

TEACHER GUIDE

Jump the Moon by Kathy Simmers

GRADE LEVEL

3-5

OVERVIEW

Jump the Moon is an inspiring true story about the relationship between a young girl and a pony named Me Too. Through their shared experiences, the girl learns about perseverance, empathy, and the power of dreams. This guide will help students explore these themes, develop critical thinking skills, and engage in creative activities that encourage them to reflect on their own dreams, goals, and relationships.

Objective

By the end of the unit, students will be able to:

- Analyze the themes of empathy, perseverance, and dreams in the story.
- Examine the character development of the girl and Me Too.
- Make connections between the text and their own experiences.
- Engage in critical thinking through comprehension, discussion, and creative activities.
- Expand their vocabulary and use new words in context.

Pre-Reading Activities

1. DISCUSSION ON DREAMING BIG

- Begin by asking students: "What are some things you dream of doing or achieving?" Discuss how dreams can motivate people to work hard and be persistent.
- Connect the idea of "jumping the moon" to the broader concept of setting big goals in life. Ask, "What is a big goal or dream that would be like jumping the moon for you?"

2. INTRODUCE THE STORY'S CONFLICT

- Briefly summarize the plot of the book, highlighting the central conflict: the girl's efforts to win the trust of the pony, Me Too, and their eventual separation.
- Ask the students to predict what will happen in the story based on this information. What do they think will help the pony and Me Too succeed? What obstacles might they face?





During Reading Activities

1. CHARACTER ANALYSIS

As you read, encourage students to track the character development of both the pony and Me Too. Ask the following questions at key moments in the story:

- How does the girl's attitude toward Me Too change over time?
- What causes Me Too to trust Denise? How do you think their relationship grows throughout the story?
- When they are separated, how does each character change? What does this teach us about perseverance and longing?

2. THEME EXPLORATION

Pause at key points in the story to discuss the emerging themes. Focus on the following:

- **Empathy:** How does the girl show empathy for Me Too? How does this make a difference in their relationship?
- **Perseverance:** What obstacles do the girl and Me Too face, and how do they keep working toward their goals?
- **Dreams and Goals:** How does the idea of "jumping the moon" represent the characters' big dreams? How does this relate to the real-world goals people set for themselves?

3. LITERARY DEVICES

- Discuss the use of repetition in the story, particularly the phrase "Me too," which is echoed throughout the text.
- Ask students to analyze the significance of this repetition: How does it reflect the bond between the girl and Me Too? What does it symbolize in terms of their connection and shared experiences?

Post-Reading Activities

1. REFLECTING ON THE STORY'S THEMES

- **Class Discussion:** Ask the students: "What lesson did you learn from the girl's relationship with Me Too? How can we apply the lessons of empathy and perseverance in our own lives?"
- **Write a Response:** Have students write a short reflection on what they think it means to "jump the moon" in their own lives. What are some of their own big dreams or goals?

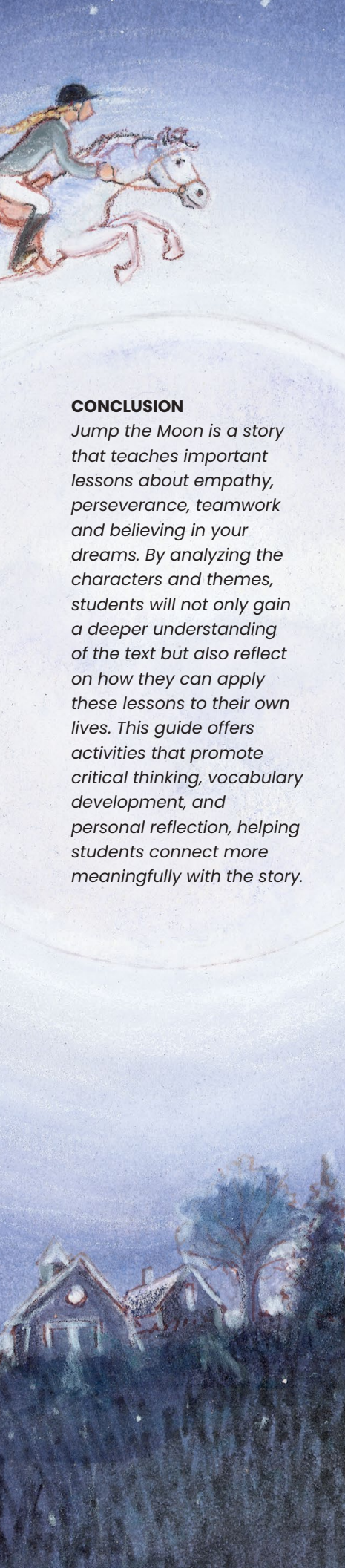
2. COMPARING CHARACTERS

Create a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the girl and Me Too. Students can focus on their personalities, how they change over the course of the story, and what motivates them. Discuss:

- How does each character face challenges?
- How do their actions reflect their growth as individuals?

3. CREATIVE EXTENSION

- **Story Continuation:** Ask students to imagine what might happen after the story ends. Will the girl and Me Too have more adventures? Will they continue to "jump the moon" together? Students can write their own continuation of the story.
- **Design Your Dream Pony:** Have students design a pony (or other animal) they would like to have as a companion. What would they name it? What would be its strengths and challenges? How would they care for it and develop a relationship, just like the girl did with Me Too?



CONCLUSION

Jump the Moon is a story that teaches important lessons about empathy, perseverance, teamwork and believing in your dreams. By analyzing the characters and themes, students will not only gain a deeper understanding of the text but also reflect on how they can apply these lessons to their own lives. This guide offers activities that promote critical thinking, vocabulary development, and personal reflection, helping students connect more meaningfully with the story.

Vocabulary Development

KEY WORDS TO EXPLORE

- *Shabby* (adj.) – In poor condition because of age or wear.
- *Nickered* (v.) – The soft, gentle sound a horse or pony makes.
- *Perseverance* (n.) – Steadfastness in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success.
- *Trainer* (n.) – A person who teaches animals or people specific skills or behaviors.
- *Empathy* (n.) – The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

ACTIVITIES

- Have students use these words in sentences of their own. Then, have them share their sentences with the class.
- Play a vocabulary game like “Word Charades,” where students act out the meaning of the words for the class to guess.

Critical Thinking Activities

1. CHARACTER MOTIVATION

- Ask students: “Why do you think Me Too was so afraid of people in the beginning? What changed for her as she spent more time with the girl?”
- Discuss how characters’ past experiences influence their behavior, and how the girl’s actions help Me Too overcome her fears.

2. MAKING CONNECTIONS

- Ask students to compare the relationship between the girl and Me Too to a relationship they have had in their own lives. What similarities do they see in how they work through challenges or build trust with others?

3. PERSONAL REFLECTION

- **“My Big Dream” Journal Entry:** Have students write about a big dream they have for their future. What steps will they take to achieve it? How will they persevere through any challenges that come their way?

Assessment

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Assess students’ understanding of the story by asking them to answer questions like:

- How did the girl show that she understood Me Too’s fears?
- What role does the theme of perseverance play in the story?
- How does the ending of the story reflect the power of dreams coming true?

CREATIVE PROJECT

Evaluate students’ creative projects, such as the continuation of the story or the design of a dream pony, based on their ability to connect themes from the story with their own imagination.

VOCABULARY USE

Monitor students’ ability to use new vocabulary in both written and spoken contexts.