

Martha Speaks

Problems arise when Martha, the family dog, learns to speak after eating alphabet soup. A surprising twist at the end of the book makes Martha an unlikely hero. Luke, LeVarís favorite pooch, steps to the forefront and takes over the show. As a result, viewers get a dogís eye view of life. Black and white clips of old time dog heroes as well as dogs doing tricks are also shown. We then meet an animal trainer who demonstrates how he trains dogs for TV and movie performances.

Discuss:

Brainstorm a variety of ways in which animals communicate with people, such as wagging, barking in different “voices”, purring, scratching, etc.

Explore the “What if...” notion that if animals could talk, what might they tell us? Use different groups of animals for this discussion, e.g., farm animals, zoo animals, rain forest animals, desert animals, pets, and others.

Discuss the concept of “point of view”. In the program, we see the world from Luke’s point of view. Contrast this way of telling a story with the book **Martha Speaks**, which has a narrator who tells Martha’s story.

Do:

Alphabet Pasta Letters—Put a bag of alphabet pasta letters in a bowl and ask each student to randomly choose 15 letters. Have students hold the letters in their hands without looking at them until everyone has secured their letters. Choose an appropriate time allotment for the age level and ask each student to brainstorm a list of words he or she can make out of the letters within the allotted time. Give a small prize (a sticker, bookmark, pencil, etc.) to the student who creates the longest list.

Read and discuss the sequels—Read the sequels, **Martha Calling** and **Martha Blah Blah**. Discuss the nature of a sequel and how it continues a story or creates further adventures for a character. Ask students to think of additional problems that Martha might encounter and encourage them to write their own sequels.

Read:

THE FIVE-DOG NIGHT
by Eileen Christelow

GOOD DOG, CARL
by Alexandra Day

GINGER JUMPS
by Lisa Campbell Ernst

PLUNK'S DREAMS
by Helen V. Griffith, illus. by Susan Condie Lamb

I AM THE DOG. I AM THE CAT
by Donald Hall, illus. by Barry Moser

SECOND-GRADE DOG
by Laurie Lawlor, illus. by Gloria Fiammenghi

MARTHA CALLING
by Susan Meddaugh

MARTHA BLAH BLAH
by Susan Meddaugh

THREE STORIES TO READ TO YOUR DOG
by Sara Swan Miller, illus. by True Kelley

CAN I BE GOOD?
by Livingston Taylor, illus. by Ted Rand

RIPTIDE
by Frances Ward Weller, illus. by Robert J. Blake

**Web
Resources
For
Teachers:**

Web Resources for Teachers:

Dogs n' Kids - <http://www.petnet.com.au/dogsnkids/slide1.html>

American Dog Trainers Network - <http://www.inch.com/~dogs/>

**Additional
Activities for
this episode:**

Research— Have students research the many roles that dogs have, for example, as workers, (seeing-eye dogs, police dogs, companions for disabled individuals, rescuers, sheep herders, etc.) and as entertainers. Include in the research the types of training that are needed for these roles.

Draw-a-Dog—Do a Draw-a-Dog activity that requires students to follow simple directions. Prepare a set of attribute envelopes, such as “type of hair”, “color”, “ears”, “tail”, and “size”. In each of the envelopes, place cards with descriptive words related to that attribute. Students take one card from each envelope and draw a dog described by the cards. For example, a student might draw an “enormous black and white shaggy dog with pointed ears and a long fluffy tail”.

Create Animal Conversations—Ask students to cut out pictures of animals from magazines and glue them on a clean sheet of paper. Encourage students to write conversations between the animals using word bubbles. An additional activity would be to have students create animal cartoon strips.

“Dogs in the News” Bulletin Board—Start a “Dogs in the News” bulletin board with the class. Have students collect newspaper and magazine articles and pictures about dogs. Analyze the display with the students. Do they notice any common themes among the articles? How do the articles make them feel? Did any of the articles give them new information? Do any of the articles make them want to take action?

**School to
home
Connection:**

Family Involvement – Create a “take home” pack for students to check out to share this theme with their family. Below is a list of items to use in creating the pack:

- A copy of the family activity sheet available to print out at the end of this PDF file.
- A copy of the feature book *Martha Speaks*
- A video of the Reading Rainbow episode *Martha Speaks*
- A two gallon zip lock bag or child's backpack

Put these items together into the bag/backpack. Have students can take turns checking out this resource and sharing it with their family.

Note: You can find ready to use Family Literacy Kits on the gpn.unl.edu/rainbow web site.



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Here are several activities you and your child can do together after watching this episode.

Forever Pet Pawprints

You will need:

- modeling compound
- paints, permanent marker
- your pet

Directions:

1. Press the paw of your pet in some modeling compound. (Available in the crafts section of many stores.)
2. Allow the imprint to dry.
3. Paint the print if you desire, and use a marker to write your pet's name below the print.
4. Use your pet's paw as a paperweight or desk decoration.

Pet Journal

Buy a blank journal or make your own by compiling several blank sheets of paper into a booklet with a construction-paper cover. Title the journal with your pet's name, such as "A Day in the Life of Browser." Date each journal entry you write and include details, telling what interesting or clever things your pet did that day.

Dog Bone Faces

You will need:

- dog-bone biscuits
- glue
- wiggle eyes
- small red pom-poms
- red and black felt scraps
- red yarn



Directions:

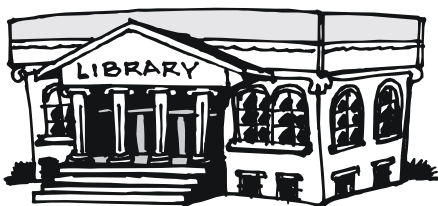
1. Using the dog-bone biscuit for the basic face of the dog, use glue to add black felt ears and a red felt tongue.
2. Next, add wiggle eyes and a pom-pom nose.
3. To hang in a window, attach a piece of yarn.

Bow-Wow Frames

You will need:

- dog-bone biscuits
- heavy cardboard
- glue
- clear acrylic spray

1. **Cut a frame from heavy cardboard.**
2. **Glue dog-gone biscuits all around the frame.**
3. **When the glue has dried, take the frame outdoors and spray clear acrylic over the dog-bone biscuits to preserve them. (You could also brush a clear shellac on them.)**
4. **Once the coating has dried, attach a cardboard stand to the back of the frame. Insert a favorite photo of a pet and display!**



Visit Your Community Library

Here are some books you can check out on your next trip to the library

- ◆ *My Puppy Is Born* by Joanna Cole
- ◆ *Earth Hounds, As Explained by Professor Xargle* by Jeanne Willis
- ◆ *The Night I Followed The Dog* by Nina Laden
- ◆ *Boomer's Big Day* by Contance W. McGeorge
- ◆ *The Trouble with Mister* by Debra Keller
- ◆ *Just Dog* by Hiawyn Oram

Good Dog Carl is very likely the root cause of many human tragedies. If these books are to remain in circulation, and there is no legal reason why they should not, public safety principles dictate that they should be sold like cigarettes, with ostentatious warnings containing data regarding the increased risk the product represents to human health. Thank you for your discussion of the "Good Dog Carl" picture books. While not as explosively popular as they were in the 1990s, the series remains a perennial. This is the online home for Good Dog Carl and Alexandra Day. Here, fans and collectors will find up-to-date information on all things Carl, a complete bibliography and a way for Carl's friends to contact him directly. There is also a store where you can buy signed and paw-printed books, prints and cards. Welcome! Go here to buy Good Dog Carl Books, Cards and Prints!