

# A Curriculum Guide for Educators & Readers



Discussion points, activities, and writing prompts to help educators use *The Pepper Party Picks the Perfect Pet* as a classroom read-aloud or as a selection for independent reading. Great for book clubs, too!

## About the Author, Jay Cooper

Jay Cooper is the author and illustrator of *The Spy Next Door* series from Scholastic and the illustrator of the *Bots* series from Little Simon. He lives in Maplewood, New Jersey. Visit him at [www.jaycooperbooks.com](http://www.jaycooperbooks.com).



## Common Core Aligned for 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> Grade

2<sup>nd</sup>: ELA.RL.2.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; W.2.1, 2, 3, 7; SL.2.1, 2, 3, 4

3<sup>rd</sup>: ELA.RL.3.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7; W.3.1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8; SL.3.1, 2, 3, 4

4<sup>th</sup>: ELA.RL.4.1, 2, 3, 4, 7; W.4.1, 2, 3, 7; SL.4.1, 2, 3, 4, 5

This guide was created by Marcie Colleen, a former teacher with a BA in English Education from Oswego State and a MA in Educational Theater from NYU. Marcie can often be found writing books of her own at home in San Diego, California. Visit her at [www.thisismarciecolleen.com](http://www.thisismarciecolleen.com).

Guide content © Copyright 2019 by Marcie Colleen. Available free of charge for educational use only; may not be published or sold without express written permission.

## Before You Read...

1. Take a close look at the cover of *The Pepper Party Picks the Perfect Pet*. What do you see? Describe the characters. Can you guess what the story might be about? What clues can you find in the cover art to support your prediction?
2. Read the text on the back of the book. What do you learn about the story from this blurb? What questions does it raise about the story?
3. Using all this information, can you make any predictions about what might happen in the book?
4. List five questions you have, and hope to have answered, about the book.

## Chapters 1-3

1. What three words would you use to describe the Pepper family house on a Saturday?
  - a. Look closely at the illustration of the house on pages 2-3. Who would you prefer to hang out with on this Saturday? Why? Use specifics from the text to support your answer.
  - b. Why is Annie Pepper's room silent?
2. Using chapters one through three as evidence, who is Annie Pepper? Draw an outline of a human figure, which will represent Annie, on a large piece of paper.
  - a. Write any known details about Annie inside the outline. Outside of the outline, discuss and write any questions about Annie that you might have.
3. In your own words, explain how Annie met Azzie.
  - a. Where did Azzie come from?
4. In her ploy to adopt Azzie, Annie tries to act extremely responsible at dinner. What does she do?
5. How is Annie's approach different from how her siblings tried to convince their parents to get a pet?
  - a. Why do you think Annie's approach worked?

### Making Connections:

Using the text and illustrations found in Chapters 1-4, create your own version of Frida Flamingo's Fun Facts flyer.

Be sure to include the statistics Annie shared with her family, as well as photos/illustrations of the many pets that are available for adoption like Azzie.

Research some other animal shelter brochures on Google for some examples of other information to incorporate in your flyer.

## **Chapters 4-6**

1. How does Annie's plan to convince her family to get a pet kind of backfire on her?
2. What does Sal Pepper mean when he says, "We should get the hat"?
  - a. Describe the hat and Presto Pepper in your own words.
  - b. What are the rules around the hat?
  - c. Explain "even family rules had limits" in your own words, regarding the Pepper family hat.
3. Beta Max Pepper's name is pulled from the hat and he is the one to choose the family pet. What kind of pet is he looking for?
  - a. Why does Beta say he doesn't want Azzie?
  - b. Why does Beta choose the tarantula?
4. How would someone care for a pet tarantula? Conduct some research on the internet to determine what kind of habitat they require; what they eat; and how to care for them.
5. Why does Annie sneak into Beta's room at night to open Harry's terrarium?

### Making Connections:

Frida Flamingo's Animal Adoption Agency has all kinds of pets like dogs, cats, rabbits, hamsters, mice, and tortoises. Of course, she also has tarantulas!

What kind of animal would you choose to adopt and why?

Research the pet of your choice. You may even want to choose a pet mentioned in *The Pepper Party Picks the Perfect Pet*.

