

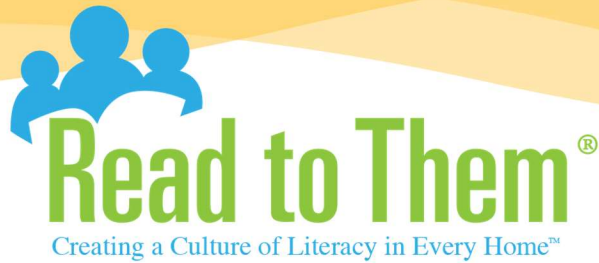
**Activity Ideas for
Dog Days (2013)
by Karen English**

Before the Book

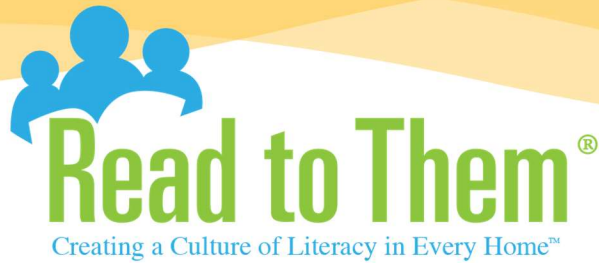
1. **Teasers** – During the days leading up to the kickoff, use these teasers to build curiosity:
 - Decorate the main hallway with glamorous pictures of fancy dogs
 - Have several teachers dress in skater garb and carry skateboards
 - Play “Who Let the Dogs Out” and other dog-themed songs during the morning announcements.

Throughout the book

2. **Digital Resource Hub** – Be sure to check out the Digital Resource Hub for *Dog Days* for Kahoot! quizzes, Flipgrid interactions, and the *Dog Days* Blog. Find it at www.readtothemresourcehub.org/ with the password **Carlotta4**.
3. **Jump for Journaling** (Writing/Language Arts) – Gavin’s teacher has her students write in their journals every day. Have students do daily journaling throughout the novel. Topics could come from the Discussion Questions for *Dog Days* or could be completely random and fun. Make sure to throw in an Open Topic day every now and then like Ms. Shelby-Ortiz!
4. **Pets and Bullying Picture Books** (Language Arts) – Throughout your time with *Dog Days*, classroom teachers, the librarian, or parents could share picture books about pets or bullying. Examples about pets include: *The Wonderous Dinosaurium* by John Condon, *I Do Not Like Al’s Hat* by Erin McGill, *No More Bows* by Samantha Cotterill, *Charlotte and the Rock* by Stephen W. Martin, *Smelly Bill* by Daniel Postgate, and *The Perfect Dog* by Kevin O’Malley. Examples about bullying include: *The Oak Inside the Acorn* by Max Lucado, *The Invisible Boy* by Trudy Ludwig, *Tales from the Bully Box* by Cat Woods, *One* by Kathryn Otashi, and *Stick and Stone* by Beth Ferry.



5. **Teacher Pets Display/Contest (Game)** – Prior to the kickoff assembly, have teachers bring in pictures of their pets that could be used in a display. The pictures should be numbered and displayed on a bulletin board or wall where all students can easily view them. Make a worksheet with all of the teachers’ names who submitted pictures with blanks next to them. Students can take a sheet and write the number of the pet next to the teacher they think it belongs to and submit them to the office. The winning students could receive a prize – maybe the second book in the *Carver Chronicles* series.
6. **Chapter Chat** – Draw an asterisk (*) beside your favorite part each night as you read together. Share that part the next day with a partner in class, explaining why you liked it so much.
7. **Giant Crossword Puzzles (Language Arts)** – If your school has a poster maker, you could use the trivia questions and an online crossword puzzle making site to create crossword puzzles for *Dog Days*. These could be blown up on a poster maker and hung up around the building for students to fill in.
8. **Bookmark Contest (Art)** – Have students design a bookmark with a scene from the book on it. There could be winners at each grade level. Winners could receive the next book in *The Carver Chronicles* series.
9. **Fan and Pick (Cooperative Learning)** – Start with the discussion and trivia questions included in this packet for each chapter. Write the questions on cards, and divide your class into groups of four. Here are the steps for the game:
 1. Student #1 holds question cards in a fan and says, “Pick a card, any card.”
 2. Student #2 picks a card, reads the question aloud, and allows five seconds of think time.
 3. Student #3 answers the question.
 4. Student #4 responds to the answer by praising and paraphrasing the thinking that went into the answers.
 5. Students rotate roles, one person clockwise for each new round.



