

# TEACHER'S GUIDE

Grades 5-7

## HOWL



BY KAREN HOOD-CADDY



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# I OVERVIEW

## A Note to Teachers

*Howl* by Karen Hood-Caddy offers students and teachers an opportunity to work with curriculum while engaging in Robin's story. A story about dealing with the loss of a parent and living in a new environment, this novel contains many possibilities to enhance reading, writing and discussion for students in the middle grade years. The love of animals and bullying are other themes in this book, and each offers possibilities for study.

Because one of the major themes of this novel involves Robin's journey following the death of her mother, questions and concerns may be raised by students. The death of Robin's mother is not dealt with in a religious context. Additional potentially controversial topics in the novel include the value of wild animal rescue centers and breaking the law in order to stand up for what one believes to be right. Awareness of the sensitivity of these topics, the nature of student comprehension at this developmental level, and of your school district's guidelines with regard to working with students on issues of this nature will help teachers to proceed in the best possible way.

The ideas presented in this Teacher Resource Guide are intended for the consideration of teachers who may use this novel in their practice with students. It is not intended that this guide be followed in a step-by-step manner, but rather, that teachers choose the assignments that best support their particular approach and the learning needs of their students. Included are a variety of ideas that are appropriate for students with diverse learning abilities and that can be used as presented or modified by the teacher to span the different levels of demonstrating learning as documented in Bloom's Taxonomy.

## Book Summary

This is the story of a twelve year old girl who is mourning the loss of her mother. The family relocates to a small town to live with a "weird" grandmother. At her new school she's mockingly called "Green Girl" and is taunted relentlessly because of an award she received. When her pregnant dog plunges into a frozen lake, she saves the dog and hence the puppies. She begins rescuing wild animals and rehabilitates them in the barn. Robin's father forbids her to take in more, but she rescues some skunks, anyway, and hides them. Other animals arrive, and soon she's running an illegal animal shelter. When she is found out, Robin mounts a campaign to save her shelter.

## About the Author

Karen Hood-Caddy is the author of three literary novels on environmental themes and a non-fiction inspirational book. She lives in rural Ontario.

# II SETTING THE PURPOSE: PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Prior to reading, it is of benefit to predict what might be found in the story. The process of prediction can engage the reader throughout the reading of the text, but especially at the beginning it can help to capture the interest of the reader in proceeding with the story. In the case of *Howl*, the following are some possibilities for prediction and helping the reader to set a purpose for reading. The questions may be addressed as whole class discussions, small group or individual work.

- 1. Consider the title. What do you think the book will be about based on the title? What do you think when you see the word “howl?”
- 2. Look at the front cover. What do you see there? Which animals can you identify in the illustration? What does the illustration tell you that would help you to know what the book might be about?
- 3. Read the back cover. What big ideas or themes do you think will be explored in this novel?
- 4. Read Chapter One. Based on what you have learned from the front and back covers of the book, and from reading Chapter One, complete a KWL Chart to discuss your expectations, questions and predictions about the book.

K What I Know	W What I Would Like To Know	L What I Learned

At this time, students complete only the first two columns of the chart. Let students know they will be returning to the chart at the end of the study to see if their questions were answered, their expectations were met or their predictions were correct. Students should have an opportunity to share their information orally once it is collected. This particular activity can be worked on by the class as a whole, by small groups, or by individuals. If worked on individually or in small groups, there should be plans for sharing in some way with the larger group. Students might want to learn, for example, why the book is titled *Howl*. They might wonder about the different themes suggested on the back cover and how they will play into the story. They might like to learn how Robin will deal with her feelings regarding the death of her mother, or how she will work with her dad who was opposed to Relentless having puppies. They might like to know why her dad didn’t tell his family in advance that they were moving.

# III EXPLORING THE TEXT

## 1. Chapter Summaries

### Chapter One

We are introduced to Robin, the main character. Today is Robin's twelfth birthday and she is sad and struggling with grief regarding the recent death of her mother. Robin's older sister Ari and her younger brother Squirm are among the guests at Robin's birthday. Ari and Robin are interested in different things and Squirm is an asthmatic. Robin worries about Squirm's health and medication. We also meet Relentless, Robin's loyal Black Labrador companion. Relentless is expecting babies and, while this is a source of happiness for Robin, it angers her father, a veterinarian who is struggling with his own grief. During the party, Robin overhears her aunt mention that the family will be moving from their home in Winnipeg to her grandmother's home in rural Ontario.

### Chapter Two

As they prepare to drive to their new home, Dad tells the children of the many animals they are likely to see there. This reminds Squirm that he has forgotten his favorite toy, an old stuffed owl named Owlie. Dad retrieves the owl. We learn that Robin had been president of the Environmental Club at school. After a two day journey, the family arrives at the cottage. They are greeted by Grandma Griffith, also known as "Griff," Dad's mother. Griff lives in a cabin by the lake and the family is to live in the main cottage on the same property.

### Chapter Three

While Robin and Squirm explore the landscape outside the cabin, a snowmobile heads toward them, and circles around them, swerving to avoid them. This frightens Robin and Squirm until Griff appears on the scene and yells and waves her arms to drive them away. Griff identifies the snowmobilers as neighbours Rick Kingshot and his daughter Brittany. Griff tells Robin and Squirm the genesis of Owlie while making pancakes and maple syrup for the kids' breakfast. Robin sees a photo of Emmeline Pankhurst, suffragette, on Griff's wall, and learns there is a family connection. While looking outside for Squirm, Robin sees Relentless on the thin ice on the lake. The ice cracks and Relentless plunges into the cold water. Robin jumps into the water to save her but she sinks.

### Chapter Four

Griff pulls Robin out of the water and gets a rope to help pull Relentless out as well. Together Robin and Griff retrieve Relentless from the water and save her life.

### Chapter Five

Robin admits to Griff that she has a fear of water. Relentless goes into premature labour as a result of the cold water exposure. Griff and Robin help Relentless deliver her puppies. After delivering five puppies, Relentless becomes exhausted. Dad arrives and removes the remaining puppies by Caesarean section. Three of them are not alive. Robin helps Relentless by feeding some of the puppies and this act makes Robin happy.

### Chapter Six

After spending the remaining days of holiday at Griff's taking care of the new puppies, Robin and her brother and sister begin the new term at their new school. Robin meets Zoey (Zo-Zo) and Brodie and she is taunted

by Brittany. The teacher, Mr. Lynch, tells the class about Robin's award-winning environmental work as the class begins a project. Robin learns that Brittany likes Brodie and that Brittany's dad is running for mayor. In the cafeteria, Brittany jostles Robin's arm, causing Robin's fries to spill to the floor, and the ketchup to splatter across her top. Zoey takes a photo of this and posts it on the Internet.

## **Chapter Seven**

The puppies are moved to the barn where there will be more room for them as they grow. Robin replays the ketchup incident in her mind and becomes more and more convinced that Brittany did this on purpose as she second-guesses her own response. She thinks she should have told Brittany off at the time of the incident. Robin also thinks a lot about Brodie. Griff, Robin, Ari, and Squirm see Conner Kingshot riding an ATV and chasing a bear. Conner tries to shoot the bear. The bear falls into an old well. Conner threatens to shoot the bear with his crossbow but Griff tells him to leave. Griff directs Robin and Squirm to a ladder so they can remove the bear from the well. Ari goes for an ATV ride with Conner.

