

## *HOLLY'S STORY*

Lesson Plan One – for grades 7 and up

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*This lesson plan is designed to be versatile enough for use with a whole class, in small groups, or individual students.*

### Objective & Materials Needed:

Time Needed: 30 minutes to one hour per chapter

Objective: Reading comprehension and understanding key ideas, concepts and fluency

Materials: Book: *Holly's Story*, pencils, paper, coloring materials if desired

### Activating First Impression:

Before reading, show the front and back cover of the book. Ask student(s) what they think the book might be about.

### Concept Questions

After reading each chapter, choose the appropriate questions for the grade level of the student(s). They can answer the questions in discussion form or write answers to the concept questions: Who, What, Did What, How, When, Where, and Why?

### Understanding key ideas

At the end of each chapter, there are questions to be used to open up class discussion on the topics and events covered in each chapter.

## Chapter 1 – Trashed

1. What is the point of view of *Holly's Story*?
2. Who is telling the story?
3. Why was Holly roaming the streets?
4. What made Holly panic and dart into the street?
5. How did Holly get hurt?
6. Where did she go after the accident?
7. Where did Holly want to go?
8. What is a “stray”?
9. What other words were used to describe what happened to Holly?
10. Who called her “part miniature Schnauzer, part fence jumper”?
11. What made Holly feel sad and alone?

Discussion:

Discuss the idea that Holly was abandoned and how student(s) would feel if they were lost and no one looked for them.

## Chapter 2 – Hospital Friends

1. What petrified Holly?
2. Holly found out that she would be leaving the animal hospital soon. How did she try to convince the staff not to trash her?
3. Why does Holly feel close to Buck?
4. What does Missy do to deal with her pain?
5. In Holly's eyes and heart how did she see Missy?
6. How was Crackers funny?
7. Penny did what to save herself?
8. What is a "forever home"?
9. How was Samson brave?
10. What does Holly want that Samson had?

Discussion:

Compare and contrast Buck, Penny and Samson's lives as dogs.

## Chapter 3 – The Big Brown Door

1. Where did the hamster hide?
2. What did Missy want to do to the hamster?
3. Who walked with Holly that morning?
4. What is a kennel?
5. What shocked Holly upon entering the kennel?
6. How did Holly react when she realized she was walking toward the Big Brown Door?
7. The other dogs in the kennels did what when Holly, Buck and Jack turned around and ran out of the kennels?
8. What happens to the dogs and cats behind the Big Brown Door?
9. What reason did Buck give for the cats and dogs being taken behind the Big Brown Door?
10. How did Holly feel after knowing about the Big Brown Door?
11. Where did Holly fear she might go when she had to leave the animal hospital?

### Discussion:

- Talk about the many questions that popped into Holly's thoughts about humans about humans on page 35.
- Discuss how pets are sometimes treated and what "humane" means.

## Chapter 4 – Doom to Zoom

1. Holly's favorite nurse did what to Holly?
2. Why does Holly have to leave?
3. How did Holly feel when she heard the word "go"?
4. What does she think is going to happen to her?
5. What does Buck tell Holly to do?
6. Who is Ms. Mary?
7. Missy did what to try and stop Holly from leaving?
8. Why did Holly feel forlorn?
9. Where will Holly be when she leaves the hospital?
10. What were Holly's worries for Missy and Buck when she had to leave?

Discussion:

Discuss the meaning of the chapter title "Doom to Zoom" and how it applies to Holly's feelings.

## Chapter 5 – My Foster Home

1. Holly has her own place at her foster home. What is it?
2. What do the other dogs call the white-haired lady?
3. What did Holly think was magical?
4. Who showed Holly around the back yard?
5. What kind of look did Little Bear give Holly?
6. What were the four “don’t” rules for the yard that Little Bear told Holly?
7. Why did Holly make a mental note?
8. What were the three things Little Bear told Holly that she would have to do?
9. Who will Holly have to keep away from the garden?
10. Who will give Holly the “Bite” and why?

### Discussion:

- Compare and contrast the hospital to the foster home.
- Explain how Holly describes herself and why she feels that way.

## Chapter 6 – The Bond

1. What did Holly wonder about herself?
2. Why did Holly think no one wanted her?
3. Who was the other woman sitting in a chair when Holly came in the house from outside?
4. Why did Holly feel a rush of envy?
5. Why did the mommy ask Holly if she was all right?
6. What did Holly want someone to tell her?
7. How did Holly know the dogs and the mommy loved and respected Grandma?
8. After everyone went to bed what did the mommy tell Holly they needed to do?
9. How could Holly tell that the mommy really cared about her?
10. What developed between Holly and the mommy?

