



## Henry and Mudge

### STUDY GUIDE

Dear Teacher,

We have created the following study guide to help make your students' theater experience with Henry and Mudge as meaningful as possible. For many, it will be their first time viewing a live theatrical production. We have learned that when teachers discuss the play with their students before and after the production, the experience is more significant and long-lasting. Our study guide provides pre and post production discussion topics, as well as related activity sheets. These are just suggestions; please feel free to create your own activities and areas for discussion. We hope you and your class enjoy the show!

### Background

Our play is based on the Henry and Mudge series of stories by award-winning author Cynthia Rylant.

### The Story

- Henry and his parents have moved to the country from the city. Henry is not sure he likes his new home and he misses his friends. He decides what would make him feel better is to get a dog. His mother suggests a small dog but his father brings home a huge dog which Henry names Mudge.
- Henry works hard trying to train Mudge and finally teaches him a few tricks. Henry gets a surprise when his cousin Annie comes for a visit. She forms an instant bond with Mudge and gets him to do tricks no one else can, like rolling over. Henry feels rejected and runs away into the woods when Annie leaves.
- Mudge and his parents search for him and finally Mudge finds Henry. They go home and Henry learns that Annie will be moving to the neighborhood. He decides that he can deal with sharing Mudge when Annie is around especially after Mudge finally does the roll-over trick for him.

### Before Seeing the Play

1. You may want to read some of the Henry and Mudge stories and review the plots and characters with your students.
2. Ask your students about their pets. Have them describe some activities they do with them.
3. Ask the class how living in the city is different than living in the country. Make a chart of things you can do in each location.

4. Discuss how it would feel if you had to move to a new town and go to a new school. What would you miss the most? What would you look forward to? Are you excited when you try new things? Scared? Share some experiences doing a new thing (moving, going to camp, joining a team)
5. One theme in the play is friendship. Discuss what it means to be a friend. What qualities do you look for in a friend? How do you help each other?

### After Seeing the Play

1. Ask your students how the play was different from the Henry and Mudge books you read. How was it the same? Discuss the actor who played Mudge. How do you think he prepared for his/her role? How would you portray a dog on stage?
2. When Henry's family first moves to the country they sing "*When you're living in the country, your dreams can all come true. The sky's the limit and the birds are singing, and there's nothing you can't do.*" What do those lyrics mean? What dreams can come true in the country but not in the city? Have you ever had a dream that came true?
3. Has anyone ever trained a dog? What do you have to do to get a dog to obey? What are some of the things you can teach a dog? How about other pets, what kinds of things can you teach them?
4. Henry and Mudge are best friends and they play together. What kind of games could you play with an animal?
5. Why do Henry and Mudge need each other? What qualities do they have that make for a good friendship? How were they able to help each other in the play?

### Activities

#### *Creative Dramatics*

Have your students re-enact scenes from the play. First, have the students discuss specific scenes – who were the characters, where did it take place, what happened? Examples of scenes might be:

- Henry trying to teach Mudge a trick
- Henry, Annie and Mudge playing
- Henry's parents looking for Henry and Mudge

#### *Creative Writing*

1. *Character Maps*- Use the attached character maps to describe Henry and Mudge. After students have listed some traits in the bubbles, have them write a paragraph describing the characters using the trait words. Students can join their paragraphs into a story and bind it into a classroom book for all to share.

2. *Comics*- Use the attached comic strip to have students fill in the words and thoughts of Henry, Mudge and Annie. Use the captions as prompts to continue the story.
3. *Fill in the words*- Use the attached sheet to complete the sentences using the words in the text box.

### *Artistic Expression*

The characters in the play talk and sing about their dreams. Have students think of some dreams they have. (what they want to be, pets or toys they want, wishes for their families) Students can illustrate their dreams and create a bulletin board or poster of the dreams of the whole class.

### **All About Dogs**

Learn about dogs by doing some research. Do dogs really act like Mudge does in the play? Explore your library or the Internet for information. Students can work individually or in groups and create presentations displaying their work. Some facts to get you started:

- The first living creature sent into space was a DOG! His name was Laika and he was sent into orbit by the Soviet Union in 1957.

