MASON DIXON
PET DISASTERS
CLAUDIA MILLS
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Suggested Activities for Teachers

The FRED Steering Committee has put together a list of possible activities for the classroom teachers. They are intended to offer potential follow-up activities or provoke class discussions on the chapters read the night before in a brief, fun way and not meant to be a test. They are merely suggestions and may serve as springboards for individual creativity or preferred teaching strategies.

CHAPTER 1:

★ How did the author describe each of the characters? (Mason, Parents, Brody)
★ What evidence from the text supports that description?
★ Make a character map using the information. (Save for future use)

NEW VOCABULARY

★ Mason Dixon Line (p. 5)
★ Sari (p. 6)
★ Capers (p. 6)
★ Dimensions (p. 17)

CHAPTER 2:

★ How did the author describe each of the characters? (Nora, Dunk)
★ What evidence from the text supports that description?
★ Continue the character map using the new information.
★ What kinds of friends were Nora and Mason to Brody? How do you know?

NEW VOCABULARY

★ Medium (p. 18)
★ Rectangular (p. 16)
★ Vibrant Hues (p. 18)
★ Accomplished (p. 21)
★ Non-contaminated (p. 22)
CHAPTER 3:

★ Imagine what might have happened to Hamster after he escaped from Mason and Brody. Write about Hamster’s adventure after he left/escaped Mason’s house dressed as a pirate.
★ Research: What items would you need to care for a hamster?
  ▪ How are each of these items used for the care of a hamster?
  ▪ How much would it cost to purchase a hamster and all its items?
  ▪ Create a spreadsheet using excel to add up the cost of the items

NEW VOCABULARY

★ Sprawled (p. 26)
★ Miffed (p. 28)
★ Afghan (p. 29)
★ Bureau (p. 32)
★ Assemble (p. 35)

CHAPTER 4:

★ Create your own “lost” poster for Hamster.
★ Using Monet’s Haystack painting – Why would Monet have picked one thing to paint over and over?
★ If you could pick one thing to paint over and over what would you paint?

NEW VOCABULARY

★ Contributing (p. 38)
★ Abandoned (p. 42)
★ Smirk (p. 43)
★ Systematically (p. 45)
★ Advantageous (p. 45)
★ Jinxing (p. 46)

CHAPTER 5:

★ What was Mason’s challenge with the cat on the couch? What did he do to try to solve his problem? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.
★ Why do you think the author used the sentences “But to prolong the snack, today he might be adventurous. He might spread a saltine with peanut butter. He might squirt a Ritz cracker with some cheese spread from a can.”? (page 56) What was the author telling the reader about Mason?
NEW VOCABULARY

★ Oppressive (p. 50)
★ Emerged (p. 52)
★ Repulsive (p. 53)
★ Emotional (p. 54)
★ Residence (p. 56)
★ Kiln (p. 57)
★ Commotion (p. 60)
★ Quizzical (p. 61)

CHAPTER 6:

★ Why was Mason against getting a dog? Were his parents in agreement with him? Explain using information from the text.
★ How do Mason and Brody differ? Create a Venn diagram using examples the author gives you.

NEW VOCABULARY

★ Piteously (p. 63)
★ Critical (p. 65)
★ Acquaintance (p. 67)
★ Incessantly (p. 67)
★ Facility (p. 73)

CHAPTER 7:

★ How did Mason choose pet names?
★ Research: What are the items you would need to care for a dog?
  ▪ How are each of these items used for the care of a dog?
  ▪ How much would it cost to purchase a dog and all its items?

NEW VOCABULARY

★ Rapturous (p. 75)
★ Devoured (p. 78)
★ Gait (p. 79)
CHAPTER 8:

• Add to the character map additional characteristics of Dunk using the information the author has given.
• According to Mason, what was the trouble with having a friend like Brody?

