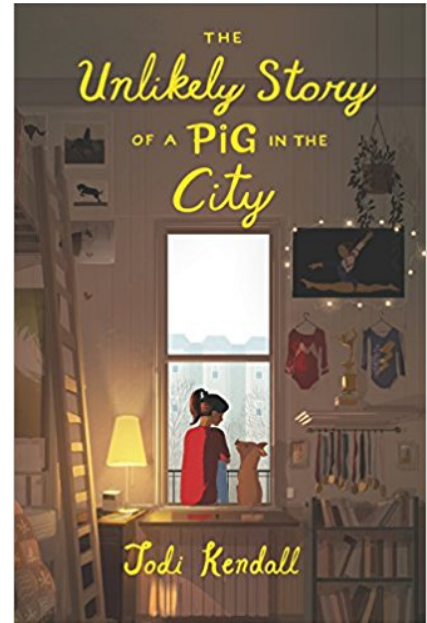


A Curriculum Guide for Educators & Readers

Aligned to the Common Core Grades 3-7

Discussion points, activities, and writing prompts to help educators use *The Unlikely Story of a Pig in the City* as a classroom read aloud or as a selection for independent reading.

Great for book clubs, too!



About the Author



Jodi Kendall grew up in the Midwest with her family of seven, and a household of countless pets including hamsters, ducks, dogs, rabbits, an iguana, and yes...even a farm pig! As a freelance writer for a variety of clients including the National Geographic Channel, Jodi once followed a secret nighttime transport of a manta ray over state lines, swam with seven species of sharks, got up close and personal with venomous snakes, and motored through a saltwater crocodile breeding ground. These days, you can find Jodi typing away at home in New York City, where she's still an animal lover at heart. Jodi holds an MFA from The University of Arizona and is an active member of SCBWI. *The Unlikely Story of a Pig in the City* is her first novel. Visit Jodi online at www.jodikendall.com.

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About the Book

A little pig in a big city leads to lots of trouble!

Josie Shilling's family is too big, their cramped city house is too small, and she feels like no one's ever on her side. Then, on Thanksgiving Day, her older brother, Tom, brings home a pink, squirmy bundle wrapped in an old football jersey—a piglet he rescued from a nearby farm. Her name is Hamlet.

The minute Josie holds Hamlet, she feels an instant connection. But there's no room for Hamlet in the crowded Shilling household. And whoever heard of keeping a pig in the city? So, it's up to Josie to find her a forever home.

Common Core Aligned for Grades 3-7

3rd grade: ELA. RL.3.1,2,3,4,6,7; W.3.1,2,3; SL.3.1,2,4; L.3.4,5

4th grade: ELA. RL.4.1,2,3,4,6,7; W.4.1,2,3; SL.4.1,2,4; L.4.4,5

5th grade: ELA. RL.5.1,2,3,4,6,7; W.5.1,2,3; SL.5.1,2,4,5; L.5.4,5

6th grade: ELA. RL.6.1,2,3,4; W.6.1,2,3,4,7,8,9; SL.6.1,2,3,4,5; L.6.4,5

7th grade: ELA. RL.7.1,2,4; W.7.1,2,3,4,6,7,8,9; SL.7.1,2,3,4,5; L.7.4,5

Before You Read...

1. Take a close look at the front cover of *The Unlikely Story of a Pig in the City*. Create a list of everything you see.
2. Can you predict what this book might be about?
3. Can you make any predictions about the main character, Josie Shilling? What from the illustration and title of the book supports your prediction?
4. Read the text on the jacket flap and on the back of the book. What do you learn about the book from this text?
5. Look closely at the design of the book: the colors, text, illustrations, and word choice. How would you describe the design?
6. Who do you think is the intended audience for this book? If you saw this book on the shelf, would you want to read it? Why or why not?

Write one paragraph describing your thoughts about the book, and include one question you have that you hope to learn the answer to when you read. Share your paragraph with the class.

Chapters 1-8

1. Using specific examples from chapter one, create Josie's family tree and next to each family member, describe their feelings toward Hamlet and whether they are for or opposed to keeping Hamlet.
 - a. What reasons do others give Josie for why they cannot keep Hamlet? What is Josie's solution to each reason?
 - b. What is Josie's plan to save Hamlet?
2. Why is Josie worried about growing taller?
 - a. What is Tom's advice for her?
3. What do you think Josie's coach means when she says, "the only one holding you back is you?"
 - a. Does Josie agree with this statement? Why or why not?
 - b. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
4. Explain in your own words The Three Stoops.
 - a. What is the new Case File?
 - b. Can you come up with at least three more reasons to add to the Case for Keeping Hamlet?
5. Write about Josie getting locked out of the house from the point of view of one of the following characters:
 - a. Lucy
 - b. Mrs. Taglioni

Who is Josie?

