

## Lesson Plan – Empathy & Changing Times

NM Language Arts Standards Grades 4, 5, & 6 – Listen to, read, react to and retell information.

**Objectives** Developing empathy towards animals can be a key step toward developing empathy toward people and rejecting violence against all living things.

**Skills:** This exercise helps students to visualize, through story details, how animals might feel under different specific situations and recount what they have learned with two writing exercises.

### Materials

- Handouts *Animals and Their Feelings & Changing Times, Changing Minds*
- DVD **Black Beauty**
- Laptop & Projector
- KWL Handout

### Activities

#### I. Animals and Their Feelings

- **Before Reading** Tell the students that we are going to read an excerpt from the novel Black Beauty by Anna Sewell (1877). Black Beauty takes place a long time ago in the mid – to late nineteenth century in England. Horses were the primary means of transportation during this period. The story is told from the perspective of the main character, Black Beauty, a horse. In this excerpt, a horse named Ginger tells Black Beauty of her first unpleasant experiences with humans. Written from an animal’s point of view, the passage uses empathy to illustrate that animals experience love, pain, sadness, and frustration.
- **Build Background -Discuss Human Behavior** Ask the students what they know about empathy? Feelings? Ask the students have they ever felt empathy? Have their parents ever grounded them? How did that make them feel? Have you ever felt empathy for someone else? Introduce words similar to empathy i.e. sympathy.
- **Connect Human Behavior to Animals** Break students into groups. Give students 5 minutes to share stories to see if they understand empathy. Do any of you have a dog or a cat or a bird? Do you think they get cold? Do they get bored by themselves? Do they feel cramped up? Do they have enough space? What signs does the animal make to display his or her feelings, just as other members of the family might? Do we need to take care of them when they’re sick, like we do for humans? How does an animal’s behavior change as circumstances around him or her change? After discussing animals they know, suggest to students that perhaps other animals

- like a horse – might experience similar feelings. Preface animal questions appearing on worksheet with similar human questions first.
- Pass out handouts *Animals and Their Feelings* and KWL chart. Display the KWL graphic organizer on the board. Fill in the “K” section of the organizer with the class as you ask the students what they know about horses. Have they ever ridden a horse or watched someone else ride? Encourage them to share their experiences. Discuss why people would want to own a horse. Explain that caring for a horse takes a lot of time and energy, and the person who owns it needs to provide adequate space, shelter, food and attention. Ask students to share their opinions and/or desires about caring for their own horse.
- **Preview the Article.** Read the title of the text passage, text features and preview the picture with the class. Ask students what they think the passage might be about as you fill in the “W” section of the organizer with the class, leading them aloud, “What do I want to know about horses? Do they have feelings like me?” How are they the same and how are they different from my dog, cat, bird?
- **Introduce Vocabulary** Have students find the bold word **empathy** and **autobiography** in the passage. Frontload vocabulary on the board through examples of human behavior. **Content Words:** *empathy, autobiography, fling, gallop, halter, flog, fret, pined, stall, breaking in, halter, bar (bit), box stall, dreadful, liberty*
- **During Reading** Read the excerpt out loud. Stop every paragraph and ask the students questions for understanding. (i.e. whose point of view is the story being told from?) Verbalize thoughts about information just learned.
- **DVD** Play scenes 4-5 of the DVD *Black Beauty* up until the point where horseshoes are put on his hooves. Play scene 6 just until the box stalls are shown to illustrate what a box stall is.
- **Discussion** Complete the questions together with the class. Refer to answer key for suggested solutions. Fill in the “L” portion of the chart with the class. “I learned that horses have feelings like me. They experience love, pain, sadness and frustration. They are large animals and need space to run. They have memories”
- **DVD** Play scenes 25-26 until the time that *Black Beauty* and Jerry pick up their “fare” as an introduction to the following exercise.

## II. Changing times, Changing Minds (20 Minutes)

- Pass out handout and Frontload Vocabulary: *reduce and positive*.
- Let the students read the article in their groups and complete the news story in 2 -3 sentences. Have one or two students from each group present their article to the class. Facilitate more responses for the “L” portion of the chart as students present their article.

**Assessment:** Observation, completed solutions & graphic organizers, and class discussion.