NEW VOCABULARY

• Gouging (p. 88)
• Nobly (p. 89)
• Awkwardly (p. 90)
• Feeble (p. 91)
• Principle (p. 95)
• Thrusting (p. 96)
• Plume (p. 96)

CHAPTER 9:

• Make a Venn diagram comparing Mason’s room to Brody’s room. Which room would you rather live in?
• Write a story about what you would do on a Saturday if Dog was your pet.
• Write a good bye letter to Dog from Brody.
• What does crossing that bridge when you came to it mean?

NEW VOCABULARY

• Crumpled (p. 100)
• Surrounded (p. 101)
• Visions (p. 103)
• Glorious (p. 103)
• Standard (p. 104)
• Aglow (p. 104)
• Retrieving (p. 105)
• Humongously (p. 106)
• Incessant (p. 108)
• Raucous (p. 109)
CHAPTER 10:

★ Research goldfish. How long can they live without food? What kind of food do they need to stay healthy? Find one fact about goldfish that is new to you and share with a friend.
★ What other items besides vegetables could you use to make a print picture? Use some of those items to make a print picture.
★ At the end of the chapter Mason thinks that Dog likes him more. Do you agree or disagree with Mason? List your reasons. Support your answer with examples from the text.

NEW VOCABULARY

★ Sandwiched (p. 111)
★ Obligingly (p. 112)
★ Distinguished (p. 112)
★ Piercing (p. 114)
★ Kneaded (p. 119)
★ Pounced (p. 120)
★ Retrieving (p. 105)

CHAPTER 11:

★ Sequence-
  ★ Illustrate the process of giving Dog a bath providing captions.
  ★ Write out the correct procedure of giving a dog a bath.
★ Make a prediction about the art show at the end of camp. What do you think will happen?
★ Using your background knowledge (especially knowing how Mason is beginning to feel about dog) infer what other reasons besides Dog being made fun of would make Mason not want Dog to go to the Art Show.

NEW VOCABULARY

★ Fascinated (p. 125)
★ Appalled (p. 126)
★ Mimic (p. 127)
★ Bewildered (p. 129)
★ Forlorn (p. 129)
★ Pang (p. 130)
★ Mural (p. 131)
CHAPTER 12:

- How did Dunk change? Support your answer with examples from the text.
- How could the fight have been prevented?
- How is Dunk’s behavior similar to his dog?

NEW VOCABULARY

- Vastly (p. 134)
- Wreathed (p. 136)
- Indignity (p. 137)
- Atrium (p. 138)
- Savagely (p. 143)
- Drenched (p. 144)

CHAPTER 13:

- Looking at the character charts made throughout the book, how have the characters changed from the beginning of the story?
- Do you think Mason, Brody, Dunk, and Nora could ever be friends?
- Write the next chapter of the book. It will be shared with the author.

NEW VOCABULARY

- Veterinary (p. 145)
- Urgent (p. 145)
- Stricken (p. 145)
- Conscience (p. 149)
Additional Teacher Activities

The F.R.E.D. Steering Committee has put together a list of possible activities for the classroom teachers. They are intended to offer potential follow-up activities or provoke class discussions on the chapters read the night before in a brief, fun way and not meant to be a test. They are merely suggestions and may serve as springboards for individual creativity or preferred teaching strategies.

Character Charts: In the beginning of the story, you could create a character-trait chart for each of the characters as they appear in the story, i.e. Mason, Brody, Nora, and Dunk. List words that describe each of their personalities, behaviors, preferences, quirks, etc. You can add to the charts as the story develops.

Example: Mason – only child, likes plain clothes, brown socks, simple food, etc.

Pro/Con Charts: Compare and contrast the animals as they are introduced throughout the story. There are 4 animals introduced over 13 chapters as Mason's parents bring different pets into the home.

Example: Hamster – Pro-lives in a cage; Con-runs on the wheel at night and keeps Mason awake.

Morning Entry Activities: Create Venn diagrams or T-charts or bar graphs on the board by asking students to respond to a question as they enter the classroom in the morning. Unlike some activities, this is not text-dependent and allows all students to participate whether they got a chance to read the assigned chapter from the night before or not.

Example: Venn diagram Question – Do you own a gold fish? (Yes/No circles on the board.) Write your name in the circle that applies to you.

