

*The Truth About Nibbles*  
**Teacher's Guide**

This guide accompanies “Student Activities: The Truth About Nibbles.”

*This unique “Families-Read-Together” book follows the adventures of Karen and her classroom as they take care of Nibbles the hamster. Ningwakwe Learning Press hopes that students and their families will be able to spend time together reading and enjoying The Truth About Nibbles.*

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Questions and activities designed by Nancy Cooper

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## theme

This unique “Families-Read-Together” book follows the adventures of Karen and her classroom as they take care of Nibbles the hamster. This is a book for families to take turns reading aloud which includes passages for both adults and children to enjoy.

The children in the story have a lot to learn about taking care of another living being. Learning about other beings and having respect for them is a theme found throughout the book. Ningwakwe Learning Press hopes that students and their families will be able to spend time together reading and enjoying “The Truth About Nibbles.” Group discussions and further study with the various subjects found in the highlighted pieces will be highlighted at the end in the Go Further section of the guide.

## rubrics

The Rubrics (except the last one) are designed for student self-assessment. After the student has finished the first Rubric in Part 1, check their work and their assessment of their work. This will give you a chance to see if the student understands and is comfortable with the level of the material being presented. This will also present a chance to decide how you would like to have the student proceed with the written sections.

## BEFORE READING

Review the ‘Go Further’ section to familiarize yourself with the activities that are suggested.

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## REVISITING THE STORY AND SELF REFLECTION

These sections are to be completed in full sentence format by the student, marked and corrected for grammar as indicated in the Rubrics. They will be used as an introduction to the five-paragraph essay format.

*Note:* If the student is having a lot of trouble with the grammar and sentence structure but has no trouble with the comprehension, feel free to create separate lessons for the student and not worry so much about the grammar and structure aspect of their writing as they work through the book.

## AFTER READING

### ANSWERS

#### Part 1

#### A Pet for the Classroom - pages 5-17

A. 1) c 2)a

3. Karen feels like she doesn’t fit in at her school. Why do you think she feels this way? Use an example from the text to support your answer.

*She feels different, probably because she is an Aboriginal girl. She also feels like people don’t understand her when she is talking about her cultural beliefs and values.*

4. Pictures of Tecumseh and Sitting Bull are on the History Wall in Karen’s classroom. Who were these men? Why are they important figures on the History wall?

**Tecumseh** – was a Native American leader of the Shawnee and a large tribal confederacy that opposed the United States during Tecumseh’s War and the War of 1812. He grew up in the Ohio country during the American Revolutionary War and the Northwest Indian War where he was constantly exposed to warfare.

During the War of 1812, Tecumseh and his confederacy allied with the British in Canada and helped in the capture of Fort Detroit. The Americans, led by Harrison, launched a counter assault and invaded Canada, killing Tecumseh in the Battle of the Thames. Tecumseh has subsequently become a folk legend. He is remembered as a hero by many Canadians for his defense of the country.

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=A1ARTA0007898>

<http://www.biographi.ca/009004-119.01-e.php?BioId=36806>

**Sitting Bull** - was a Hunkpapa Lakota Sioux holy man who led his people as a war chief during years of resistance to United States government policies. Sitting Bull is notable in American and Native American history for his role in the major victory at the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

<http://www.powersource.com/gallery/people/sittbull.html>

<http://www.manataka.org/page55.html>

## **B. Revisit the Story**

What animal does Karen suggest the class purchase? Explain in more detail what she means when she points to the map on the wall in the classroom.

*Turtle Island is used today by many North American First Nations as a substitute, or synonym, for North America. A map of North America resembles a turtle.*

Ojibway creation story: [http://www.gct3.net/wp-content/uploads/2008/01/creation\\_story.pdf](http://www.gct3.net/wp-content/uploads/2008/01/creation_story.pdf)

## **C. Self-Reflection**

Consensus decision making is used in the class’s decision to purchase a pet. Write a 2-5 a paragraph describing what consensus decision making is and how it works. Describe a situation when you had to use consensus decision making.