## **Chapter Eight**

After donning oven mitts, Dad removes the baby bear from the well and discovers that the baby bear's arm is broken. Against his better judgment, Dad decides to set the bear's arm and he agrees to keep the bear in the barn until the arm heals. The family discusses their concerns with Conner and the Kingshots and Dad is upset that Ari has gone with Conner for an ATV ride.

## **Chapter Nine**

Robin enjoys caring for Mukwa, the baby bear, in addition to the puppies and Relentless. Robin, Brodie and Zo-Zo team up to devise an environmental project. Robin is attracted to Brodie and hopeful when she learns that Brittany is not Brodie's girlfriend. Brittany continues her bullying of Robin by stomping on an apple Robin accidentally dropped to the ground and by calling Robin names.

## **Chapter Ten**

Griff praises Robin's book report. At school, work continues on the project, now called "Your Big Fat Footprint." When Robin is to hand in her book report, she cannot find her backpack. After searching, she and Zoey find the backpack, but the book report is missing.

## **Chapter Eleven**

Griff reveals to Robin that Brodie's dad is an alcoholic. Robin shares with Griff that both she and Brittany like Brodie and that Brittany is bullying Robin. Robin talks about not getting along with Ari, but Griff assures her that they will be friends again someday. Zo-Zo shows up with a box full of baby skunks and asks Robin to keep them in the barn.

## **Chapter Twelve**

Work proceeds on the environmental contest as Robin, Brodie and Zo-Zo agree on a format for the questionnaire. Robin inadvertently tells Brodie about the baby bear and plans are made for a playtime in the barn when Dad will not be at home. Squirm discovers Robin feeding the skunks and reveals his contribution to the menagerie—a nest full of baby squirrels that had been knocked down by the wind. Dad learns about the skunks and squirrels. He takes Zo-Zo and Brodie home. He reveals his concern about the possibility of losing his job if the illegal animal shelter is discovered by his boss at the clinic.

## **Chapter Thirteen**

Griff and Robin talk about Robin's feelings about not telling Dad the truth about the animals and about what

she should do now. Robin decides to put a hold on further acquisitions for the shelter and to keep it secret. Robin loses her voice and is in bed for four days with the flu, and thus cannot tell Zo-Zo to be particularly careful with the photos she has taken of the animals. On her return to school it is clear that Robin's secret has been revealed. Zo-Zo has printed the photos of the skunks for Brodie and somehow they were also sent to Zo-Zo's dad who, unaware they were to be kept secret, has printed them in his newspaper. When Robin gets home from school her dad tells her he has been fired.

#### **Chapter Fourteen**

Robin tries to work through her guilt about her dad being fired. Zo-Zo, Robin and Brodie mark the second round of questionnaires for the contest and discuss the award presentation. When Brodie suggests involving Rick Kingshot, candidate for mayor, in addition to the present mayor who is running for re-election, the three have a disagreement. Robin overhears her father and Ari arguing about Ari's wish to attend a bush party with Conner. Dad says she may not attend and Ari is angry. Dad shouts at someone who has phoned to ask if they are rehabilitating wild animals. Robin and Griff discuss Dad's anger and how he is torn between helping the animals and breaking the law. Robin tells Griff of her experience in the pool that has made her fear being in water. Griff says she is afraid the situation with the animals may blow up in their faces as they are breaking the law by housing the animals without a permit.

#### **Chapter Fifteen**

Spring is in the air. Ari goes on a jet ski with Conner. A stranger shows up with an injured baby owl and Dad, against his better judgment, begins to treat the owl. He says it feels good to be working again.

#### **Chapter Sixteen**

The animal rescue business thrives as more and more people learn about it. An application has been made for a permit but no response has yet been received. The awards assembly for the environmental projects is held. The mayor promises support for The Wild Place if re-elected and Mr. Kingshot makes fun of it, stating that he has kept the sheriff away only because Brodie, his "daughter's boyfriend," likes the place. Brittany hands out invitations to her birthday and does not invite Robin. Dad and Griff plan a trip to buy new cages and they will leave Ari in charge. While Ari is sleeping, Robin reads part of her unlocked diary and finds out that Ari plans to sneak out to the bush party even though Dad has forbidden her from doing this.

#### **Chapter Seventeen**

Dad and Griff leave for the city. Squirm has an asthma attack and Robin keeps him inside. Ari leaves with Conner in his car. Brodie shows up saying that the sheriff is on his way to take the animals away. Robin decides on a plan to prevent this from happening.

#### **Chapter Eighteen**

The sheriff and deputy inform Robin that they will be taking the animals away. Robin refuses to get out of the way and the deputy moves to lift her away. He cannot do this because Robin has used her bike chain to attach herself to the metal bar that locks the barn door. The sheriff sends for a hacksaw. Zo-Zo shows up and uses her bike chain to chain herself to the barn as well. Just as the sheriff begins to use the hacksaw, Squirm and Relentless show up and begin to attack the sheriff and deputy, who, in turn, hold Squirm back, spray Relentless with pepper spray, and then shove Relentless into their truck. Squirm has an asthma attack. The sheriff helps him get his inhaler and then tells Robin to take him back to the farmhouse. Squirm responds by taking his bike chain and wrapping it around his wrist. Brodie and a number of other kids show up and stand with Robin, Zo-Zo and Squirm. The sheriff and deputy leave, promising to return soon. They take Relentless with them.



## Chapter Nineteen

Robin and her family celebrate Griff's birthday on the beach, while, at the same time, Brittany's party is taking place. Relentless still has not been returned and Robin is worried. Conner and some of his friends join the party and Ari goes swimming with them. Griff gives Robin the gift of a silver pendant of a dog. Zo-Zo and her dad drive out and announce that an energy company wants to use the eco-contest in schools across the country. Zo-Zo, Brodie and Robin have a sleepover in the barn.

## Chapter Twenty

As the sleepover trio prepare for the night, Brodie tells them that he has been fired by Mr. Kingshot and Robin shares that Ari plans to sneak out for Conner's bush party. The three consider possibilities for fighting back when the sheriff returns for the animals. Robin awakes partway through the night and, as she goes outside, she comes upon the mother bear. Fear does not prevent Robin (and Brodie who has also awakened) from reuniting Mukwa with his mother. The mother bear leads Mukwa away from the barn to the intense relief of Robin and Brodie.

## Chapter Twenty One

Robin and Griff discuss Robin's dilemma about whether or not to tell Dad about Ari's plans to sneak out to the bush party. Griff tells Robin that Brodie is a special boy. Robin also worries about what is happening to Relentless and what she should do about whether or not to confront the sheriff with her friends. Supported by Griff's care and love, Robin finally lets her emotions go and cries for the loss of her mother and her other worries.

