The Christmas Day Kitten

Book by James Herriot Literature based unit study by Wende

Social Studies

Geography: England

The stetting of this story is England. England, a country located on the continent of Europe, is also known as the British Isles, Great Britain, and the United Kingdom. It includes about 5,000 small islands and two large ones; Great Britain and Ireland. The United Kingdom is a union of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland. The population is approximately 58.8 million. The capital is London. Warm ocean currents keep the climate moderate with winds bringing the heaviest rainfall to the western coasts.

Activity- look at a map of England in an atlas. See if you can locate the Yorkshire region.

Have child record setting of story in the book report flap.

Culture: Christmas in England

Christmas is an important, happy holiday in most of the world. It is the day that celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ, about 2000 years ago. Christmas is a short form of Christ's Mass. It means a worship service in honor of Christ.

Many of the Christmas customs are based on the birth of Christ. People give each other gifts because the Wise Men brought three gifts to the Christ child. Songs called carols are sung to tell about Christ's birth. Scenes of Jesus birth are put up with the Wiseman, and animals around the tiny baby in a manger. It wasn't until about 200 years after Christ's time that Christians thought about celebrating His birthday. No one knows the exact day. December 25th was chose to help turn people away from heathen holidays celebrated at the same time of the year.

Christmas is a special time for children-the day they receive present from a magical person. In the US and Canada, the person is called Santa Claus, and rides in a sleigh pulled by eight flying reindeer. However, in England, the gift giver is called Father Christmas. His coat and beard are longer than the American version and his deer

do not fly, they just pull the sleigh.

In England, the day after Christmas is called Boxing Day. It comes from the Old English custom of opening the church poor boxes and giving it to the poor. This day is a national holiday in England, Australia, and New Zealand. On this day, many enjoy outdoor events, such as a soccer game. It is also called St. Stephen's Day. It is also customary to have a special play called a Christmas pantomime put on that day.

Read the poem "Christmas Carol" by English author Kenneth Grahame.

Villagers all, this frosty tide, Let your doors swing open wide, Though wind may follow, and snow beside, Yet draw us in by your fire to bide; Joy shall be yours in the morning!

Here we stand in the cold and the sleet, Blowing fingers and stamping feet, Come from far away you to greet — You by the fire and we in the street — Bidding you joy in the morning!

For ere one half of the night was gone, Sudden a star has led us on, Raining bliss and benison — Bliss tomorrow and more anon, Joy for every morning!

Goodman Joseph toiled through the snow — Saw the star o'er a stable low;
Mary she might not further go — Welcome thatch, and litter below!
Joy was hers in the morning!

And then they heard the angels tell, "Who were the first to cry Nowell? Animals all, as it befell,

In the stable where they did dwell!

Joy shall be theirs in the morning!"

Christmas Symbols

Throughout the story we read about and view symbols of Christmas. Over Mrs. Pickering hangs holly with berries, bells, tinsel and red ribbons. We see pretty colored lights in shop windows. Evergreens are strewn with popcorn and balls, and pretty wreaths hang on the doors. Even the cover illustration is a picture of Buster festively framed with holly and ivy. Does your child know why some of these items are recognized worldwide as symbols of Christmas?

Bells – Bells are symbolic of a joyful noise rung out for the Lord. Bells have been used since Biblical times, to help find the livestock wearing them, and for ornamentation. In Exodus we read that only a high priest bearing a robe with bells around the hem was to be allowed to enter the holy place before the Lord. In Zechariah 14:20, the bells used for ornaments on horses' harnesses were to be inscribed "Holiness unto the Lord". Sing "Jingle Bells" or "Carol of the Bells" with your child. Have child recite "Christmas Bells" by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Christmas Ornaments – The red balls hung on Christmas trees are thought to symbolize apples, or God's bounty and blessings.

Evergreens — While the original adornment of evergreens was a heathen practice, Christians around the world like to think of the evergreen as a symbol of God's eternal love for us, shown through the sacrifice of His Son. It may be fun to make strings of popcorn to strew around trees outdoors to give the birds a special Christmas treat.

Christmas Lights – Jesus is the Light of the world (Matthew 5:14), and Christmas lights are symbolic of His Light that dispels all darkness.

Wreaths – Wreaths are an unending circle of green, another symbol of God's never ending love for us.

Holly – The pointy, green holly leaves are thought to represent the crown of thorns placed on Christ at His crucifixion, and the red berries represent his bloodshed.

Stray animals (and field trip to animal shelter)

Everyone must use caution around all stray animals. The stray pet running through your neighborhood may just have escaped out of the yard or perhaps was abandoned several weeks ago. Whether a pet has been lost for one day or three weeks makes no difference. Stray pets suffer. They are scared and confused by their strange surroundings. They are hungry and constantly looking for food. They run the risk of being hit by a car, taunted or hurt by cruel people, or may come into contact with vicious or rabid animals. They may not be vaccinated against rabies either. And if they have the disease, they could bite another neighborhood animal or unsuspecting child and pass it along.