### **Breeds of dogs**

There are hundred of breeds of dogs. The 10 most popular, according to the American Kennel Club are:

Labrador retriever	Golden retriever
German shepherd	Beagle
Yorkshire terrier	Dachshund
Boxer	Poodle
Shih tzu	Chihuahua

Learn about all the different breeds at: <http://www.dogbreedinfo.com/index.htm>

### **Working dogs**

Did you know that dogs can have jobs? Some working dogs include:

- Hunting dogs
- Search and Rescue dogs that find people who are trapped
- Herding dogs who help farmers herd sheep and cattle
- Sled dogs that transport people and supplies across the snow
- Guide, service and therapy dogs that can act as a person's eyes, ears or hands and even help them recover from injuries
- Police dogs that can detect drugs or poisons

Learn about service dogs at: <http://www.ismi.net/paws/>

Therapy and guide dogs: <http://www.canismajor.com/dog/helping.html>

Dogs in the Iditarod sled race:

[http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/iditarod/dogs\\_life/index.asp?article=dogs\\_life](http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/iditarod/dogs_life/index.asp?article=dogs_life)

Police dogs: <http://people.howstuffworks.com/police-dog.htm>

Herding dogs: <http://www.glassportal.com/herding/dogs.htm>

### **Dog Activities**

Dogs can take part in many activities such as:

- Dog Shows – dogs are judged in breed categories
- Agility trials – dogs are trained to run through obstacle courses
- Dog racing – not only for Greyhounds; terriers race too!

Training a puppy: <http://www.dogbreedinfo.com/care.htm>

Puppy, Dog and Cat training: <http://www.perfectpaws.com/>

### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Cynthia Rylant has written over 60 children's books including the Newbery Award winner, Missing May. There are more than 20 books in the Henry and Mudge series including:

Henry and Mudge

Henry and Mudge in Puddle Trouble

Henry and Mudge Under the Yellow Moon

Henry and Mudge in the Sparkle Days

Henry and Mudge and the Forever Sea

Henry and Mudge Get the Cold Shivers

Henry and Mudge and the Happy Cat

Henry and Mudge and the Bedtime Thumps

Henry and Mudge Take the Big Test

Henry and Mudge and the Long Weekend

Henry and Mudge and the Careful Cousin

Henry and Mudge and the Best Day of All

#### **Internet:**

Learn about author Cynthia Rylant :

<http://www.kidsreads.com/authors/au-rylant-cynthia.asp>

MacMillan McGraw-Hill Publishers – Internet Connection Activities:

<http://www.macmillanmh.com/reading/2005/student/activity.php3?story=57>

Simon & Schuster Publishers – Teaching Guide for Henry & Mudge Books:

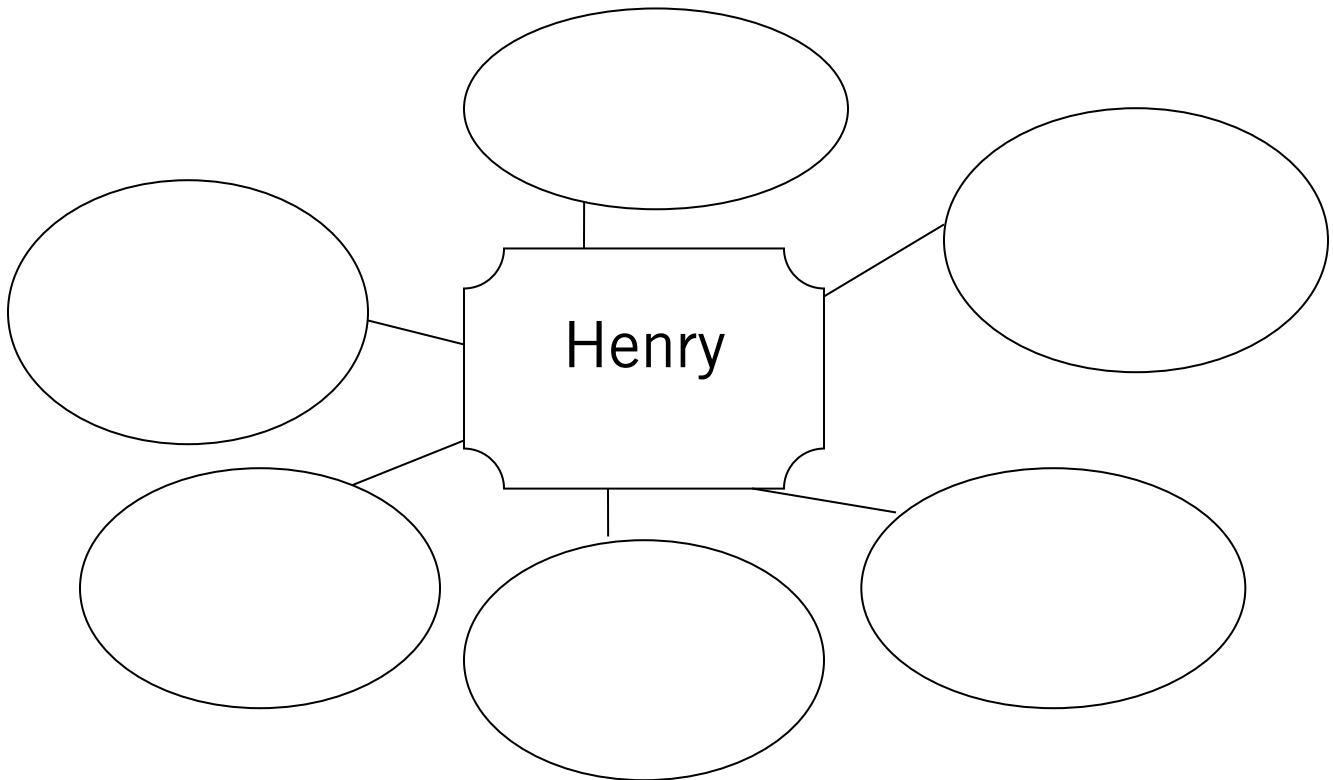
<http://www.simonsays.com/content/destination.cfm?sid=810&pid=368129&agid=21>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Henry and Mudge Character Map

Use the character map to write words that describe Henry. Then write a paragraph about Henry using those words.



