Hang on to your hats! It’s time to gear up and go wild for reading!

On March 2, tip your hat to Dr. Seuss and celebrate his newly discovered book, *What Pet Should I Get?* with creative acts of reading and learning for kids of all ages. In this guide you’ll find ideas for classroom-based activities and school-wide events that take advantage of kids’ affinity for animals and Dr. Seuss’s talent for creating fantastic creatures.

_hatful of Fun with *What Pet Should I Get?*

Make some creative connections with science and social studies.

_hat Off to Reading and Exploring!

Pair favorite Dr. Seuss titles featuring beloved characters with particularly interesting selections from *The Cat in the Hat’s Learning Library* to inspire imaginative art and writing projects.

_hat Off to Pets!

Generate excitement for reading with pawsome pet-themed activities.
Hatful of Fun with What Pet Should I Get?

WHAT GUEST READER SHOULD WE GET?

Look to people in your community whose jobs involve working with animals: veterinarians or veterinary technicians, nature center staff members, zookeepers, marine biologists, animal groomers, zoologists, wildlife rehabilitators, fish and wildlife specialists, animal trainers, farmers, or animal rescue or animal welfare workers. Invite one or more of these specialists to read What Pet Should I Get? and other animal-filled titles to your class on Dr. Seuss’s Birthday. Guest readers should also explain the work they do, share information about the type of training and education that prepared them for their jobs, and discuss responsible animal care. Be sure to prepare your students for the visit and have them work together to come up with questions for the guest readers in advance.

WHAT PET SHOULD WE READ TO?

Reading to nonjudgmental, specially trained therapy dogs has been shown to help children improve literacy skills and boost self-esteem. Get your students in on the read-aloud action on March 2 and invite a guest listener—a therapy animal—for your students to read to! There are thousands of registered R.E.A.D. (Reading Education Assistance Dogs) teams throughout the United States. Visit the Intermountain Therapy Animals website (therapyanimals.org/Read_Affiliate_Programs.html) to find trained animals and handlers. Depending on your location, trained animals may also include cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, parrots, or miniature horses.

As you plan this activity, keep in mind its small, personal scale. The real benefits happen when a student gets one-on-one time with the therapy animal. That means for a class of twenty-four, you’d need to invite three R.E.A.D. teams to spend at least two hours with your students. You’ll also need to have other activities planned for students before and after their fifteen-minute reading session—perhaps crafting a special reading hat to wear, finding just the right book to read aloud, or creating a thank-you card for their canine listener and the listener’s handler.

If it’s not possible to invite animals to your school or library, consider toy animals as potential reading buddies. Taking turns reading aloud to a plush Cat in the Hat or Horton the Elephant would make Dr. Seuss’s birthday extra special. As an alternative, host a stuffed animal drive or have students bring a favorite toy from home so that everyone has an animal buddy to read to. And since it’s a birthday celebration, have readers make hats for themselves and their stuffed animal reading buddies!
PETS ON PARADE

Picking a pet can be difficult. With so many different kinds of pets, how should kids choose? To help, put pets on parade and get kids talking about their pets and other pets they know. Start by reading What Pet Should I Get? aloud to students. Then provide students with cardstock, scissors, a hole punch, string, markers, glue, feathers, and fleecey scraps to make masks representing their own pet or a pet they would like to have. Have students wear their masks as they parade in front of classmates and talk about their preferred pet. Ask them to each share why this animal makes a great pet, what kind of care it requires, and other interesting details about what this animal looks like, what it eats, and how it behaves. After learning about pets of all kinds, take your parade out to the playground or auditorium to celebrate with a flurry of furry, fluffy, and feathered fun!

TELLING TAILS

Kids are very curious about animals and the lives they lead. In What Pet Should I Get?, Kay and her brother wonder about how different pets will fit into their family. But what were the potential pets thinking about? Talk with students about their own observations of animals and how they act in different situations. Then ask your students to choose which animal they think is in the brother’s basket and have them continue the story from the new pet’s point of view. They should include real facts about the animal they’ve chosen and draw on experiences with their own pets or pets they know. Students can illustrate their work and read their stories aloud.