- 10. Inside Outside Circle** (Cooperative Learning) – You can play this game using the same cards from Fan and Pick. Here are the steps:
1. Students form pairs. One student from each pair moves to form one large circle in the class facing outward.
 2. Remaining students find and face their partners (class now stands in two concentric circles).
 3. Inside circle students ask a question from their card. Outside circle students answer. Inside circle students praise and coach.
 4. Partners switch roles: Outside circle students ask, listen, then praise or coach.
 5. Partners trade question cards.
 6. Inside circle students rotate clockwise to a new partner. (The teacher may call rotation numbers: “Rotate Three Ahead.” The class may do a choral count as they rotate.)
- 11. Random Acts of Kindness Calendar** (School Community) – Gavin is new to his school, and many students are not being very kind to him. Have students complete a random acts of kindness calendar during your school-wide read. Challenge them with ways to be kind to other students in the school (younger and older), teachers, and staff.

Chapter One – It Was an Accident! (pp. 1-17)

- 12. Sensational Snow Globes** (Art/STEM) – Gavin and Richard break Danielle’s precious snow globe showing the Empire State Building from her trip to New York City. Allow students to design a snow globe from a place they have visited or a place they would like to visit. They can draw their design on a piece of drawing paper. Here are some instructions to make a project that look more like a snow globe:
- You will need: cheap dinner-sized paper plates, blue construction paper, another color of construction paper, drawing paper, plastic wrap, tape, glue or stapler
 - Cut the inner flat part out of the paper plate (younger students might need help with this part).
 - Trace this circle on the drawing paper and blue construction paper.
 - Draw the snow globe design inside the circle of the drawing paper.
 - Decorate inside the blue circle with white crayons, chalk, or paint to make a snowy scene.
 - Cut out the snow globe design elements and glue them inside the circle of the blue construction paper on top of the snowy background.



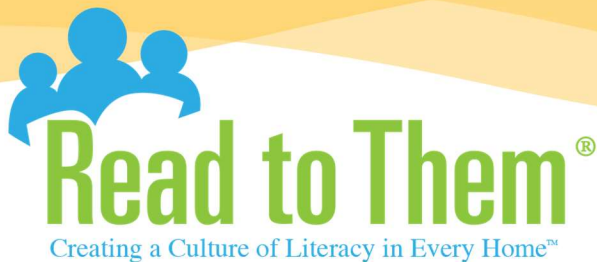
- Tape a piece of plastic wrap to cover the circle cut out in the paper plate, taping it to the inside of the plate.
 - Flip the plastic lined paper plate over the design and glue or staple it down to make a globe. Trim the blue construction paper.
 - Cut out a base from another color of construction paper and glue or staple it to the bottom of the globe.
13. **Design a Dream Home (STEM)** – Gavin has just moved to a new town and home. If you could design a new home to have any features you wanted, what would it have? Draw a diagram or floor plan of your dream home. For inspiration, read aloud the picture book *If I Built a House* by Chris Van Dusen.
14. **Sock Ball Games (Physical Education)** – While Gavin waits for Richard to get to his house, he throws a sock ball at the ceiling. What other games can you invent with sock balls? Have your students bring in a few orphan socks from home (the ones without mates). Divide them into small groups and have each groups devise at least one game that came be played with sock balls. The groups can write up the rules and then teach the game to the rest of the class. You could keep the sock balls and the rules in a bag in your classroom for indoor and outdoor recess.
15. **Welcome to Our School (School Community)** – Have students brainstorm ideas for how to make new students feel welcome. Set up a schoolwide program where new students are assigned buddies that will help show them around the school and be a good friend to them.
16. **Empire State Building by the Numbers (STEM)** – Danielle’s snow globe had a replica of the Empire State Building inside of it. Have students research the Empire State Building and its fascinating history. How tall is it? How long did it take to build? What innovations in building techniques were used? Have students draw a scale model of the building and fill the outline up with interesting facts.
17. **Learn Basic French (Languages)** – Danielle has learned some basic French, and she shows it off to the family she is baby-sitting for. Over the course of your schoolwide reading event, have students learn a few basic words in French each day. *The Everything Kids’ Learning French Book* by Dawn-Michelle Baude, Ph.D. would be a great resource!

