

### About the Book

Text Type: Nonfiction/Biography Page Count: 16 Word Count: 1,600

### Book Summary

Many brave people serve their country during wartime, but animals can also be involved in the fight. *Sergeant Stubby* recounts the story of one faithful dog who sailed to France with American soldiers to serve in the trenches of World War I. The young bull terrier proved so heroic that he was promoted to sergeant and received numerous honors and awards. Though wounded in battle, Stubby survived the war to become a national hero. Photographs, illustrations, and a map support the text.

### About the Lesson

#### Targeted Reading Strategy

- Ask and answer questions

#### Objectives

- Ask and answer questions to understand text
- Sequence events in the text
- Identify and use names of titles as proper nouns
- Identify and choose synonyms

#### Materials

Green text indicates resources that are available on the website.

- Book—*Sergeant Stubby* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry-erase board
- Sheets of paper
- Highlighters
- Thesauri
- Photographs and illustrations cut out of an extra copy of the book
- Sequence events, proper nouns: names of titles, synonyms worksheets
- Discussion cards



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting the book on an interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if the books are reused.)

#### Vocabulary

\*Boldface vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on [VocabularyA-Z.com](http://VocabularyA-Z.com).

#### Content words:

Story critical: **canine** (n.), **distinguish** (v.), **mascot** (n.), **regiment** (n.), **sergeant** (n.), **World War I** (n.)

Enrichment: **allies** (n.), **artillery** (n.), **diminutive** (adj.), **stalemate** (n.), **trenches** (n.), **tribute** (n.)

### Before Reading

#### Build Background

- Ask students to draw a picture of a dog on a separate sheet of paper. Then, have students do a quick-write for a minute about everything they know about dogs. Remind students that during a quick-write they should never stop writing, even if they need to repeat words and sentences until they arrive at a new detail.

- Have students share their picture and quick write with a partner. Then, have students discuss with their partner their prior knowledge about dogs. Ask partners to focus their discussion on skills dogs possess, such as hunting, protecting, herding, and so on. Invite volunteers to share their thoughts with the rest of the class.

### Preview the Book

#### Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name).

#### Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Ask and answer questions**

- Remind students that engaged readers help themselves to understand what they are reading by asking questions before and during reading, and searching for answers as they read. Point out that readers create questions on the basis of what they read in the text and their own prior knowledge of the subject.
- Model how to ask questions.  
*Think-aloud: I know that as I read, I will continually ask questions about what I see and learn. Even before I begin reading, I can think of questions from the cover materials and from previewing the book. On the cover of Sergeant Stubby, I see a dog climbing around the trenches in a battlefield. I have some questions for the book. Who is that dog, and what is it doing in the middle of a fight? What war is being depicted in this illustration? I will look for the answers to these questions as I read.*
- Draw a T-chart on the board, and label the left side *Questions* and the right side *Answers*. Record the questions from the think-aloud in the left column of the T-chart.
- Review with students that a table of contents provides clues about the details to be covered in the book. Have students work with a partner to read the section titles in the table of contents and preview the illustrations and photographs in the book. Then, have them generate at least one question on the basis of this information.
- Have students record their questions on a separate sheet of paper. Encourage students to create their own T-chart to organize their questions and answers. Invite volunteers to share questions with the rest of the class, and record them on the board in the left column of the T-chart.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

#### Introduce the Comprehension Skill: **Sequence events**

- Review or explain to students that knowing the order in which events happen in a text is important to understanding the book. Point out that in a biography, the events described are either major events in the subject's history or important historical events connected to the subject's life.
- Point out to students that this book is a biography of a dog's life. Remind students that they can look for transition words such as *today*, *then*, *first*, and *after that* to help them understand the order of events. Write these words on the board, and have students share with a partner other words to add to the list. Invite volunteers to come to the board and add more transition words that aid in the sequencing of events.
- Model sequencing the events of a person's life, using a familiar historical figure as a model. Have students record the dates and transition words on a separate sheet of paper as they hear them in the think-aloud.  
*Think-aloud: To describe the sequence of events of a person's life, I would start with the day that person was born, if the date is known. Then, I would describe the major events and dates in that person's life. To describe the sequence of events in Abraham Lincoln's life, I would begin my description in the following manner. First, Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809, in Kentucky. Later, Lincoln's mother, Nancy, died. She died of milk sickness in 1818, and his sister*