## Chapter Twenty Two

Robin promises not to tell as Ari sneaks out to the bush party. At 5:00 a.m., a drunk Ari is returned home by the police. It takes Ari several days to recover from this humiliating experience. Griff and Dad leave home with the intention of locating and returning Relentless. While using binoculars to scan the lake, Robin is thrilled to see Mukwa and his mother on a far shore as they enter the water to swim toward Berry Island. Her thrill changes to worry as she first hears and then sees the jet skis driven by Conner and Brittany. Robin is horrified as Conner throws a lasso around Mukwa's neck and starts to drag the baby bear. Ari joins Robin in a canoe and they set out to save Mukwa. In the ensuing melee, the canoe is tipped over and Robin is convinced she will drown. But somehow Relentless gets in the water and Robin holds onto her until she reaches the water's surface. When the mother bear prepares to attack Brittany, Robin manages to intervene and save Brittany. The truth of what happened is captured by Zo-Zo on her camera and this helps with the explanation to the sheriff when Conner claims he did not harass the bears.

## Chapter Twenty Three

The Wild Place has become a legal rehabilitation center. Ed Goodings wins re-election as mayor, Robin's dad sets up an operating room at the center, and Robin considers giving Brittany one of the puppies. Robin works with Griff to overcome her fear of water. Robin at last comes to terms with her mother's death.

## 2. Chapter Questions

Many incidents occur throughout the story of *Howl*. These chapter questions have been developed to assist the reader in situating and organizing these happenings. The questions are intended for this purpose only and not to elicit higher order thinking or responses. Other activities in this guide focus on the possibilities of higher order thinking and responses.

## **Chapter One**

- What special occasion is being celebrated?
- Why is Robin sad?
- Who are the members of Robin's family?
- What is special at this time about Robin's dog Relentless?
- What does Robin learn about her family's future by overhearing her aunt speak to someone else?

## **Chapter Two**

- Who or what does Dad retrieve as the family leaves for the drive to Ontario?
- With what club had Robin been involved at her previous school?
- Who is Griff?

## **Chapter Three**

- Who circles around Robin and Squirm in a snowmobile while they explore the cottage's landscape?
- What is Owl's background?
- Who is Emmeline Pankhurst?
- What happens to Relentless in this chapter?

## **Chapter Four**

- Who saves Robin and Relentless and how?

## **Chapter Five**

- What fear does Robin reveal to Griff?
- What happens to Relentless as a result of exposure to the cold water?

## **Chapter Six**

- In the remaining days of holiday, what do Robin and her sister and brother do?
- What are the names of the students Robin meets on her first day at the new school?
- What happens to Robin in the cafeteria?

## **Chapter Seven**

- What happens to the puppies in this chapter?
- What conclusion does Robin reach regarding the ketchup incident?
- How does the baby bear become part of the story?
- What does Ari do in this chapter?

## **Chapter Eight**

- What interesting equipment does Dad use to retrieve the baby bear from the well?
- What is the problem with the baby bear and what does Dad do about it?
- What about Ari upsets Dad?

## **Chapter Nine**

- What does Robin name the baby bear?
- Who are the members of Robin's team for the environmental project?
- What bullying tactic does Brittany use against Robin in this chapter?

## **Chapter Ten**

- What does Griff say about Robin's book report?
- What is the environmental project called?
- What happens to Robin's backpack and book report?

## **Chapter Eleven**

- What does Griff tell Robin about Brodie's dad?
- Why does Robin think Brittany is bullying her?
- What new animals make their debut in this chapter?

## **Chapter Twelve**

- What new animals does Squirm add to the menagerie in this chapter?
- What fear does Dad express when he learns about the skunks and squirrels?

## **Chapter Thirteen**

- What does Robin decide to do after reflecting on her decision not to tell Dad about the animals?
- Robin misses four days of school due to illness. When she returns, what does she discover?
- What happens to Dad as a result?

## **Chapter Fourteen**

- About what does Robin feel guilty?
- About what does Ari argue with Dad?
- What two things is Dad torn between?
- What fear does Robin reveal to Griff?

## **Chapter Fifteen**

- Where and with whom does Ari go?
- What does Dad do when a stranger shows up with an injured owl?

## **Chapter Sixteen**

- At this point in the story, what is the status of the animal rehabilitation center permit?
- What important event is held?
- What does Brittany do in this chapter?
- Where do Dad and Griff go?
- What does Robin learn when she reads Ari's unlocked diary?

## **Chapter Seventeen**

- Where does Ari go when Dad and Griff leave for the city?
- What news does Brodie bring to Robin?
- In light of this news, what does Robin do?

## **Chapter Eighteen**

- What does Robin do to prevent the sheriff and deputy from taking the animals away?
- When Squirm arrives on the scene, what happens to Relentless?
- What happens to the sheriff and deputy at the end of the chapter?

## Chapter Nineteen

- What two events are going on at the same time at the beginning of this chapter?
- What special gift does Griff give to Robin?
- What special announcement does Zo-Zo's dad make?

## Chapter Twenty

- What happens with Mukwa in this chapter?

## Chapter Twenty One

- What dilemma do Robin and Griff discuss?
- What are the two things Robin worries about?
- In terms of grieving her mother's death, what milestone does Robin reach?

## Chapter Twenty Two

- Where does Ari go and what are the results?
- When Griff and Dad leave the cottage, what is their goal?
- What does Robin see as she scans the lake with her binoculars?
- What do Robin and Ari do together?
- What happens when the mother bear prepares to attack Brittany?
- How does Zo-Zo help when Conner claims he did not harass the bears?

## Chapter Twenty Three

- What is the status of The Wild Place?
- Who won the mayoralty election?
- What has Griff helped Robin to overcome?
- At the end of the book, with what has Robin come to terms?

# 3. Vocabulary

## Crossword Puzzle

This crossword puzzle highlights a number of words used in the novel. The puzzle provides an opportunity to study the context and the meaning of these words.

Each clue is followed by a number in parentheses. This is the page where the word is found in the novel. Students should be instructed to find the word in its context and then to add it to the puzzle.

