

ANCHOR

by Schyrlet Cameron and Kathy Brown
Illustrations by Armond Hayes

Book at a glance: Follow Dustin and his new puppy, Anchor, as they settle into life at Mutton Creek Marina and Campground. Through daily “pest patrol,” lake adventures, and a Fourth of July boat parade, Anchor learns what it means to belong. When Anchor wonders why he doesn’t have a birthday, Dustin and friends surprise him with an adoption celebration—showing that a forever home is something to celebrate.

Suggested Grade Levels: PreK–2 (read-aloud) Grades 2–3

(independent reading with support)

Themes & Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

- Friendship and community
- Responsibility and caring for animals
- Belonging, adoption, and “forever home”
- Traditions and celebrations (Fourth of July)
- Safety around water and animals



Learning Objectives

- Retell key events in sequence (beginning, middle, end)
- Identify characters, setting, and major problem/solution
- Describe how Anchor changes (feelings and understanding of belonging)
- Connect the story to real-life pet care and safety
- Use descriptive language to write or speak about a setting

Vocabulary (with Kid-Friendly Meanings)

- Marina: a place where boats are kept
- Campground: an area where people stay outdoors in tents/RVs
- Patrol: to watch an area and check that everything is okay
- Critters: small animals
- Parade: a line of people/vehicles moving together to celebrate
- Tradition: something people do again and again each year
- Adoption: bringing an animal into a family as a permanent home
- Certificate: a paper that proves something is official

Before Reading

1. Picture walk: Ask students what they notice about the setting (lake, boats, dogs).
2. Build background: “What jobs do animals sometimes do?”
“What is a marina?”
3. Prediction prompt: “What do you think Anchor’s big wish will be?”





During Reading

During Reading (Stop & Think Questions)

- Why does Dustin choose the runt of the litter?
- What is Anchor’s ‘job’ at the campground? Is it a fun job or a serious job—or both?
- What clues show the marina is busy and full of people?
- Why is Anchor confused on the Fourth of July?
- What problem does Anchor have after the celebration?
- How do Dustin and friends solve Anchor’s problem?

After Reading

Quick Check

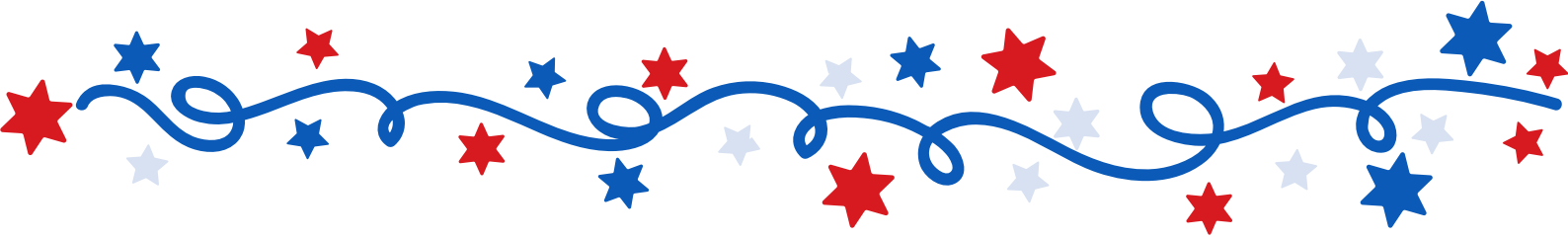
1. Who are the main characters?
2. Where does the story take place?
3. What does Anchor do during the day?
4. What makes Anchor feel sad?
5. How do Anchor’s friends help him feel special?

Discussion Prompts

- What does “forever home” mean?
- How can a community make someone feel like they belong?
- What responsibilities come with having a pet?

STEM / Real-World Connections

- Water Safety Mini-Lesson: Discuss why life jackets matter and create a class “Lake Safety” poster with 5 rules.
- Animal Needs Sort: Sort pictures/words into: Food, Water, Shelter, Exercise, Love/Care.



Art & Creative Projects

- Design an “Adoption Certificate” for a stuffed animal (or class mascot).
- Make red/white/blue boat parade crafts (paper boats with decorations).
- Create a “Captain Anchor” badge or hat.

Character Education & Classroom Community

- “Welcome to Our Class” activity: Students brainstorm ways to help new students feel included.
- Compliment circle: Share one kind thing you’d do for a friend who feels left out.

Family & Community Extensions

- Invite a local shelter volunteer or veterinarian to speak (if available).
- Optional service project: Collect towels/blankets for a local animal shelter.

Assessment Ideas

- Retell rubric (characters, setting, problem, solution, sequence)
- Writing sample (journal entry or postcard)
- Participation in discussion using text evidence (pictures/phrases from the story)
- Sequence chart (Beginning/Middle/End)

Other Books By The Same Authors