### Discussion:

- Talk about the things the mommy did to make Holly feel wanted from the time she arrived, and how they led to the bonding of the mommy and Holly.
- Explain what made Holly want the mommy to be her “Mommy” also.

## Chapter 7 - The Bite

1. Who was supposed to tell Holly about her “jobs”?
2. What does Little Bear do each morning to get extra pats?
3. Why can't old Grandma take care of herself?
4. What does Danny do that impresses Holly?
5. Why did Holly have a pang of jealousy when watching Danny and Mommy?
6. What did Little Bear give Holly?
7. How did Holly feel about Little Bear's gift?
8. What did Danny tell Holly he would do the first day she arrived?
9. What did Holly look for?
10. What types of education do Danny and Little Bear have, and what are they called?
11. What does Little Bear do when Mommy scolds him?
12. What kind of look did Smoker's eyes reflect?
13. Where was Smoker rescued from?
14. What does “alpha dog” mean?
15. What did Holly do that made Danny feel he had to tell Holly the “do's” and “don'ts” right away?
16. How did Holly feel about the rules?
17. List five rules that Danny told Holly to follow.
18. Who did Holly talk to about the “don'ts”?
19. What did Danny do when Holly was not following the rules?

### Discussion:

- Discuss Holly and Smoker's conversation about the “don'ts” and why the student(s) think Smoker suggested Holly focus on the “do's.”
- Talk about the “school of life” that Smoker said he went to. If student(s) are unclear as to what this means, or are unfamiliar with the term, explain it to them.
- Discuss how the “school of life” affected Smoker.



## Chapter 8 – “Murder”

1. What does Mommy still do for Holly every night and why?
2. Holly did what every evening when she came in the house after potty break?
3. What is Holly still looking for?
4. What was Holly’s outside job, and what did she have to do for that job?
5. Little Bear did what to the little bird and why?
6. Who decided to eat Mommy’s tomatoes?
7. What happened to Little Bear when he tried to save the tomatoes?
8. Who came to help Little Bear and what did he see?
9. What did Smoker do first and why?
10. Why did Smoker think he and Little Bear were “goners”?
11. Who heard Smoker’s alert, and what did they do?
12. What did Danny see when he got to the side of the house?
13. How did Little Bear, Smoker, and Danny protect themselves in the fight?
14. Who joined the boys in the fight?
15. Why did it appear that the sky had turned black?
16. What did Danny see in Mommy’s eyes when she saw the fight?
17. When did the boys bark “fight harder” and why?
18. What did Mommy do to stop the fight?
19. Why did Holly think Mommy would be mad at her?
20. Why did Holly join the fight?
21. Where did Mommy take everyone after the fight and why?
22. What kind of crows did the vet say the crows were?
23. What did Mommy do to the crows that had been injured?

### Discussion:

- Talk about each dog’s part in the crow fight and how they viewed the fight.
- Discuss why groups of crows are called a “murder.”

## Chapter 9 – We are Siamese, if you Please

1. How did the cats greet Holly, and what was their attitude?
2. After seeing the cats, who did Holly think of, and what did she wish?
3. What kind of sound did the cats make, and describe what they looked like.
4. How did it make Holly feel when she watched the cats?
5. What did the cats do that made Holly feel intimidated?
6. What did the cats say when Holly told them she was part Schnauzer?
7. How did it make Holly feel and what did she do?
8. What did the cats argue about as they walked away from Holly?
9. When the cats came back later, what did they say Holly needed, and who would they talk to about it?
10. What did Holly say when Danny asked her if the cats were treating her all right?

### Discussion:

- Ask the student(s) what breed of cat Beethoven and Nicholas are and discuss their behavior. Discuss how certain breeds of animals are associated with certain attitudes and ways of behaving.
- Why hadn't Holly seen the cats before now?