Possible sources for information:

- Nonfiction books
- Encyclopedias
- The Internet

Take notes and gather as much information as possible on the following 6 topics:

- Physical and personality traits
- What to feed this pet
- The best habitat for this pet
- How to care for this pet
- Other fun facts

Once the information is gathered, work to create either an illustrated poster or booklet of the findings.

## **Chapters 7-9**

1. Harry visits every room in the house before he is discovered. Where, by who, and how is he discovered?
2. What is Frida's return policy?
3. Why do both Ricky and Maria get to pick pets next?
  - a. What do each of them choose?

- b. How do the pets that Maria and Ricky choose fit each of their personalities?
4. Even though he returned Harry to the shelter, how does Beta make the best of the new pets and continue with his movie project?
5. Why does Annie want to cheer Elvis up?
  - a. What is her plan?
  - b. How does her plan backfire?
  - c. Who do you think sprayed Lacey with the perfume? What would be their motive?
6. Why does Annie feel responsible for all three pets having to be returned to Frida?
7. What pet does Megs choose?
  - a. Does Oink make a good pet for the Pepper family? How so?
8. How and why does Oink end up back at Frida's?
9. Sal Pepper's last words are "Peppers! Don't! Do! Pets!" Do you think the Peppers will try another pet?
  - a. What do you predict might happen to Annie's dream of adopting Azzie?

### Making Connections:

Taking care of a pet is a huge responsibility.

#### 1. What is *responsibility*?

- Being accountable for your actions and behavior.
- Doing the right thing at the right time so others can trust and depend on you.

#### 2. How do the following demonstrate *responsibility*?

- Complete your homework and chores on time without being reminded.
- Follow through on your commitments, even when you don't feel like it.
- Accept responsibility for your mistakes and learn from them. Don't make excuses or blame others.

- Take care of your things and those of other people. Return items you borrow.
- Find out what needs to be done and do it.
- Make wise choices, such as choosing to eat healthy foods and wearing a helmet.
- Always do your very best. Others are counting on you!

3. How would you demonstrate *responsibility* if...

- You broke the wheel off your brother's new skateboard?
- Your friend asks you to play and you haven't finished your homework?
- You're playing a really fun game at your friend's house and it's time to go home?
- You promised your mom or dad you would clean your room but you just don't feel like it?
- It is time to go to bed and you just remembered that your book report is due tomorrow?
- You agreed to take care of your neighbor's dog while she is away, but now a friend has invited you to a sleep over?
- Your mom is not feeling well and could really use some extra help around the house?
- You forgot to bring your homework home from school, including the book you need to study for tomorrow's test?

4. Choose at least FOUR characters in *The Pepper Party Picks the Perfect Pet* and explain how they demonstrate responsibility. Back up your answers with evidence from the book.

5. Choose at least FOUR characters in *The Pepper Party Picks the Perfect Pet* and explain how they act irresponsible. Back up your answers with evidence from the book.

6. Design a poster encouraging *responsibility* to hang around the school.

## Chapters 10-12

1. Describe Annie's plan in your own words.
2. How does Annie's plan help the following people:
  - a. Beta
  - b. Frida
  - c. Sal
3. The Peppers adopt all the animals, including Azzie, but what is Frida's one condition?

## After You Read...

Here are a few extension activities to further the learning and the fun!

1. Book Trailer

Have students work together to create a book trailer about the Pepper Party to get others to read the series.

2. Frida Flamingo's NEW Fun Facts Flyer

Create a new version of Frida's flyer, highlighting some of the exciting events that happened to her pets in the book. How could these events help Frida get more pets adopted? How would her flyer have changed?

3. Point of View

Pick one of the pets adopted by the Peppers. Re-write their scenes from the point-of-view of the pet. Use the scene from Harry's point-of-view on pages 54-57 as an example.

4. We are Family

The Pepper Party is very much a series about families and siblings.

Who are the members of the Pepper Family? Create a family tree. Write whatever information about each family member that you can on the tree.

Do the members of the Pepper family get along?

Do the family members have a lot in common?

Find five sentences in the book that describe the members of the Pepper family.

Your own family:

Who are the members of your family?

Do you get along with them?

What are some family activities you like doing?

What don't you like doing with your family?

Can you relate to the Pepper family? How so?

5. A Close Look at Illustrations

Go back through the book and closely examine the illustrations. How do the illustrations help tell the story? Which illustration is your favorite? Why?