PASS THE HAT TO SUPPORT ANIMALS IN NEED

With so many animals in need of homes, the publisher’s note in What Pet Should I Get? advocates for adopting pets from animal shelters rather than buying them in pet stores. Shelters, which care for and place homeless animals, need support to do their important work. Ask kids to imagine how they might help raise awareness about animals in need. Have them investigate the needs in your community and come up with a plan to help. Tie their efforts into your celebration with these literacy and literary connections:

- Make and illustrate a book about caring for pets and the responsibilities of pet ownership.
- Create original art inspired by animal characters from favorite books as a fund-raiser.
- Raise money and read great books about animals with a Read for the Animals Read-a-thon.

GET WILD ABOUT ANIMALS AND READING

Pets aren’t the only animals that need our care. Based on your location, your school grounds may provide habitat for local and migratory wildlife, including songbirds, shorebirds, small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and insects. Take some time to discover, observe, and investigate wildlife around your school, then brainstorm with students about habitat needs and possible improvements to make. Keep in mind that your school yard is also an environment for kids—plant a reading tree or create a storybook-themed garden and make it a good habitat for readers, too!
Hats Off to Reading and Exploring!

Sharing favorite Dr. Seuss titles in combination with selections from The Cat in the Hat’s Learning Library will fascinate kids who love stories and facts as well as fuel imaginations around a major topic of interest—pets! The following activities pair titles with a similar theme and encourage kids to be curious, explore, and create.

PRODUCE A PERFECT PET

What Pet Should I Get?
Oh, the Pets You Can Get!: All About Our Animal Friends

In *What Pet Should I Get?* by Dr. Seuss, a Yent might have been the perfect pet for Kay and her brother, if only they’d had a tent. Or if the siblings’ house wasn’t so small, a thing on a string might have been the best pet of all.

All pets have certain requirements that pet owners must meet to keep their animal friends safe, healthy, and happy. Help students understand this by having them create a fantastic new pet of their own.

Students should:

1. Listen to *Oh, the Pets You Can Get!* read aloud.
2. Discuss the book as a class and come up with a list of specific things pet owners need to do to care for their pets.
3. Listen to *What Pet Should I Get?* read aloud. Discuss the story and the unusual pets Dr. Seuss created.
4. Offer their ideas about which pet was selected and consider all the things Kay and her brother will need to do to care for that pet (for example, if they chose a Yent, they will need to get a tent, in addition to food, water, health care, etc.).
5. Imagine a new kind of pet, including its size, shape, attributes, personality, behavior, and appetites, and create a how-to guide for caring for this special pet.

The only limitation on imaginary pet creations is that a real pet owner must be able to provide and care for this new kind of pet. But as long as students can explain how to care for an invisible flying lizard or a sticky-toed peeper, let their imaginations soar! Have them create a detailed drawing of their pet as the cover for their how-to guide, which should include all the details on the special care and specific needs of their pet. Then have them share their work and create a display of their great new pets to get!
WORKING LIKE A DOG

How the Grinch Stole Christmas!
If I Ran the Dog Show: All About Dogs

In How the Grinch Stole Christmas! the Grinch has a pet dog named Max. But it’s not clear whether the Grinch keeps Max around for companionship or to help him execute his awful plans.

If I Ran the Dog Show: All About Dogs illustrates how dogs can be great helpers and good companions. Get kids thinking about the many different roles and responsibilities a dog can have by creating dog puppets and invent interesting jobs for dogs.

Students should:

- Listen to How the Grinch Stole Christmas! read aloud and talk about Max, his role in the story, and his relationship with the Grinch.
- Listen to If I Ran the Dog Show: All About Dogs read aloud and identify and talk about the helpful things dogs can do and some of the jobs dogs have.
- Make a sock or paper bag puppet of a dog and create a character for it, thinking about its talents, what makes it unique, and what it enjoys doing.
- Think of and discuss what kinds of real or imaginary jobs real or imaginary dogs might like to do.
- Write a “Help Wanted” ad for a dog that includes some activities or actions that a dog in that job would do.
- Perform with the dog puppet, presenting their dog doing his or her job.

Students could give the title of the dog’s job before performing job duties. Some may want to have the audience guess what the dog’s job is. For more drama, students could also read their “Help Wanted” ads aloud and have classmates and their dog puppets participate in an improvisational job interview.