## Chapter 10 – Designer Dog

1. According to Holly, who really ran the house?
2. How long has Mommy had the cats, and what kind of blood line did they come from?
3. Why did Mommy stop “showing” the cats?
4. Who did Holly think was beautiful, and how did she see herself?
5. When people came to see Holly, what would they say, and how did that make Holly feel?
6. What did the girl dogs do when they came to visit, and how did it make Holly feel?
7. Why did Danny give the girl dog the “Bite” and how did she react?
8. What happened to Danny after he gave the girl dog the “Bite”?
9. What did the cats do to show their disapproval of the girl dogs’ behavior?
10. When Holly apologized to Danny about the girl dogs, what did Danny tell Holly?
11. How did that make Holly feel?
12. Who was Lou, and why did she come to the house?
13. What was unusual about that day’s grooming process, and why did it make Holly sad?
14. What was the secret that everyone was keeping from Holly?
15. What does Holly mean when she says she is a “designer dog”?
16. How did Holly see herself when she looked in the mirror after her grooming?
17. What did Holly feel was “best of all” after the grooming?
18. Who did Holly think about that night as she basked in her newly found beauty?

### Discussion:

- Talk about how Holly described each of the boys, and point out the different qualities of each of them.
- Discuss how Holly felt about herself before and after the grooming. Ask student(s) if they think Holly was already “beautiful” before she was groomed, and begin to discuss personal image and self-esteem.

## Chapter 11 – Angel Dogs

1. Who laid heavy on Holly's heart, and why?
2. Who did Holly talk to about how she felt?
3. What did Holly need to know?
4. Explain Smoker's philosophy regarding humans and life.
5. Did Holly fully understand what Smoker told her?
6. What was Holly's ritual that she did every evening?
7. What comparison did Holly use to describe Old Grandma's eyes?
8. What was the significance of the ritual and how did it make Holly feel?
9. Why wasn't Grandma in her chair that evening, and where was everyone?
10. When Holly went into the bedroom and saw everyone, what did she feel, and what did she stop herself from doing?
11. Where was Danny, and what was he doing?
12. What was Mommy doing for Grandma?
13. What was everyone doing to try and help Grandma breathe?
14. When the boys moved in closer to Holly what did that do for her, and what could she then see?
15. After barking an alert, what did Danny do?
16. Who came to the house to help?
17. What was Little Bear's job and who helped him?
18. Who did the angels hover around and why?
19. What did one of the angels and Danny do?
20. When the paramedics put Grandma in the ambulance, what happened to Danny?
21. How did it make the other animals feel seeing what happened to Danny?
22. Why did they agree never to speak of it to anyone?
23. Who was left in charge after Mommy and Danny left?
24. Where did Little Bear, Smoker, and Holly sleep, and how did it make them feel?
25. Who came the next morning and what did she do?
26. Why did the angels come and who did they come to help?
27. What is the "Rainbow Bridge"?
28. By the end of the chapter, the dogs and cats are feeling grateful – what are they grateful for?

### Discussion:

- Discuss Smoker's philosophy regarding humans and life.
- Talk about why finding out about the angels helped Holly find peace about Missy and Buck.
- Have student(s) discuss a time they might have felt sad, helpless, or missed friends and family, and what helped them (if anything) get through it.

## Chapter 12 – Waiting

1. What did everyone realize when Grandma had to go to the hospital?
2. Danny alerted the hospital staff two more times while Grandma was in the hospital. Why?
3. When Holly got up the courage, what did she ask Danny about?
4. Why did Holly feel she let Danny down?
5. What did Danny tell Holly about the ropes?
6. What did old Buck tell Holly to be careful of?
7. Why did Holly no longer think being beautiful was the most important thing?
8. What was Holly's new dilemma?
9. What was Holly doing that made Danny worry about her?
10. What kind of talk did Holly and Danny have?
11. Why did Holly make a comment about Smoker?
12. How did Holly feel after she said something about Smoker?
13. Did Holly understand what Danny told her?
14. What did Holly ask Danny to speak to Mommy about?
15. Why would Holly be a wonderful companion for someone?
16. How did Holly start to feel about a forever home?

### Discussion:

- Have student(s) make predictions about what they think will happen to Holly – will she get a “forever home” or will she stay at the foster home with Mommy and the boys?
- Discuss the feelings Holly expressed to Danny about wanting to stay at the foster home. Ask student(s) if they have ever felt that way. Also discuss Danny's corresponding feelings.
- Ask student(s) if they feel that Holly should stay at her foster home or leave for her forever home. Discuss pros and cons.

## Chapter 13 – Chosen

1. Thinking that Holly would be leaving soon, what did she and Little Bear do?
2. When Holly first arrived at her foster home she thought Little Bear was lazy. What does she think now?
3. What kind of things did Little Bear do, and who would help him?
4. What did Beethoven tell the boys he saw in Mommy's bathroom?
5. When the boys got to the bathroom what did they really find, and what happened to them?
6. Who did Mommy blame for the powder mess and why?
7. After the boys' punishment was over, what did the cats ask the boys?
8. What did Smoker do to make the cats squirm?
9. Who came to visit Mommy?
10. How did Little Bear and Holly help Mommy's grandson?
11. Who came to see Holly?
12. How did Holly feel about the visitor?