Chapter Two – Eat Those Peas! (pp. 18-28)

18. **Most Disgusting Vegetable Graph** (Math) – Gavin absolutely despises peas, and they make him gag. Survey the student body and staff about their least favorite vegetable by giving them a list of choices to choose from. Have an older group of students graph the results for the entire school, or teachers could graph their classroom results and post outside their door for the whole school to see. Graphs could also be shared with the food service director and displayed in the lunch room. This could be a great lesson on constructing circle graphs or bar graphs.
19. **Most Disgusting Vegetable, part 2** (Food) – You could bring in some samples of the vegetables that your students claim to not like. Often, if these veggies are presented in their most simple form – raw, maybe with some ranch dressing – kids find that they like them after all.
20. **Barbershop Crooners** (Music) – Gavin’s Uncle Vestor sings in a group called the Barbershop Crooners. Find a video of a barbershop quartet to show to students, or have one visit your school. Often high schools have barbershop and beauty shop quartets. Your school’s music teacher could teach some old favorite barbershop quartet songs.
21. **Carlotta Caricature** (Art) – On pages 19 and 27, Gavin gives vivid descriptions of Aunt Myrtle’s Pomeranian, Carlotta. Using the description, draw a picture of what you imagine Carlotta to look like.
22. **Breeds of Dogs** (Language Arts/Technology) – Aunt Myrtle has a Pomeranian. As a class, do some research about that particular breed of dog. Then have students research different dog breeds and make a poster describing their favorite.

Chapter Three –Problems, Problems, Problems (pp. 29-38)

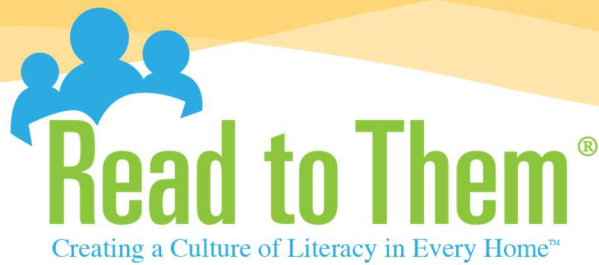
23. **Classroom Reward System** (Classroom Community) – Gavin’s teacher has a reward system where table groups work together to earn gold stars on the Winners’ Board. At the end of the month, students at the winning table get to choose a prize from the grab bag. Have students or groups of students design their own classroom reward system to present to the teacher. Will it be a group or individual reward system? What kinds of behaviors will be rewarded? Can individuals/teams lose points for misbehavior? What would the prizes/rewards be? Then talk about the difference between internal and external motivation. Are there ways students can internally motivate themselves that are more effective than a classroom reward system? After the discussion, would students change their reward system design?



24. **Responsible Pet Owner** (Community Service) – When Carlotta comes to Gavin’s house, they have to make sure they have a place for him to sleep, and Gavin is going to be responsible for walking her every day. Have someone from the local animal shelter visit to talk with students about how to be a responsible pet owner. Or, take a field trip to a local animal shelter and learn about pet care.
25. **Favorite Pet Graphing** (Math) – Survey the student body and staff about their favorite pet. Give them choices such as dog, cat, bunny, snake, hamster, hedgehog, fish, and turtle. You could also do favorite dog breeds instead. Have older students graph the results for the whole school, or teachers could graph their classroom results to hang outside the room.

Chapter Four –On the Job, Day One (pp. 39-54)

26. **Pet Clothing Designer** (Art) – The first day Gavin walks Carlotta, she is wearing a big pink satin bow, a lace sweater, and a rhinestone collar that spelled out her name. Have students individually or in groups design their own unique outfit for Carlotta, or matching outfits for Carlotta and Aunt Myrtle.
27. **It’s the Law** (Government) – Aunt Myrtle tells Gavin that picking up your dog’s poop is the law. Research this law in your state and see what the punishment is for not following it. What other pet laws are there in your community? Are there laws about allowing a dog to bark or letting an animal roam free outside?
28. **Cursive or Manuscript?** (Language Arts) – Gavin has trouble reading Aunt Myrtle’s instructions because they are written in cursive, and he has just started learning to write in that style. There has been much debate lately about whether or not students need to learn cursive writing anymore. Discuss this with third grade and older students. Present articles on both sides of the topic and have a debate. Some schools have started Cursive Writing Clubs for kids who want to learn how to write in cursive. You could start one, too!
29. **Favorite Snack Recipes** (Cooking/Language Arts) – Gavin’s favorite after-school snack is wheat crackers with grape jelly. Have students write directions for making their favorite after-school snack. Compile a class book of after-school snacks.
30. **How to Handle a Bully** (Social and Emotional Learning) - While Gavin is walking Carlotta, he gets bullied by a fifth grader named Harper. It is very hard to know what to do in a bullying situation when you are being bullied or you are a bystander. Have your students make posters with their suggestions on how to handle bullying as a victim or a bystander.