Draw an outline of a human figure, which will represent Josie, on a large piece of paper.

Using chapters 1-7 as evidence, write any known details about Josie inside the outline.

Outside the outline, record any questions you may have about Josie.

- c. Sarah
6. Describe in your own words what is at stake if Josie is found outside with Hamlet without permission.
 - a. In what way does Hamlet appear to be smart and save the day?
 7. Draw a picture of Hamlet's Cave, being sure to include the details mentioned in the text.
 8. Dr. Stern tells Josie that studies have shown that pigs can learn tricks. Go to www.YouTube.com to find a few videos to support this statement.
 9. Josie asks her coach to spot her. What does that mean?
 10. Josie is not as happy as she should be after nailing her gymnastics routine. Why?
 11. Josie's coach encourages her to practice her routine every day by *visualizing*. What do you think this means?
 - a. How can *visualizing* help Josie?
 - b. Can you think of something you need to practice or are worried about that you could use this technique for?
 12. What is Tree Day?
 - a. Imagine that you are Josie and write a diary entry about the magic of Tree Day.

Making Connections:

Josie is stuck in the middle of the family birth order. Using evidence found in chapters 1-8, describe how Josie feels about being a middle child.

- What about you? Are you oldest, middle, youngest, or only?
- What's one of the challenges you face regarding your place in the family?
- What's one positive thing about your place in the family?

Chapters 9-14

1. Josie needs \$200 for her gymnastic team registration. How does she plan to pay for some of it?
 - a. Write a scene in which Josie talks to her mother about the registration fee. What does Josie say? How does her mother react?
 - b. Write a scene in which Josie talks to her father about the registration fee. What does Josie say? How does her father react?
 - c. If you were Josie, which parent would you prefer to talk to about the situation? Use information from your two written scenes above to support your answer.
2. Dr. Stern calls with the news that she knows of a family who might be interested in taking Hamlet. This is supposed to be good news, but Josie doesn't think so. Why?
 - a. What is Josie's plan regarding this information?
3. Imagine that you are Ms. Coburn and describe your dinner at the Shillings.
4. What is the Three-Week Rule?
 - a. Do you think the Three-Week Rule could be applied to Hamlet?
 - b. What evidence has there been for the Three-Week Rule and The Case for Keeping Hamlet?
5. How did Hamlet get into Mrs. Taglioni's house?
 - a. Why is Josie held responsible?
 - b. What is her "punishment?"
 - c. How does Hamlet crashing through the fence and into Mrs. Taglioni's house effect Dr. Stern's contact who were interested in taking the pig?

Challenge Yourself!

Lucy and Josie challenged each other to go vegetarian for a month, Thanksgiving until Christmas.

Do you think you are up for a challenge? Maybe stop eating sugar, give up video games, go for a walk or read every day. Try it for a week.

Whatever the challenge, set the goal and try it! Keep a journal of the days of the challenge and report to your class on how it went.

6. What issues start to arise as Hamlet grows bigger?
7. What incident causes Josie to think that maybe she has something in common with Mrs. Taglioni?
 - a. What is a sugar glider?
 - b. Losing a beloved pet is difficult. Imagine that you are Josie and brainstorm a list of possible ways to comfort Mrs. Taglioni during this difficult time.
8. Josie needs new grips for gymnastics. Why hasn't she gotten any yet?
 - a. How are the hand-me-down grips from Lucy affecting her?
9. What nickname do the Level 10 kids at gymnastics give Josie?
 - a. Why does this nickname bother her so much?

Making Connections:

Josie soon learns that taking care of a pig in a tiny city townhouse is not easy.

Imagine that you are Josie and you need to explain to someone else how to care for Hamlet and clean her Cave.

Write down detailed instructions based on evidence from the text.

If you had to create a cave for a pig in your house, where would you put it? Take a photo of the space and then write instructions on how to make it pig friendly.

Chapters 15-22

1. Write a scene in which the other animals in the clinic talk to Hamlet about their homes and give Hamlet advice to be a city pig or country pig. Be sure to include Hamlet's thoughts, as well.
2. Why does Josie think her house was robbed?
 - a. Why was Hamlet not in her cave?
 - b. Where did the presents go? Why?

