

# Pets: Round Robin Book Discussion

## Directions

Divide the class into three groups. Assign group 1 to read *Because of Winn-Dixie*, group 2 *The Gravedigger's Cottage*, and group 3 *Chicken Feathers*. Encourage students to read carefully, paying special attention to the role of pets in the stories and their interactions with characters. After reading, set aside time for pairs of groups to discuss as follows. Each paired discussion group should choose a reporter to take notes, for a summary to the class after all discussions. Discussions may be brief—perhaps fifteen minutes per grouping.

This round robin format aids in comprehension, allows students to make creative connections and exercise critical thinking skills, and exposes them to several good books. After all discussions, have group reporters share ideas from their paired group or invite each group to explain words and images they added to the multi-book web described below.

**NOTE: Review the annotations and consider reading levels when assigning these titles. *The Gravedigger's Cottage* is more appropriate for mature readers; the other two are very accessible to middle or upper elementary students.**

### Groups 1 and 2

- One person from each book group will briefly describe the plot of the book and introduce main characters, including pets as appropriate. Talk about whether each book is funny, serious, or a combination of both.
- Both Sylvia in *The Gravedigger's Cottage* and Opal in *Because of Winn-Dixie* have recently moved to new communities. Describe and compare their attitudes toward making new friends.
- Both Sylvia and Opal are without mothers. What happened to each mother, and how does her absence affect her daughter? Describe each character's relationship with her father.
- Describe the role of pets in each book. How has pet ownership affected Sylvia? How about Opal?
- Winn-Dixie is the perfect pet for Opal. What do you think might be the perfect pet for Sylvia and her brother? Explain your answer.

### Groups 1 and 3

- One person from each book group will briefly describe the plot of the book and introduce main characters, including pets as appropriate. Talk about whether each book is funny, serious, or a combination of both.
- "Magical realism" is a literary device in which authors matter-of-factly insert fantasy elements into stories that are otherwise realistic fiction. Both of these books are examples of magical realism. What are the fantasy elements in each title? (Hint: *Chicken Feathers* has one fantasy element; *Because of Winn-Dixie* has two.) What do the fantasy elements add to each story?
- Describe and compare the relationships between Winn-Dixie and Opal, in *Because of Winn-Dixie*, and Semolina and Josh, in *Chicken Feathers*. Share how each child reacts when he or she thinks a beloved pet is dead; then describe their reunions with their pets.
- Are Josh and Opal good pet owners? Give examples to support your answer.
- Do you think Otis' music magic would work on Semolina? Why or why not?

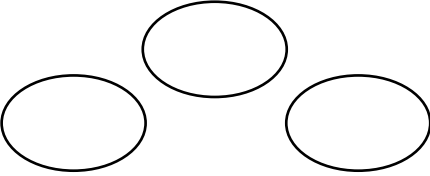
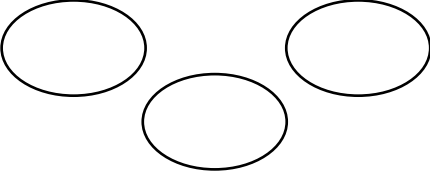
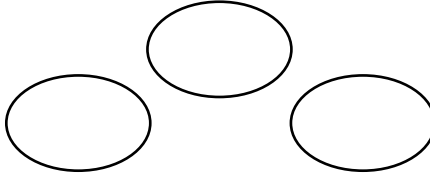
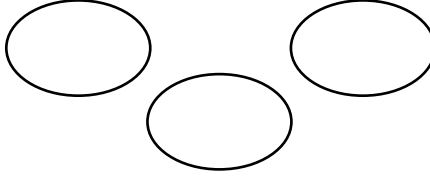
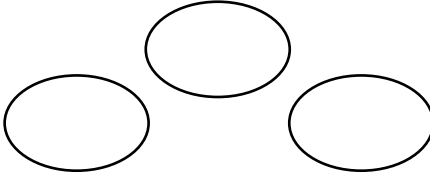
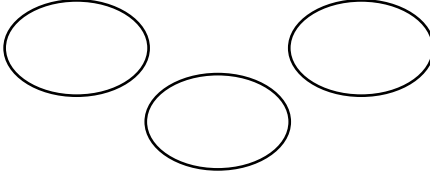
### Groups 2 and 3