### CLUES

#### Across

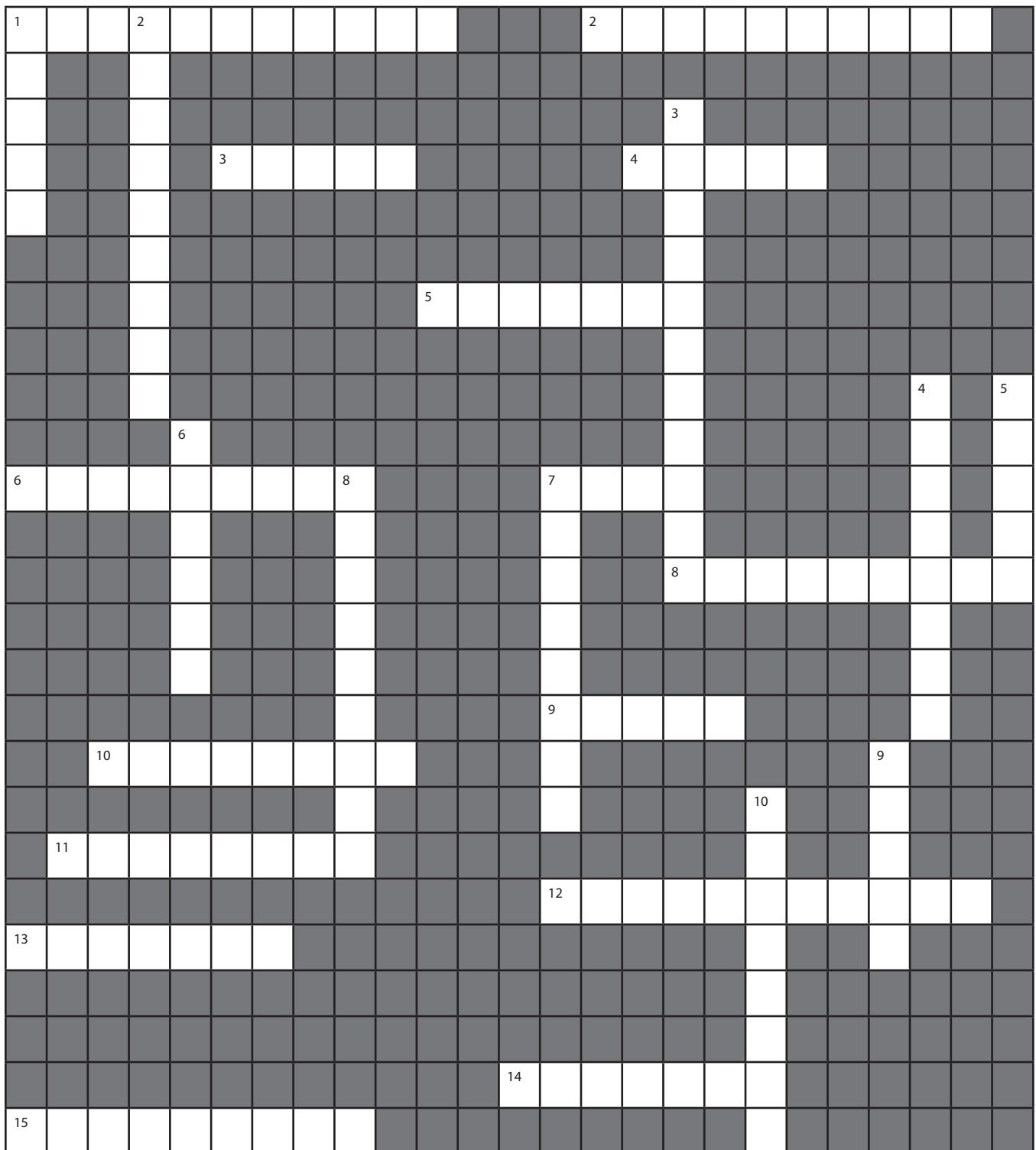
1. the state of being disgraced (p. 55)
2. an evaluation or appraisal (p. 115)
3. faint from extreme emotion (p. 84)
4. dark and dirty; not clear (p. 172)
5. loud, aggressive or indignant talk (p. 7)
6. make an exact copy (p. 48)

7. pulled or drawn tight (p. 39)
8. unusual or odd (p. 14)
9. excited to the point of disorientation (p. 235)
10. extremely large (p. 16)
11. showing strong feeling (p. 215)
12. the action of fixing the boundary or limits of something (p. 95)
13. a large fire that is dangerously out of control (p. 146)
14. loud enough to be heard (p. 45)
15. superior attitude (p. 221)

## **Down**

1. corny (p. 20)
2. quality of being clever, original and inventive (p. 167)
3. woman who wanted the right to vote and to be treated as equal to men (p. 31)
4. able to speak logically and clearly (p. 225)
5. widespread destruction (p. 146)
6. slight but persistent annoyance, discomfort or anxiety (p. 132)
7. present in large numbers (p. 161)
8. filled with lively energy and excitement (p. 213)
9. lack of flexibility (p. 40)
10. a collection of historical documents or records (p. 90)

## CROSSWORD PUZZLE



## Context Clues

Learning the meaning of a word from its context (the examination of the parts of the sentence surrounding the word) is one way to find meaning. Below are ten sentences from *Howl*. The page number on which each appears is in parentheses following the sentence. Read each sentence and then, using the context of the underlined word, including the sentences around the word if necessary, make an educated guess about the meaning of the word. Following this exercise, discuss as a class to confirm the meaning, using a dictionary if required.

1. "Robin hit out in various directions, pretending to be completely engrossed in finding the piñata." (p.13)  
engrossed means \_\_\_\_\_
2. "Robin looked at Griff's beaming face and suppressed a yawn." (p. 32)  
suppressed means \_\_\_\_\_
3. "Lately, fear seemed to be tying her up like a hostage more and more." (p. 42)  
hostage means \_\_\_\_\_
4. "It wasn't her fault if life was throwing them together. There was a weird feeling of inevitability about it all." (p. 68)  
inevitability means \_\_\_\_\_
5. "Now that she had a clear demarcation between her side of the room and Robin's side, she made pincers with her fingers, picked up a folder and tossed it into Robin's area." (p. 95)  
pincers means \_\_\_\_\_
6. "Maybe Brodie felt as bullied by Brittany as she did. That thought diluted her anger toward him." (p. 98)  
diluted means \_\_\_\_\_
7. "The bell rang, and the grenade of kids exploded in every direction." (p. 135)  
grenade means \_\_\_\_\_
8. "She could feel the heat radiating up into the backs of her legs." (p. 151)  
radiating means \_\_\_\_\_
9. "Baby birds fell out of nests, baby ducks got caught in boat propellers, baby deer got injured by cars- there seemed to be an endless list of predicaments they got themselves into." (p. 162)  
predicaments means \_\_\_\_\_
10. "Knowing the animals would be clamoring for food, she dressed quickly, had some cereal, and went to the barn." (p. 177)  
clamoring means \_\_\_\_\_

## Animal Terms

Below are several words used in *Howl*. These words have a connection to animals in some way. Students use the page numbers following each word to locate the word in the novel and to then record the meaning of the word, using the internet to verify word meanings if they are not clear from the context.

omnivore (p. 79) \_\_\_\_\_

euthanize (p. 80, 145) \_\_\_\_\_

abattoir (p. 83) \_\_\_\_\_

taxidermist (p. 18) \_\_\_\_\_

veterinarian (p. 241) \_\_\_\_\_

sanctuary (p. 245) \_\_\_\_\_

rehabilitating (p. 145) \_\_\_\_\_

enclosures (p. 240) \_\_\_\_\_

Having learned and/or confirmed the meanings of the above words, students use these words to write a paragraph demonstrating that they understand the words.

