

MORE FIRST FLIGHT: Mutt

About the Author

Jane A C West has written over 60 books for children and teachers including the 'Magic Mates' series. Her books for Badger include 'Shark's Fin Island', 'Mystery in Mexico', 'Wanda Darkstar', 'Just in Time' and 'Hero: A War Dog's Tale'.

Genre

Mutt is an issues story in a familiar setting.

Summary

Evan has dyspraxia (although the term isn't used in this book). He finds it difficult to catch things, he's clumsy, reading is a struggle and so is maths. He's fed up being last at everything. His friend tries to help him but his teacher worries this is making him too reliant on others. She suggests his parents buy him a pet to teach him responsibility.

His Mum thinks a hamster is a good idea but Evan falls in love with a smelly, flea-ridden, partially deaf rescue dog. He calls him Mutt.

Mutt is naughty and eats the post but he's very good at football. Evan helps him by teaching Mutt hand signals because he's deaf. His Mum decides to take them both to dog agility classes.

Evan and Mutt are a really good team and the dog trainer enters them in a competition. Evan is nervous but they do really well. Everyone cheers and claps.

Book Introduction

- Who is Mutt?
- Why do you think he has insects buzzing around him?
- What does Mutt think of the boy?
- What does the boy think of Mutt?
- Do you think Mutt is a good name for a dog?

New vocabulary

In addition to the vocabulary provided on page 4, here are some technical words and phrases in the order they appear in the story:

P6	shuffle
P7	blur
P9	responsible
P10	confident
P11	volunteer
P15	dribbled
P27	tickled

Group work

Discussion points

- Why does Evan's teacher suggest they get him a pet?
- Why did Evan's Mum want a hamster not a dog?
- Why did Evan choose Mutt?

Pair work

- Find the powerful verbs on pages 24-25. [*climbed, slid, sailed, bumped, ran*]
- Find the simile on page 7. [*Like a blur*]

Individual work

- Think of three adjectives that describe either Mutt or Evan.
- Think of three comparative adjectives that describe the change in Mutt.
For example, 'cleaner', 'happier'.

Y4 Narrative Unit 4 – Stories that raise issues/dilemmas

Stop to predict the outcome of an issue or dilemma. Explore possible courses of action using improvisation. Children write own endings based on drama and discussion. Compare these endings with the original story ending and evaluate it.
What might have happened if Evan has been given a hamster instead of a dog?

Using the CD

Write thought bubbles for Mutt throughout the book.

Copymasters

A: Author's Viewpoint

Children answer questions about the author and the book.

**Read another of the author's books that has a dog as a main character:
'Hero - A war dog's tale'.**

B: Take me home!

Children design an advert for a dog that needs re-homing.

Children write a story about what happens to their dog next.

Extension 1 (literacy)

If Mutt wrote a Dog Blog, what do you think he would say? Write a blog about something important to Mutt.

Read these dog blogs from Max <http://max.meltedgold.com/> and Pip www.janewestwriting.co.uk/dog-blog

Extension 2 (cross curricular)

How many dogs do the Dogs Trust help each year?

List three things that the Dogs Trust do to help dogs.

www.dogstrust.org.uk



Author's Viewpoint

"I'm a born-again dog lover. As a child I was scared of dogs but now I love them: all shapes and sizes, colours and levels of hairiness.

I feel I rather missed out by not having a dog for a friend when I was a kid. And I think they can be friends. That's what Mutt is in this story – he's Evan's friend.

Evan's family think they're rescuing Mutt from the dog rescue centre, but Mutt 'rescues' Evan in a way, too.

I wanted to show that the friendship between a boy and his dog is two-way; maybe it's a friendship between a dog and his boy."

Jane A C West

Questions

Q What sort of dogs does the author like?

Q Why does the author like dogs?

Q Has she always liked dogs?

Q What does she like most about dogs?

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Q What do you think she means when she says that Mutt 'rescues' Evan?

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Q Who do you think gets the most out of their friendship: Evan or Mutt?

Why do you think this?

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Q Why do you think the author likes writing about dogs so much?

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