Veronica’s Pack
A shy girl discovers how to build strength in numbers

About the Story

Levels
Lexile Range: 600L-700L
Guided Reading Level: T
DRA Level: 50

Learning Objectives
Students will examine how an author uses figurative language in a story about a girl who overcomes her shyness to speak up for animals in danger.

Content-Area Connections
Science: the environment
Social-emotional learning: social engagement, relationship building

Key Skills
Author’s craft, figurative language, problem and solution, plot, character, theme, opinion writing

Standards Correlations
This article and lesson support the following Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, W.1, SL.1, L.4, L.5

Check our website for more standards information.

Your Teaching Support Package

Here’s your full suite of materials, all of which you’ll find at storyworks.scholastic.com:

Audio: Our audio version of this story provides support for struggling readers or works as a read-aloud for your whole class.

Skill Builders to print or project:
- Vocabulary
- Critical-Thinking Questions
- Core Skills Workout: Author’s Craft, Character, Plot, Theme
- Comprehension Quiz*

*Available on two levels
connection to animals, since later she becomes able to speak with, and for, them.

• **Figurative Language** (p. 11) The author used this hyperbole to help readers picture how tall the trees were. Also, the image of trees painting the sky reflects the awed and cheerful feelings the trees inspire in Veronica.

• **Identifying Problems** (p. 12) The first problem is that workers are cutting down the forest that Veronica loves. The second problem is that she feels drowned out—she’s not loud or powerful enough to make her objection heard.

• **Suspense** (p. 12) The author builds suspense by putting Veronica in a tense situation where neither she, nor readers, know what is going on or what will happen next. First, Veronica feels an unexplained jolt when she touches the stone. Then, she hears a voice but can’t see where it comes from. This suspense builds as she keeps looking “in all directions at once.”

• **Play on Words** (p. 12) Veronica hears a voice say what she thinks is “dear me,” meaning “oh my.” But it’s actually a deer identifying itself, responding to Veronica’s question “Who’s there?” The animal says “Deer? ME!” This play on words adds humor to the story.

• **Plot** (p. 13) The animals want Veronica to speak up for them and stop the construction so their home will be saved.

• **Character** (p. 13) Veronica doubts whether she has a group because she feels powerless to speak up to her friends. She quietly follows along but doesn’t feel confident to lead, like when she ran away from being captain of the kickball team.

• **Character** (p. 14) This is an important moment because Veronica finally finds the courage to
overcome her shyness and ask her friends for help.

- **Author’s Craft** (p. 14) The author compares Veronica to a wolf. Wolves form packs, giving them strength in numbers. Like a wolf howling with its pack, Veronica will have a more powerful voice if she protests the construction with many other people.

- **Character** (p. 15) Veronica gained the confidence to speak up and be the leader of a group. She learned that she can gather her own team to make a difference.

**Critical-Thinking Questions**

- Why do you think the author includes magical elements, like talking animals, in this story? Do you think the story would be as good without them? (author’s craft) The author probably includes magical elements to give an unexpected and dramatic reason for Veronica to change and grow. Answers will vary for the second question.

- Why do you think the story is titled “Veronica’s Pack”? Why might someone need a pack? (theme) The title refers to the group of kids and adults who are willing to help Veronica try to save the forest. They are like a wolf pack that is “hard to ignore” when they howl together: They stop the loggers by coming together and loudly protesting. At first, Veronica thinks she doesn’t have a pack. She finds out otherwise when the kids quickly agree to help her. Answers will vary for the second question.

### 3. Skill Building

**Featured Skill: Author’s Craft**

- Distribute our author’s craft Skill Builder and have students complete it in small groups.

**Writing Prompt:** Imagine that you are Veronica. Write a letter to the local newspaper explaining why the forest should not be cut down.

## Differentiate and Customize

### For Struggling Readers

For a first read, play our audio version of the story as students follow along in their magazines. Then have students read it again in small groups, pausing to discuss the questions in the margins.

### For ELL Students

ELLs might need help understanding the many animal-related puns from pages 12-13, when Veronica first hears the forest animals speak. Read the passage aloud to your students, pausing at each pun. Guide students in a brief discussion about what each phrase means and why it’s a play on words.

### For Advanced Readers

Invite students to retell this story from another character’s point of view. For example, what story would Gabby or one of the forest animals tell about what happened?

### Story Connection

Our October/November 2018 fiction feature makes a great pairing with this story. “Brave Chicken” is another tale of how a young girl overcomes her shyness to speak up for others. Ask students to compare Izzy’s experiences with Veronica’s. What role do animals play in each story?