

# *Guinea Dog*

**AUTHOR:** Patrick Jennings  
**PUBLISHER:** Scholastic, Inc.  
**COPYRIGHT DATE:** 2010  
**GENRE:** humorous fiction  
**LEXILE:** 600L, grades 4-5

**SUMMARY:** Rufus wanted a dog more than anything. His dad said “absolutely not”! His mom came up with a wonderful compromise...a guinea pig! Rufus is disappointed and humiliated, but Fido turns out to be a pretty cool pet after all!

**BOOKTALK:** Did you ever want something so desperately that no substitute was acceptable? That’s how Rufus feels about getting a dog, but his parents have another idea that seems unacceptable to Rufus...they want to give him a guinea pig! Read *Guinea Dog* to find out what changes Rufus’s mind about the ideal pet.

## **AUTHOR’S BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:**

Patrick Jennings grew up in Indiana and loved reading books when he was a kid. Now he loves writing books for kids. He lives in Washington state with his family .

**Author’s Name:** Patrick Jennings

**Author’s Website:** [www.patrickjennings.com](http://www.patrickjennings.com)

**Other books written by the author:**

Jennings has written 17 books including:

Guinea Dog

Guinea Dog 2

Invasion of the Dognappers

Wish Riders

Outstanding in my Field

## **CHALLENGING WORDS**

**Lateral thinking (5)** finding a solution by thinking creatively, or outside the box

**nanometer (8)** very, very close; one billionth of a meter

**grimacing (15)** a facial expression that indicates displeasure or pain

**posthaste (23)** immediately

**translucent (28)** somewhat see through

**similes (36)** a figure of speech comparing two unlike things using “like” or “as”

**anagram (42)** to rearrange the letters of a word or phrase to create a new word or phrase

**rectify (93)** to redeem or make up for a bad situation

**untenable (93)** a situation or point of view that cannot be defended

**eon (102)** a long period of time

**condolences (138)** an expression of sympathy for someone who is suffering or grieving

**eavesdropping (141)** listening in on someone else’s conversation

**elevated (162)** to raise up, as in keeping an injured foot elevated

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. **Murphy had been Rufus's best friend for years. What was it about Murph that also made him popular with his classmates?** Murph had a fun personality, a great sense of humor and liked to flirt with the girls. He was nice to everyone and a loyal friend to Rufus.
2. **Why did Rufus's dad object to him having a dog?** According to Rufus the list was "endless" (see page 2). This included whining, gnawing, licking, jumping, sniffing, chasing, and getting fleas, worms and rabies, among other things
3. **How did Rufus feel at first about getting a guinea pig for a pet instead of a dog. What changed his mind?** Rufus was disappointed and embarrassed. He did not want his friends to know about his pet. As he realized how smart and fun Fido was, and how he acted like a dog, he decided Fido was a pretty good pet.
4. **What were some of the tricks Fido could do that amazed Rufus and his friends.** He followed commands such as sit, stay, roll over and play dead. He played fetch and wrestled like other dogs. He was able to change the CD in the CD player. When Rufus broke his foot, Fido ran down the trail and got help.
5. **What changes took place in the following characters from the beginning to the end of the book?(From Rufus's perspective)**  
**Murph**-He was still a fun and loyal friend, but not perfect. He was failing several classes because of his fun loving attitude.  
**Rufus's Dad**- he had lightened up on his objection to Fido, and was starting to enjoy his company. He was also making a more positive to working at home  
**Lurena**- At the beginning he didn't like her because she was a girl, but she was smart and she and Rufus had a lot in common.  
**Dimitri**- Nothing really changed... he was still mean and arrogant and put people down. Rufus realized he felt sorry for him for trying so hard, and people still did not like him .

## ACTIVITIES with COMMON CORE STANDARDS:

### Language Arts:

- Work with a small group of 2-4 students. Each student comes up with a word or phrase from the story to create an anagram related to that word or phrase. Create a "bumper sticker" or small placard to display the best anagram for each phrase.

**Standard 5.L.5** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

- a. Interpret figurative language including similes, and metaphors, in context
- b. Recognize and explain the meaning of common idioms, adages and proverbs

Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of

the words

- The book Guinea Dog is written from the point of view of Rufus. He is the story teller, and we learn about his thoughts and feelings. Select a passage from the book (or have your teacher help you select it), and re-write it from the point of view of another character, such as: Murph, Dimitri, Lurena, Dad or Mom

**5.RL.3** compare and contrast two or more characters, settings or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g. how characters interact)

**College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing**

**Craft and Structure 6.** Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text

**LIFE SKILLS:**

Friendships and Relationships (how they change, seeing the good in others, trying to understand how others feel, or why they act a certain way)

Dealing with disappointment, and making the most of what you have

Respect

Making choices

**RELATED INTERNET SITES:**

Patrick Jennings' Website:

[www.patrickjennings.com](http://www.patrickjennings.com)

50 Facts About Guinea Pigs

<http://www.onlineguineapigcare.com/50-fun-facts-about-guinea-pigs-for-kids/>

**ACTIVITY SHEET CREATED BY:**

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