Can understanding your dog help you figure out the people in your life?

About the Story

Levels
Lexile Level: 610L
Guided Reading Level: T
DRA Level: 50

Learning Objectives
Students will analyze the problem and solution in a story about a girl who is figuring out how to make friends at her new school.

Content-Area Connections
Social-emotional learning: relationships, communication

Key Skills
Problem and solution, vocabulary, inference, character, plot, how characters change, figurative language, analyzing, narrative writing

Standards Correlations
This article and lesson support the following Common Core anchor standards: R.1, R.3, R.4, W.3, SL.1, L.5 For more standards information, go to our website.

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.

Activities to print or project:
• Vocabulary
• Critical-Thinking Questions
• Core Skills Workout: Character, Plot (Problem and Solution), Author's Craft
• Comprehension Quiz*

*Available on two levels
doesn’t match Megan’s claim that everyone at school is awful. This causes Cassie to wonder whether Megan’s views of their schoolmates are correct.

- **Identifying a Problem** (p. 11) Cassie's problem is that no other kids seem to want to spend time with her and Megan.

- **How Characters Interact** (p. 12) Cassie seems confused by Megan’s harsh response, since Jessica is being friendly. Jessica “looks embarrassed” and probably feels surprised and upset at being snapped at while trying to have a pleasant conversation. Perhaps both girls would like to talk to each other more.

- **Character Trait** (p. 12) Cassie’s decision to stand by Megan—even though she has doubts about her cousin’s opinion of the other students—shows that Cassie is very loyal.

- **Character** (p. 12) Cassie is starting to realize that Megan might be the one avoiding the other kids at school, instead of the other way around.

- **Inference** (p. 13) Bandit reminds Cassie of Megan because both seem to avoid others out of fear of being hurt. This makes Cassie wonder if something bad happened to Megan at school, similar to when Bandit was bitten on his nose by another dog.

- **Plot** (p. 13) When Cassie realizes that Bandit needs friends other than just her, she understands that the same thing is true about Megan. At this moment, Cassie decides she will do something to help both Bandit and Megan get over their fear of others so that they can have more friends to enjoy.

- **Plot** (p. 13) Cassie’s plan is to use Jessica and Megan’s shared love of dogs to bring the two girls together. She creates a club for dog lovers, hoping this will help Jessica and Megan become friendlier with each other.
• How Characters Change (p. 14) Both girls realize that they have been holding onto misunderstandings about the other. Also, they both feel bad about the way they treated one another.

• Solution (p. 14) Cassie’s club for dog lovers has brought Megan and Jessica together—and more kids might join. Cassie and Megan now have other kids to hang out with at school.

Critical-Thinking Questions
• Why do you think this story is titled “Dog People”? (figurative language) The title of the story has two meanings. “Dog people” is a phrase used to describe people who love dogs—people like Cassie, Megan, and Jessica. It’s also a reference to how people can be like dogs. This idea is shown in Cassie’s game of comparing people to different types of dogs and in the ways Megan and Bandit are alike.

• What does it mean for Cassie to be on Megan’s side “no matter what”? Can you be on someone’s side and disagree with them at the same time? (analyzing) This means that Cassie always wants the best for Megan and will be friends with her, no matter what happens. It doesn’t mean they always have to agree. In fact, Cassie comes to disagree with Megan about what kind of person Jessica is. She’s even willing to upset Megan by including Jessica in the dog lovers’ club. For Cassie, being on Megan’s side means helping her find a way to get over her fears and become friends with other kids.

3. Skill Building
Featured Skill: Problem and Solution
• Distribute our plot (problem and solution) activity. It will help students prepare to respond to the writing prompt on page 14.

Differentiate and Customize
For Struggling Readers
To help students understand the dog metaphors in this story, ask them to mark each passage with a dog/human comparison. Discuss what each breed mentioned is like, and how humans could have similar traits. With students, research dog breeds as needed to aid comprehension.

For Advanced Readers
Have students practice using metaphors, inspired by Cassie’s comparison game. Students should think of another category they could compare people to (e.g., vehicles, songs, birds), then write descriptions of three people they like, using metaphors they create from the category.

For ELL Students
Work with ELLs to find examples of idiomatic language in this story. Discuss what the phrases mean, then guide students to rephrase them using literal language. Examples include: “breaks into a smile” (p. 12); “head back” (p. 12); “on her side” (p. 12); “steers clear” (p. 12); “stops short” (p. 12); “then it hits her” (p. 13); “(Cassie’s heart lifts up” (p. 14).

Story Connection
Our March/April 2018 fiction feature makes a great pairing with this story. “Squeak Twice for Yes” is another dog-centered tale of how a character learns to overcome her fears. Ask students to compare Brian and Ophelia’s experiences with Cassie and Megan’s. What role do dogs play in each story?