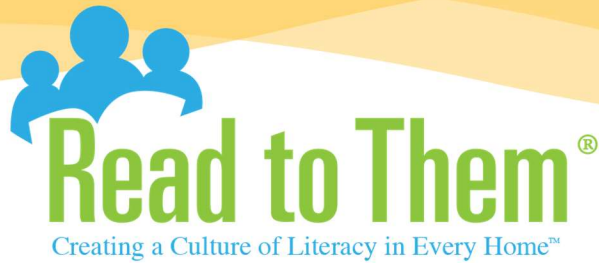


Chapter Five – Where’s Carlotta’s Chew-Chew? (pp. 55-71)

31. **Design a Dog Toy (STEM)** – Carlotta’s favorite dog toy is her Chew-Chew. Design the perfect dog toy. What would it look like? What would it be made out of? Why would dogs like it? If your school has a maker space, students can make a prototype. Or ask for donations of supplies like fabric scraps, pieces of rope, yarn, and see what your students can make out of those materials.
32. **Comfort Items for Dogs (Community Service, Art)** – Making dog toys out of fleece fabric is a project that is fun for students of any age. A Girl Scout in Virginia made them and gave them to first responders in her community to soothe dogs that had been through an emergency. Her instructions are included in the supplemental sheet titled Fleece Dog Toys in this packet.
33. **Skateboarding/Skateboard Park (Physical Education/Language Arts)** – Richard and Gavin spend time at the skate park after school. Have students watch a video about skateboarding that shows different skateboard tricks. Does your town have a skate park? If not, have students write a persuasive letter that could be sent to the city council persuading them that one should be built in the town.
34. **Skate Park Designer (STEM)** – What elements should the perfect skate park have? What innovative elements can your students design? Have them draw a design for the perfect skate park. You can even provide some supplies and see if they can build a prototype. Supplies might include: cardboard, masking tape, paper towel tubes, dowels, rulers, clay, etc.
35. **Skateboard Designer (STEM, Art)** – Let your students be skateboard designers for a day. They can do some online research about the basic design of skateboards and the types of art that often appears on them. Then, break out the art supplies and let their creativity flow.
36. **Declarative Sentences (Language Arts)** – For Gavin’s homework he has to write ten declarative sentences. Declarative sentences end in a period and make a clear statement. Write ten declarative sentences about his book.

Chapter Six – Harper and the Sticky Fingers (pp. 72-87)

37. **Bullying Songs, Poems, and Skits (Writing/Language Arts)** – In this chapter, Harper bullies Gavin on the basketball court, and most of the bystanders don’t do anything about it. Have students write their own songs, poems, raps, or skits about what to do to handle a bully, not only when you’re being bullied but if you are a bystander.



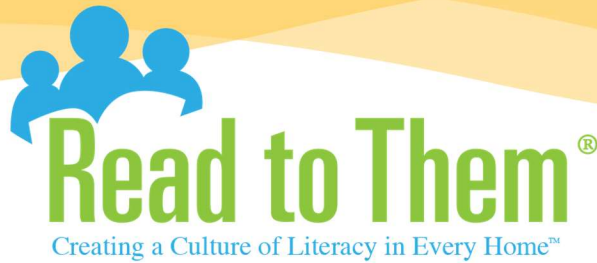
38. **Pet Store Math** (Math) – Have students pretend they can have any new pet of their choice. The pet has already been purchased, but they have \$50 to buy supplies, accessories, and food for their pet. Have them use a pet store website to fill out the attached worksheet.
39. **Dog Biscuit Bakery** (Cooking) – When Gavin and Richard go to the pet store to look for a new chew toy for Carlotta, Gavin catches Richard sniffing the dog biscuits. Find a dog biscuit recipe online and try it out! Create and design an advertisement for your tempting new pet treat.
40. **Dominoes** (Games) – Mr. D at the convenience store asks Gavin to tell his uncle he is waiting to challenge him at dominoes. Have a family or class dominoes tournament. If you can get several sets, challenge your students to make domino runs. How long and complex can they make the run? There are lots of videos online for amazing domino runs that can provide inspiration!

