

By, 

Cynthia Rylant

“Stray”

» Cynthia Rylant

- > Born in 1954
 - + Yes, she is still alive
- > Lived with her grandparents
 - + Spent her childhood in West Virginia

Meet the Author >

» Every year in the United States, millions of dogs are abandoned or born in the wild, without homes. This is a fictional account of one such puppy.

Build Background >

- » The theme is the message about life that the author wants you to take from the story. Authors rarely state the theme directly. But you can find clues in the text to help you start figuring out what the theme might be.

Theme



- » A cause makes something happen; what happens is called an effect. The effect can in turn lead to the cause of something else that happens.

Cause and Effect



- » Read this short story to find out what happens in a family when a stray dog appears one day.
- » As you read look for clues about the main character to help you understand the character better (THINK: Characterization)

Read with a
Purpose



» Based on “Stray,” how do you think Cynthia Rylant feels about children and pets?

Think about the
writer



Academic Vocabulary is the language you use to write and talk about literature. Use these words to discuss the stories you read in this unit. The words are underlined throughout the unit.

- » attitude (AT uh tood) n.: opinions and feelings you usually have about someone or something. A character's attitude may change and be a clue to theme.
- » communicate (kuh MYOO nuh kayt) v.: express your thoughts or feelings clearly so that other people understand them. Writers communicate lessons about life.
- » contrast (KAHN trast) v.: note the differences between two people, situations, ideas, and so on that are being compared. You can contrast the different themes you find in stories.
- » illustrate (IHL uh strayt) v.: explain or make something clear by giving examples. Use details from a story to illustrate your idea of its theme

Talking and Writing About Theme



- » Explain to a partner your idea of the theme of “Stray.” Remember that readers may state a theme in different ways. Try to use each Academic Vocabulary word at least once in your discussion.

Communicate

Contrast

ILLUSTRATE

Talk about...

PairShare

ATTITUDE



Answer the following questions about “Stray.”

For definitions of the underlined Academic Vocabulary words, look in your ISN.

1. How does the author illustrate the cruelty of abandoning pets?
2. How does the dog communicate that it wants to belong to the family? How does Doris communicate her pain over losing the dog?
3. How does Mr. Lacey’s attitude toward the stray change after he visits the pound?
4. Contrast Mr. Lacey’s attitude before he visits the pound with his attitude after he visits the pound.

Academic Vocabulary



You can learn about the personalities of story characters by determining their traits or qualities. Pay attention to the following details to learn a character's traits:

the character's thoughts, feelings, and actions

the speech, thoughts, and actions of other characters (**dialogue**)

the writer's direct statements about the character

descriptions of the character's appearance

Characterization



- » In your group find examples of characterization
 - > Be sure to focus your attention on the main character--Doris

Characterization



What does the character look like?

-
-
-
-
-
-

How does the character act?

-
-
-
-
-
-

How do other characters in the story react to this character?

-
-
-
-
-
-

Characterization

