

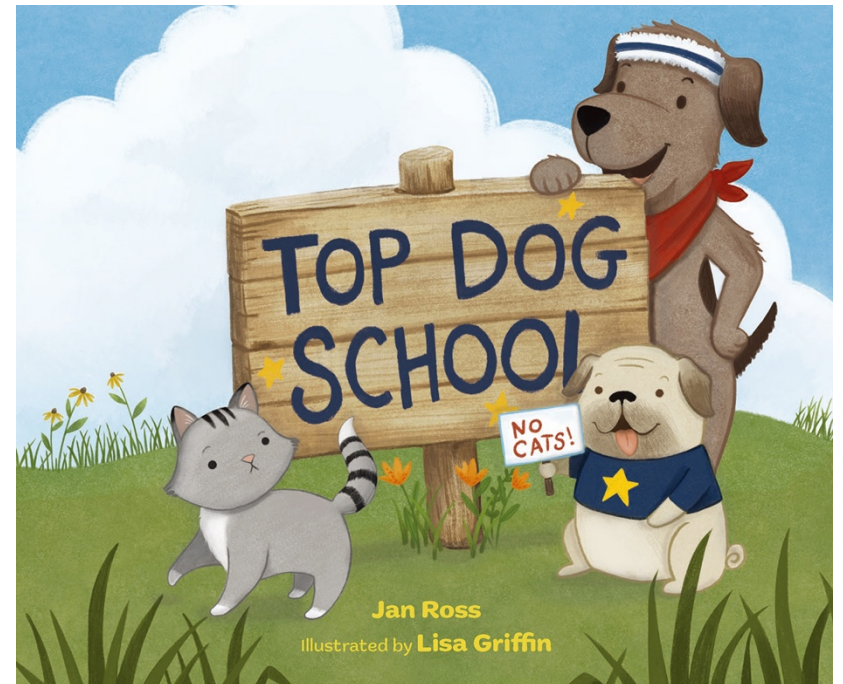
Top Dog School Teaching Notes

Author: Jan Ross
Illustrator: Lisa Griffin

Synopsis:

Jessie the Cat wants to join Top Dog School. He knows he is smart enough and strong enough — he just needs to convince the dogs, too!

Can Jessie work his way to the top despite his feline flaws? Expressive animal characters carry this story of triumphing through unfair adversity.



<u>Before Reading</u>	<u>During Reading</u>	<u>After Reading</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a prediction about what you think this story might be about. • Do you think all the characters are friends? • Where do you think the story takes place? • Do you think there will be ‘bad guys’ and “good Guys” in the story? • Why do you think the dogs have a sign saying “no Cats” 	<p>Literal Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What sorts of clothes caught Jess’s attention? • Can you guess what breeds of dogs Jack and Pip are from the illustrations? • Why did Jess still think he should be allowed to join in after the dogs said he couldn’t? • Who else was not allowed to join Top Dog School? • Why were they not allowed to join in? • What was the dog’s reaction to Jess when he first arrived at the Top Dog School? • What happened that began to change the dogs’ minds about Jess being at Top Dog School? • Did Jess joining the school have an impact on the school rules? <p>Inferential Questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do you think Jess wanted to join the dogs? • Why do you think the dogs didn’t want Jess to join? • Why do you think the dogs laughed at Jess when he wanted to join in? How do you think this made Jess feel? • Why do you think some dogs were mean and rough? • Why did some of the dogs think Jess could be a superstar? • Why did the dogs cheer for Jess when he won? How do you think Jess felt when this happened? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you ever made someone feel unwelcome? Why? • Has someone made you feel unwelcome? • How did that make you feel? • What would you do differently if you were Jess? • Do you think Jack and Pip were unkind or were they just following the rules? • Would you let Jess join in if you were one of the dogs? • What was your favourite illustration in the book? • Is it sometimes ok to stop someone joining in? • Can you think of a time this might be the right thing to do? • What did you feel at the end of the story when Jess was accepted and cheered, and the school rules were changed to make everyone welcome? • Is there anything we can do in our classroom, or playground or school to make sure everyone feels included and welcome?

- What do you think made some of the other dogs feel different too?

By Myself Questions

- What other animals do you think might want to join the school after the rules changed?
- Do you think it was a good thing that the rules changed at the end?
- Are you glad that Jess won, and the dogs cheered him on? Why?
- Have you ever felt like the odd one out in a group?
- What would you have done if you were Jess? Would you have wanted to join in?
- Why?

Activities

- Choose a page and write down the rhyming words – how many more words can you find that Rhyme with these words.
- Draw a picture of what you think might happen at Top Dog School after the rules have changed.
- Using the template of Jess, colour in his new sporty outfit. Choose your favourite patterns and colours.
- In a small group, think of ways we can make sure anyone feeling left out or new to the school can be made to feel welcome and included. Can you make a “New Rule” that you think might make our classroom a more welcoming place? Did you all agree?

About the author:

Jan Ross was born and raised in Edgworth, England, and now resides in Adelaide, Australia. With an early love of reading, Jan still has many of her favourite childhood books, and she would read them to her children when they were growing up. Janice originally wrote *Top Dog School* for her own daughter many years ago, later deciding that it was something that should be enjoyed by as many children as possible. Several re-writes later, the dream of having it published has come true.

About the illustrator:

Lisa Griffin spends her days making art from a cozy studio in New Hampshire, USA. Her illustrations have been commissioned for greeting cards, magazines, and children’s books. She believes in keeping the pencil moving, in the hopes of adding more happiness to the world, one illustration at a time. When not in the studio, Lisa enjoys yoga, photography, gardening, and being outside in the sunshine (preferably near a palm tree).