A Well-Trained Dog
by Alvin Court

Fountas-Pinnell Level M
Humorous Fiction

Selection Summary
Robin is tired of doing her chores, but she takes on one more: looking after her new dog, King. When King learns how to make Robin’s bed, tidy up her clothes, and put away her toys, Robin is very happy. However, Robin’s mom catches on to who is doing the chores. King gets a reward for his hard work, and Robin goes back to doing her own chores. Her favorite chore is taking care of King.

Characteristics of the Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Humorous fiction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text Structure</td>
<td>Third-person narrative; Organized chronologically; Problem presented on first page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>The relationship between a girl and her dog; Household chores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes and Ideas</td>
<td>Responsibilities can be fun; It's not good to let others do the work we're supposed to do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language and Literary Features</td>
<td>Conversational language; Third-person narrator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Complexity</td>
<td>Dialogue on almost every page; Mostly simple declarative sentences. Some introductory phrases, and some compound and complex sentences. (She had wanted a pet for such a long time, and now they were getting a dog. Robin taught King to pull up the blanket on her bed when she said, &quot;sit&quot;).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Special words related to training a dog: buddy, obeys, command, retrieve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words</td>
<td>Monosyllabic and multisyllabic words: taught, blanket, typical, and unusual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illustrations</td>
<td>Realistic illustrations of family members and their dog in household setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book and Print Features</td>
<td>Fourteen pages of text, with illustrations on every page; Text and illustrations vary position between top and bottom of page.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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Build Background

Build interest in this story by asking questions such as the following: *What are chores? What chores do you do in your house?* Read the title and author and talk about the cover illustration. Tell children that this story is humorous fiction, so the characters will act like real people and do things that may make readers laugh.

Introduce the Text

Guide children through the text, noting important ideas, and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so they can read the text successfully. Here are some suggestions:

**Page 2:** Explain that this story is about a girl named Robin who doesn’t like doing her chores.

*Suggested language:* *Turn to page 2 and let’s read the second paragraph:* Robin was tired of chores. “When I finish one chore, it’s time to do another. Then the next day I must do my chores all over again. The chores never end.” *What is Robin’s problem?*

**Pages 5–7:** Have children look at the pictures on these pages. *Why do you think Robin looks so happy? How does Robin feel about her new chores? How can you tell?*

**Pages 8–10:** Look at the pictures of Robin training her dog King. *The author says:* The first lesson was “sit,” but it was not the *typical* “sit.” *What do you think the author means? Next, Robin uses a command to tell King what to do. The command is “roll over!” What do you think Robin has trained King to do? Why? How can you tell?*

*Now turn back to the beginning of the story and read to find out what happens when King comes to live at Robin’s house.*

Expand Your Vocabulary

- **command** – order, tell to do something, p. 9
- **deceive** – lie to, p. 13
- **deposit** – put it away, p. 10
- **disbelief** – not believing what you see, p. 13
- **retrieve** – pick up, p. 10
- **typical** – normal, regular, p. 8
- **unusual** – different, not like normal, p. 9
Read

Have children read *A Well-Trained Dog* silently while you listen to individual children read. Support their problem solving and fluency as needed.

Remind children to use the Monitor/Clarify Strategy as they read to think about what happens and why.

Discuss and Revisit the Text

Personal Response

Invite children to share their personal responses to the book.

**Suggested language:** *Do you think Robin was wrong to teach King to do her chores? Why or why not?*

Ways of Thinking

As you discuss the text, help children understand these points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking Within the Text</th>
<th>Thinking Beyond the Text</th>
<th>Thinking About the Text</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Robin doesn’t like doing her chores because she has to do them over and over again.</td>
<td>• Most people don’t like doing chores, but they are something we all have to do.</td>
<td>• The text and dialogue tell about how the characters feel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Robin wants a pet and is very happy to add taking care of King, her new dog, to her list of chores.</td>
<td>• Pets can be trained to do amazing things.</td>
<td>• Exclamation marks show when someone is excited or has strong feelings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Robin teaches King to do her chores, but when her mom finds out, she gets in trouble.</td>
<td>• We need to take responsibility for our own chores and not push them off on others.</td>
<td>• The pictures and text work together to tell what is going on in the story.</td>
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Choices for Further Support

- **Fluency** Invite children to choose a passage to read aloud. Allow children to practice their passages, paying attention to dialogue and punctuation to help them understand how the characters are feeling. Help them with any words they aren’t able to figure out. Then have children read aloud their passages while you evaluate their fluency.

- **Comprehension** Based on your observations of the children’s reading and discussion, revisit parts of the text to clarify or extend comprehension. Remind children to go back to the text to support their ideas.