*then helped raise Lincoln. After that, his father remarried in 1819, and Lincoln grew close to his stepmother. In 1830, the Lincoln family moved west to Illinois. Then Lincoln branched out to support himself. He was hired by a New Salem businessman in 1831 to transport goods by flatboat. I could continue describing Lincoln's life in this manner, finally finishing with his assassination and death on April 14, 1865.*

- Invite volunteers to share with the class what they recorded on their paper. Remind students that dates, like transition words, are useful tools in organizing a sequence of events in a biography.
- Draw a timeline on the board. Remind students that a timeline shows the sequence of the most important events in a subject's life in a concrete visual form. Review with students how to fill in a timeline.
- Begin the timeline with Lincoln's birthdate. Write the date above the first point on the line, and write the corresponding event (his birth) beneath the same point. Invite students to identify the next event, and add it to the timeline. If students share an event in the wrong sequence, discuss with them how they know it belongs later on the timeline. Continue the process until all dates from the think-aloud are recorded and organized in the correct sequence.
- Point out to students that they could record many more significant events in Lincoln's life on the timeline, leading all the way up to his death, but they just worked with a small sample of his life to practice sequencing on a timeline. Draw a point on the end of the line. Ask students to share with a partner what major event would end the timeline (his death).
- Have students share with a partner their life story. Then, have them work with their partner to create timelines for their own lives on a separate sheet of paper. Invite volunteers to share their timeline with the rest of the class.
- Ask students to point to any transition words they used to describe events on their timeline. Discuss with students what transition words are best suited to which events, and encourage students to add words to the appropriate places on their timeline.
- Erase the information from the timeline on the board. Write the words *Sergeant Stubby* above the blank timeline. Explain to students that they will be creating a timeline to organize the important events related to the life of Stubby the dog.

### Introduce the Vocabulary


- Remind students of the strategies they can use to sound out words they don't know. For example, they can use what they know about letter and sound correspondence to figure out the word. They can look for words within words, and prefixes and suffixes. They can use the context to work out the meanings of unfamiliar words.
- Write the story-critical vocabulary words on the board. Point to each word and have students read it aloud. Point to each word again and have students raise their hand if they know what the word means. Invite volunteers to share a definition with the rest of the class, and have other students give a thumbs-up signal if they agree with this definition.
- Remind students that the words in the glossary can also be found in boldface print in the text. Have students work with a partner to find the vocabulary words in the text and discuss their definitions on the basis of context. Then, have students turn to the glossary, read the definitions for the vocabulary words, and compare those definitions to the ones they inferred from context.
- Have students divide a separate sheet of paper into four rectangles. In the first box, have them write the word *canine*. In the second box, have them record the definition for the word, as determined in the previous discussion. In the third box, have students draw a picture for *canine*, and in the fourth box, have them write an original sentence that accurately uses the word.
- Have students repeat the process for the remaining vocabulary words. Invite volunteers to share a picture or a sentence with the rest of the class, and have other students identify the vocabulary word being used.

### Set the Purpose


- Have students read to find out more about Sergeant Stubby and his unusual life. Remind students to continue asking and answering questions while they read.