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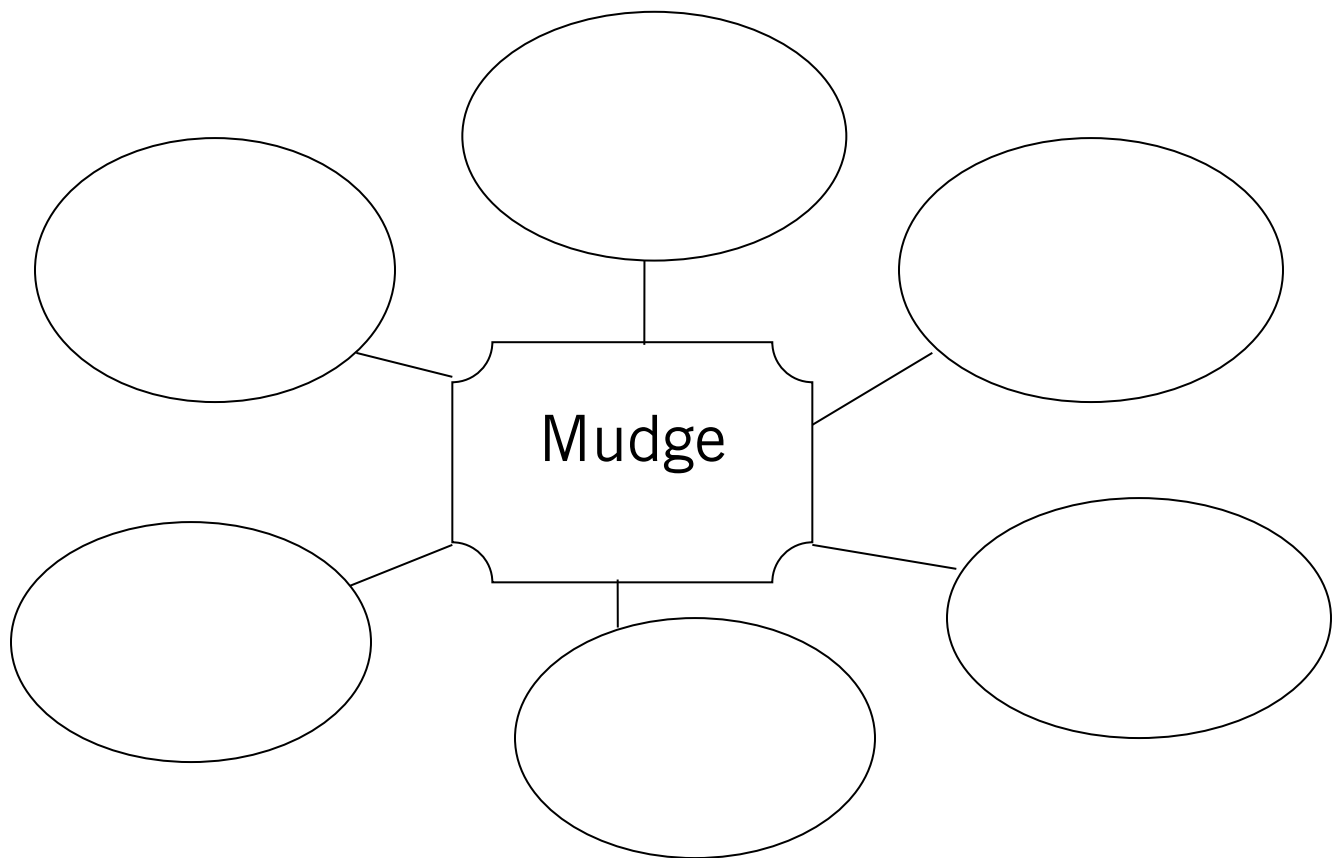
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## Henry and Mudge Character Map

Use the character map to write words that describe Mudge. Then write a paragraph about Mudge using those words.



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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Complete the sentences using a word from the text box:

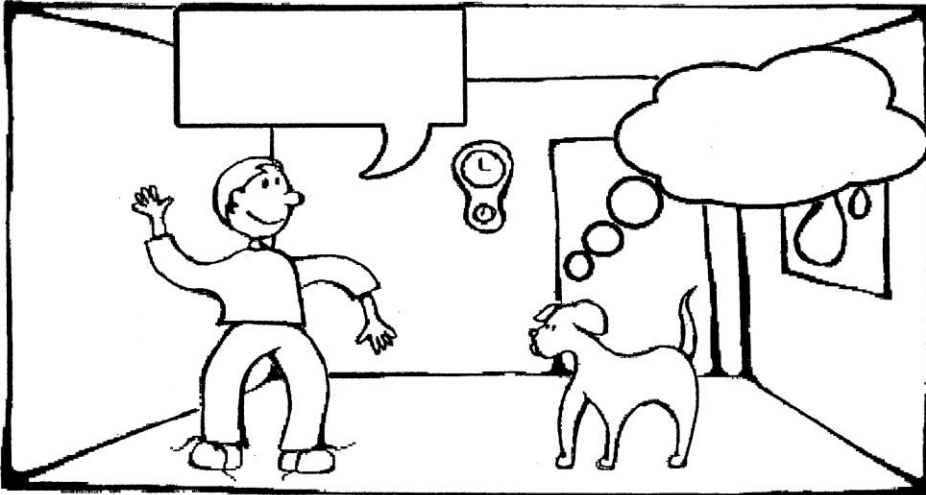
games	small	friends	city	visit
tricks		roll	smell	moving

1. Henry was upset about \_\_\_\_\_ to the country.
2. Mom told Dad to get a \_\_\_\_\_ dog but he came back with a really big one.
3. Henry tried to teach Mudge some \_\_\_\_\_ but Mudge wouldn't learn.
4. When Annie came for a \_\_\_\_\_, she and Mudge became good friends.
5. When Henry and Mudge were together, they liked to play \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Mudge used his sense of \_\_\_\_\_ to help Henry find his way home.
7. At the end of the play, Annie was going to move from the \_\_\_\_\_ to the country near Henry.

