

# Literacy Skills Teacher's Guide for Shiloh by

Phyllis Reynolds Naylor

## Book Information

Phyllis Reynolds Naylor, Shiloh  
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Book Level: 4.4  
Interest Level: MG

When he finds a lost beagle in the hills behind his West Virginia home, Marty tries to hide it from his family and the dog's real owner. The owner is a mean-spirited man known to shoot deer out of season and to mistreat his dogs. Book #1.

**Award:** Misc./Other; Newbery Medal; State Award; Young Reader's Choice Award/Nominee

**Topics:** Animals, Dogs; Community Life, Animal Rights; READNOW - Demco Media Turtleback Books, Demco Media - Read Now Grades 6-8; Recommended Reading, California Recommended Lit., English, 3-5; Series, Shiloh; U.S. States/Regions, West Virginia

## Main Characters

Becky Preston Marty's youngest sister  
Dara Lynn Preston Marty's younger sister  
David Marty's best friend  
Judd Travers a mean-spirited neighbor of the Prestons  
Lou Preston Marty's ma, loving and hard-working  
Marty Preston the eleven-year-old boy who loves Shiloh  
Ray Preston Marty's dad, who is a mail carrier  
Shiloh a beagle belonging to Judd Travers

## Vocabulary

**lying by omission** not telling the whole truth  
**snake stick** a strong forked stick for handling snakes

## Synopsis

Marty Preston likes spending time outdoors, hiking

and target shooting in the hills behind his home near Friendly, West Virginia. Sometimes he just goes early in the morning to watch wildlife.

One summer morning, Marty finds a young beagle on the road near the old Shiloh schoolhouse. The dog follows him home, and his troubles begin.

He suspects the dog has been mistreated and wonders what to do about it. Should he report his neighbor? Does he have the right to keep the dog? Marty faces these questions and encounters problems along the way. His courage helps him confront Judd, a man he despises, in order to save Shiloh.

In the end, after working for Judd, Marty learns something about what made Judd the way he is, and Judd seems to understand more about Marty. Although it seems as if Judd will renege on his deal with Marty, he lets the boy have Shiloh and even offers a new collar for the dog.

## Open-Ended Questions

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

### Initial Understanding

Why do you think Marty's attitude toward Judd changed?

*He realized that he had a better chance of changing the way Judd treated his dogs if he was complimentary instead of critical. He realized Judd didn't have a good relationship with his dad.*

### Literary Analysis

When do you think this story took place? Support your answer with detailed information.

*While an exact year is not given, there are references that indicate it was within the recent past. Televisions and telephones are mentioned.*

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## Inferential Comprehension

How does Marty change during the course of the story?

*He realizes that he will need proof before anyone will believe his charges against Judd. He also understands that by keeping Shiloh, he is breaking the law, too. Right and wrong are not as definite as he thought in the beginning.*

## Constructing Meaning

Think about how Marty acted in this story. How would you have responded?

*Marty's first thoughts were to protect the dog. He felt this justified telling lies, but it bothered him.*

the situation. Have the students identify those feelings and find other examples in the story when Marty experienced similar feelings. Have the students keep a diary for one week noting each time they have a feeling that Marty had in the story. What activity caused that feeling?

**Differentiating Fact and Opinion** Marty felt that Judd has abused Shiloh. Have the students list events and ideas from the story that support Marty's belief. Identify whether each item on the list is a fact or opinion. Ask the students to talk to a police officer, a veterinarian, or someone from the humane society to find out the conditions necessary to charge someone with animal abuse. Decide if Marty was correct in his belief.

## Teachable Skills

**Recognizing Plot** The main character, Marty, faced many problems in this story. 1)He had to decide what to do when he found Judd's dog. 2)He went against his father's order to return the dog to Judd. 3)He witnessed Judd breaking the law and confronted the man. 4)He had to work for Judd, a man he despised, in order to work off what he owed Judd for Shiloh. Ask the students to select one situation and suggest different ways to resolve that problem. This could be presented orally before the class. Then have the class decide which suggestion is the most believable. Have the students discuss how the different suggestions would change the story.

**Comparing and Contrasting** Have the students write a paragraph to compare this story of a boy's love for a dog to another story with a similar theme, such as *Old Yeller* or *Gentle Ben*. This comparison could include how Marty obtained food for Shiloh, was determined to keep the dog, and lied to avoid returning Shiloh. Ask the students what they would do to get and keep a pet.

**Recognizing Feelings** When Marty saw Judd shoot a deer out of season, he realized he now would be able to bargain for Shiloh. As he talked with Judd, he had many different feelings about