### During Reading


#### Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read from page 4 to the end of page 7. Encourage those who finish early to go back and reread. Ask students to go back and look at their questions on a separate sheet of paper to determine whether this part of the text answered them. Have students record the answers on their separate sheet of paper.
- **Model answering questions and asking new ones.**  
**Think-aloud:** *Before I started reading, I had some questions I hoped the book would answer. Who is the dog, and why is it in a war zone? What war is it? Having read the first few pages of the book, I now know the answers to those questions. The dog is Stubby, a stray animal adopted by James Conroy, who snuck him aboard the ship of the 102nd Infantry Regiment. He traveled with that part of the army to France, where the allied forces were engaged in World War I. Stubby became a mascot for the 102nd Infantry Regiment and often fought on the battlefield with them. That's why he was in the middle of a battle in the illustration on the cover. The book answered all the questions I had earlier, but as I read, I thought of more questions to consider. Why is Stubby called Sergeant Stubby in the title? How did Stubby stand out from all the other canines? I will look for the answers to these and other questions as I read.*
- Record the answers to your questions in the right side of the T-chart on the board, lining up the answer with the corresponding question.
- Review with students the other questions recorded in the T-chart. Have students point to any questions already answered by the book. Invite volunteers to come to the board and record the answer on the board, and have other students give a thumbs-up signal if they agree with the written answer.
- Have students discuss with a partner the answers they found to their own questions and share with them new questions they generated while they read. Have students record new questions on the separate sheet of paper. Invite volunteers to share new questions with the rest of the class, and record them in the left column of the T-chart on the board.
-  Have students review with a partner the important events in Stubby's life described in the first few pages of the book. Ask students to highlight all the dates included in these pages. Call on students to share an event with the rest of the class and record it on the board.
- Introduce and explain the [sequence events worksheet](#). Have students record important events from the book, and any associated dates, on their worksheet. Remind students to use appropriate transition words when describing the events.
- Ask students to call out the date with which to begin the timeline (1917). Invite a volunteer to describe the event associated with that date, referring to the board as necessary (James Conroy snuck Stubby aboard the *Minnesota*). Ask students to discuss with a partner why the book does not begin with Stubby's birth, and invite volunteers to share their thoughts with the rest of the class (Conroy adopted the dog when he was in college, so no one knows exactly when Stubby was born).
- Point out that the book includes details that make the account interesting and concretely describe events, but these supporting details are not necessary for a timeline. Explain to students that timelines include the most important information in concise wording. Point out that not even complete sentences are necessary. Demonstrate as you record the first event with a brief description beneath the date.

- Invite volunteers to describe the details we know about Stubby prior to 1917: Conroy found Stubby at the Yale University football stadium, adopted him, and named him Stubby, and Stubby learned how to march and salute with the other soldiers. Point out that students could extend the timeline and add these events before 1917, but they would have no corresponding dates to match to them.
- Have students discuss with a partner how they would arrange on the timeline the details from their worksheet. Invite a volunteer to share with the rest of the class the next detail belonging on the timeline, including the date and a concise description. Add it to the timeline on the board. Continue until all pertinent details from pages 6 and 7 are recorded on the board.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students read pages 8 through 11. Have them write answers they found while reading on their separate sheet of paper and add any additional questions that came to mind. Have students share with a partner answers they found and new questions they considered. Encourage students to add interesting questions heard from their partner to their own separate sheet of paper. Invite volunteers to share new questions with the rest of the class and record them in the T-chart on the board.

 Ask students to highlight all the dates they can find in these pages and add more information to their sequence events worksheet. Remind them to use transition words in their descriptions.

- Have students discuss with a partner the events of Stubby's life described in this portion of the book, and ask them to choose what events and dates belong on the timeline. Call on students to share important dates and events with the rest of the class.
- Invite volunteers to come to the board and continue filling in the timeline by adding the next important date and its associated event. Have students leave a longer space between the dates March 21, 1918, and November 1918. Continue until all dates and events have been entered on the timeline in the correct sequence.
- Discuss with students details that do not have a specific date, such as Stubby helping soldiers get back to Allied lines or Stubby hearing the incoming artillery shells and alerting the men to take cover. Point out that these actions occurred over a period of time between March 1918 and the end of the war in November 1918. Explain to students that timelines can include information without a specific date point if the details are important parts of the subject's life. Add brief descriptions of these events beneath the timeline, in the space between the points at March 1918 and November 1918 (the point at April 1918 when Stubby was wounded will be on the timeline among these details, but the ongoing events can really go any place between March and November).
- Have students read the remainder of the book. Remind them to look for and write answers to their questions. Encourage them to add new questions to their paper as well. Ask students to keep track of the correct sequence of events that occurred in the life of Stubby the dog.

 Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

### After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

### Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Have students review the questions on their separate sheet of paper and write the answers to all those questions the book covered. Have students share with a partner their questions and the answers they found.



