# DOG MAN: BRAWL OF THE WILD

# **Summary**

Dog Man is a hybrid hero: half cop and half police dog. But now Dog Man has been locked up in the dog pound for a crime he didn't commit! His pals are working hard to clear his name, but right now our hero is in trouble. He's no ordinary dog – he's half human! How will he fit in? And will the real baddies ever be caught?

This is classic laugh-out-loud graphic fiction by Dav Pilkey, author of the bestselling series *Captain Underpants, Super Diaper Baby* and *Ricky Ricotta*. It combines full-colour cartoon pictures with rich vocabulary, limitless imagination and plenty of talking points, making it an excellent choice for exploring English skills in your classroom.

## Did You Know?

Dav Pilkey is dyslexic and has ADHD. At elementary school he was often sent out of class to sit at a hallway desk. He created his best-known character, Captain Underpants, at that desk.

He studied art at Kent State University in the USA. As a student he entered his first book, *World War Won*, in a national writing contest and won. The prize was to have his book published – the start of his official writing career.

Dav has won several awards, including a Caldecott Honor for The *Paperboy* and the Disney Adventure Kids Choice Award for *Captain Underpants*.

His books are huge favourites with children and also highly praised by teachers and parents for engaging children and turning reluctant readers into keen ones.

His work is distinctive for its blend of simplicity and complexity, mixing cartoon artwork and easy-read captions with advanced vocabulary and moral themes.

The Captain *Underpants* series has sold over 70 million copies worldwide.

# Ideas for using this book in your classroom:

## Create your own hybrid superhero!

Dog Man is a hybrid – half policeman and half dog. He eats things he shouldn't, digs holes everywhere and infuriates the Chief, but he is also very loyal and great at sniffing out criminals.

Individually or in small groups, ask your pupils to imagine their ultimate hybrid hero or heroine, exploring both parts of their identity. What special skills would they have? What obstacles or character flaws might they face?

If there's time, you can ask the children to plot and sketch a short adventure story featuring their hero.

## Compose a song:

On page 32, Lil' Petey writes a superhero song for the Supa Buddies. Ask the children to work in groups to think of a rhyming song for their own dream superhero squad. If they want, they can invent characters and refer to them in the lyrics. Afterwards, they can perform their songs.

# Dictionary challenge!

Dav Pilkey loves to use super-long words, such as 'volition', 'assiduous', 'flagitious' and 'circumstantial'.

As a class or in small groups, look through the book to find difficult words. (There are lots in the preface and around page 55.) Does anyone know the definitions? If not, ask the children to guess what the words might mean, based on the context. At the end, look in the dictionary together to see who was closest.

You could also ask the children to think of other words that mean the same thing, or to compete to think of the longest word they know.

## Recap:

The book starts with a quick recap of what has happened in previous adventures. How would the children write their own recap of this book? Ask them to work individually or in teams to condense it into 10-20 steps, either in short sentences or in sketched cartoon frames with captions.

# *Sequencing the action:*

Spend 10 minutes as a class brainstorming a short and simple new *Dog Man* story (or part of one). Then ask the children to work in groups to draw it as a series of quick sketches, with captions if they wish. When they have finished, look at the pictures together and discuss:

- What did they choose to show in each image, and why?
- How do the pictures follow on sequentially?
- Does the storytelling make sense? Could it be improved?
- What captions/text did they use, if any?

## Mime challenge!

On page 102, the robot 80-HD tries to show Chief what has just happened in a mime. Unfortunately the preceding events were quite complex, and Chief can't

understand him. Ask for volunteers to mime out a simple part of the story. It's up to the others to guess what part it is.

# Spot the bully:

Bullying is a major theme of this story. Can the children identify key moments where bullying takes place? (Look especially at pages 70-71, 87, 100 and 130-135).

Ask them to discuss the bullying behaviour, exploring what is unkind about it and how it might feel to be on the receiving end.

How do Dog Man's friends try to cheer him up on pages 137-141 and 204-207? What works and what doesn't? What might the children try? What cheers them up when they feel low, and is it the same for everyone?

## Working as a team:

Teamwork is very important to the book. As a class or in groups, discuss who is on Dog Man's side and how his friends work together to help him. What strengths does each character bring to the team? Who can do what?

Ask the children to invent a superhero squad with a range of complementary skills. Who is in the team? What skills do they each have? Do any of the team members face special challenges? How do they work together?

If the children are working in groups, you could also ask them to think together about each person's individual strengths and special contribution to their group. The children can then take turns to 'introduce' their group's members to the rest of the class – eg 'This is Danny and he is amazing at thinking of plots'. This provides practice in giving and receiving compliments.