Remember the description and location of the stray animal you see and call your local animal control immediately. You'll be ending the pet's suffering, perhaps reuniting him/her with the owner, and insuring your community's safety too. *Activity*- Take a trip to your local animal shelter and find out how they care for strays and for how long. What would one need to do to acquire one for a pet?

For the older student, the book, *Too Few Happy Endings* by Margaret Poynter, may be informative. Use your judgment on if it is appropriate for your child or not.

Responsibility for Pets –

Mrs. Pickering is very good to her pets. Pets are a big responsibility. They need water, food, shelter from the elements, and affection. They need to be protected from predators and diseases. Most need to be brushed and bathed, and cleaned up after. Does your child have any pets? Does he act responsibly for the care of them? Complete pet care book.

Language Arts

<u>Author Study</u>- James Herriot James Alfred Wight OBE (James Herriot) 3rd October 1916 - 23rd February 1995

James Alfred Wight (James Herriot) was born on 3rd October 1916 in the Roker area of Sunderland. His parents James and Hannah were married on 17 July 1915 in Sunderland. The couple moved to Glasgow soon after the wedding but Hannah Wight returned to Sunderland to have her baby. When he was about three weeks old he was taken to Glasgow where he lived for some twenty years. This and his Glaswegian accent gave many the impression he was a Scot.

Alf Wight qualified as a veterinary surgeon in Glasgow in December 1939. Contrary to popular belief his position at Thirsk with Donald Sinclair was not his first employment after qualifying. His first position was in Sunderland in January 1940 and it was not until July 1940 that he moved to Thirsk.

Alf Wight was a country vet and as James Herriot a bestselling author. Two films and the popular television series 'All Creatures Great and Small' were based on his books. The stories were based on his experiences as a country vet. His first book -'If only they could talk'- was published in 1970. In all he wrote eight books about his life as a vet. In 1979 his illustrated "James Herriot's Yorkshire" was published with photographs by Derry Brabbs. The book with photographs of the Yorkshire Dales, Moors and Coast and commentary by Alf went on to be another best seller.

Alf Wight was respected locally and did not let his fame as an author change his lifestyle. Despite extremely high taxation in the mid and late 1970s he refused to leave Britain preferring to remain in Thirsk. He died on 23rd February 1995 at his home in Thirlby near Thirsk.

Among his many interests were literature, sport and music. He was an avid supporter of Sunderland football club and he was involved in cricket, athletics and tennis. He married Joan Danbury on 5th November 1941 in St. Mary Magdalene Church Thirsk. They had two children, Jimmy and Rosie. Jimmy followed in his father's footsteps and became a veterinary surgeon whilst Rosie became a doctor.

The original building was at 23 Kirkgate Thirsk but moved in 1997 to purpose built premises on the Thirsk Trading Estate. The original building along with an adjacent one has now been turned into the famous 'The World of James Herriot' center.

Have your child record the name of the author in the book report flap.

Read a book about veterinarians. If desired, have your child interview a veterinarian using attached trifold lapbook component.

Action Verbs and Descriptive Adverbs

This story is filled with wonderfully imaginative action verbs and descriptive adverbs! Verbs are words that you can DO! Adverbs are words that tell HOW or WHERE it was done!

Some of the verbs and adverbs found in this story include: moving quietly, creep in, slip away, sitting very upright, sniffed, flopping, pops through, gaze quietly, leaned away, nibbling daintily, flitting away, winked, huddled close, staggered, streaking away, boxing, bounded, etc.

Activity- Use the prepared cards; cut them apart, and take turns acting out a verb and adverb.

Main Character

The main character of a story is the person a story is the most about. Sometimes, but not always, the main character of the story is also the person telling the story. Can your child identify the main character of *The Christmas Day Kitten*? Record answer on book report flap.

Creative Writing

Activity- Write a paragraph about the best Christmas present you ever received. Decorate your margins with Christmas items, stickers, or rubber stamps, or cut around it with fancy craft scissors and glue it onto red or green cardstock or construction paper. If desired, your child could use mini book provided to draw a picture of the best present he has received to place in lap/notebook.

Art

Illustrator Study: Ruth Brown

Biography- Ruth Brown was born in Devon in 1941. At the end of the war the family moved to Germany but returned to England in 1953 and they settled in Bournemouth.

Ruth always had a natural talent for drawing and at 16 she attended Art College, first in Bournemouth then Birmingham at the age of 18. She then went to the Royal College of Art in London in 1961.

She gained a National Diploma in Design (first class honors) in 1961, and became an Associate of the Royal College of Art in 1964. She married a fellow student, Ken Brown that year. During her working life Ruth has always been a freelance illustrator.

Initially she worked mainly for BBC television, specializing in programs for children including Playschool and Jackanory, but also illustrated a few of James Herriot's books.

