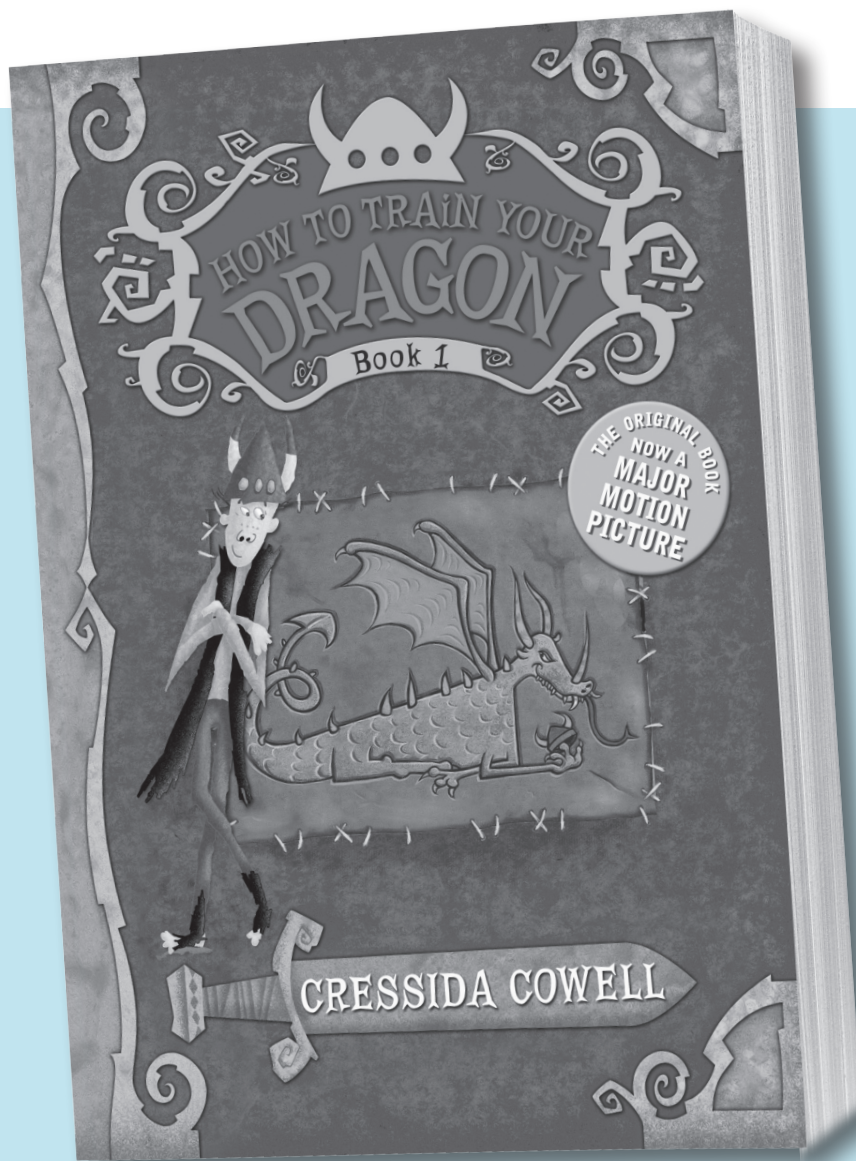


# HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON SERIES



written and illustrated by  
**CRESSIDA COWELL**

## Curriculum connections

- ❖ Literature
- ❖ History
- ❖ Psychology
- ❖ Dragon Care

## Thematic connections

- ❖ Family
- ❖ Friends
- ❖ Enemies
- ❖ Arch Enemies
- ❖ Mortal Enemies

## Setting the stage for learning



With a few easy-to-do adjustments to your classroom routine and a little imagination, your students can be transported back to the long ago world of Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III and his tight band of Viking hooligans. If you are lucky enough to be situated in a soggy climate, keep your classroom windows open all day and all night (sabotage the school's sprinkler system if you hail from drier climes). Make sure that beans are always on the lunch menu. Dress in tattered rags and animal pelts. Cut back on toiletries. Build fires. Curse. After a few weeks—or maybe a couple of months, if they are from especially genteel homes—your students will become thoroughly modern barbarians.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III is the son of Chief Stoick the Vast, the leader of the Hairy Hooligans. He is also a direct descendant of Grimbeard the Ghastly, the greatest pirate the world has ever known. Does his noble ancestry sometimes intimidate Hiccup? Is it ever possible to have too much savagery in your blood?
2. How did Hiccup meet his dragon? Why is it called Toothless, and not Sweetems, Sugarlips, or Babyface?
3. Why does Hiccup sometimes feel inadequate in comparison to his classmate, Snotlout? Is it because Snotlout is bigger, faster, and better at almost everything? Or is Hiccup just overly sensitive?
4. How much violence is too much violence for a Viking? Are family and friends off-limits? Should innocent women and children be spared? How about cute animals? Where would you draw the line if you were a bloodthirsty pirate?
5. Goober the Belch is in charge of the Pirate Training Program on the Isle of Berk. Explore his teaching philosophy and instructional methods. Do you think he would be an effective educator in your system? Why or why not?
6. Professor Yobbish wrote a very famous book about dragons. What was its title? What was its message? Speak up.
7. A Viking Chief feels no pain, according to Stoick the Vast, and no fear. A Viking Chief must also be above mere weak, personal feelings. Where is the fun in that? Would you want to be a Chief?
8. In his opening note, Hiccup tells readers that he eventually grows up to be a hero, but that he did it the hard way. What was the easy way? Which route would you prefer? Be honest.
9. What if a Viking came for a visit to your home? Would you answer the door? Would you call the police? Would you look for a place to hide yourself and everyone you loved?



