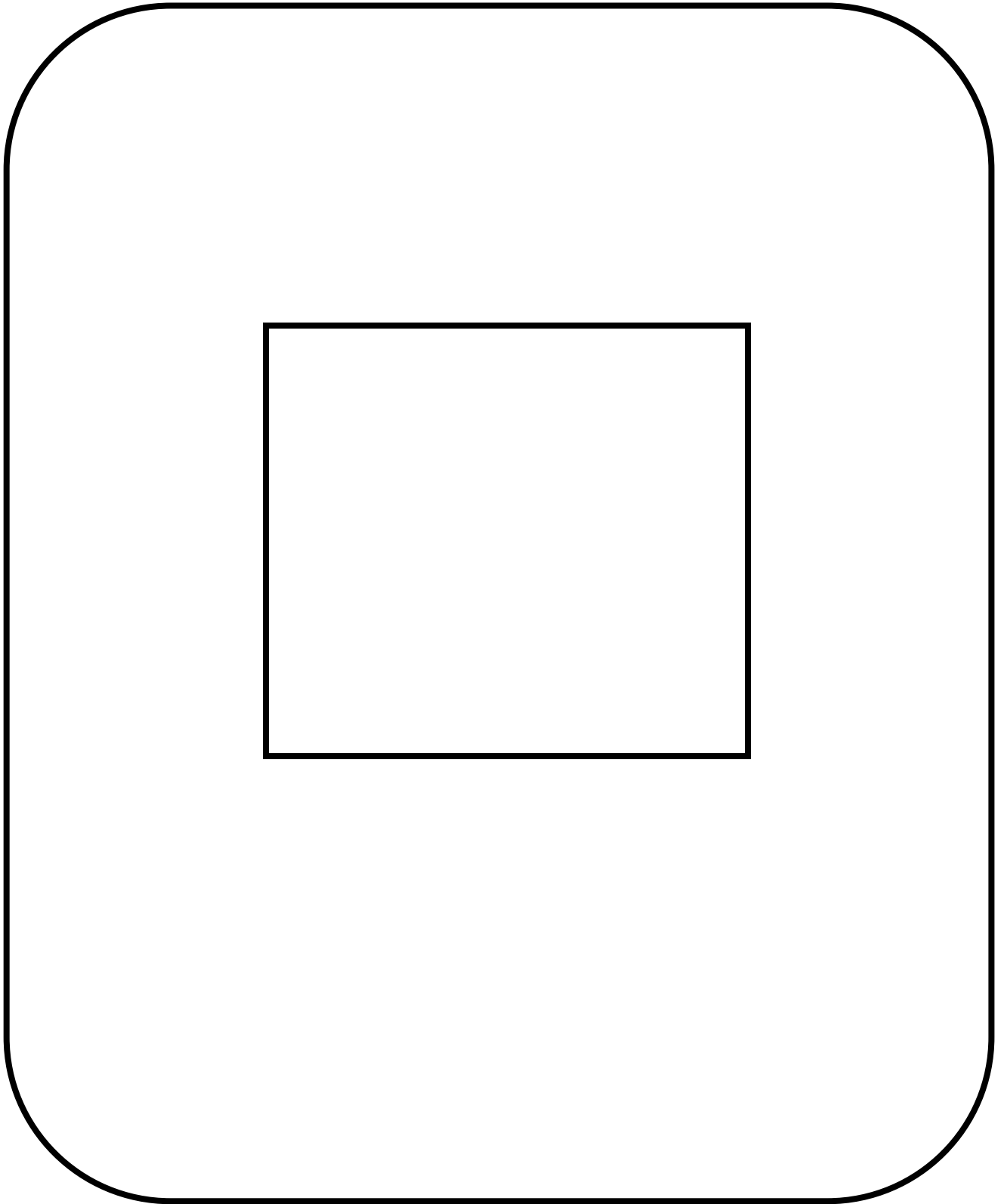
“America has infinite opportunity. When you have a good education, you can do and become anything. I am so proud to live here, and I want the best for my children.”

“The only thing I want for Christmas is for Murphy to come home.”

“People ask me all the time if I think Murphy is still alive. I say yes, of course. I have to be positive, and keep hope alive.”