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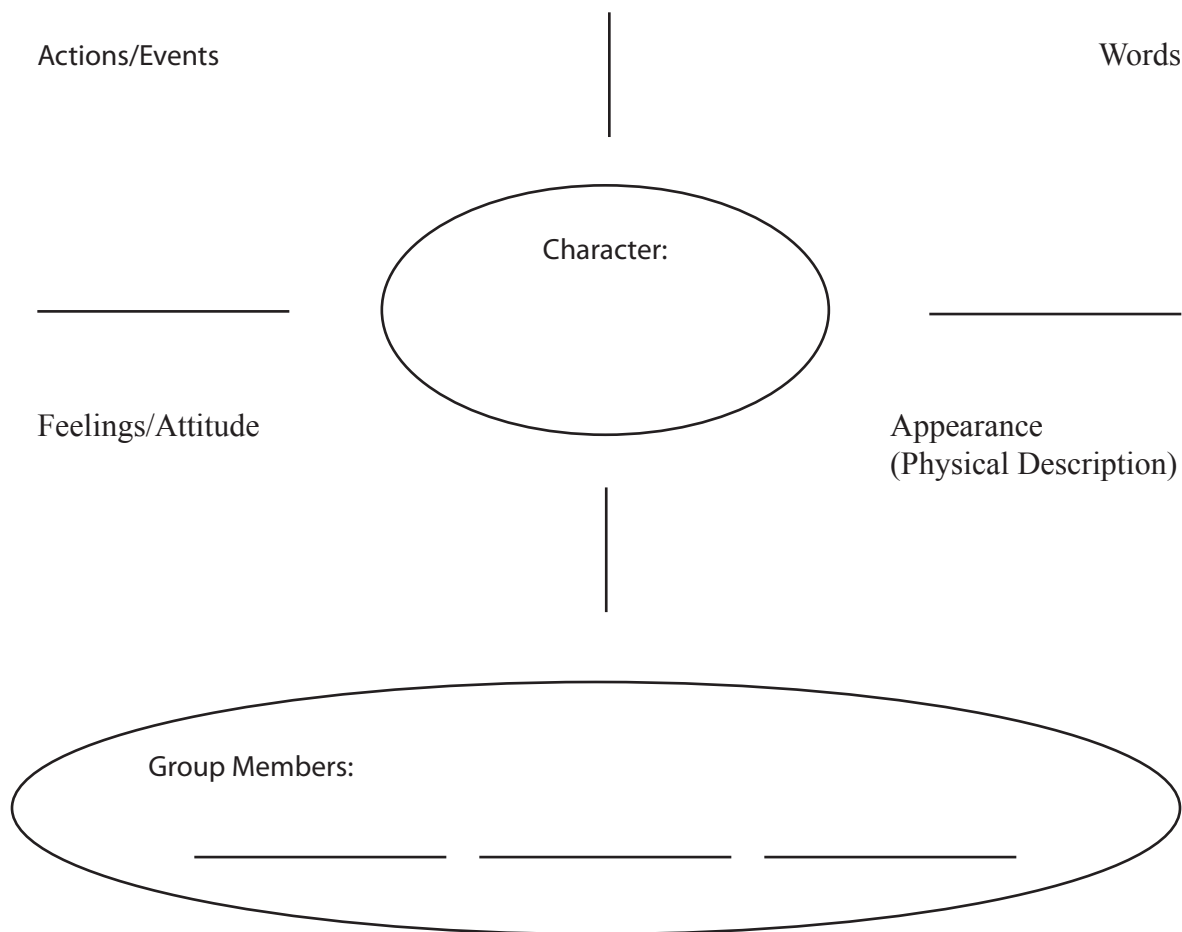


## 4. Character Study

### Character Web

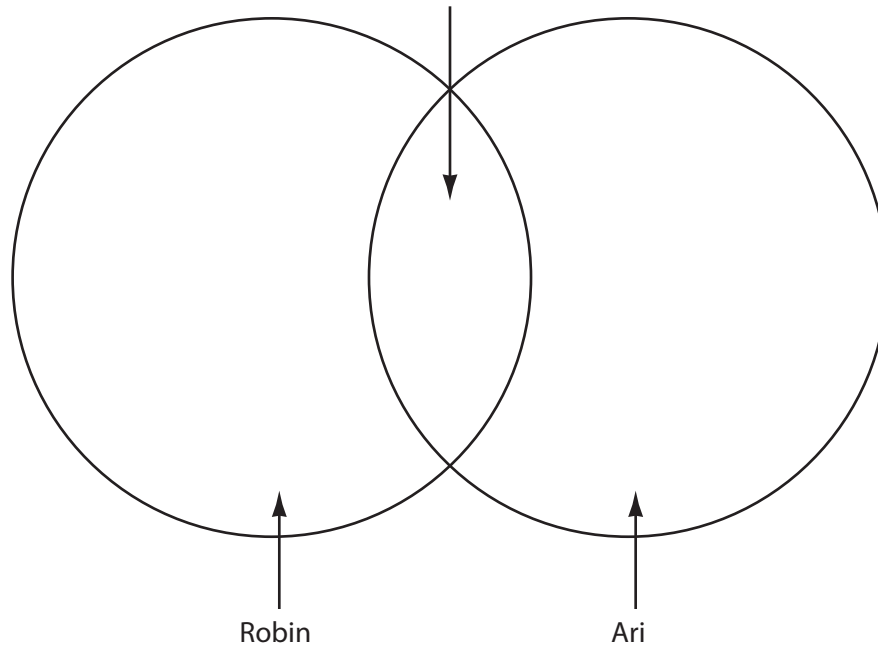
In this assignment, students are divided into groups of three. For each group, a facilitator, a recorder and a reporter are assigned. The facilitator's job is to make sure the group stays on topic and to keep the discussion going; the recorder's job is to document the discussion as it is occurring; the reporter's job is to report back orally to the large group when requested. All members are responsible for the research and participation in the discussions in addition to their specific role.

Each group is assigned a character from the story: Robin, Griff, Brodie, or Ari. There will be more than one group studying a particular character. The assignment is to discuss their character, record information on the following template, including page numbers to support documentation, and then to present the information to the large group.



## Character Comparison

Compare and contrast the characters of Robin and Ari. Initially, students collect information by using a Venn diagram (as below). The Venn diagram allows students to organize the information in point form as to unique characteristics of each character, and ways they are alike. Then, using the information from the Venn diagram, they write a paragraph that explores the ways Robin and Ari are similar to and different from each other.



## Character Interview

In groups of two, each group chooses one of the following characters: Robin, Brodie, Griff, Brittany, Zo-Zo. The group works together to develop and write ten questions they would like to ask this character. The group also writes the answers they think this character would give. All of this is to be based upon what they know of the character and the way the character acts on the story.

When the questions and answers have been developed, the group turns them into an interview. One group member is the interviewer and the other group member is the character. The completed interview is presented to the class and the written portion is submitted to the teacher. Teachers may choose to assess students on the process of working in a group, the authenticity of the questions and answers, and the oral presentation.

## Character Poetry

Following instruction, students use different forms of poetry to demonstrate their understanding of the characters, and they choose good descriptive words and phrases to aid in this demonstration. Students can be asked to present this poetry in an artistically pleasing fashion, and may illustrate by drawing, shading, bordering, or computer enhancing.

Some possible types of poetry include:

#### Acrostic

A poem about a particular person, the acrostic poem has the poet write the names of the person's/ animal's name vertically. A word or phrase or sentence (depending on the level of complexity desired) beginning with each letter is written next to the letter.

e.g.        Grandmother of Robin, Ari and Squirm  
              Rallies around her family  
              Independent, intelligent, impressive  
              Fights for what she thinks is right  
              Friendly to those she likes

#### Cinquain

This is a five line poem that does not rhyme. The first line contains a subject, the second line contains two descriptive words (adjectives), the third line contains three action words (verbs), the fourth line contains a phrase or sentence describing the subject, and the fifth line contains a word that means something similar to the subject.

e.g.                Relentless  
                      black, loyal  
              swimming, running, barking  
              She saves Robin's life  
              Black Labrador

## 5. Descriptions

Karen Hood-Caddy describes a number of events and scenes in the novel. Strong and evocative terms and phrases are used to paint a picture in the reader's mind. In this activity, students are asked to choose one of the following descriptions from the story. Students find the description in the book and then draw a pencil sketch of their vision of this setting.