Have child record name of illustrator in book report flap.

Color Palette

Look at the page with the three dogs and Debbie in front of the fireplace.

Activity- List the colors that you see. Reds, oranges, yellows, golds, and browns-- all warm colors. Discuss how that illustration makes you feel. Contrast it with the illustration two pages later. Note how lonely Debbie looks out in that big field by herself. Get out some paints and mix warm colors to get more warm colors. Paint a scene with a fire in a fireplace. If your student wants, add a Bassett Hound or two (or three!) and a cat or even your own pet.

Print story color fan if desired, and have child color blades of fans to match story colors. Warm colors include red, red-orange, orange, yellow-orange, and yellow. Cool colors include green, blue-green, blue, blue-violet, and violet.

Arts and Crafts

Have your child observe the pretty collar worn by Buster. If you have any pets, maybe your child would like to make a special Christmas present for him/her. Using yarn, embroidery floss, and/or beads, have your child braid or crochet a pretty collar for a pet. Be sure to take a picture of your pet wearing it to place in your lap/notebook.

Math

Geometric shapes

The illustrations are full of geometric shapes.

Activity- Make lists of the shapes found in the illustrations; squares (windows, tiles, flooring, etc.), triangles (neckline, town clock, shawl, etc.), rectangles (houses, door panels, window sills, etc.), and circles (tires, rocks, clock face, etc.), arches (windows, chairs, etc.)

Activity- Using geo-blocks, make some patterns of your own. You can cut shapes out of colored cardstock or construction paper or use commercial wood or plastic ones.

Publication Date

Have your child look on the title page to find out when this story was first published. Record the publication date on book report flap. If James Herriot was born in 1916, how old would he have been in 1976?

Science

Animal Classification: Mammals

What is a mammal? Mammals are warm-blooded animals; this means their bodies can maintain the same temperature all the time. This is in contrast with reptiles and amphibians, etc. They also have a backbone (vertebrae), breathe air using lungs, and have hair, fur, or wool over skin. The hair can be long or short, straight or curly, soft or hard. There may be a lot of it or just a few thick, stiff hairs. The mother's body is created with special organs in which to give nourishment to the young with a substance called milk. The young are born alive as opposed to hatching from eggs like insects, fish, birds, reptiles, amphibians, etc. do.) Mammals mostly live on land, but a few are found in the ocean, like whales and dolphins. There are more than 5,000 kinds of mammals. They are most often chosen as pets or helpers by humans. Two common pet mammals are dogs and cats.

Bassett Hounds

Bassett Hounds are one kind of dog. They have short legs, long bodies, long ears, and sad looking faces.

Complete dog fact accordion.

For younger children, read the book, *Dogs*, by Elsa Z. Posell.

Cats

Cats were created to be the most efficient hunter. They use cunning and stealth to stalk their victims silently before attacking. Cats are most active at night. Their extremely good hearing and vision are specially designed to hunt in the darkness. There are two kinds of cats: small and big.

The big cats lie down to eat, rest with their paws in front of them and can roar. Big cats include the lion, tiger, jaguar, leopards, and cheetah.

The small cats crouch to eat, rest with their paws tucked under them, and can purr. Small cats include our many kinds of domesticated cats—our house cats. They have lithe, muscular bodies that enable them to move with speed, strength and flexibility. They are agile climbers. Razor sharp, the claws are retractable and are used for attacking prey, defense and for climbing. They have powerful hind limbs for pouncing and use their tail to help balance themselves. The tongue is rough and created for cleaning bones. Cats are very social animals and enjoy a good romp together. They have a very unusual ability for which they are famous: they are able to land safely on their feet even when they fall. This allows them to climb high to escape danger or for hunting prey. Cats allowed to roam outdoors will hunt birds, rabbits, voles, mice, moles, and chipmunks or ground squirrels. Complete cat fact accordion.

Check out the book, *Taking Care of Your Cat*, by Joyce Pope.

Smelling Spices

If you've never studied how the nose smells, this may be a great opportunity. Check your library for an easy reader non-fiction book on smelling. Here is one I found, *Smell* by Patricia J Murphy by Children's Press, 2003.

Discuss-How does Christmas smell? What smells come to mind when you think about Christmas? Candles, evergreen trees, turkey or ham, cookies baking?

Activity-If it is Christmas-time, take some time to smell the spices of Christmas; cinnamon, sage and onion, pine, vanilla, peppermint, spiced tea, nutmeg, etc. After smelling each item, blindfold the child and place each item one at a time under his nose and have him tell you what the item is.

If it is not Christmas time, just gather the spices, peppermint flavoring, etc. and to the same.

Copywork Poem: "Smells" by Christopher Marley

Bible

Read the Christmas story found in Luke 2.

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Flag of ENGLAND

England

Cut "Flag of ______" book out as one piece. Fold in half. Cut out flag. Color. Paste inside book. Older students may want to write a few flag facts in the book as well.