Create a Lost Dog Poster

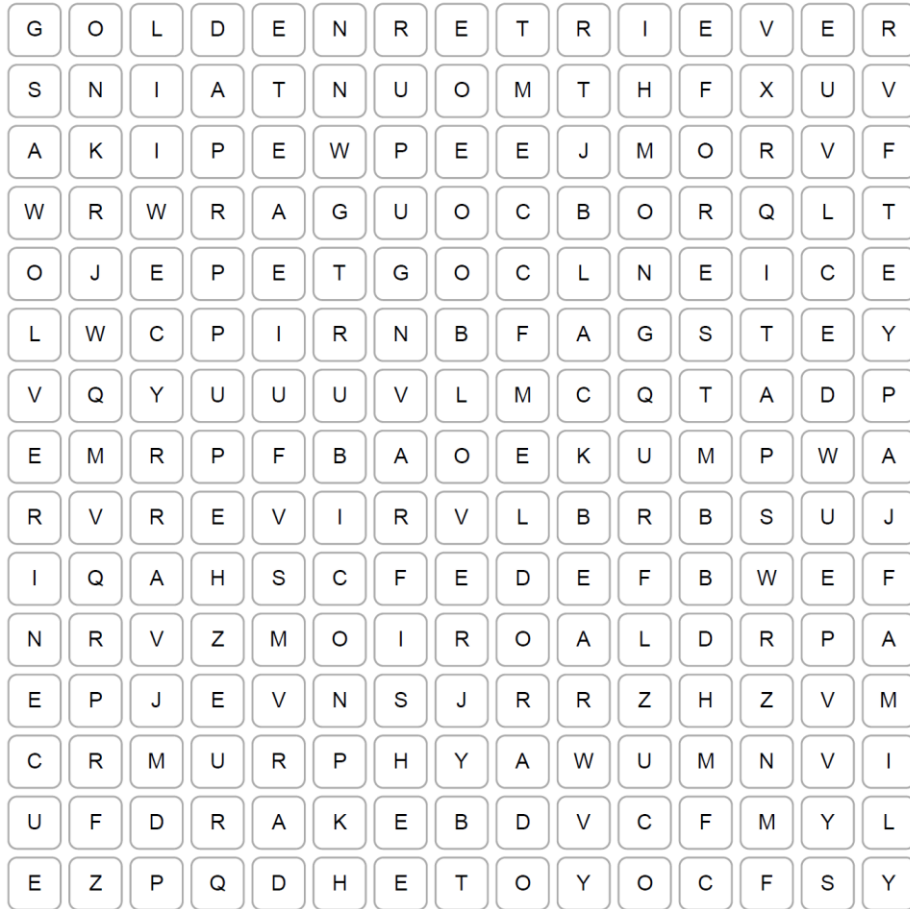
One of the most important things to do when you're looking for a lost pet is to create a poster. Create a lost dog poster for Murphy, or for your own pet. Make sure you include the vital information about your pet, and also how people can contact you.



Murphy's Miracle Word Search

Can you find all the hidden words in this word search?

Words can go in the following directions: → ↓ ←



GOLDENRETRIEVER

RIVER

PET

JEEP

FAMILY

LOVE

FISH

PAJ

HMONG

BLACKBEAR

MOUNTAINS

PIKA

FOREST

WOLVERINE

MURPHY

COUGAR

ELDORADO


DRAKE

COYOTE

RUBICON

When Did It Happen?

Draw a line from the number to the event, so the events are in order.

<p>Paj finds Murphy and wants to take her home.</p> 	<p>1</p>
 <p>Murphy runs from a forest fire.</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Murphy befriends Drake and sleeps in his pickup truck.</p> 	<p>3</p>
 <p>Murphy joins a pack of coyotes.</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>Murphy encounters a mountain lion.</p> 	<p>5</p>
 <p>Murphy plays with a salmon and a bear.</p>	<p>6</p>

Grammar Exercises

Circle the nouns and pronouns in the following sentences:

The bear looked at her, eyes narrowed, while Murphy's heart and legs froze with fear.

As she traveled deeper into the forest, the trees began to eclipse the sun until daytime was as dark and lonely as the night.

In the forest there was no easy water to drink, no quick laps from the silver bowl she was accustomed to, and no warm shelter where her family eventually came home and gave her affection and plenty to eat.

Circle the nouns and adjectives in the following sentences and replace with ones of your choice. (Teachers may choose to expand on these as story starters)

Example: All **eyes** (hands) were on the **action** (jokes) the **dads** (kids) were creating, but **Murphy's** (the bear's) ears (paws) were desperate (hungry) for peace (food).

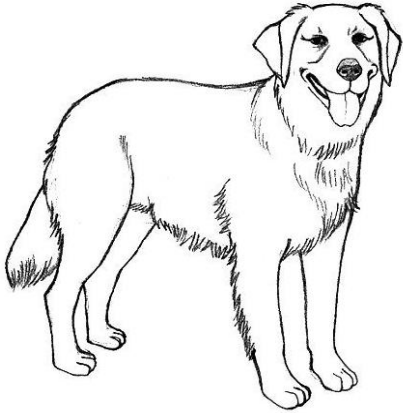
The days of easy, highchair scraps were over. Murphy wasn't a housedog any longer. She would have to survive in the wild, which meant that whether she ate or not would be up to her.

Murphy circled until she was about to burst. *Please stop*, her eyes begged and her tail demanded.

Paj saw something golden colored standing next to the iron pot over the fire, *a coyote or a mountain lion*, she thought, and her heart jumped.

"That's a boy's name," people said, but Murphy was feminine enough, a perfect name actually.

The frigid days and even colder nights also brought with it the realization that Murphy may not have survived.



Murphy's Miracle Story Quiz

1. What kind of dog is Murphy?

2. Name two animals that Murphy encountered while she was in the forest:

3. What was Murphy's family doing when she was lost in the forest?

Fishing

Camping

Hiking

4. What kind of vehicle did the group drive along the Rubicon Trail?

5. What were the animals that Paj's family hunted and cooked in a stew?

6. What was the type of animal that Paj's family really wanted to get, but was very elusive and difficult to find?

7. Paj's family originally came from Asia. The name of their culture is

Thai

Hmong

Chinese

Japanese

8. What group of animals accepted Murphy into their pack?

Bobcat

Coyote

Wolf

9. Drake fought in a war that began after the attack in New York on this date:

10. Murphy loved to swim before she was lost, but seemed afraid of the water after she was reunited with her family.

True

False