*Try to get them to write about a specific task or a life lesson from his or her own life.*

*Consensus: Many First Nations use circles in both sacred and political gatherings. In a circle, everyone speaks in turn. The use of consensus by the Haudenosaunee has been well documented. The Haudenosaunee Six Nations (Iroquois) continue to make their inter-nation decisions by consensus.*

[http://www1.canadiana.org/citm/themes/constitution/constitution2\\_e.html](http://www1.canadiana.org/citm/themes/constitution/constitution2_e.html)

## **First Rubric**

Use the first Rubric as a quick assessment of the student’s comfort level with the material.

**Part 2**  
**Nibbles the First pages 19-29**

A. 1)d

2. In the pet store, the sign says that all the animals were born in Canada. Why is this an important thing to know when buying pets in a store?

*This ensures that none of the animals were smuggled into the country.*

3. If one hamster lives for three years and has 12 litters a year of 15 babies each time, how many hamsters will be born?

$$36 \times 15 = 540$$

4. Please list the English names for these animals: chigaag, shiiken, waawaashkeh, mukwa.

*Skunk, turtle, deer, bear*

**B. Revisit the Story**

Ms. Jenkins purchases an exercise ball for the hamster so it can exercise at its most active, which is during the night time. What is this called when an animal is active during the night?

*This means that the animal is nocturnal.*

**C. Self-Reflection**

What are your feelings about keeping animals as pets? Did you grow up with pets in your home? Do you have pets now? Should children be allowed to have pets at home like Karen wants? Answer these questions in sentence form and provide justification for your answers.

**Part 3**  
**Nibbles Comes Home pages 31-44**

A. 1) c 2) d

3. What can small pets transfer to humans?

*Parasites, fungus, bacteria*

4. What were Lenny and Adam doing before they came home and found Nibbles?

*Shopping for shoes*

**B. Revisit the Story**

List some of the things that Karen was doing when she was 'playing' with Nibbles. What do you think she was doing wrong?

*Pretending it was on a balance beam, playing dress up, putting it in the remote controlled car. This type of playing can place extreme stress on an animal.*

**C. Self-Reflection**

Lenny and Adam don't tell Karen that Nibbles is dead. Why do you think they did this? If you were in the same situation, what would you do? Do you think what Lenny and Adam did was right or wrong? Why or why not?

**Part 4**  
**Adventures of Nibbles II pages 45-58**

A. 1) d 2) c

3. Why was it important for Lenny and Karen to take a walk in the bush the day after Nibbles was taken? What lesson was Lenny hoping to convey to Karen?

*It was important so they could observe animal behaviour in the wild. Lenny was hoping to have Karen understand that animals have their own place in the world, with their own rhythms and roles.*

4. Find the English words for waabozhoo, waabhanoojinh, and waagosh. Find the Anishnabe word for hawk.  
*Rabbit, mouse, fox. gekek*

**B. Revisit the Story**

When the adults hear about Joshi being scared of Nibbles, they all start telling animal stories. Name two animal stories they talk about. Do you have a humorous animal story to tell? In 2-5 paragraphs tell your story. Don't forget the rules of paragraph writing: introduction, subject, content, and conclusion.

**C. Self-Reflection**

Nature has a way of teaching us many things. Lenny takes Karen for a walk in the woods to show her that nature has its own rhythms and rules. What is a lesson you have learned from nature? Write a short poem about what you have learned from nature.

**Part 5**  
**The Truth About Nibbles pages 59-63**

A. 1) b

2. Why did Ms. Jenkins think that Karen gave a very profound speech? Please list two reasons why you think this was or was not a profound speech.

*She thought it was profound because it was very mature for a child and it conveyed important information about the lives of all creatures*

3. What kind of ceremony do you think Lenny will have for the class? Explain what you think she will do and what she might want to accomplish with the ceremony. If you were asked to do this type of ceremony in your child's class, would you agree? What would you plan to do?