How	How	How	How	How
Cats	Cats	Cats	Cats	Cats
Say	Say	Say	Say	Say
"I'm	"I'm	"I'm	"I'm	"I'm
Hungry"	Angry"	Friendly"	Scared"	Happy"
1 1 1 1 1	1 1 1 1	1 1 1 1		



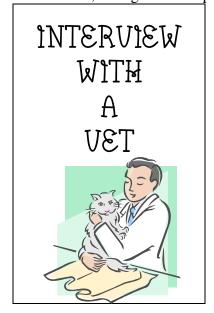
How Do Cats Communicate?

Cut component on dotted lines. Fold on solid lines. Under flaps, write the ways that cats communicate.

"I'm happy" - purrs
"I'm scared" - hisses, screams
"I'm friendly" - rubs against a person
"I'm angry" - hisses, screams, arches its back
"I'm hungry" - meows

Person Interviewed:
Date of Interview:
How long have you been a veterinarian?
What made you decide to be a vet?
How many hours a week do you work?
Did you need any special training?
What do you like best about your job?
What do you like least about your job?

Cut out tri-fold and cover graphic on solid lines. Fold left side (this will be your cover) over on dotted line, and then unfold. Fold right side in half to the fold. Glue graphic to cover. Have child use form to interview a veterinarian, then glue into lap/notebook.



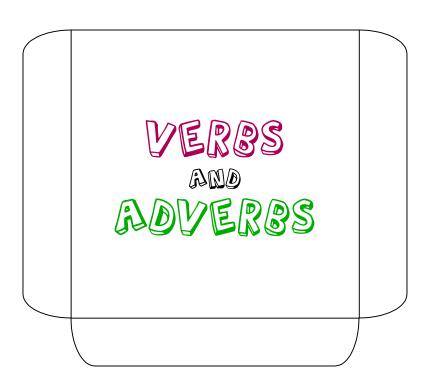
Print out all word cards on cardstock and cut apart. Rose are verbs, green are adverbs.

Tillit out all word cards on c	cardstock and cut apart. Rose a	are veros, green are adveros.
grew	moving	quietly
darted	creeps	in
streaking	slips	away
dancing	sitting	upright
boxing	gaze	rapidly
rolled	nibbling	daintily
lifted	talked	softly
bounded	flitting	over
seized	come	quickly
dropped	decorated	beautifully
waited	lying	still
threw	huddled	close
purred	staggered	loudly

Have child create pairs of action verbs and descriptive adverbs using colored cards.

Mix and match to create unique combinations.

Store cards in lap/notebook using this pocket if desired.

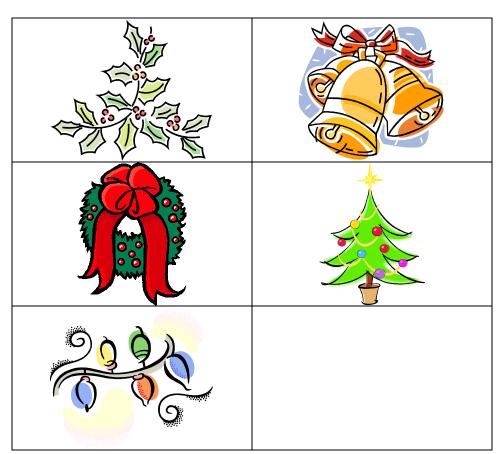




tjolly	
Symbolic For:	

Symbolic For:			
	Of water a		
	Christmas Tree		
Symbolic For:			
		Lights	
		13 Mrs	

	Bells
Symbolic For:	



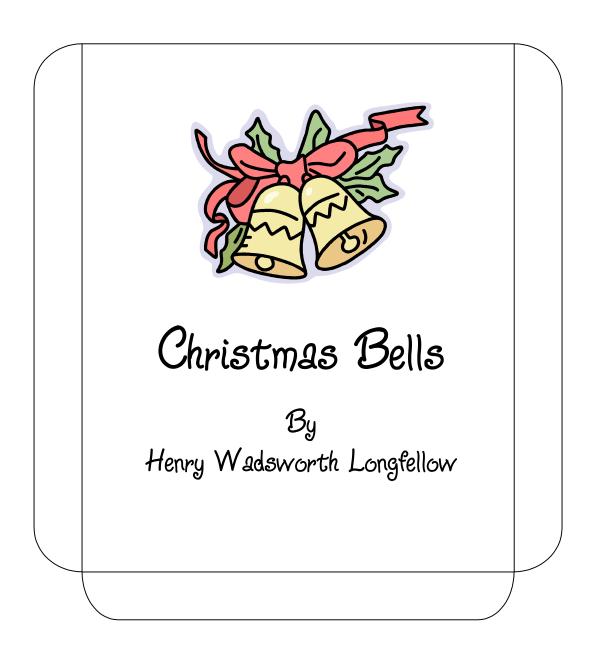
Print out tabbed pages and graphics. Cut all on solid lines. Have child glue graphic on appropriate page, and describe what each item is symbolic for. Refer to lesson if needed.





