



Story Summary

A dog's world is a world of scents, of adventure. When a runaway West Highland Terrier named Harvey wanders out of his old life guided only by his nose and his heart, lives begin to converge.

Austin, a young volunteer at Brayside retirement home, quickly finds that the audacious Harvey inspires Mr. Pickering, a bitter resident coping with memory loss, to tell stories of his childhood. Moved by the elderly man's Dust Bowl recollections of grinding poverty and the perseverance of his friends and family, Austin begins to trade his preconceived notions for empathy. But is it enough to give him the resolve to track down Harvey's original owner?

Colleen Nelson earned her Bachelor of Education from the University of Manitoba in her hometown of Winnipeg. Her previous novels include *Blood Brothers*, selected as the 2018 McNally Robinson Book of the Year for Young People, and *Pulse Point*, selected as one of the CBC's Most Anticipated YA Books of 2018. Colleen writes daily in between appearances at hockey rinks and soccer fields in support of her two sports-loving sons.

A folk artist and award-winning illustrator who trained at the Ontario College of Art and Design, **Tara Anderson** is known for her lively and humorous illustrations of animals. Her books include *That Stripy Cat*, *Rhino Rumpus*, *Pumpkin Orange*, *Pumpkin Round*, and the award-winning *Nat the Cat Can Sleep Like That*. Tara has also provided illustrations for middle-grade novels, including *Harvey Comes Home* and *Sapphire the Great and the Meaning of Life*. She shares a farmhouse in Tweed, Ontario, with her husband, her young daughter, and several cats.

Juvenile Fiction Ages 8–12 | ISBN: 978-1-77278-097-0 | Pages: 224

Keywords: Intergenerational, Integrity, History, 1930s, Dogs, Friendship

BISAC Codes

JUV002070 – JUVENILE FICTION / Animals / Dogs

JUV039020 – JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes / Adolescence

JUV016180 – JUVENILE FICTION / Historical / Canada / Post-Confederation (1867-)

Reading Level

Fountas & Pinnell: T | Lexile Measure: 680L

Dear Teacher,

Hello and thank you for bringing *Harvey Comes Home* into your classroom.

This teacher's guide has a flexible structure. Each section (Before, During, and After Reading) offers questions that can be used for whole-class discussions, small group (literature circle) discussions, or for reading responses. The questions are open-ended to allow you and your students to consider a variety of viewpoints. *Harvey Comes Home* might even be the jumping-off point for an inquiry into what life was like in the past, or how life on the prairies has changed over the years, or how animals enrich our lives. I invite you to choose the questions and activities that are the best fit for you students, or better yet, allow them to choose!

In an effort to make the teacher's guide more personal, I have included some video and audio clips which you can share with your students. There are also a variety of visuals which will make the setting of *Harvey Comes Home* more relevant for your students.

—Colleen Nelson, author of *Harvey Comes Home*

ONLINE RESOURCES

- Photograph of a Missouri migrant family's jalopy stuck near Tracy, California: "Broke, baby sick, and car trouble!" 1937 by Dorothea Lange loc.gov/pictures/resource/fsa.8b38633
- Recording of author Colleen Nelson reading chapter 1 of *Harvey Comes Home*: pajamapress.ca/resource/harvey_comes_home_extra_content
- Photograph of a farmhouse surrounded by drought-stricken fields by Irving Rusinow, courtesy of the US National Archives and Records Administration, Records of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics www.archives.gov/exhibits/picturing_the_century/images/greatdep_046_v76.jpg
- First-hand accounts of the drought: www.cbc.ca/history/EPISCONTENTSEIEPI3CHIPA2LE.html
- *Climate and Change* article: "Living Through Drought" climateandchange.usask.ca/histories.html#living-through-drought
- *Sunshine Hours* article: "It wasn't this way before," admitted Edna Jaques in a soul-baring article in *Chatelaine* magazine" sunshinehours.net/2019/06/06/it-wasnt-this-way-before-admitted-edna-jaques-in-a-soul-baring-article-in-chatelaine-magazine
- Photograph of combined thresher-harvester operated by tractor courtesy of Library and Archives Canada: PA-040497 data2.archives.ca/ap/a/a040497-v6.jpg
- Instant Online Crossword Puzzle Maker: www.puzzle-maker.com/crossword_Entry.cgi
- Storyboard That: www.storyboardthat.com
- *Wessels Living History Farm* article "The Dust Bowl" by Bill Ganzel: <https://livinghistoryfarm.org/farminginthe30s/water/the-dust-bowl>
- Poets.org entry on found poetry: <https://poets.org/glossary/found-poem>
- Video of author Colleen Nelson explaining the inspiration behind *Harvey Comes Home*: <https://youtu.be/adT7xoh8DIE>
- *The Globe and Mail* article: "The second coming of the Dirty Thirties? Climate change will bring drought and depression" www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/the-second-coming-of-the-dirty-thirties-climate-change-will-bring-drought-and-depression/article30144894

BEFORE READING

1. As a class or in a small group, discuss the pros and cons of working at a seniors' home. Do you have any in your neighborhood? Can anyone share an experience they have had at one?
2. In this book, there are three points of view. Austin will tell his story in the first person; we will read about Maggie in the third person; and Harvey's story will be told from a dog's perspective in the third person. Have you read any other books with animals as main characters? Do you prefer a book written in the first or third person? What are the benefits of each as a writer and as a reader?
3. In your notebook or on sticky notes, write down some assumptions you have about elderly people. These will be shared with the class. At the end of the book, we will see if any of these assumptions have changed.
4. Look at the photo below. What do you think is happening?