*Lenny may bring a smudge to the class, recite a prayer, and give teachings about the creatures we share the world with.*

**Revisit the Story**

The story ends with the decision to have Lenny visit the class to perform a ceremony in remembrance of all the hamsters that were in the class. Re-write an alternate ending to the story. Use your imagination and prepare a new short final chapter.

**C. Self-Reflection**

Do you think the teacher handled the situation the right way? Explain why you do or do not think she did the right thing. What would you have done if you had been the teacher in this classroom? Write a 1-3 paragraph response.

## **GO FURTHER**

### **Group Activities:**

#### **Class Writing Marathon**

Have the class write their own children's book. This can be a collaborative project that includes everyone's writing and artwork. Make colour copies (if possible) for everyone to take home.

#### **Photo Story**

Does the literacy/adult education program have a digital camera? Make a photo story with the class. Decide on a story and have the class as a group go out into the community and find pictures that will coincide with the story. If the class is a large group, divide into smaller groups and have each group tell the same story but from their different perspectives. Publish on the web or print each story out.

#### **Family Learning Activities**

The following two websites are great for doing fun literacy activities with children.  
Make Your Own Wordsearch

<http://www.armoredpenguin.com/wordsearch/>

#### **Make An Acrostic Poem**

[http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/acrostic/Word of the Day](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/acrostic/Word%20of%20the%20Day)

#### **Literacy Back Packs or Tote Bags**

Literacy back packs or tote bags for kids are full of reading activities. One example of a literacy back pack or tote bag could be enclosing the student written children's book along with some word searches and perhaps a small sewn doll or animal that coincides with the children's book. Back packs or tote bags could be purchased at the local thrift store or made by students with fabric. The class could make bags for their children or grandchildren. They could also make enough bags to give to the local daycare or kindergarten class.

