Pilot Pups
Picture Book Teaching Activity Guide
(Pre-k - 2nd Grade)
Written by Michelle Meadows
Illustrated by Dan Andreasen
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Book Summary

When a couple of kids forget to put away their toys, it's up to Pilot Pups to go on a special search and rescue mission to bring their toy buddies back home. Come along for the ride as Pilot Pups zip and zoom through the air as they search for their friends.

Story Behind the Story

Michelle Meadows, the author of this book, was inspired to write Pilot Pups because of the toy airplane and toy helicopter on her son's bookshelf. She is also fascinated with search and rescue operations. It's wonderful when team members pull together to help others!

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Pilot Pups Teaching Activities Linked to Common Core State Standards (CCSS) English Language Arts

Themes: Transportation, Airplanes, Helicopters, Teamwork, Helping others, Toys, Imagination, Dogs, Rhymes/poetry; CCSS: Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

1. Anatomy of a Picture Book

CCSS: Name the author and illustrator of a story and define the role of each in telling the story.
CCSS: Distinguish between information provided by pictures or other illustrations and information provided by the words in a text.

- ✓ Discuss the role of the author Michelle Meadows (words/text) and the illustrator Dan Andreasen (pictures) and how both play a role in conveying a story.
- ✓ In a picture book, illustrators use the text as a jumping-off point; the text inspires illustrators to express their creativity through visual pictures. Discuss these specific examples:
  - o The Pilot Pups text mentions "Watch out for the mountaintop!" The illustrator decided that Dad's head would be "the mountaintop."
  - o The illustrator (not the author) decided what the Pilot Pups would look like.

2. Comprehension

CCSS: Ask and answer questions about key details in the text.
CCSS: Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.
CCSS: Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

- ✓ Discuss the concept of search and rescue. Here is a good explanation of search and rescue that teachers can use for background: http://voices.yahoo.com/how-organize-search-rescue-mission-127465.html?cat=7
- ✓ Explain that Pilot Pups is fiction. Discuss the fictional elements in the context of using imagination: toys coming to life, toys flying planes, toys helping friends…
- ✓ Discuss the characters: The characters are pilots and dogs. After reading Pilot Pups, ask students to describe the Pups. This can be a group activity and an opportunity for vocabulary

building. What do the Pups look like? What color are they? Describe their noses. What are they wearing?
- ✓ Discuss the setting: What is the setting of this story?
- ✓ What activities do the pups engage in?

3. Story Structure

CCSS: Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.
CCSS: Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

- ✓ Every story has a beginning, middle, and end. Use a board or flip chart. As a group, discuss what major events happen in the beginning, the middle, and the end.
- ✓ Every story has a problem. As a group, make a list of the problems the Pups encounter.
    - o Why are the Pups flying through the air?
    - o Who are the Pups looking for?
    - o What do the Pups do when they encounter "the mountaintop"?
    - o What do the Pups do when they encounter a "patch of fog"?
    - o What do the Pups in the airplane do when they find their buddies? (call in the helicopter!)
- ✓ How does the story end?

4. Rhyme Time

CCSS: Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds (phonemes).
CCSS: Describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.

- ✓ Pilot Pups is a story in rhyme. Discuss the definition of rhyme. Rhyming words end in the same sound.
- ✓ Give students a word from the book and have them brainstorm corresponding rhyming words as a group. UP: What rhymes with up? Ask students to name any rhyming words they can think of.
- ✓ Ask students to identify rhyming words through the Pilot Pups matching exercise on the next page.

Pilot Pups
Rhyme Time Matching Activity

Draw a line to connect each word on the left side of the page with a rhyming word on the right side of the page. These words are from Pilot Pups, written by Michelle Meadows and illustrated by Dan Andreasen.

up	top
air	glide
sky	screen
ride	dog
drop	there
between	peak
fog	double
creek	sound
trouble	pup
ground	high

5. Projects

CCSS: Participate in shared research and writing projects.
CCSS: Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.
CCSS: Write opinion pieces in which students introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.
CCSS: Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.
CCSS: Compare characteristics of animals that make them alike and different from other animals and nonliving things.

- ✓ Ask students to use their imagination and choose their favorite Pup from the story, make up a name for the Pup, and describe the character traits of the Pup.
- ✓ Ask students to draw a picture of their favorite Pup from the story.
- ✓ Ask students to bring their favorite stuffed animal into class and to describe the animal (name, personality…). Ask students to explain why the stuffed animal is their favorite. Ask students to create a story about their stuffed animal.
- ✓ Ask students to write about their own dogs.
- ✓ Discuss with students how dogs are different from other animals. Discuss the characteristics that dogs have in common.
- ✓ Parts of Speech: Ask children to identify verbs, nouns, and adjectives in the text of Pilot Pups.
- ✓ Show children **how to make a dog card.**
- ✓ Show children **how to make a dog mask.**
- ✓ Show children **how to make paper airplanes with this step-by-step guide.**