This assignment offers the opportunity of integrating art with literature. Teachers might provide suggestions and instructions on pencil sketching.

- "She could hardly believe this place used to be her home. The walls had strange, light-colored squares on them where the pictures used to hang, and there were gashes in the carpet where the legs of the furniture had pushed big round indentations into the rug." (p. 15)
- "As they travelled toward Ontario, the fields became snowier, and soon there were huge hills of snow on either side of the road. Robin couldn't see over them, so she was forced to stare ahead at the long black highway that snaked through the white landscape." (p. 19)
- "She went to the back of the barn and made up Mukwa's formula, then pulled on the oven mitts and tattered old coat that hung beside his enclosure and went in. Because of his cast, it was difficult for him to hold the bottle, so she helped him get it into his mouth and held it in place. He made happy

little grunting noises as he sucked, and his claws clicked on the plastic sides of the bottle.” (p. 87)

- “She climbed on top of a huge boulder that overlooked the water. Relentless scrambled up behind her. She liked having the dog by her side again....She sat with her back against a tall pine tree that stood regally in the middle of a rock, its long roots going down over the sides to the earth below.” (p. 151)
- “By the time the big black truck stopped in the yard, Robin was prepared. She had shut the barn door tightly behind her from the outside, making sure that the long bar that went across the front of the door was firmly closed. She leaned back now and felt the solid strength of the barn itself.” (p. 187)
- “The sheriff and his deputy got out of the truck slowly, both slamming their doors at the same time. The sheriff was tall and skinny and had a shiny badge pinned to his shirt, just like in the movies. His deputy was smaller and so round in the middle that the material of his shirt strained against the buttons above his belt buckle.” (p. 188)
- “Outside the barn, the ground was moist from the dew. She looked up. The night sky was sprinkled with the glitter of a million stars. Stunned by the magnificence of it, she stood still for several minutes and just stared.” (p. 211)

# IV RESPONDING TO AND REFLECTING ON THE TEXT

## 1. Response Journaling; Dialogue Journaling

Students respond to different parts of the book, either on their own or as a dialogue journal with a classmate. The ideas for these responses are posed as questions for the students to consider. The questions encourage students to go beyond recalling events in the story and to demonstrate higher levels of thinking about what they have read. Some of these responses could take place during the reading of the book, and some might best take place following the reading. For each, the teacher might consider a class discussion prior to the writing activity so that students would have some ideas as to where to begin their responses. Students should be asked to write about their answers to the questions. In the case of dialogue journaling, they would write back and forth to a partner as in a conversation and base their writing on the particular question assigned by the teacher, commenting on the other student's ideas and posing further questions and offering possible answers.

- Why do you think the author chose the title *Howl* for this book?
- Compare yourself to Robin. How do you see yourself as similar and how do you see yourself as different? Use a Venn diagram to begin your response.
- Robin and Ari seem to have very different characteristics. Write about five ways they are different and one way they are the same. Start by writing in jot notes or point form and then expand into a paragraph.
- Why do you think Robin's dog was named Relentless?
- Throughout the story, Robin struggles with her grief over her mother's death. Discuss how she feels at the beginning of the story and how she feels at the end of the story. What helped Robin along the way?
- What did you learn about wild animal rescue centers by reading this book?
- Brittany and her brother Conner are bullies. Give three examples of their bullying. Do you think Robin could have handled them differently? What would you have done in Robin's situation? What is your opinion about bullying?
- Brodie and Zo-Zo become Robin's friends. Why do you think these three became friends? What challenges did their friendship face and how did they overcome these challenges? In your opinion, what is a friend?
- How would you feel if you, like Robin's family, had to leave everything you knew, your home, your friends, and your community, and move to a new home? What fears would you have? What questions would you have? How do you think it would feel to be a new student at school?
- Squirm was very attached to Owl, his pet stuffed owl. Why do you think Owl meant so much to Squirm? Did you have a favorite stuffed toy when you were young? What was it? Why did you like it?
- Robin grows increasingly close to her grandmother, Griff, throughout the novel. Find and write about three events that help this to happen. Tell why you think these events help them to become closer to each other.

- Robin fears water but, through the story, she faces up to and overcomes her fear. How does she do this? Do you have a fear of anything and how do you face up to your fear?

## 2. Partner Discussion and Individual Written Response

Another possibility for eliciting responses to this novel is included here. A number of quotes from the story are documented below. The process would have the teacher read the quote aloud and ask students to find the quote in the book and to read the quote in context. Then, with a partner, students should discuss what they think this quote means in the story and what it might mean to them in their own lives. Following this discussion with a partner, each student would write his/her own six to eight sentence response to the quote. After completion, these responses could be read aloud to the class. It is intended that this assignment would take place during the reading of the novel, and that the work would be done on an ongoing basis.

- “When her mom had been sick, everyone always said she was going to get better. When she didn’t, Robin felt utterly betrayed. But now, for the first time, she understood why people had said what they did. Sometimes the truth was just too hard to bear.” (p. 46)
- “What I want to say is this,” Griff began. “Life can be brutal. It can rip things away from you, even rip away people, people we love.” She squeezed Robin’s hand and then let it go. “But I want you to remember that it can also give, give good things like puppies and well, all kinds of other things that you’re going to experience. So don’t go thinking that life isn’t good. It is good. At least it can be. Very, very good. Don’t let yourself close down to that, okay?” (p. 51)
- “Everyone would know she was new, and they’d stare at her. She hated being stared at.” (p. 55)
- “You can’t just let bad things happen and do nothing.” (p. 94)
- “I know it’s a bit of a stretch to think this way, but people who do mean things, bossy people, bullies and the like, they’re usually unhappy and scared themselves.” (p. 108)
- “Now don’t get me wrong. I’m not saying you shouldn’t listen to your dad. You should. But listen to your own heart first.” (p. 131)
- “There was something so new and irresistible about this time of year. It was hard not to feel happy through and through.” (p. 151)
- “Do you think I should tell my dad?” Zo-Zo bit her lip. “No. You can’t. Kids’ code.” (p. 210)
- “Courage isn’t about not having fear. It’s about having fear and doing something anyway.” (p. 218)
- “As usual, her thoughts were driving her crazy! They swarmed around her like insects.” (p. 218)
- “I don’t know what it is about the wilderness,” Griff said. “Maybe it’s just so big that it makes everything else seem small, but it settles me somehow. Gets me feeling really quiet.” (p. 220)

## 3. Completion of KWL Chart

Return to the KWL Chart that was partially completed at the beginning of reading the book. Ask students to complete the “What I Learned” or “L” part of the chart. This can be done individually, in small groups, or by the class as a whole. Regardless, the information should be shared by the larger group and can form an effective

conclusion to the study. Completing this chart helps students articulate their new learning and what they have gained from reading the book. The “L” part of the chart may contain new learning not previously wondered about in addition to questions answered.

K What I Know	W What I Would Like To Know	L What I Learned

Do you think Cecile will be an ally or an enemy? Explain.