Drawing Activities:
Draw your favorite scene from the book and write a caption.
Draw your favorite character from descriptions in the book.
Draw your dream pet.
Draw a storyboard with 10 key scenes from the book.

Writing Activities:
Journal about how you felt about what happened in the last chapter.
Write about how you would have reacted to . . .
Imagine you could meet one of the characters in the story and write about who you would choose and why or what you might talk about or do together.
Think about how the story might have ended in a different way and write about it.

Role Playing Activities: Choose a scene from the chapter read the night before and invite students to role play the action.

Example: Show us what Mason, Brody, Nora and Dunk did at Art Camp in the last chapter.
Glossary

Abandoned – deserted or given up; forsaken
Accomplished – carried out; completed
Acquaintance – a person whom you have met but do not know very well
Advantageous – profitable; favorable; useful; beneficial
Afghan – a soft woolen blanket, crocheted or knitted, usually in a geometric pattern
Aglow - glowing
Appalled – to upset someone
Assemble – put together
Atrium – the entrance to a building
Automatically - done unconsciously or from force of habit; mechanical
Awkwardly – not graceful; clumsy
Bewildered – puzzled; confused
Bureau – a chest of drawers, often with a mirror at the top.
Capers – onion like vegetable
Commotion – noisy or confused activity
Conscience – inner feeling of what is right and wrong
Contributing – being partly responsible for
Critical – pointing out a mistake
Crumpled – to fall apart
Devoured – to eat something up quickly
Dimensions – a measurement of length, width, or thickness
Distinguished – to make noticeable or different; set apart
Drenched – to wet someone or something completely
Emerged – to rise from or as if from immersion
Emotional – having strong feelings
Facility – a building
Fascinated – to attract and strongly hold the interest of someone
Feeble – weak
Forlorn – sad
Gait – a way of walking or running
Gales – a noisy outburst
Glorious – having great beauty or splendor; magnificent
Gouging - a groove or gash
Humongously - very large
Incessant - continuing without interruption; ceaseless; unending
Incessantly - never stopping
Indignity - anger caused by something unfair or mean
Jinxing - to bring bad luck to
Kiln - an oven or furnace that is used to harden pottery
Kneaded - to squeeze, press or roll with the hands
Mason Dixon Line - the boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland, partly surveyed by Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon between 1763 and 1767, popularly considered before the end of slavery as a line of demarcation between free and slave states
Medium - one of the techniques, materials, or means of expression available to an artist
Miffed - to offend or annoy
Mimic - to imitate
Mural - a painting that is done on a wall or ceiling
Nobly - having or showing courage or goodness
Non-contaminated - not polluted; or unclean
Obligingly - unaware or unmindful
Oppressive - difficult to bear; harsh
Pang - a sudden sharp feeling
Piercing - to sound sharply through
Piteously - a feeling of sorrow
Plume - an especially large feather used for decoration
Pounced - to spring or swoop suddenly
Principle - a rule of behavior
Quizzical - showing some confusion
Rapturous - loving
Raucous - rowdy; disorderly
Rectangular - having the shape of a rectangle
Reprimanded - scolding
Repulsive - disgusting
Residence - a place in which to live
Retrieving - to bring back
Sandwiched - to insert between two other things tightly
Sari - a garment worn by Hindu women, consisting of a long piece of cotton or silk wrapped around the body with one end draped over the head or over one shoulder.
Savagely - wild and fierce
Smirk - to smile in an affected, smug, or offensively familiar way
Smitten - in love with
Sprawled - to sit or lie in a relaxed position with the limbs spread out carelessly or ungracefully
Standard - normal; familiar; usual
Stricken - ill or misfortune
Substance - something that has weight and takes up space
Surrounded - encircle; to extend on all sides of
Systematically - orderly or methodical
Thrusting - a forceful push
Urgent - important
Vastly - very great area, size or amount
Veterinary - animal doctor
Vibrant Hues - bright color
Visions - a mental picture
Wreathed - light up with; covered with