Chapter Seven – Harper’s Not Happy (pp. 88-98)

41. **Design a Park** (Art/Language Arts) – Gavin takes Carlotta to the park to walk her. What features would your perfect park have? Draw and design your ideal park, labeling its most important features. Or, focus on one important feature that you feel your local park is missing. Write a persuasive letter to the city council trying to convince them to add this feature to your park.
42. **Design a Park, Part 2** (Art) – Now, design a park from Carlotta’s point of view. What would a dog like to have in a park? How does it differ from what a kid might want in a park?
43. **Thank You Letter** (Writing/Language Arts) – Pretend that you are Gavin, and write a thank you letter to the tall boy in the park who rescued him when he was being bullied by Harper. Make sure to explain how you were feeling during the situation.

Chapter Eight – Where Did Carlotta Go? (pp. 99-112)

44. **From a Pet’s Point of View** (Writing/Language Arts) – Tell the story of Carlotta’s escape from her point of view.
45. **Double Dutch** (Games/Physical Education) – When Gavin was looking for Carlotta, he ran across two girls doing double dutch jump rope. Have students watch some videos on this style of jumping rope and try it out. Your community might have a double dutch team. If so, invite them to come and give a demonstration.

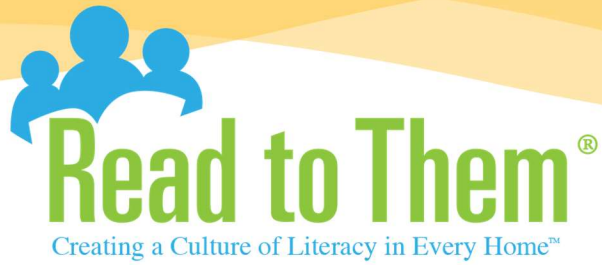


Chapter Nine – Is That Carlotta? (pp. 113-122)

46. **Lost Item Flyer** (Art/Language Arts) – Design a flyer similar to the one on p. 118 for some item you have lost – a sock, your homework, your patience, etc. What information would you include? What would make it eye-catching?
47. **A Dog for Nikki** (Language Arts) – Nikki was disappointed when she learned she could not keep Carlotta. Choose a dog breed and try to persuade Nikki to adopt that type of dog. How would you describe that breed, highlighting its best qualities?

End of the Book

48. **Story Tree** (Language Arts) – Inside the outline of a tree, students build a story tree by using the following directions:
1. Name of character
 2. Two words that describe the character
 3. Three words that describe where the story takes place
 4. Four words telling what the character wanted in the story
 5. Five words telling what happened that almost stopped the main character from getting what they wanted in the story
 6. Six words telling how the main character got what he/she wanted in the story
 7. Seven words that describe the best part of the book
 8. Eight words telling why you would or would not tell a friend to read this book. If written from top to bottom, the words will be in the shape of a tree and could be displayed in the hallway.
49. **Author Study** (Language Arts) – Karen English has written many books besides *Dog Days*. If you can find copies of some of her other books, provide them for your students to enjoy. In 1999 she was the recipient of the Coretta Scott King Award for her book *Francie*. Read this book and other Coretta Scott King award winners and see what makes them so noteworthy.
50. **Book Review** (Language Arts) – There are lots of websites dedicated to sharing book reviews, from the comments on Amazon to Goodreads. Create your own classroom book review site – either as a website or as a bulletin board – and have your students write a review of *Dog Days* as the first entry. The reviews should fit on a half-sheet of paper, so they need to really focus on what they liked – or didn't like – about the book, not just give a plot summary.



51. **Dog Walker Flyer** (Art/Language Arts) – Gavin is now an experienced dog walker. Pretend Gavin wants to try to find some more dog-walking jobs. Design a flyer advertising his service. Make sure to include the experience he has, price, and phone number.

Every Family. Every School. Every Night.[®]