

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_



# Activity One

As we read *Because of Winn-Dixie*, we are given many different descriptions of how Winn-Dixie looks, from dirty, brown, and smelly, to clean and improved. What we aren't told, however, is just what kind of dog Winn-Dixie is, and so we each create our own image in our minds of what he looks like. Perhaps that was exactly what Kate DiCamillo had in mind for us, but it might also be nice to know for sure what kind of dog he is.

## What kind of dog do you think Winn-Dixie was?

One thing we do know, is that he was a big dog, so large in fact that Miss Franny thought he was a bear. Here are the names of some large dog breeds:

• Irish Wolfhound

• St. Bernard

• Great Dane

• Great Pyrenees

• Briard

• Malamute

Research the names of these and other large dog breeds from around the world.

## Collect information on A CARD like this for each dog:

<b>Breed Name</b>	_____	<b>Illustration</b>
<b>Color(s)</b>	_____	
<b>Height</b>	_____	
<b>Weight</b>	_____	

When you have finished your research, decide which kind of dog you think he was. Write a two or three paragraph report telling why you have chosen that particular breed. Use proof from the story to support your opinion. Illustrate your work.

**When you have finished, share your work with your class.**

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## Activity Two

In Because of Winn-Dixie, we learn about Littmus W. Block, Miss Franny's great-grandfather, who fought in, and survived, the Civil War.

Many of Miss Franny's descriptions of the war, and what her great-grandfather experienced hint at what went on during that time: the first battle at Fort Sumter, family members dying of disease, homes burned, and thousands of soldiers killed.

**Opal says she knows about the Civil War. Do you?**

Conduct some **RESEARCH** into the Civil War, using these questions as a guide. Record your findings on **A CHART**, in point form notes, and present what you have learned to your class.

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1. **When did the Civil War take place?**
  2. **What were the reasons behind it? What caused it?**
  3. **Who was Abraham Lincoln?**
  4. **Who were some of the famous leaders on both sides of the war?**
  5. **What were some of the most famous battles?**
  6. **When the Civil war ended, how was the country different?**
  7. **What were some of the long-term affects of the war?**
  8. **Why do we continue to remember the Civil War? What lessons did it have for us?**

After finding answers to these questions,  
think about Littmus W. Block's story.  
Other than the Littmus Lozenges, evaluate how realistic his story is.



# Activity Three

At the beginning of Because of Winn-Dixie, we witness a stray dog running through a grocery store. The workers in the store call him dirty, and yell out that he should be sent to the dog pound.

## What is a dog pound?

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## In your community, where do people send stray dogs and cats?

Research how strays are treated in your community.

### As you do your RESEARCH, consider these questions:

- Where are stray dogs and cats sent?
- Who cares for them there? • What is the cost of caring for them?
  - Can people adopt a pet? • What steps are followed?
- What does it cost to adopt a pet? • What does the cost cover?
  - What happens to pets that are not adopted?
  - What can people do to prevent strays?

Present your findings in a **NEWSPAPER ARTICLE FORMAT**.

Include an eye-catching headline, an illustration with a caption, and interesting facts arranged in paragraphs.

(Hint: The answer to each of the above questions could be the topic sentence of each of your paragraphs!)

**Beside your newspaper article, write a list of things people should do to care properly for their pets.**



## Activity Four

In Because of Winn-Dixie, we see two examples of how alcohol can negatively affect people's lives.

- Opal's mother drank far too much, and the preacher says that was one of the reasons that they fought a lot before she left them.
- Gloria Dump's ghost tree is decorated with dozens of empty alcohol bottles, many of which she emptied when she did bad things.

While drugs from a doctor are given to us to make us better, in your Health class, you have probably learned about the **harmful affects of illegal drugs, cigarettes, and alcohol.**

Thinking about what you have learned, and what Because of Winn-Dixie shows us, complete the following two writing activities:

### Part A

**Design a POSTER** showing some of the harmful affects of illegal drugs, cigarettes, and alcohol.

**Think about:**

- What will your poster show?
- Which words will you choose to put on your poster?
- What will your message be?
- Which colors will you use?

### Part B

**Write a short SKIT**, based on one of the examples from the novel, that shows the dangers of alcohol.

**Think about:**

- What will your skit show?
- Which characters will be in your skit?
- What will your skit's message be?

**When you are finished, present both your poster and your skit to your class.**



# Activity Five

**Because of Winn-Dixie** takes place in Naomi, Florida.

**Pretend you are a geographer and a historian, and complete some research on Florida.**

**Record your answers on lined paper, and present your findings as a project.**

## 1. Your First Task

**Is Naomi, Florida a real place?**

If yes, then what facts can you find out about it?

## 2. Your Second Task

**Find out all that you can about Florida, using the following questions as research starters.**

- Where is Florida located?
- Which states border Florida?
- What is the population of Florida?
- What is the capital city of Florida?
- What is the climate of Florida like?
- How does this climate affect the people who live there, and the people who visit?
- What are Florida's major industries?
- What kinds of wildlife are unique to Florida?
- What kinds of interesting plant life would you find in Florida?
- What are some of Florida's major tourist attractions?

## 3. Your Third Task

**Ask two questions of your own about Florida, and record the answers on your sheet of lined paper.**

Question 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Question 2: \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. Your Fourth Task

Think about the novel Because of Winn-Dixie.

**What information in the novel is accurate in its depiction of Florida?**



## Activity Six

**Because of Winn-Dixie is written by the author Kate DiCamillo.  
Conduct some research on her to find about her life and her career.  
Record your findings on a lined piece of paper.**

**Here are some RESEARCH starters for you:**

- What other books has Kate DiCamillo written?
- Which awards has she won, and why were they awarded?
- Where does she get her ideas for her stories?
- Where does she live?
- Where can you write to Kate DiCamillo?

Conduct your research at school, using things such as author biographies and the Internet. For your safety, if you are using the Internet, always remember to use only those web sites approved by your school, your teacher, or your parents! Check with them first, before beginning any research.

After completing your research, write **A LETTER** to Kate DiCamillo, using proper letter format.

**Think about the following things:**

- **What questions do you have for her?**
- **Will you tell her about some of the things you have learned about her?**
  - **What will you tell her about your experiences with, and opinions about, Because of Winn-Dixie?**

Be sure to have proper permission from your teacher and your parents before sending any letter. Share your letter with them before sending it, so that they can approve it!

After mailing your letter, it may take some time to receive an answer. While there is no guarantee you'll receive an answer, most children's authors take the time to answer their mail!

**Good luck!**