# V EXTENDING THE TEXT

This novel presents a number of potential student interests, and a number of possibilities for developing and extending these ideas. Teachers might use the topics to extend the work in some of the following curriculum-related ways.

## 1. Research Possibilities

Each of the following topics or activities is mentioned in the novel. Choose one. Research this topic or activity on the Internet. Share your research results thorough a collage, traditional report, presentation software, or poster.

1. Maple Syrup
2. Emmeline Pankhurst
3. Black Labradors
4. Skunks
5. Bears
6. Totems
7. Bullying
8. Aspen Valley Wildlife Centre

## 2. Debate

Throughout Robin and her family's development of a wild animal rescue centre, it is evident that there is disagreement on this issue in the community.

A debate is a formal discussion on a particular topic in which opposing sides are put forward. Take this opportunity to teach middle school students a little about the debate process.

Some **basic debate** terms would include resolution, affirmative team, negative team, rebuttal, judges, and opinion (based on example, common sense, expert, statistics).

A **formal debate** process would include the formation of teams, consideration of the resolution, selecting sides, speech one (first argument of the affirmative), speech two (first argument of the negative), speech three (second argument of the affirmative), speech four (second argument of the negative), short break to prepare rebuttal, speech five (negative team presents rebuttals to affirmative team's arguments and summarizes own arguments), speech six (affirmative team presents rebuttals to negative team's arguments and summarizes own arguments), and judge chooses winner.

A **resolution** might be:

"Be it resolved that animal rescue centres are of great value and should have public financial support."



### 3. Opinion Writing

*Howl* offers a stepping stone for working with opinion writing. Holding an opinion means having a thought or belief about something or someone. In an opinion paragraph the writer takes a stand on a particular topic and gives the reason(s) for this stand. The format of an opinion paragraph might be as follows:

**Topic Sentence** (states agreement or disagreement with the topic)

**Reasons and Supporting Details** (give examples or evidence that proves your point of view)

**Concluding Sentence** (summarizes the main reasons or restates the topic sentence in different words)

Some ideas for opinion writing based on the novel *Howl*:

- Robin and her family started an Animal Rescue Center. What is your opinion about the value of Animal Rescue Centers?
- In starting their rescue center before obtaining the appropriate permit, Robin and her family broke the law. What is your opinion about breaking the law? Are there times when it is ok?
- Robin was bullied by Brittany in this novel. What is your opinion about bullies? Should a person fight back when bullied?

### 4. Questionnaire

Robin and her friends won an award for developing and implementing a questionnaire regarding the environment (The Big Fat Footprint). Ask students to reread the appropriate parts of the novel and then to develop and implement their own questionnaire on this topic.

## **VI   BLACKLINE MASTERS**

BLM 1: First KWL Chart

K What I Know	W What I Would Like To Know	L What I Learned

BLM 2: Second KWL Chart

K What I Know	W What I Would Like To Know	L What I Learned

### BLM 3: Crossword Puzzle

#### CLUES

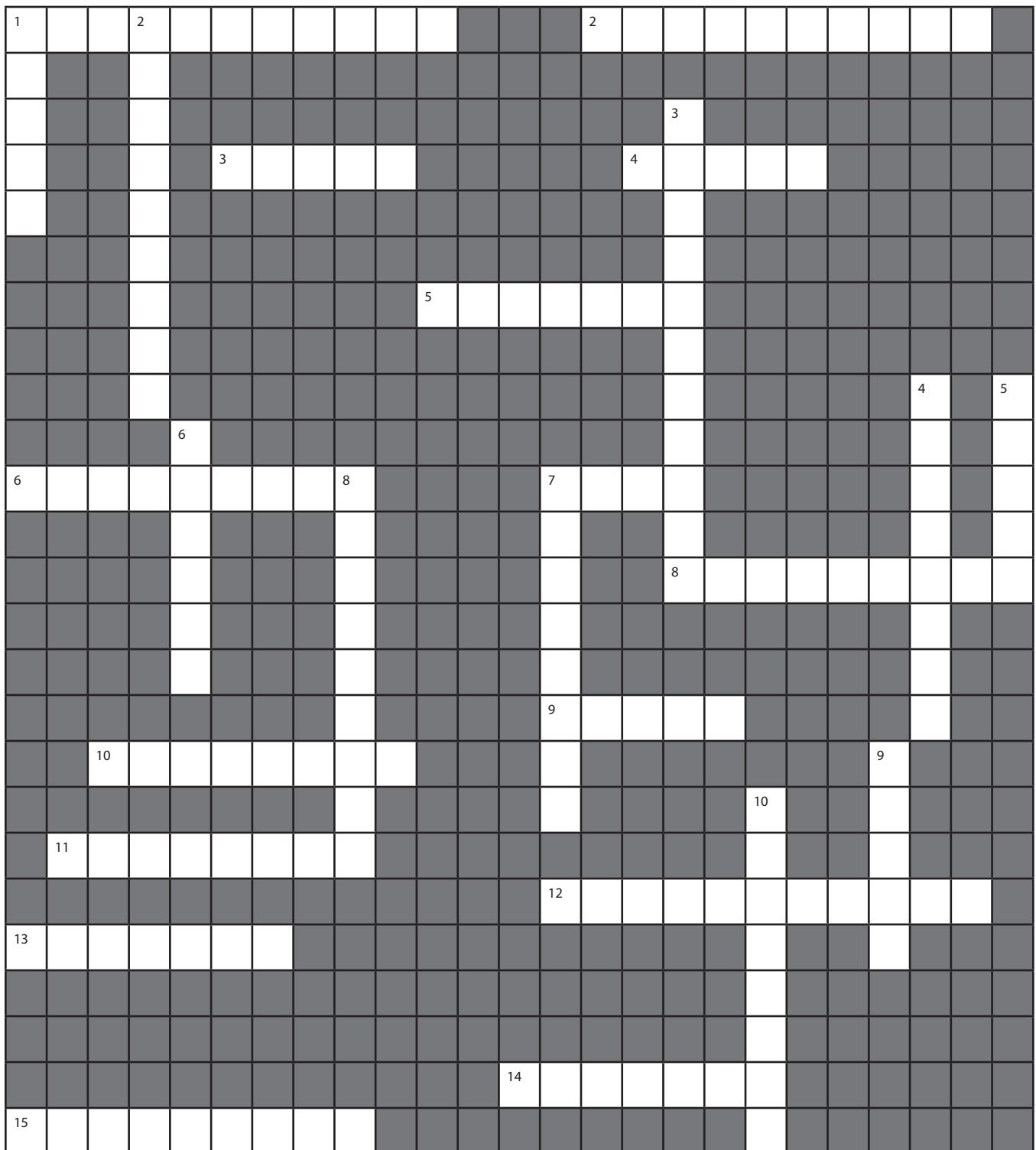
##### Across

1. the state of being disgraced (p. 55)
2. an evaluation or appraisal (p. 115)
3. faint from extreme emotion (p. 84)
4. dark and dirty; not clear (p. 172)
5. loud, aggressive or indignant talk (p. 7)
6. make an exact copy (p. 48)
7. pulled or drawn tight (p. 39)
8. unusual or odd (p. 14)
9. excited to the point of disorientation (p. 235)
10. extremely large (p. 16)
11. showing strong feeling (p. 215)
12. the action of fixing the boundary or limits of something (p. 95)
13. a large fire that is dangerously out of control (p. 146)
14. loud enough to be heard (p. 45)
15. superior attitude (p. 221)