5. Visit pajamapress.ca/resource/harvey_comes_home_extra_content to hear Colleen Nelson read the first chapter of *Harvey Comes Home*.

DURING READING

Chapters 1–10

1. Was Austin's punishment fair? Why or why not?
2. Make a map of Harvey's travels from when he leaves his yard to when he is found by Austin.
3. The residents at Brayside have collages to share their lives with each other. Make a collage of your own life so far.
4. "Harvey has no hindsight." Explain a time when, looking back, you would have done something differently.
5. Writing Assignment: At the end of Chapter 10, Austin makes a big decision. Was he right? Write a letter to Austin giving him your advice. Be sure to include a salutation, a closing, and a few words introducing yourself before you launch into the advice.

Photo by Dorothy Lange, 1937.

Library of Congress digital ID: fsa.8b38633

Chapters 11–16:

1. In order to gain context about the drought of the 1930s, divide students into groups and have them examine the following resources and write what they notice about each one.



Artifact a:

Photo by By Irving Rusinow,
Courtesy of National Archives
and Records Administration,
Records of the Bureau of
Agricultural Economics.

Artifact b: Look at www.cbc.ca/history/EPISCONTENTSEIEPI3CHIPA2LE.html for some first-hand accounts of the drought.

Artifact c: climateandchange.usask.ca/histories.html#living-through-drought

Artifact d: sunshinehours.net/2019/06/06/it-wasnt-this-way-before-admitted-edna-jaques-in-a-soul-baring-article-in-chatelaine-magazine

2. Discussion: Did Maggie's mom make the right choice to keep Harvey's disappearance a secret from Maggie?
3. This is a photograph of a thresher. How do you think it worked?



Combined Thresher-Harvester
Library and Archives Canada ID:
PA-040497

- Mr. Pickering refers to the Dirty Thirties and the Dust Bowl. Using what you've learned from *Harvey Comes Home*, write a definition for both of these terms.
- Friendship is an important theme in this section. Give three examples of how the characters in *Harvey Comes Home* demonstrate what it means to be a friend.
- Writing Activity: Rewrite the scene when the boys disrespect the grave from Bertie's perspective.
- What is Bertie thinking and feeling when she sees the boys handling the bones? Why does she react the way she does?
- Below are two photos of schools c. 1933. Compare these photographs to your school. What is the same? What is different? What do you notice?

Chapters 17–21

- Create a crossword based on *Harvey Comes Home*. The words and clues should be relevant to the book. Use a crossword puzzle generator website like www.puzzle-maker.com/crossword_Entry.cgi. Trade your crossword with a partner.

Sugarloaf School (no date) by R. J. MacKenzie Archives of Manitoba School Inspectors Photographs GR8461, A0233, C131-3, page 113



Interior view of Oakdale School near Loyston, Tennessee. From 30 to 40 pupils usually attend, October 1933 By the U.S. National Archives, via Flickr

Chapters 22–28

1. Create a comic frame using a scene in Chapter 22. Include thought bubbles and/or speech bubbles for the characters. You may want to try using an online resource like Storyboard That: www.storyboardthat.com
2. Walt has a lot of regret over how he treated Bertie, especially since she thinks of him as her best friend. Have you ever treated a friend badly and regretted it?
3. Choose two different characters and explain how each suffered physically and emotionally up to this point.

Chapters 29–41

1. Three years have passed in Walt's memories. He is now 13. In what ways has he changed? Can you tell by the tone of his stories? By his actions?
2. Listen to the dust storm oral history. Write a found poem based on either Walt's memory from the book, or the oral history. <https://livinghistoryfarm.org/farminginthe30s/water/the-dust-bowl>
(For information on found poems, check out this website: poets.org/text/found-poem-poetic-form)
3. P. 179: "With her short hair and freckled face, she didn't look like a girl; she didn't look like a boy either. She looked like herself. I felt a flush of admiration for her—and maybe jealousy too." Explain Walt's conflicted emotions.
4. Chapter 31 is a pivotal (meaning "life-changing") chapter for Walt. Find three quotes that support this idea.
5. Austin thinks it is because of Harvey that Mr. Pickering shared his memories, but his grandpa thinks it is because Austin was there to listen. What do you think?

After Reading

1. Go back to your assumptions about elderly people. After reading *Harvey Comes Home*, have any of them changed? What will you add?
2. Pick one theme: friendship, forgiveness or regret. Which is the most important theme in *Harvey Comes Home*? Explain.

3. Find an artifact that represents one of the themes and explain how it connects to the story and your life.
4. Watch this video of Colleen Nelson explaining her inspiration for writing *Harvey Comes Home*. <https://youtu.be/adT7xoh8DIE>
5. What seniors' homes are near your school? Find out if it is possible to visit. Make a list of questions you could ask.
Or
Interview a family member about a special memory from their youth.
6. The illustrator, Tara Anderson, selected images to draw for each chapter. Which one is the most effective? Explain why.
7. Use the directions provided by Walter to make your own slingshot. Use a marshmallow as a projectile to hit a target.
8. Research different breeds of dogs and decide which one would be the best fit for you. What are the 'pros' and 'cons' for each one? Rank your top three with reasons for each.

SCIENCE EXTENSION:

Read this article on climate change:

www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/the-second-coming-of-the-dirty-thirties-climate-change-will-bring-drought-and-depression/article30144894

What impact does climate change have on our way of life now?