- **Think-aloud:** *Now that I have finished reading, I can check to see whether the book answered all my questions. I wanted to know why Stubby was called Sergeant Stubby. I discovered that Stubby was promoted to a sergeant after he captured a German soldier. I also wanted to find out what made Stubby stand out from the other dogs. I learned that Stubby accomplished many amazing things during the war. He could smell the gas attacks before the men and alerted them to use their masks. He helped lead wounded men back to safety and stood over those that were too injured to move and barked until help arrived. He once was even shot while he ranged in the field to help soldiers. Stubby was a great soldier and risked his life over and over to help others, and that is what made him stand out. The book answered all the questions I asked while reading. More importantly, asking questions and seeking the answers kept my attention focused and helped me remember what I read.*
- Write the answers in the right column of the chart on the board. Have students point to questions on the board that the book answered. Invite volunteers to come to the board and record answers in the *Answers* column of the T-chart. Discuss with students any necessary changes to the answers.
- Invite volunteers to come to the board and circle questions that remain unanswered. Remind students that books may not answer every question a reader has. Discuss with students resources they could use to conduct further research, such as other nonfiction books, the Internet, and newspaper and magazine articles.
- Have students circle unanswered questions on their separate sheet of paper. Assign students to groups and have students read all the unanswered questions circled on their papers. Ask groups to discuss which questions they would be interested in researching further and what resources they could use to find out more.
- Have students discuss with a partner how asking and answering questions helped them to remember and understand what they read about Sergeant Stubby and his army career.

### Reflect on the Comprehension Skill

- **Discussion:** Review with students the timeline on the board. Have students discuss with a partner how they would finish the timeline. Invite volunteers to come to the board and add more details to the timeline. Discuss with students how they would end the timeline. Would they end with Stubby's death or his final recognition by the Smithsonian Institution? Finish the timeline on the board.
- Place on the board the photographs and illustrations cut out of an extra copy of the book, arranged in an incorrect sequence. Have students discuss with a partner how to properly sequence the events depicted in the material on the board. Call on students to come to the board and rearrange the illustrations and photographs so they are in the correct sequence, and then call on other students to come and write an appropriate transition word above each one.
- Have students describe the sequence of events to a partner, using transition words. Discuss with students the difference between their descriptions and the timeline on the board.
- Erase the timeline from the board before students begin the one on their worksheet.
- **Independent practice:** Have students complete the sequence events worksheet by recording the remaining dates and events from the book. Then, have students turn the worksheet over and create their own timeline for Stubby's life. Have students compare their timeline with a partner's and make final changes or additions.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you learned about Stubby, the brave dog who fought alongside Allied soldiers during World War I. Why did the author choose to write a biography about a dog? Do you know other stories about amazing animals?

### Build Skills

#### Grammar and Mechanics: **Proper nouns: Names of titles**

- Ask students to locate five people, places, or things inside the classroom. Have students point to one item they see. Call on random students to share their chosen target with the rest of the class, and record the words on the board. Ask students to identify the kind of words they see (*nouns*). Remind students that *nouns* are words that identify *people, places, and things*.

- Write the following sentence on the board and have students read it aloud: *Sergeant Stubby accompanied his owner, Private James Conroy, to Germany to help fight in the war.* Ask students to identify all the nouns to a partner. Invite volunteers to come to the board and circle a noun, and continue until all nouns are located (*Stubby, owner, Private, James Conroy, Germany, war*).
- Ask students to discuss with a partner why some nouns are capitalized and some are not. Invite volunteers to share their thoughts with the rest of the class. Review with students that a *proper noun* identifies a *specific person, place, or thing*, and is always capitalized.
- Underline the words *Sergeant* and *Private*. Explain to students that these words are military titles. Explain that military titles indicate the rank of a person in the military, and when they refer to a specific person, they are proper nouns. In other words, when the title comes before a person's name it is a proper noun and should be capitalized.
- Write the following sentence on the board and have students read it aloud: *The sergeant gave the private his orders.* Have students discuss with a partner why *sergeant* and *private* are not capitalized. Reinforce with students that the title needs to come before a person's name to be a proper noun and capitalized.
- Write the following military titles on the board: *Private, Corporal, Sergeant, Sergeant Major, and Admiral*. Discuss with students other positions that include titles, such as *President, Secretary, Doctor*, and so on. Record these words on the board. Have students work with a partner to choose five titles from those listed. For each title, have students use it as a proper noun in one sentence and a common noun in a second sentence. Invite volunteers to write their sentences on the board, and have other students give a thumbs-up signal if the titles are used correctly.
- Remind students not to confuse a proper noun with the capital letter used at the beginning of a sentence or in a title. Point out that sometimes the beginning of a sentence can also be a proper noun, however. Encourage students to pay attention to the word and its context to determine whether it is a proper noun.