- One person from each book group will briefly describe the plot of the book and introduce main characters, including pets as appropriate. Talk about whether each book is funny, serious, or a combination of both.
- At the beginning of *Chicken Feathers*, Josh is described as serious, a worrier, and a little soft. What about Sylvia? Is she any of those things? What three words best describe her?
- What did having pets bring to the lives of the main characters—to Josh? To Sylvia? Compare their very different experiences.
- What about Josh's personality, life, and circumstances prepared him to be a good pet owner? What about Sylvia's personality, life, and circumstances made her such a poor pet owner? Were Sylvia's pets' deaths just bad luck, or the result of poor care due to poor preparation for the responsibilities?
- Do you think some people are naturally suited to have pets, and others are not? Explain your answer.

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## Accompanying Multi-Book Web Activity

Extend learning by adding a student-generated graphic organizer to the process. After students finish reading their books, and before you begin paired group discussions, introduce the idea of a three-book idea web, which students will develop to show elements of the three books and connections between them. Provide a large (24" x 40") sheet of poster board, with light lines dividing it into three equal-sized sections. Write the title of one of the books in the center of each section, and add several "web bubbles" around each title.

 <p><i><b>Because of Winn-Dixie</b></i></p> 	 <p><i><b>The Gravedigger's Cottage</b></i></p> 	 <p><i><b>Chicken Feathers</b></i></p> 
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Give each group about ten minutes to write words in the bubbles that define or describe their book—character names, themes or concepts, adjectives describing tone, etc. They will add bubbles as needed, along with simple drawings of characters or symbols that relate to the book. After each paired group discussion, while other groups are discussing, book groups will add new ideas and insights to their sections of the poster. They will also show connections between books by drawing lines from section to section and showing, in words or images along the line, the shared or contrasting concepts and emotions.

# Pet Business Plan

Think up a pet-related business that might be fun or successful. It can be serious or silly. Develop a business plan for it, using this worksheet. Fill in blanks or write short statements in each section. Use pencil so you can revise, or rewrite your finished plan on separate paper. You'll want to change things as you go.

Business Name \_\_\_\_\_

Owner(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_



**Statement of Purpose.** What need will your business meet and what products or services will it provide to meet that need?

**Products or Services.** Describe in detail your products or services, and how they meet the need you have identified.

**Time Required.** How much time will your business take?

**Competition.** Do other businesses in your area provide similar products or services? What will set your business apart from them and attract customers?

**Marketing.** Who are your potential customers? How will you tell them about your business? Word of mouth, flyers, posters, printed T-shirts, ads in the newspaper, on radio or TV? A Web site? Describe your plan. Then create a marketing tool on a separate sheet of paper. It could be a print advertisement, a script for a radio or TV ad, a design for a T-shirt, or a sample home page for a Web site. Catchy slogans and attractive logos or graphics help!



# Pet Business Plan Finances



## Finances.

Expenses What will it cost to start your business?

- To buy materials and equipment to begin making your products or offering your services \_\_\_\_\_

- To advertise and attract customers \_\_\_\_\_

- To pay employees \_\_\_\_\_

- Where will you get the money to start up? Will you need partners or investors? \_\_\_\_\_

Income How much money will you take in, and when?

- What will you charge for your services? Make a detailed price list on a separate piece of paper.

- How long do you think will it take for your business income cover start-up costs, so you can start showing a profit? \_\_\_\_\_

- Will you reinvest some of your profit to keep the business going? \_\_\_\_\_

**Personnel.** Will you work alone, or will you need partners or employees to get started? If you need to involve others, how will you choose the right people and get them to commit to the business with you?

**Beginning Goal.** How will you decide if your business is a success or if it's time to quit? Set a goal you can use to evaluate your business in a short time. Be specific.

**By** \_\_\_\_\_

**(date in a few weeks or months), my business will**

**have provided** \_\_\_\_\_

**(number of services or quantity of products) to**

\_\_\_\_\_

**(number of customers or clients), and taken in**

**\$** \_\_\_\_\_ .

**I've paid for my start-up costs and I'm on my way to financial success!**

