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Activity Guide

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A Day in the Life of Murphy

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ABOUT THE STORY

Murphy the terrier's day begins with a trip into the house. He eats, sniffs around, chases mice, and gets into trouble. Then he goes to the vet and is very glad to come home again. In the evening, before dinner, he barks wildly, getting into trouble again. At last it is nighttime, and Murphy settles down in the barn to sleep after another fine day.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR/ILLUSTRATOR

Alice Provinsen has illustrated dozens of children's books, both with her late husband Martin and on her own. The Provinsens' illustrations have won the Caldecott Medal and Honor awards. Alice Provinsen lives on Maple Hill Farm in New York State.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask volunteers to describe a day in the life of a dog. Then tell them that the book they will read is about a little terrier and his day.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- "Why does Murphy have to hurry in the morning?"
- "What does Tim Cat do?"
- "Where are the mice?"
- "Why doesn't Murphy like the car?"
- "How does Murphy feel about the vet?" (*Make Inferences*)
- "Why does Murphy think his name is Murphy-Stop-That?" (*Draw Conclusions*)

Vocabulary

Write these sets of words on the chalkboard. Have children write the first word and the word that means the same in each set.

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|---------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|-------------|
| 1. <i>attention</i> | tiredness | alertness | worry | playfulness |
| 2. <i>lulling</i> | hanging | sleeping | crying | dancing |
| 3. <i>glorious</i> | strange | sad | happy | wonderful |
| 4. <i>patient</i> | friendly | unhurried | nervous | wasteful |
| 5. <i>delicious</i> | salty | shiny | tasty | elegant |

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Science: Be a Veterinarian

Have children look in encyclopedias or other reference books to learn about veterinarians. Ask them to find out how vets train and what they do in their jobs. Children can report on what they learn to the class.

Language Arts: A Pet's Day

Have children write a description of a day in the life of their own pet. If they do not have a pet, they can describe a day in the life of a pet they would like to have. Children can illustrate their descriptions with a drawing of their pet. When they are finished, collect their descriptions to make a class pet book.

Science: Dog Breeds

Among the dogs waiting or pictured in the vet's office with Murphy are a beagle, a Dalmatian, a St. Bernard, a Labrador retriever, a collie, a cocker spaniel, and a boxer. Have children choose one of these breeds to research. Encourage them to take notes on the dog breed and prepare a brief report to give to the class. Children can show illustrations of the dog breed they have chosen along with their reports.

Math: Make a Timeline

Murphy doesn't tell exactly at what time his adventures occur, but children can make a timeline showing about when each event takes place. Have them draw a timeline and label it from 8 A.M. to 8 P.M. with a notch for each hour. At each hour of the day, have them write one thing that Murphy does. Encourage them to refer back to the book for information.

INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to be sure the sites are suitable.

Terrier Types

Tell children that Murphy is a terrier. Point out that there are many different terrier breeds. Have children research terriers on the Internet, using *terrier breeds* as keywords. Children can pick a breed of terrier to learn about. Encourage them to find out and take notes about the breed's size and characteristics. They can then tell the class about the breed they chose. If possible, have them print a picture of the dog to accompany the report.