Smells by Christopher Morley

Why is if that the poet tells	
So little of the sense of smell?	
These are the odors I love well:	
These die the odols Hove well.	
The smell of coffee freshly ground;	
Or rich plum pudding, holly crowned;	
Or onions fried and deeply browned.	
The fragrance of a fumy pipe;	
The smell of apples, newly ripe;	
And printer's ink on leaden type.	
Woods by moonlight in September	
Breathe most sweet, and I remember	
Many a smoky camp-fire ember.	
, , ,	
Camphor, turpentine, and tea,	
The balsam of a Christmas tree,	
These are whiffs of gramarye	
A ship smells best of all to me!	



Cut around outside lines, fold tabs under, and glue three tabs into lap/notebook. Use this pocket to store "Christmas Bells" poetry sheet in lapbook, if desired.



Christmas Bells by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



I heard the bells on Christmas Day
Their old, familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet
The words repeat
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along
The unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Till, ringing, singing on its way
The world revolved from night to day,
A voice, a chime,
A chant sublime
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

Then from each black, accursed mouth
The cannon thundered in the South,
And with the sound
The Carols drowned
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!

And in despair I bowed my head;
'There is no peace on earth,' I said;
'For hate is strong,
And mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!'

Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
'God is not dead; nor doth he sleep!
The Wrong shall fail,
The Right prevail,
With peace on earth, good-will to men!'



Cut out pages on solid lines. Stack from largest to smallest on top and staple across top. Have child draw pictures or write words on each page.

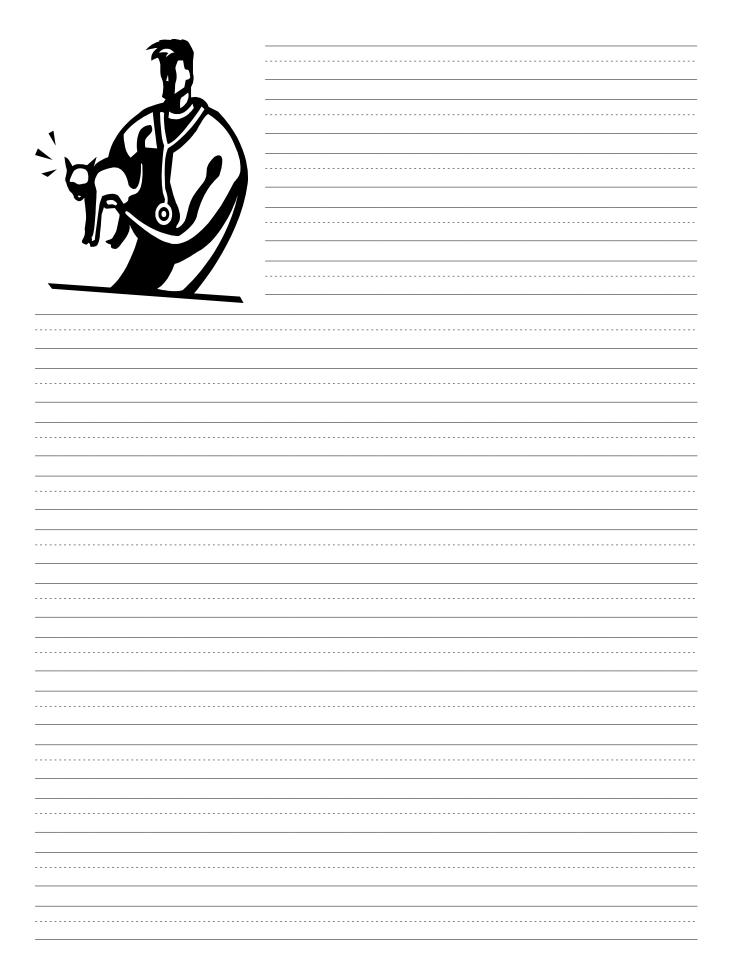
What do pets need?