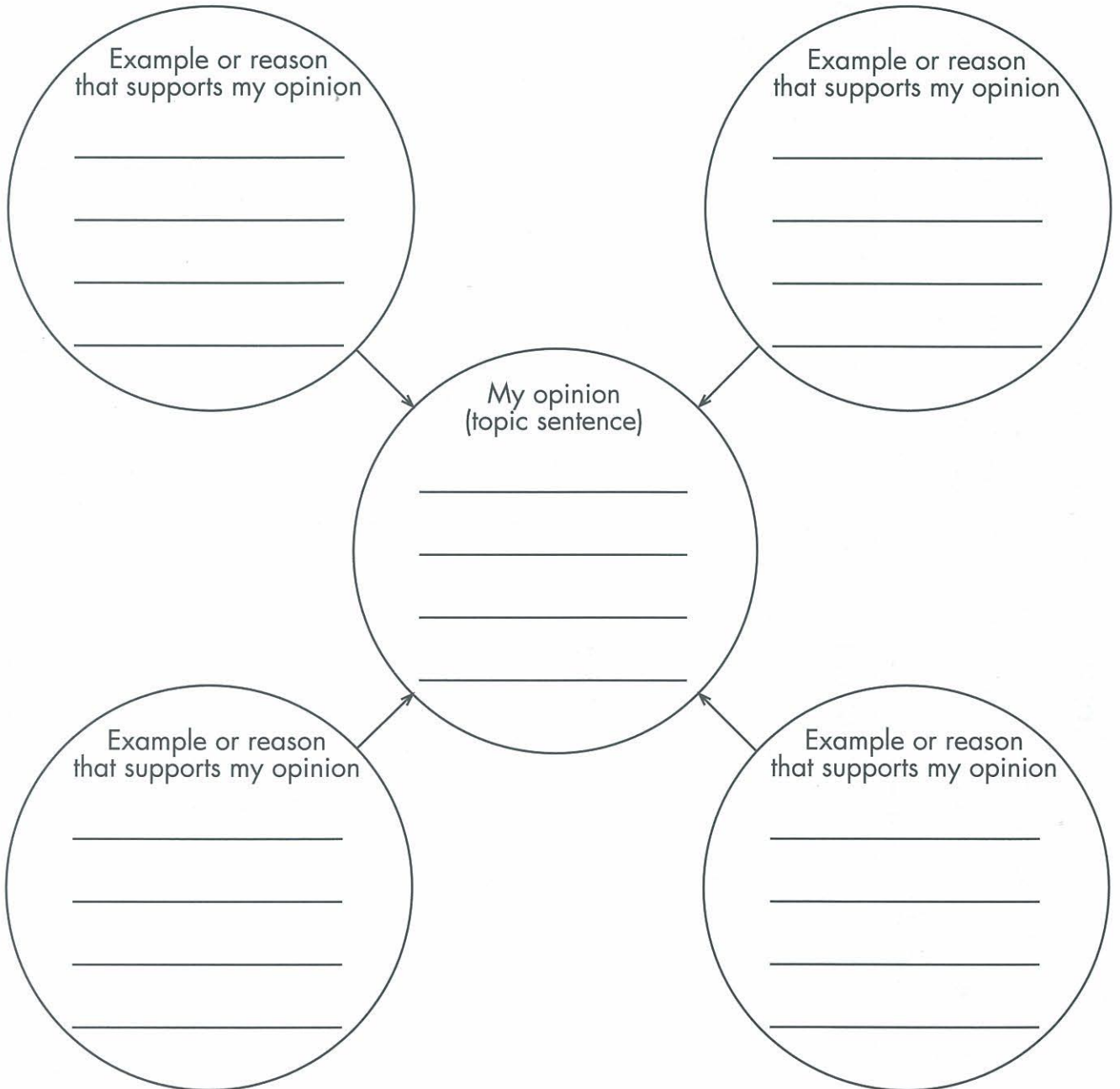
#### **Story Telling Night**

Having Elders involved with a story telling night is a great way to bring community together. Is there a senior's residence in your community? A senior's night at a local community centre? Why not invite some Elders to your classroom along with a few children or grandchildren and listen to stories of the old days and ways.

# Idea Map

Write your topic on the line below. In the center circle, write a topic sentence summarizing your opinion about the topic. In the surrounding circles, list examples or reasons that support your topic sentence. You can add more circles if you'd like.

**My Topic** \_\_\_\_\_



Persuasive Essay : Three/Five paragraph Essay

Teacher Name:

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY	4 - Excellent	3 - Good	2 - Needs Work	1 - Review	Score
Thesis Statement	The thesis statement names the topic of the essay and outlines the main points to be discussed.	The thesis statement names the topic of the essay.	The thesis statement outlines some or all of the main points to be discussed but does not name the topic.	The thesis statement does not name the topic AND does not preview what will be discussed.	
Organization	Arguments and support are provided in a logical order that makes it easy and interesting to follow the student's train of thought.	Arguments and support are provided in a fairly logical order that makes it reasonably easy to follow the student's train of thought.	A few of the support details or arguments are not in an expected or logical order, distracting the reader and making the essay seem a little confusing.	Many of the support details or arguments are not in an expected or logical order, distracting the reader and making the essay seem very confusing.	
Development and details	Achieves coherent development with specific details and examples.	Has focused but sometimes uneven development. Uses some specific detail.	Has some development but lacks specific detail; may be limited to listing, repetitions; or generalizations.	Demonstrates little or no development; usually lacks details or examples or presents irrelevant information.	
Closing paragraph	The conclusion is strong and leaves the reader solidly understanding the student's position. Effective restatement of the position statement begins the closing paragraph.	The conclusion is recognizable. The student's position is restated within the first two sentences of the closing paragraph.	The student's position is restated within the closing paragraph, but not near the beginning.	There is no conclusion - the paper just ends.	
Sentence Structure	All sentences are well-constructed with varied structure.	Most sentences are well-constructed and there is some varied sentence structure in the essay.	Most sentences are well constructed, but there is no variation in structure.	Most sentences are not well-constructed or varied.	
Grammar & Spelling	Student makes no errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Student makes 1-2 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Student makes 3-4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	Student makes more than 4 errors in grammar or spelling that distract the reader from the content.	