## ACTIVITIES

1. Conflict resolution skills are valued in every culture, even barbaric ones. With the whole class, discuss how the Vikings resolved their conflicts: staring contests, yelling, stabbing, kidney punches, poisoning, and more. Break students into small groups that thoroughly research and then demonstrate ancient methods of settling scores. Be sure to look into your school district's written policy on axe wielding.
2. One of the greatest Vikings of all time recalls his early days of struggle and challenge in the How to Train Your Dragon series. Inspired by Hiccup's honesty, your children can write their own memoirs. Ask them to be as forthright as possible about family feuds, neighborhood brawls, and ugly bouts with intestinal ailments or other illnesses. Encourage illustrations. Post the finished memoirs on your classroom website or have the proud authors recite them on a back-to-school night.
3. Lead your crew of landlubbers out onto the open seas. A voyage in a small craft on the north Atlantic would be ideal, but a lake or even a pond will do if the weather is sufficiently stormy and the crew ill prepared. Encourage your students to improvise at navigation. Amuse them with salty language. Regale them with tales of famous mutinies. Wear a life preserver. Be prepared to abandon ship.
4. Brush up on your Dragonese. Contact local colleges or zoological associations for the names of fluent Dragonese speakers in your area. Encourage your distinguished guest to teach helpful phrases to your students (salutations, complaints about the weather, death threats, etc.) and to share amusing stories about those inevitable "lost in translation" moments with dimwitted fire breathers. Leave plenty of time for student questions. Be sure that your guest is properly escorted off school property. Bar the door.
5. Where is the buried treasure in your community? Brainstorm with your students about places in your area that would be perfect targets for modern day marauders. A bank, for example, seems ideal. Try to find out which financial institution in your area keeps the most cash on hand. How good are its security systems? Research prison terms for robbery and corruption of minors.
6. As a whole class project, organize a community-wide reading initiative: One Tribe, One Town. After every man, woman, and child in your community reads every single word of every single book in the How to Train Your Dragon series, celebrate with a spirited bash that degenerates swiftly into a brawl. Challenge neighboring communities to take up the literacy challenge. Reduce their homes to rubble if they decline.



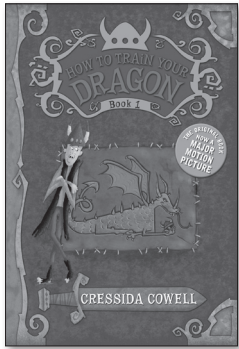


# HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON SERIES

## about the books

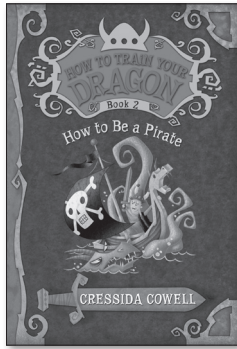
Hiccup Horrendous Haddock III was a truly extraordinary Viking. Warrior chieftain, awesome sword-fighter, and amateur naturalist, he was known far and wide as 'the Dragon Whisperer' because of his amazing power over these terrifying beasts, but he wasn't always a hero. In fact, he was once just a skinny, freckled boy who was easy to overlook in a crowd. These uproarious adventures tell the whole truth (or something like that, anyway) of his early years growing up among the Hairy Hooligans of yore.

## How to Train Your Dragon Series



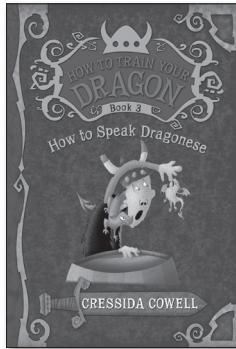
**Book One:**  
**How to Train  
Your Dragon**

978-0-316-08527-4



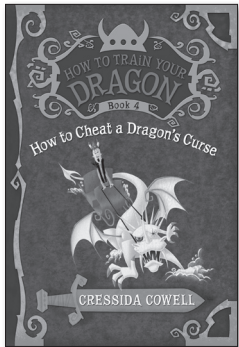
**Book Two:**  
**How to Be a Pirate**

978-0-316-08528-1



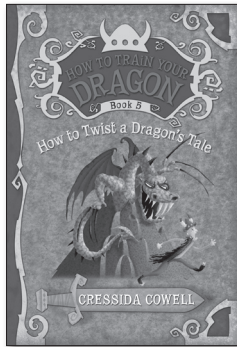
**Book Three:**  
**How to Speak  
Dragonese**

978-0-316-08529-8



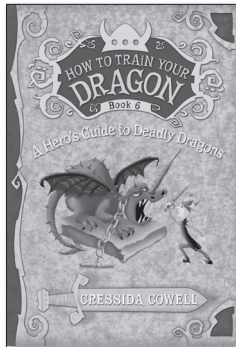
**Book Four:**  
**How to Cheat a  
Dragon's Curse**

978-0-316-08530-4



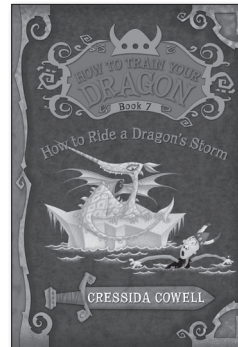
**Book Five:**  
**How to Twist a  
Dragon's Tale**

978-0-316-08531-1



**Book Six:**  
**A Hero's Guide to  
Deadly Dragons**

978-0-316-08532-8



**Book Seven:**  
**How to Ride a  
Dragon's Storm**

978-0-316-07909-9

## about the author



Cressida Cowell lives in London with her husband, three children, and two cats. As well as translating Hiccup's memoirs, she has also written and illustrated such favorite picture books as *Hiccup, the Viking Who Was Seasick*, *Little Bo Peep's Library Book*, and *That Rabbit Belongs to Emily Brown*.