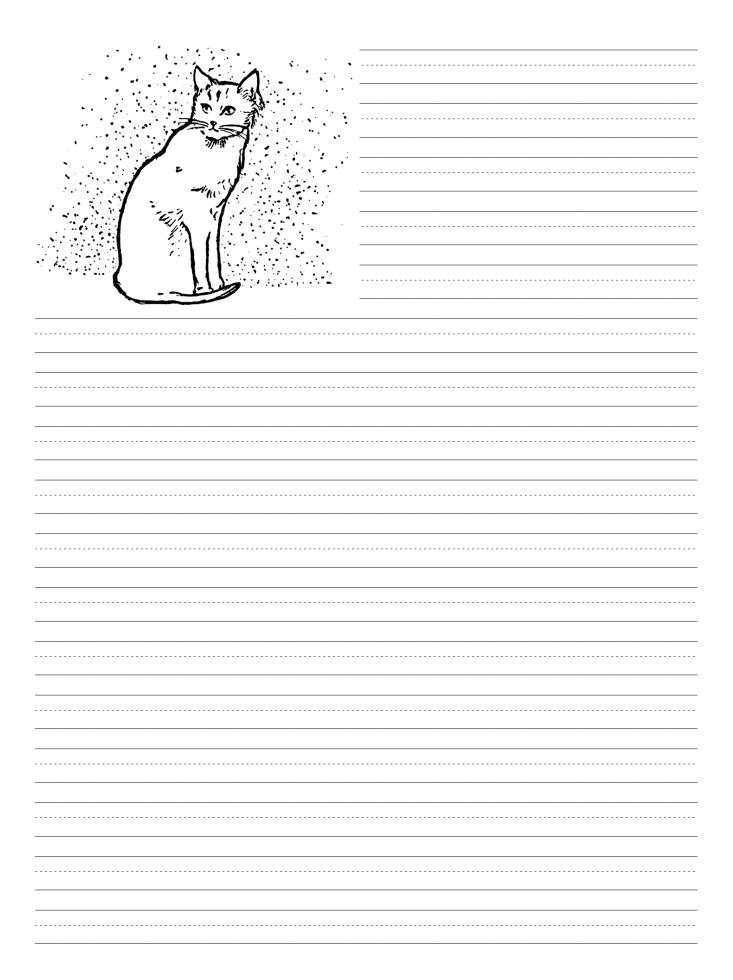
Why do people keep pets?

Different Kinds of Pets

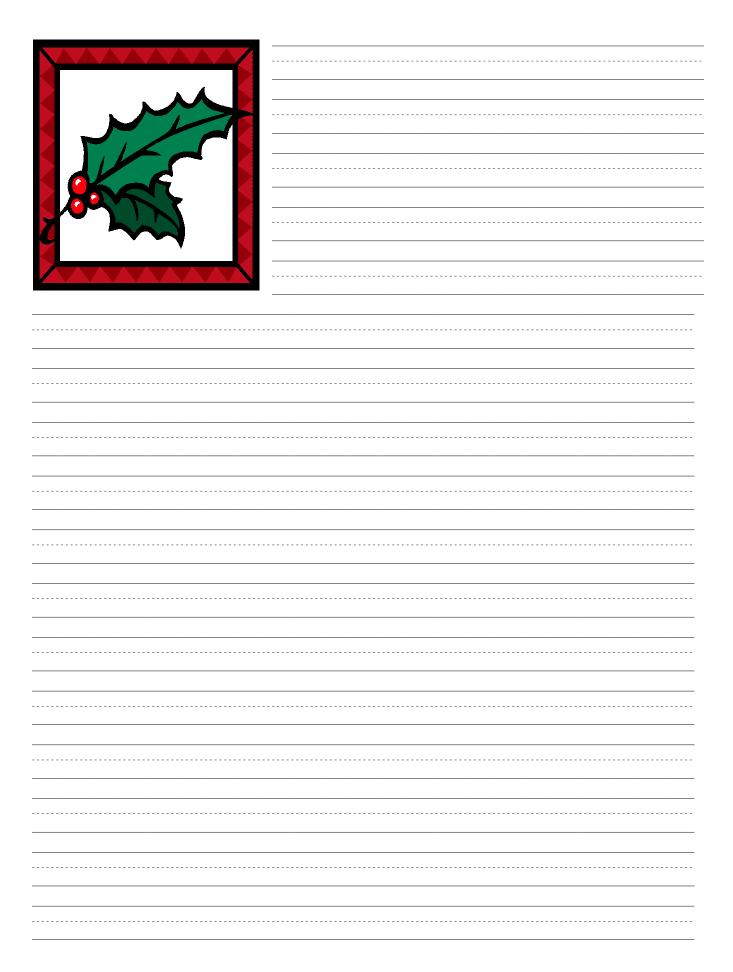
TITLE	
AUTHOR	
ILLUSTRATOR	
PUBLICATION DATE	
SETTING	
MAIN CHARACTER	
WHAT I THOUGHT OF THE BOOK	