##### Down

1. corny (p. 20)
2. quality of being clever, original and inventive (p. 167)
3. woman who wanted the right to vote and to be treated as equal to men (p. 31)
4. able to speak logically and clearly (p. 225)
5. widespread destruction (p. 146)
6. slight but persistent annoyance, discomfort or anxiety (p. 132)
7. present in large numbers (p. 161)
8. filled with lively energy and excitement (p. 213)
9. lack of flexibility (p. 40)
10. a collection of historical documents or records (p. 90)

# CROSSWORD PUZZLE



## BLM 4: Context Clues

Learning the meaning of a word from its context (the examination of the parts of the sentence surrounding the word) is one way to find meaning. Below are ten sentences from *Howl*. The page number on which each appears is in parentheses following the sentence. Read each sentence and then, using the context of the underlined word, including the sentences around the word if necessary, make an educated guess about the meaning of the word. Following this exercise, discuss as a class to confirm the meaning, using a dictionary if required.

1. "Robin hit out in various directions, pretending to be completely engrossed in finding the piñata." (p.13)  
engrossed means \_\_\_\_\_
2. "Robin looked at Griff's beaming face and suppressed a yawn." (p. 32)  
suppressed means \_\_\_\_\_
3. "Lately, fear seemed to be tying her up like a hostage more and more." (p. 42)  
hostage means \_\_\_\_\_
4. "It wasn't her fault if life was throwing them together. There was a weird feeling of inevitability about it all." (p. 68)  
inevitability means \_\_\_\_\_
5. "Now that she had a clear demarcation between her side of the room and Robin's side, she made pincers with her fingers, picked up a folder and tossed it into Robin's area." (p. 95)  
pincers means \_\_\_\_\_
6. "Maybe Brodie felt as bullied by Brittany as she did. That thought diluted her anger toward him." (p. 98)  
diluted means \_\_\_\_\_
7. "The bell rang, and the grenade of kids exploded in every direction." (p. 135)  
grenade means \_\_\_\_\_
8. "She could feel the heat radiating up into the backs of her legs." (p. 151)  
radiating means \_\_\_\_\_
9. "Baby birds fell out of nests, baby ducks got caught in boat propellers, baby deer got injured by cars- there seemed to be an endless list of predicaments they got themselves into." (p. 162)  
predicaments means \_\_\_\_\_
10. "Knowing the animals would be clamoring for food, she dressed quickly, had some cereal, and went to the barn." (p. 177)  
clamoring means \_\_\_\_\_

**BLM 5: Animal Terms**

Below are several words used in *Howl*. These words have a connection to animals in some way. Students use the page numbers following each word to locate the word in the novel and to then record the meaning of the word, using the internet to verify word meanings if they are not clear from the context.

omnivore (p. 79) \_\_\_\_\_

euthanize (p. 80, 145) \_\_\_\_\_

abattoir (p. 83) \_\_\_\_\_

taxidermist (p. 18) \_\_\_\_\_

veterinarian (p. 241) \_\_\_\_\_

sanctuary (p. 245) \_\_\_\_\_

rehabilitating (p. 145) \_\_\_\_\_

enclosures (p. 240) \_\_\_\_\_

Having learned and/or confirmed the meanings of the above words, students use these words to write a paragraph demonstrating that they understand the words.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

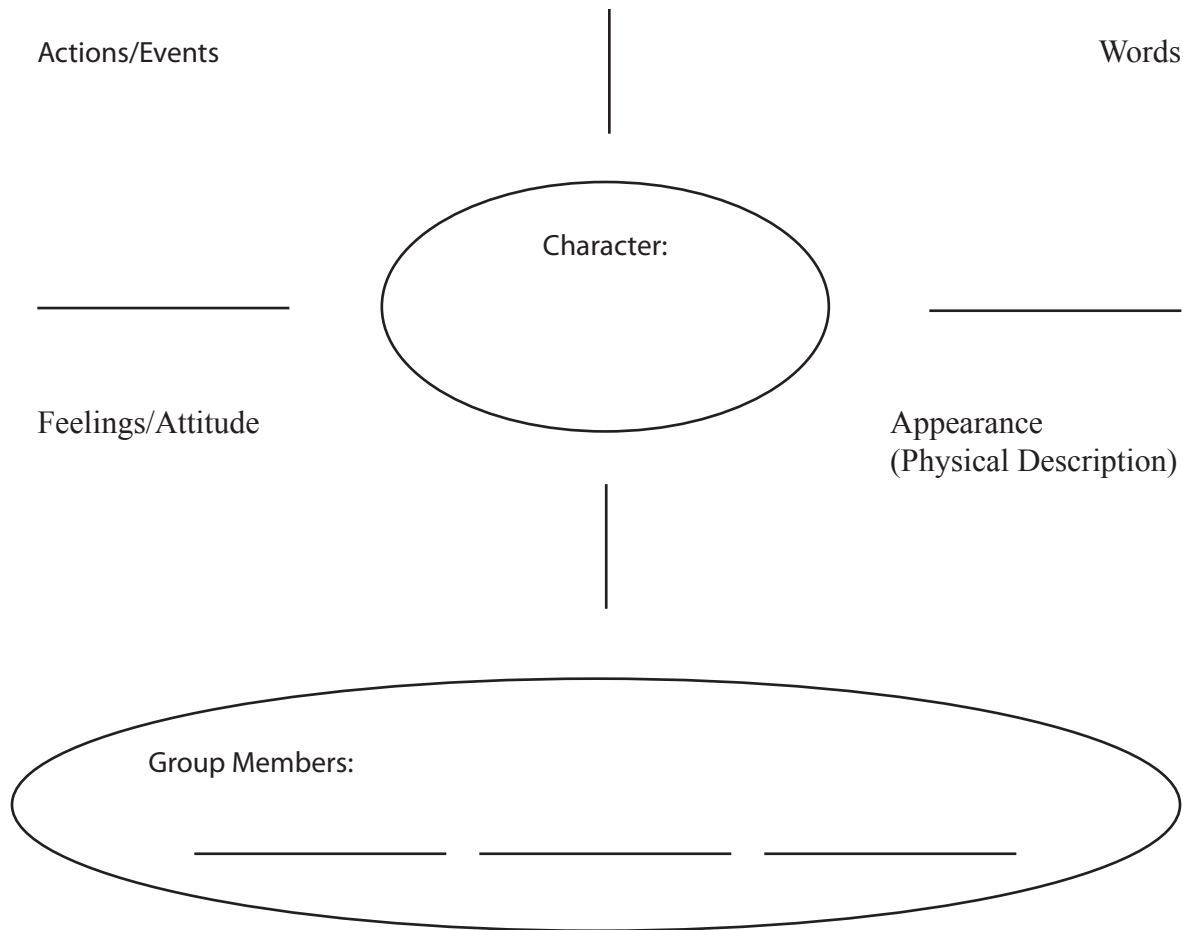
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**BLM 6: Character**



**BLM 7: Venn Diagram**

