

# EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



## GIDGET THE SURFING DOG

Catching Waves with a Small but Mighty Pug

Written by Elizabeth Rusch



little bigfoot

an imprint of sasquatch books  
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# GET MORE OUT OF THIS BOOK

## GROUP DISCUSSION

- Before reading, elicit prior knowledge about what children may already know about surfing. Ask questions like, “Have you ever surfed before?” “Do you think it could be hard to learn?” “Do you have to surf in just warm water?” “What kinds of equipment do you think people would need to surf?” “Do you think an animal could learn how to surf?” “What kinds of behavior or athletic movements do animals do just like people?” (Jumping, obstacle courses, running, climbing, swimming, walking, etc.)

## GROUP ACTIVITIES

- Discuss the similes on page 7. Ask, “Why do you think the author paired those particular animals with those actions?” Have children think about animals they would compare themselves to. Create a quick chart of animal movement similes. While viewing the chart, have students respond to the question, “How do you move?” with a simile.
- After page 8, discuss children’s opinions around the question, “How could learning to sled help or hinder a dog’s transition to a surfboard?”
- After page 9, discuss the science of how personal floatation devices (PFDs) work to keep people (and dogs) afloat. Encourage the children to learn and use the vocabulary words *buoyancy* and *gravity* in an appropriate context. The “why” behind these concepts may be abstract for some children. To help build fluency of understanding, in an appropriate exploration place, provide a shallow tub of water in which they can explore how objects of different materials and shapes either float or sink. (Use blocks of wood, corks, plastic and metal items, as well as items with holes or air inside them.) Provide sentence stems to use during explanation such as, “The force of *gravity* is stronger than the force of *buoyancy* on the (object) because it sank in the water.” Or, “The force of *buoyancy* is stronger than the force of *gravity* on the (object) because it floated.” And, “The shape of the (object) created more *buoyant force* than *gravity* because it displaced more water.”
- After pages 13 and 18-19, discuss, “How does understanding wave types and their characteristics help promote safety and enjoyment of this sport?”
- After page 17, discuss, “Why did the author include ‘Can Your Dog Hang Ten?’ in this section?”
- After pages 20-21, discuss how instinct to balance helps dogs like Gidget do this sport. Discuss what “*microadjustments*” means. What would “*macroadjustments*” mean?
- After page 25, ask, “What do you think is wrong?”
- After page 31, discuss, “Why was Gidget’s comeback so special?”
- After page 34, discuss, “How does weather play a part in this sport?”
- After page 42, ask, “How does interaction with an animal help people who have experienced trauma?”
- Discovering a deep passion or purpose can give a lot of meaning to life. Think about the last two sentences on page 44. What does charity work do for Gidget’s owner? Would you agree or disagree that spending time in the environment might help us become more aware of our effects on it? Why or why not?
- After page 46, ask, “How does this page in the story help the reader make good choices while in the ocean at a beach?”

## INDEPENDENT ACTIVITIES

- After reading the story, including the informational text throughout, have children create their own informational poster about water safety for people and dogs.
- Use any art media to design a surfboard for Gidget.
- Locate Gidget the Pug on social media. Write her a letter asking her questions, and tell her about what you have learned about her sport. Give her words of encouragement for her next race!
- Create a public awareness poster in response to the text and picture on page 43 about ocean trash. Think of some possible solutions to this huge problem. Locate the online link on page 43 and use the information in your poster.