### Discussion:

- Talk about how Holly and Bear felt about the possibility of Holly leaving, and how did it cause them to behave?
- Ask student(s) how they would feel if they were in Holly's shoes.
- Ask student(s) if they think Mrs. Susan is right for Holly, and what was good about the visit.

## Chapter 14 – Goodbyes

1. Why did the joy of being chosen turn into sorrow for everyone?
2. Why was Little Bear so distraught?
3. How did Holly feel when she found Little Bear, and what did she tell him?
4. What did Little Bear mean when he said, “let’s make the most of it”?
5. What did Smoker tell Holly never to forget?
6. What was the question Holly asked Smoker about change?
7. How did Nicholas and Beethoven surprise Holly?
8. How did Holly feel about the cats?
9. What did Little Bear do that Holly thought was funny, and did she want him to change?
10. What did Danny tell Holly that she brought to the house?
11. Who watched Grandma so that Holly could go with Danny?
12. Where did Danny take Holly?
13. When Danny told Holly to look up, what did she see?
14. Why did they all lay on their backs?
15. What did Danny say with pride?
16. What do the color and arrangement of the ropes represent?
17. While looking at the ropes, what did the boys and Holly talk about?
18. Who did the boys and Holly go see after they came back into the house and why?
19. Who is in the “pack”?

### Discussion:

- Holly shared her feelings about leaving with Smoke. What did Smoker tell her about changes?
- Discuss what Smoker told Holly about changes in life, and ask student(s) if they think Smoker gave Holly good advice. Have them explain their answer(s).
- Ask student(s) if they think dogs and cats are loyal and loving companions. Discuss the idea that dogs and cats have the same emotions as humans. Have them share examples of emotions they’ve seen in animals such as their family dog wagging its tail happily when they get home from an outing.

## Chapter 15 – My Forever Home

1. What were the papers on the small table were Holly and Mommy sat?
2. Why did Mommy show Holly the pictures?
3. What did Holly learn about herself, and did it make her happy?
4. Why were the ropes the “very best gift” and what will they always remind Holly of?
5. What did Holly learn from the boys?
6. What did Holly wish she was and why?
7. Why was everything Holly did on the last day important to her?
8. How did Holly feel about her daily routines, and why did she walk through the house?
9. How did Holly arrive at her foster home, and how was she leaving it?
10. Why did Holly visit with the cats again, and how did she feel about them?
11. What did Holly feel when she watched Danny, Little Bear and Smoker? Why did she watch them?
12. What did Holly do when she was outside in the yard?
13. How did Holly feel about the old bone?
14. What did Holly do with the bone, and why?
15. Why did Mommy call everyone in side one hour before Mrs. Susan came, and why?
16. How did everyone feel when Mrs. Susan came?
17. What did Holly forget to do, and how did she feel?
18. On impulse, what did Holly do?
19. How did Grandma respond to Holly, and how did it make Grandma and Holly feel?
20. As Holly went through the door to leave what did she think and do?
21. Why does Holly think that Buck would have been proud of her?
22. When Holly got to the car and looked back at the boys and cats in the windows, how did she feel?
23. When Holly looked at Mommy, what kind of face did she have?
24. What did Mommy do and say?
25. What did Holly remember?
26. What did Mrs. Susan tell Holly to make her feel better?
27. What did Holly think she would become with Mrs. Susan’s help?
28. Was Holly excited to start her future with Mrs. Susan?

### Discussion:

- Discuss why Holly leaving her foster home is bittersweet for everyone involved.
- Ask the student(s) if they feel that Holly going to her forever home with Mrs. Susan was a good thing for her, and for Mrs. Susan.
- Ask the student(s) if being in a foster home was good for Holly, and why they feel the way they do.



## End of book discussion and possible essay assignments:

- What is the difference between a foster home and a forever home?
- Explain Holly's feelings about her journey from the streets to her foster home and then to her new forever home with Mrs. Susan?
- Evaluate Mommy's job as a foster mother and talk about the pros and cons of being a foster mother.
- Do you think that this kind of job would be something you would like to do? Explain why or why not.
- What did you like about *Holly's Story*?
- What did you learn from *Holly's Story*?