

The SEL Interactive Read Aloud Lesson Plan Collection

Tulare County Office of Education

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Dog Days of School by Kelly DiPucchio

SEL Competencies:

Self-Awareness: Understanding and reflecting on one's own emotions, strengths, and challenges.

Self-Management: Managing emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations.

Social Awareness: Understanding and empathizing with others' perspectives.

Relationship Skills: Building healthy relationships through effective communication and collaboration.

Responsible Decision-Making: Making constructive and ethical choices about personal behavior and interactions.

Background

Dog Days of School by Kelly DiPucchio is a fun and relatable picture book that centers on a dog named Rufus who is struggling to stay focused and engaged during the school year. It's the start of the school year, and Rufus, who has a lot of energy and enthusiasm, finds himself distracted by everything from recess to the lunchroom. He dreams of a day when school could be just as fun as chasing sticks and running in the park. Through humor and adventure, the book explores themes of motivation, perseverance, and balancing fun with responsibilities, making it an excellent resource for discussing social-emotional learning (SEL) with young students.

Before You Read

What do you think the "dog days of school" means?

(Helps introduce the theme of the book and engage students with the title.)

What do you think school is like for a dog? What kinds of things would a dog find exciting or difficult?

(Encourages students to imagine themselves as the character and sets the stage for empathy.)

What do you think makes the school day feel long or hard sometimes?

(This question connects to students' own experiences with school and helps them identify challenges.)

What do you do when you feel like you're not having fun at school? How do you stay focused?

(This encourages self-awareness and self-management as students reflect on how they handle school.)

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	<p>What are some things that make you feel excited about school or learning? (Prompts students to think about their motivations and what helps them stay engaged.)</p>
<p>While You Read</p> <p>Guiding Questions</p>	<p>How do you think Rufus feels at the beginning of the book? Why? (SEL Competency: Self-Awareness – Recognizing Rufus’s feelings of distraction and frustration.)</p> <p>What does Rufus daydream about during school? Do you ever daydream about things like that? (SEL Competency: Self-Awareness – Reflecting on personal thoughts and feelings during school.)</p> <p>What makes school hard for Rufus, and how does he react to it? (SEL Competency: Self-Management – Understanding how emotions influence behavior and actions.)</p> <p>Why do you think Rufus struggles to focus on schoolwork? What could help him stay on track? (SEL Competency: Self-Management – Identifying strategies for staying focused and managing distractions.)</p> <p>Rufus seems to get distracted by everything. How do you stay focused when there are so many fun things to think about during school? (SEL Competency: Self-Management – Encouraging students to think about strategies for focus and self-discipline.)</p> <p>How do Rufus’s friends or classmates react to his behavior? How would you feel if someone was distracted like Rufus during class? (SEL Competency: Social Awareness – Understanding the perspectives of others in a social situation.)</p> <p>Do you think Rufus realizes how his behavior affects others? What do you think he could do differently? (SEL Competency: Responsible Decision-Making – Analyzing the consequences of behavior on others and making better choices.)</p> <p>What do you think Rufus learns by the end of the story? How does he handle</p>

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	<p>his school day differently? (SEL Competency: Self-Management – Reflecting on personal growth and changes in behavior.)</p> <p>How does Rufus’s attitude toward school change by the end of the book? How does he manage his excitement and focus? (SEL Competency: Self-Management – Emphasizing the importance of balance and managing emotions.)</p> <p>What do you think we can learn from Rufus about staying engaged and managing distractions? (SEL Competency: Responsible Decision-Making – Encouraging students to reflect on strategies for managing their own behavior and responsibilities.)</p>
After Reading	<p>Activity: "Create Your Own Focus Plan"</p> <p>Objective: To encourage students to identify strategies that help them stay focused during the school day and balance fun with responsibilities, just like Rufus.</p> <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Paper• Markers or crayons• A printable "Focus Plan" template (optional) with sections for writing or drawing ideas for staying on task. <p>Instructions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Discuss: Have a brief class discussion about the things that can distract us in school (like Rufus in the book) and the ways we can stay focused on our work or activities.2. Create: Ask students to create their own "Focus Plan" by drawing or writing about the strategies they use to stay on task when they feel distracted. For example, they might include things like taking a deep breath, making a list, or setting small goals to stay focused.3. Share: Allow students to share their focus plans with a partner or in small groups. Encourage them to discuss what strategies work best

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	<p>for them and how they can use these strategies in their own school days.</p> <p>4. Reflection: After sharing, ask students to reflect on how their focus plans could help them stay focused and enjoy school more, just like Rufus learns to balance fun with school responsibilities.</p> <p>Extension (Optional): Have students create a "Focus Toolbox" in class, where they can add tips or ideas throughout the year to help them stay focused when they feel distracted.</p>
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