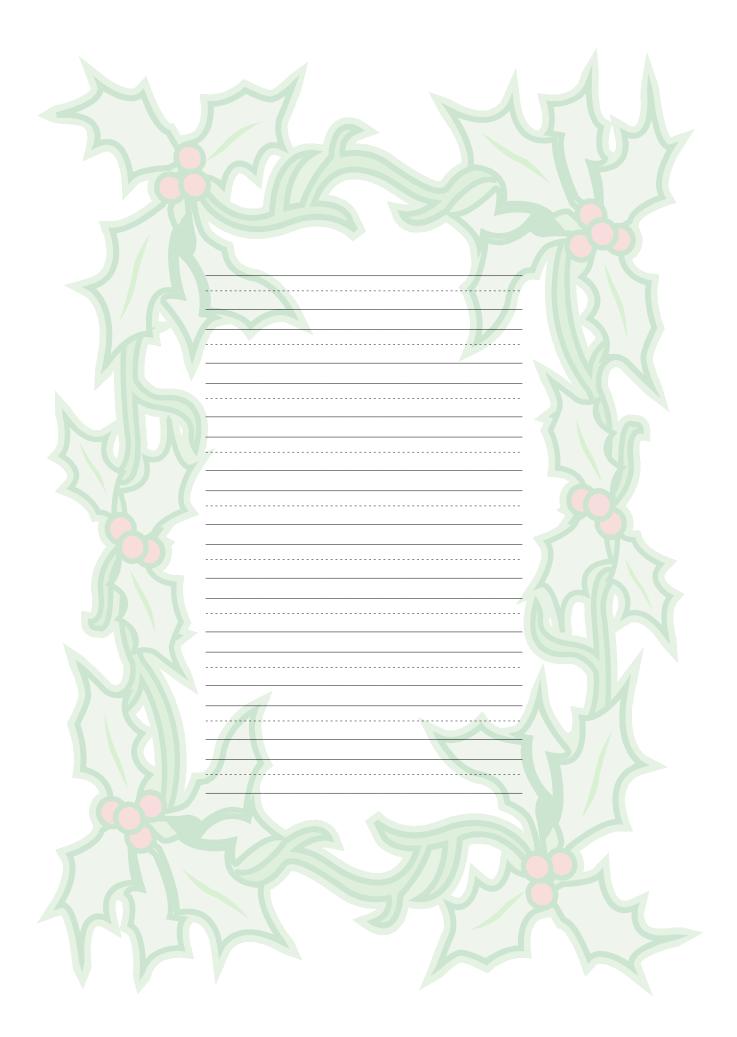








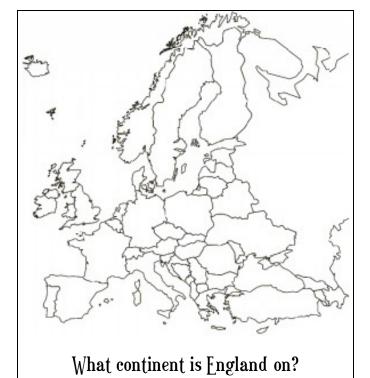




Is England?

Where in the World...