8. Henry was finally able to teach Mudge how to \_\_\_\_\_ over at the end of the play.
9. Henry and Mudge became best \_\_\_\_\_ by the end of the play.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



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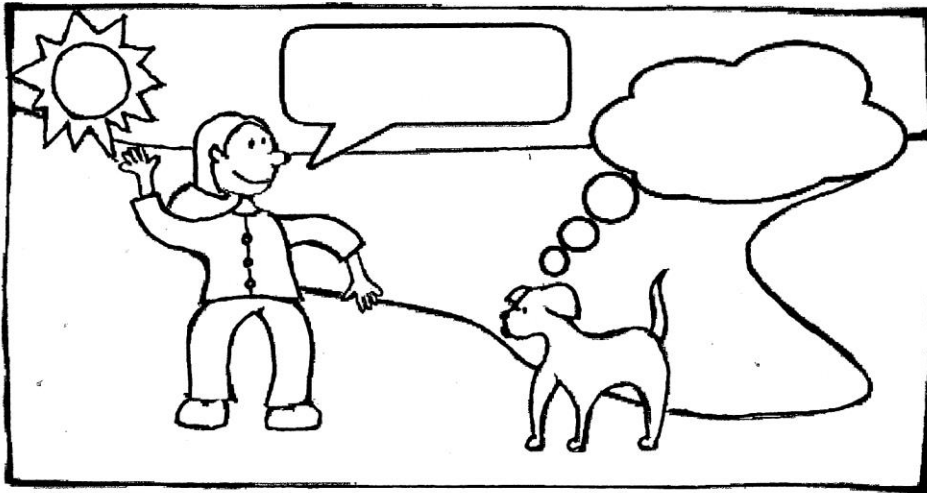
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**Caption:** When Henry and Mudge first met...



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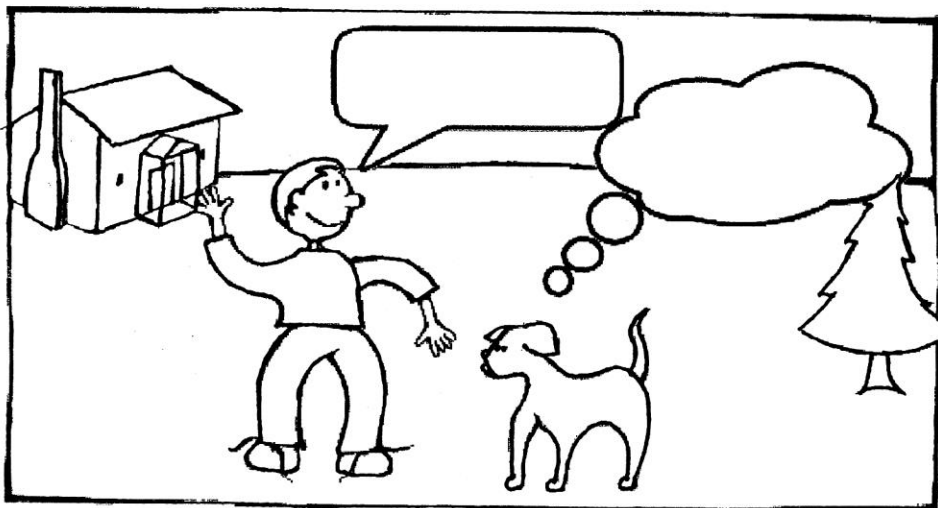
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**Caption:** When Annie met Mudge...



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**Caption:** Finally, Henry and Mudge...