

ACTIVITY 2.17

PLAN

Materials: highlighters
Suggested Pacing: 1 50-minute class period

TEACH

- 1 Read the Learning Targets and Preview with students.
- 2 Have students set a purpose for reading and read the About the Author paragraph. Prompt them to consider how the author's background as a journalist may have spurred him to write this text.

ACTIVITY 2.17

Reflecting on Marley: Textual Evidence

Learning Strategies

Diffusing
Marking the Text
Graphic Organizer

My Notes

Learning Targets

- Identify and interpret textual evidence.
- Write a response to a prompt, using textual evidence to support a thesis.
- Integrate ideas from multiple texts to build knowledge and vocabulary about the roles dogs play in the lives of humans.

Preview

In this activity, you will read a memoir about a beloved family dog and write about the purpose of pets.

Setting a Purpose for Reading

- As you read, mark the text by underlining words, phrases, and sentences that tell why Grogan loved his dog.
- Circle unknown words and phrases. Try to determine the meaning of the words by using context clues, word parts, or a dictionary.

Introducing the Strategy: Diffusing

With this strategy, you use context clues to help find the meaning of unknown words. When **diffusing**, underline words that are unfamiliar. Think of two possible substitutions (synonyms) and confirm your definition. You can confirm your definition by checking reference sources such as a dictionary or a thesaurus.

About the Author

John Grogan (1957–) is a newspaper columnist and the author of the best-selling memoir *Marley and Me*, a book based on the ideas in the article you are about to read. *Marley and Me* has been adapted into a young reader's edition, several children's books, and a major motion picture. Grogan says that he began writing in school because he "was so bad at everything else." In addition to *Marley and Me*, he has written articles for numerous magazines and newspapers.



College and Career Readiness Standards

Focus Standards:

RL.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.6.3 Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

RL.6.5 Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

Additional Standard Addressed:
L.6.4c, L.6.6

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6 After reading paragraph 12, pause again and ask students: *What new information did we learn about Marley that might change a reader's impression of him?*

7 After you've read the text for the first time, guide the class in a discussion about the memoir genre and what the text revealed about Marley. Use the Knowledge Quest questions as a starting point. Make sure students are confident in their responses before moving on to the text-dependent questions.

8 Vocabulary Development: When you revisit the text, discuss the instruction in the Word Connections feature on Roots and Affixes. Then write these words on the board: *miscalculate, misfit, mishap, misled, misunderstand*. Ask partners to use their knowledge of roots and affixes to help them define each of the words. Then have them check their ideas against a dictionary.

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WORD CONNECTIONS

Roots and Affixes

The prefix *mis-* is from Old English and means “bad” or “wrong.” This prefix is commonly used in English (*mistake, miscarriage, mischievous*) to indicate that something is incorrect or not as desired or planned.

My Notes

despite: in spite of
optimism: seeing the positive in all things
lug: an awkward, clumsy fellow
devotion: dedication

11 When I brought my wife home from the doctor after our first pregnancy ended in a miscarriage, that wild beast gently rested his blocky head in her lap and just whimpered. And when babies finally arrived, he somehow understood they were something special and let them climb all over him, tugging his ears and pulling out little fistfuls of fur. One day when a stranger tried to hold one of the children, our jolly giant showed a ferocity we never imagined was inside him.

12 As the years passed, Marley mellowed, and sleeping became his favorite pastime. By the end, his hearing was shot, his teeth were gone, his hips so riddled with arthritis he barely could stand. **Despite** the infirmities, he greeted each day with the mischievous glee that was his hallmark. Just days before his death, I caught him with his head stuck in the garbage pail.

Life Lessons Learned

13 A person can learn a lot from a dog, even a loopy one like ours.

14 Marley taught me about living each day with unbridled exuberance and joy, about seizing the moment and following your heart. He taught me to appreciate the simple things—a walk in the woods, a fresh snowfall, a nap in a shaft of winter sunlight. And as he grew old and achy, he taught me about **optimism** in the face of adversity.

15 Mostly, he taught me about friendship and selflessness and, above all else, unwavering loyalty.

16 When his time came last week, I knelt beside him on the floor of the animal hospital, rubbing his gray snout as the veterinarian discussed cremation with me. No, I told her, I would be taking him home with me.

17 The next morning, our family would stand over the hole I had dug and say goodbye. The kids would tuck drawings in beside him. My wife would speak for us all when she'd say: “God, I'm going to miss that big, dumb **lug**.”

18 But now I had a few minutes with him before the doctor returned. I thought back over his 13 years—the destroyed furniture and goofy antics; the sloppy kisses and utter **devotion**. All in all, not a bad run.

19 I didn't want him to leave this world believing all his bad press. I rested my forehead against his and said: “Marley, you are a great dog.”

Knowledge Quest

- What emotions did you feel while reading the memoir?
- What details about Marley stand out to you?

Scaffolding the Text-Dependent Questions

3. In paragraph 8, the author describes a time when Marley thought he was “on the verge of a major canine breakthrough.” What does *canine* mean? Use a dictionary to find out. Then give some examples of canine qualities

Marley possessed that made him a good companion to his owner. What do you know about canine behavior? How is Marley like other animals in the canine family? **L.6.4c, L.6.6**

Returning to the Text

- Return to the text as you respond to the following questions. Use text evidence to support your responses.
 - Write any additional questions you have about the memoir in your Reader/Writer Notebook.
- How do the first two sentences of the memoir contribute to the text? What is the effect of these sentences on the reader?