**Check for understanding:** Have students locate and underline all the proper nouns in their book. Then, have them review the proper nouns and underline all those that are names of titles. Have students check their work with a partner.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [proper-nouns-names-of-titles worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

### Word Work: **Synonyms**

- Have students point to the word *diminutive* on page 14. Ask students to discuss with a partner the meaning of the word and then think of words that have a similar meaning. Invite volunteers to share a similar word with the rest of the class, and record words on the board.
- Review with students that a *synonym* is a word that has the *same or similar meaning* to another word. Point out that the words on the board are all synonyms.
- Write the following sentence on the board and read it aloud with students: *Stubby was a happy hero.* Underline the word *happy*. Have students work with a partner to create a list of synonyms for *happy*. Invite volunteers to share a synonym with the rest of the class. Have students place a check beside the words on their list when they hear them from other students.
- Rewrite the sentence on the board with one of the synonyms in place of the word *happy*. Have students give a thumbs-up signal if the sentence makes sense. Repeat this process several times. Point out that synonyms have similar meanings, but not all words will make sense in the context of the sentence. Explain to students that they always need to check the synonym against the context of the sentence.
- Review with students how to use a thesaurus. Remind them that a thesaurus is a book with lists of synonyms for words that are arranged in alphabetical order. Explain to students that if they choose a synonym from the thesaurus, they still need to know what the word means and make sure it works in the context of a sentence.

- Have students look up the word *happy* in the thesaurus. Have them read the synonyms with a partner. Call on students to share with the rest of the class a new synonym for the word *happy* that they found in the thesaurus. Discuss with students the variation in meaning among the many synonyms found.
- **Check for understanding:** Write the following words on the board: *big, sad, help, and amazing*. Have students work in groups to think of at least one synonym for each word. Call on students to share their synonyms and record them on the board beside the appropriate word. Then, have students work with a partner to use the thesaurus and find one more synonym for each. Have partners write a sentence for all of the original words on a separate sheet of paper, and then rewrite the sentences replacing the original words with an appropriate synonym, making sure that the sentence still makes sense. Invite volunteers to share a pair of sentences with the rest of the class.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [synonyms worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers aloud.

### Build Fluency

#### Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, partners can take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

#### Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have students demonstrate to someone at home how a reader asks questions then reflects on the answers while reading.

### Extend the Reading

#### Biographical Writing and Art Connection

Have students raise their hand if they have a pet. Have students raise their hand if they know someone who has a pet. Ask students to choose one pet about which to write a biography, just as Sergeant Stubby has his own biography. Remind students that a biography shares a subject's personality, influence, and accomplishments. Have students take notes on important dates in the animal's life, such as when the animal was born, adopted, had any sicknesses, and completed any special actions. Then, have students draw a picture of the animal and write a corresponding description. Finally, have students record several ways the pet has influenced the lives of its owners. If students are writing about someone else's animal, have them interview the owner to obtain the required information. Have students write all of this information in report form, using at least five paragraphs and covering all three areas of a biography. Encourage students to have fun with the tone and style, and employ humor in their writing. Invite volunteers to present their report and illustration to the rest of the class.

Visit [WritingA-Z.com](http://WritingA-Z.com) for a lesson and leveled materials on biographical writing.

#### Social Studies Connection

Discuss with students the major events involved in World War I. Use appropriate videos, photographs, picture books, and chapter books to cover the origins of the war, its historical impact, and the people involved. Break students into groups, and assign each group a topic covering one aspect of World War I. A list of topics could include the following: origins of the war, the countries involved, Axis and Allies, the major battles, trench warfare, the vehicles and weapons involved, contemporary writers and their connection to the war, and the end of the war. Guide students in deeper research of their topic, and ensure they are pursuing age-appropriate channels. Possibly provide the research materials. Have groups record notes on what they learn and create a visual product that summarizes the information. Groups can make a poster, a collage, a diorama, and so on. Have students present their information to the class.



## Skill Review

**Discussion cards** covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

## Assessment

### Monitor students to determine if they can

- consistently use the strategy of asking and answering questions to comprehend the text during discussion;
- properly sequence events in the text, during discussion, and on a worksheet;
- correctly identify names of titles as proper nouns and use them during discussion and on a worksheet;
- accurately identify and choose synonyms during discussion and in oral sentences.

### Comprehension Checks

- **Book Quiz**
- **Retelling Rubric**