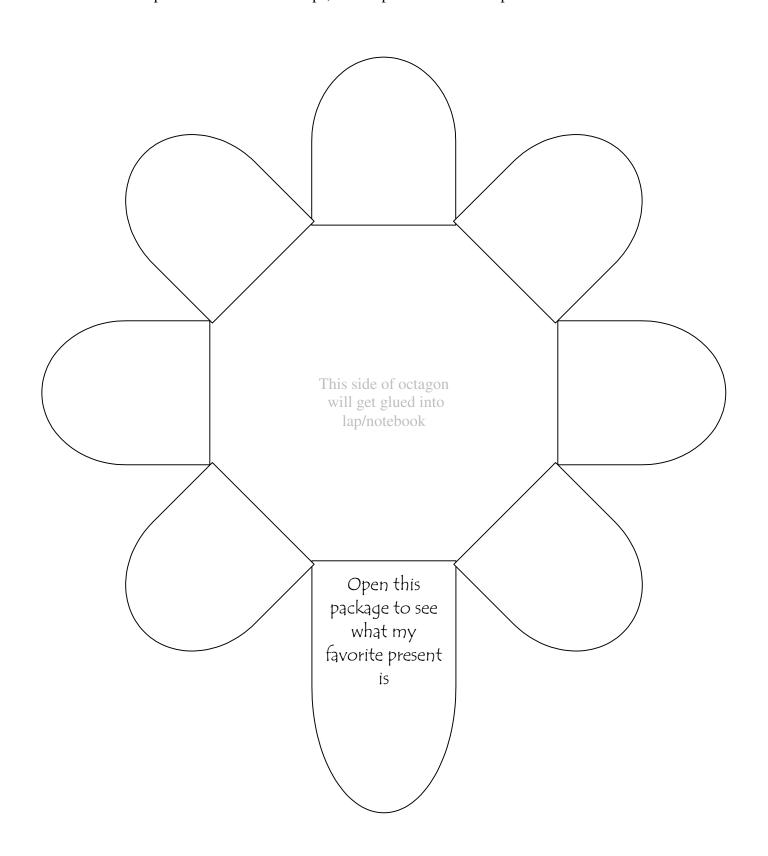




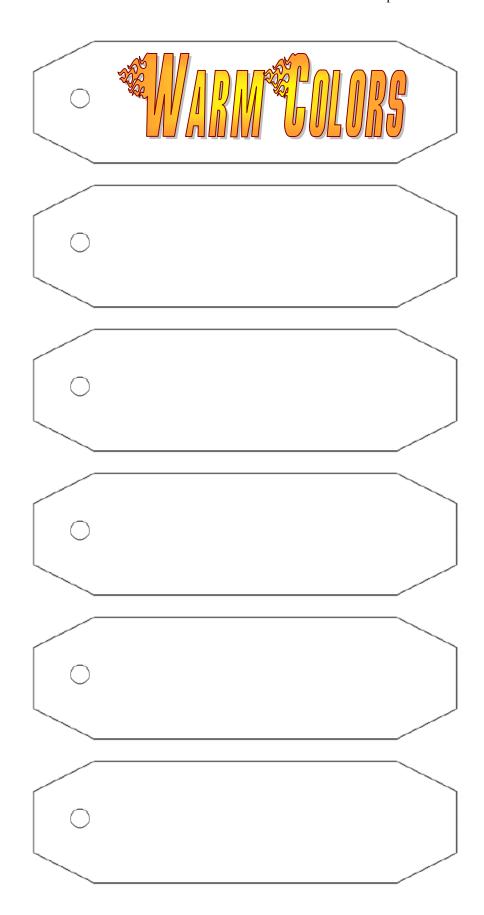
Cut old shutter book and map on solid lines. Fold shutter book on dotted lines so that words are on cover. Glue map into book under shutters.

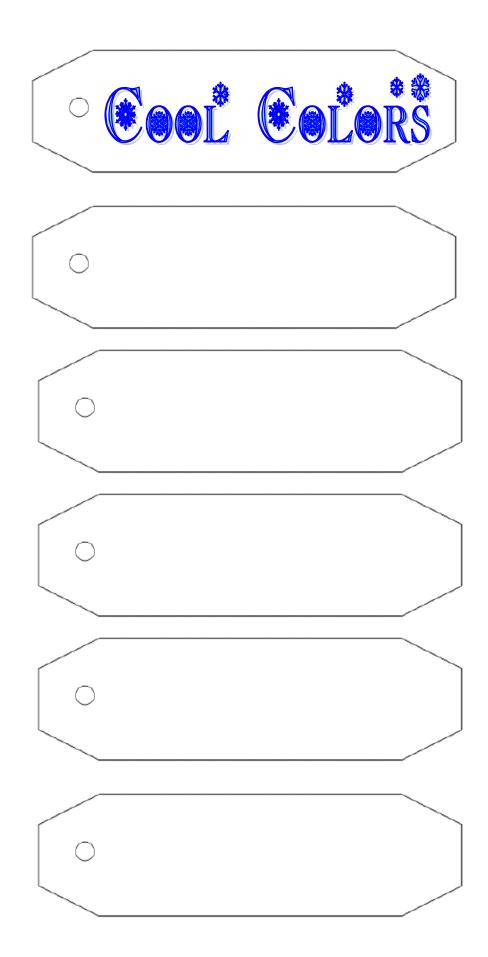
Find England on the map and color it in.

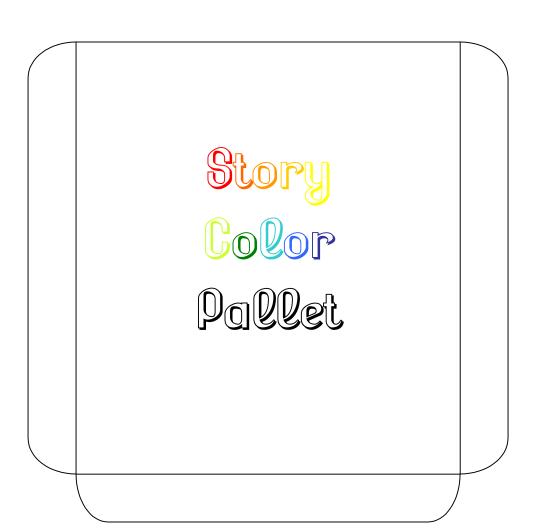
Cut out all around perimeter of flaps. Starting at flap to the left of printed one, fold each one towards center, overlapping each other. Printed flap will get folded down over top. Have child decorate outside of flaps to look like a present. Under the all flaps, draw a picture of the best present he has received.



Print out all three pages on cardstock. Cut out all fan blades, stack, and hole punch where marked. Have child match up Warm Colors in story to crayons in his crayon box, and color each blade of fan a color to match. Do same with Cool Color fan. Insert brad into hole in each set of fans. Insert fans into pocket.











What do dogs eat?

How do dogs protect themselves?

What kind of body covering?

What kind of teeth?

CIRCLE CORRECT CHOICES

Vertebrate or Invertebrate

Warm Blooded or Cold Blooded

Eggs or Live Birth

Cut out this shape as ONE PIECE. Fold on each solid line. Use the first section for your title. Write or paste whatever you want into the book Glue the back of the last section to your lapbook.





What do cats eat?

How do cats protect themselves?

What kind of body covering?

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CIRCLE CORRECT CHOICES

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