- **Phonics/Word Work** Provide practice as needed with words and word parts, using examples from the text. Remind children that longer words are often formed from shorter words with endings that add meaning. They can figure out a long word’s meaning by looking for the shorter word it comes from. For example, the word *encouraging* on page 3 is made by dropping the final *e* and adding *-ing* to the word *encourage*. Explain that Robin’s parents are trying to be *encouraging*. The meaning of the word is clear: they are trying to make Robin feel better about doing her chores.
Writing about Reading

Critical Thinking
Have children complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 15.9.

Responding
Have children complete the activities at the back of the book. Use the instruction below as needed to reinforce or extend understanding of the comprehension skill.

Target Comprehension Skill
Cause and Effect
Remind children that a cause is what makes something else happen. The effect is what happens. Model the skill, using a “Think Aloud” like the one below.

Think Aloud

When Robin gets her dog King, she teaches him to do her chores because she is tired of doing them. Her feelings about her chores cause her to train King to do them instead. The cause is Robin’s feelings about her chores. The effect is that Robin trains King to do her chores. Another effect is that Robin no longer has to do her chores.

Practice the Skill
Have children identify the problem caused by Robin’s actions in the story.

Writing Prompt: Thinking Beyond the Text
Have children write a response to the prompt on page 6. Remind them that when they think beyond the text, they use what they know and their own experience to think about what the characters do and why they act as they do.

Assessment Prompts
• What happened when Robin’s mother learned what Robin was teaching King to do?
• What is page 4 mostly about?
English Language Development

Reading Support Make sure the text matches the child’s reading level. Language and content should be accessible with regular teaching support.

Idioms Children may need help with understanding the commands Robin gives to King and what she is actually asking King to do. Discuss what the command “roll over” means. Then talk about what Robin has taught King to do when she says, “roll over.” Discuss with children why the difference between Robin’s words and King’s actions adds to the humor of the story.

Oral Language Development

Check children’s comprehension, using a dialogue that best matches their English proficiency level. Speaker 1 is the teacher, Speaker 2 is the child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning/Early Intermediate</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Early Advanced/ Advanced</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 1: Who is the girl in the story?</td>
<td>Speaker 1: What does Robin do when she gets her dog King?</td>
<td>Speaker 1: What problem does Robin have at the beginning of the story? How does she try to solve it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 2: Robin</td>
<td>Speaker 2: Robin teaches King to do her chores for her.</td>
<td>Speaker 2: Robin doesn’t want to do her chores. She gets a dog and teaches the dog to do her chores.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 1: Who is King?</td>
<td>Speaker 1: Why does Robin get in trouble?</td>
<td>Speaker 2:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 2: her dog</td>
<td>Speaker 2: Her mother sees that King is doing Robin’s chores.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 1: What doesn’t Robin want to do?</td>
<td>Speaker 2: chores</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 2: chores</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

Responding

Think and Effect
Think about what caused things to happen in the story. Copy the chart and add details from the story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cause</th>
<th>Effect</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>?</td>
<td>Robin gets extra chores.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Text to World Do you do chores at your home? Write one paragraph about doing chores. Try to persuade your readers that it’s important to do chores, and explain why.

Think About It

Read and answer the questions.

1. What is Robin’s father’s job?
   He is a firefighter.

2. How does Robin know that King is smart?
   King knows his name, and he listens when she trains him.

3. Why does Robin like taking care of King so much more than doing her other chores?
   She likes spending time with King and playing with him. He also helps her do her other chores.

Making Connections If you could choose a pet, which animal would it be? What would you have to do to take care of your pet?

Write your answer in your Reader’s Notebook.

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Thinking Beyond the Text
Think about the questions below. Then write your answer in one or two paragraphs.

Robin used King to get out of doing her chores. Do you think her parents were right to punish her for what she did? Why or why not? Use details from the story to support your opinion.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
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________________________________________________________________________
Think About It

Read and answer the questions.

1. What is Robin’s father’s job?

2. How does Robin know that King is smart?

3. Why does Robin like taking care of King so much more than doing her other chores?

Making Connections  If you could choose a pet, which animal would it be? What would you have to do to take care of your pet?

Write your answer in your Reader’s Notebook.
Robin started training King the next day. The first lesson was “sit,” but it was not the typical “sit.” Robin taught King to pull up the blankets on her bed when she said “sit.” “There, the bed is made. So one chore is done,” said Robin. She patted King and gave him a treat.

The next unusual lesson was “roll over.” Robin taught King to push her clothes under the bed when she gave the command “roll over.” “Great! Another chore is done. Good dog!” Robin said as she gave King another treat. This was fun!

### Comments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior</th>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read word correctly</td>
<td>✓ cat</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repeated word, sentence, or phrase</td>
<td>© cat</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omission</td>
<td>cat</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Accuracy Rate

\[
\text{Accuracy Rate} = \left( \frac{\# \text{ words read correctly}}{96} \right) \times 100\%
\]

### Total Self-Corrections

8

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**Lesson 15: A Well-Trained Dog**

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