The first two sentences explain the setting, which sets the tone for the memoir. The tone seems dark because the author is digging in the gray of dawn. The sentences also make the reader wonder why the author is digging and what will happen next.

- How does the author structure positive and negative details to show how Marley was both challenging and good for his family? List specific details and explain how their order in the story affects the reader's opinion.

The author implies that Marley didn't get many compliments. Paragraphs 4–9 tell how wild Marley was, including the detail about him destroying things. Paragraphs 10 and 11 show that Marley was also loyal and joyful. The author put the positive details after the negative ones to make the point that Marley's negative traits were worth it because of the positive traits.

- KQ** In paragraph 8, the author describes a time when Marley thought he was “on the verge of a major canine breakthrough.” What does *canine* mean? Use a dictionary to find out. Then give some examples of canine qualities Marley possessed that made him a good companion to his owner.

The word *canine* means “belonging to the family Canidae, or the family of dogs, wolves, jackals, and foxes.” Canine qualities that made Marley a good companion to his owner include his pure heart, protectiveness, exuberance, and loyalty.

- What was the author's purpose for writing the memoir? How is the author's purpose conveyed in the text?

The author wrote the memoir as a tribute to his dog Marley. The author gives details about how Marley was actually a good dog even though he was clumsy and destructive.

9 RETURNING TO THE TEXT:

Guide students to return to the text to respond to the text-dependent questions. Have students work in small groups to reread the text and respond to the questions. Remind them to use text evidence in their responses.

10 Move from group to group and listen as students answer the text-dependent questions. If they have difficulty, scaffold the questions by rephrasing them or breaking them down into smaller parts. See the Scaffolding the Text-Dependent Questions boxes for suggestions.

Scaffolding the Text-Dependent Questions

4. What was the author's purpose for writing the memoir? How is the author's purpose conveyed in the text? Notice that Grogan starts the memoir with the burial of Marley and then tells stories about Marley's long life. What are his final words to Marley? [RL.6.3](#)

5. What are things the text shows that people can learn from dogs? What does the author learn from Marley? What are some words the author uses to describe Marley's values and approach to life and friendship? What personality traits did Marley show through the way he behaved with the author and his family? [RL.6.1](#)

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11 Students will prepare for the writing prompt by copying into the **graphic organizer** the textual evidence they highlighted as they read the text. The summaries they generate should be concise, accurate, and legible.

12 Read and discuss the writing prompt. Remind students to include commentary and explanations of the textual evidence they use in their response.

LEVELED DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

Students may need support with organizing their evidence for their writing. Have students complete the **Key Ideas and Details** graphic organizer.

Developing After students have completed their graphic organizers, ask them basic questions about why informative writing is organized in this way.

Expanding After students have completed their graphic organizers, ask them to explain why informative writing is organized in this way.

Bridging After students have completed their graphic organizers, ask them to present an argument about why informative writing should be organized in this way.

13 Use the Independent Reading Link to help students form connections with texts and themes they have identified in class reading.

ASSESS

Check the writing prompt responses for the elements of an effective informative essay and the effective integration of textual evidence.

ADAPT

If students need help finding and citing textual evidence, narrow their search to a single paragraph and have them identify one piece of textual evidence. Then have them explain how that piece of textual evidence supports the thesis.

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5. **KQ** What are things the text shows that people can learn from dogs? What does the author learn from Marley?

The text shows how people can learn from dogs to seize the moment, follow their heart, and appreciate the simple things. Also, the author learns these specific things from Marley: friendship, selflessness, and loyalty.

Working from the Text

6. Find sentences from the story that show why Grogan loved his dog. Copy them into the Textual Evidence column of the following graphic organizer along with your thoughts on what these sentences tell about Grogan's feelings. Then use the notes in your graphic organizer to help you write a summary of the story that is logically organized, clear, and true to the meaning of the story.

Textual Evidence	Importance: What does the evidence tell you about Grogan's feelings for his dog?
"Marley taught me about living each day with unbridled exuberance and joy."	Grogan values the energetic exuberance of his wildly uncontrollable pet.

INDEPENDENT READING LINK

Read and Discuss

How is the value of human and animal interaction demonstrated in the book you are reading on your own? Are the themes present in your independent reading similar to those present in "Saying Farewell to a Faithful Pal"? With a small group, discuss various animal-related themes found in your independent reading. Compare and contrast these themes with the story you have just read.

Writing to Sources: Informational Text

Why do people have pets? Using John Grogan and Marley as examples, explain what human beings love about and learn from their pets. Be sure to:

- Write a thesis statement including the topic and your opinion.
- Use textual evidence and supporting details from the newspaper column.
- Add personal commentary while maintaining a formal style. Use the replacing strategy to make your vocabulary academic.



WRITING TO SOURCES: INFORMATIVE TEXT

The following standards are addressed in the writing prompt:

- W.6.1a, W.6.2a
- W.6.1b, W.6.2b
- W.6.1d, W.6.2d