Extend the puppet fun to other classrooms. Have students and their dog puppets take on a new job: reading their favorite Dr. Seuss book aloud to younger students.
CATALYST FOR CREATIVITY

The Cat in the Hat
What Cat Is That?: All About Cats

Dr. Seuss’s Cat in the Hat is rambunctious, exuberant, and fun-crazed—quite a bit different from the domestic cats that most kids are familiar with. What Cat Is That?: All About Cats by Tish Rabe can help students get better acquainted with domestic and wild cats and get them thinking about how these fascinating felines act.

With students inspired by the energetic Cat in the Hat and his wild and domestic counterparts, have them create and illustrate their own stories about meeting an unusual cat.

Students should:

1. Listen to The Cat in the Hat and What Cat Is That? read aloud.
2. Choose a particular cat to write about. It could be the Cat in the Hat, a domestic or wild cat they’ve read about, their own cat, a cat they know, a cat they’ve watched in online videos, or a cat from their imagination.
3. Imagine that the Cat in the Hat has come to visit their school and, taking turns, work together to dictate, write and draw what interesting things happen next.
4. Illustrate their story and present it to the class.
5. Play a game of Copy Cat. In pairs, face one another with one child making the movements of a cat and the other child mirroring those movements. Add sounds and noises as they become more comfortable with the game.

Fete your authors and artists with milk and fish-shaped crackers. It’s the purr-fect opportunity for students to read their stories aloud.
HATS OFF TO PETS!

**Make pet party hats!** Dr. Seuss was wild about books and crazy about animals. He also loved hats. Get kids using their heads to celebrate all three! Have students make a visor or hat to celebrate a favorite Dr. Seuss animal character that they would like to have as a pet. Provide inspiration by making Dr. Seuss’s books available for students to examine. Make the headgear animal- and planet-friendly by reusing an old hat or fashioning creations from cardboard, paper, or plastics from the recycling bin.

**Create culinary delights for unusual pets** in *One Fish Two Fish Red Fish Blue Fish*. The Yink likes to drink pink ink, but what about the Zeep, the Gack, the Ying, Clark, the blue-haired pet, or the poor wet pet like to eat drink? Get kids’ creative juices flowing with a recipe challenge! Have students pick a pet from the book and then concoct a fantastic new food that is both delicious to the pet and good for it too. Ingredients in their recipes could be real foods unusually combined or fantastic foods forged in their imaginations. Ask students to list their ingredients, write instructions for making the recipe, and make an illustration of their delicious dish. Have students share their recipes, then toast all their creative cooking ideas with a Pink Ink Yink Drink (seussville.com/parents/recipes/pink-ink-yink-drink).

**Draw pet portraits.** Before he became Dr. Seuss, Ted Geisel was a boy who liked to draw. Read aloud *The Boy on Fairfield Street: How Ted Geisel Grew Up to Become Dr. Seuss* by Kathleen Krull, so kids can learn more about Ted’s interest in drawing animals and how he developed his exaggerated style. Then have students examine Dr. Seuss’s books, giving them time to reflect and discuss his artistry and style, especially his use of line and color. Ask students to think about how Dr. Seuss created his illustrations and what they would do to imitate his style. Have students bring a photograph of their pet or find a picture of a pet they would like to have, and then use it to inspire the creation of a pet portrait in the style of Dr. Seuss. To add whimsy to the gallery of pet portraits, ask students to create another portrait—a pet from their own imagination. Younger artists can make use of the “Draw That Pet” reproducible on the back page of this guide. Celebrate all student artists and their works with a grand gallery opening!

**Host a Book Walk** for Read Across America Day! Like a game of cakewalk—where numbered squares are laid out in a circle—a book walk path is made of images of pets and animals from beloved Dr. Seuss books. Participants walk around the path as they listen to Dr. Seuss books read aloud until the reader stops at a point mentioning a character on the path. The student standing on that character wins a book as a prize! Play several rounds, ending with the Great Birthday Bird from *Happy Birthday to You!* by Dr. Seuss, and a final prize of cake to be shared by the whole class.
Draw That Pet!

Use the space below to draw the pet that you would adopt. It can be real or imagined!
Then write the name that you would give your pet on the line below.

My pet’s name is __________________________________________.