3. What happens when Josie asks Hamlet where she wants to live?
 - a. Explain Operation Home for Hamlet.
4. Create a list of all the thoughts that go through Josie's head during her routine at the gymnastics meet.
 - a. Then, next to each thought, describe her actions in that moment.
 - b. Can you make any connections between what Josie thinks and how she performs?
 - c. Based on this information, do you believe in "mind over matter?" Explain your thoughts.
5. What does Sarah give Josie before her uneven bars routine?
 - a. How do you think this gift helped Josie and her confidence?
6. What does Josie learn from the two cops who show up at her townhouse?
7. What is Handmade Christmas?
 - a. Whose name does Josie get?
 - b. Why can't Josie ask her parents why Mrs. Taglioni was invited for Christmas?
 - c. If you were Josie, what would you make for Mrs. Taglioni?

Making Connections:

Having a pig as a pet is illegal in Josie's big Midwestern city.

Research pets that are illegal where you live. These laws usually exist for the health and safety of people and the animal.

Do some Internet digging to find out the reasons behind these animals becoming illegal to have as pets.

Chapters 23-28

1. Explain, in your own words, what a Tuxedo Pigeon is.
 - a. Do you think Tuxedo Pigeons are real? Why or why not.
 - b. Investigate to find the truth.
2. What makes the copy of *Charlotte's Web* from Ellen so special?
3. In what ways does Josie realize that everyone in her family has supported her in different ways?
4. How does Mrs. Taglioni respond to her gift?
5. Josie really gets to know Mrs. Taglioni better on Christmas. Create a list of all she learns.
6. Describe some of the ways that the kids *think outside the box* to find a home for Hamlet.
 - a. Do you have any other ideas to add to their efforts?
7. Who is Reggie Grimson?
 - a. Why doesn't Josie want Mr. Grimson to take Hamlet?
8. Predict what you think Josie's plan might be?

Your Own Handmade Gift Giving

The rules for the Shilling Handmade Christmas are:

- 1) No one can spend any money.
- 2) The present you give must be made from something you own.
- 3) Remake the thing into something totally different that you think the other person would like.

As a class or with a small group of friends, have your own handmade gift-giving.

Be sure to follow all the Shilling rules.

Chapters 29-34

1. Draw a picture of what Josie and her siblings did for "Hamlet's transformation."
 - a. How was this plan inspired by *Charlotte's Web*?

2. Imagine that you see the story of Hamlet on the news and create a Twitter post, using #SaveTheCityPig to express your thoughts.
3. *The City Centennial* wrote a story with the headline CITY PIG FACED WITH HOG HEAVEN. Imagine that you are the reporter and write that story.
4. What two big announcements do Josie’s parents make?
5. Why is Josie unsure if she will be returning to gymnastics?
6. Who ends up adopting Hamlet?
 - a. Describe Hamlet’s new home.
7. Josie says that Hamlet “made us feel like a family again.” Explain what you think she means by this, using evidence from the book to support your answer.

After You Read...

Below are a few final project ideas for the conclusion of *The Unlikely Story of a Pig in the City*.

1. Revisit the cover illustration for the book. Explain the details that the artist Pascal Campion chose to include, using textual evidence as support.
 - a. Having now read the book, design your own cover illustration.
2. Several themes run through *The Unlikely Story of a Pig in the City*.

Family	Responsibility	Growing Bigger
Belonging	Friendship	Life/Death

Choose one of these themes on which to base a 500-word essay.

What can readers take away from *The Unlikely Story of a Pig in the City* in relation to this theme?

3. Choose one character and explore how he or she has changed from the beginning to the end.
4. Read the following summary of E.B. White’s *Charlotte’s Web*:

After her father spares the life of a piglet from slaughtering it as runt of the litter, a little girl named Fern Arable nurtures the piglet lovingly, naming him

Wilbur. On greater maturity, Wilbur is sold to Fern's uncle, Homer Zuckerman, in whose barnyard he is left yearning for companionship but is snubbed by other barn animals, until befriended by a barn spider named Charlotte, living on a web overlooking Wilbur's enclosure.

Upon Wilbur's discovery that he is intended for slaughter, she promises to hatch a plan guaranteed to spare his life. Accordingly, she secretly weaves praise of him into her web, attracting publicity among Zuckerman's neighbors who attribute the praise to divine intervention. As time passes, more inscriptions appear on Charlotte's webs, increasing his renown. Therefore, Wilbur is entered in the county fair, accompanied by Charlotte and the rat Templeton, whom she employs in gathering inspiration for her messages. There, Charlotte spins an egg sac containing her unborn offspring, and Wilbur, despite winning no prizes, is later celebrated by the fair's staff and visitors (thus made too prestigious alive to justify killing him). Exhausted apparently by laying eggs, Charlotte remains at the fair and dies shortly after Wilbur's departure.

- Why do you think Ellen chose to give this book to Josie?
 - Can you see any similarities to her story?
 - Do you think the character of Josie is more Fern or Charlotte?
5. Watch the book's official trailer on www.jodikendall.com. Write a 500-word essay on how the choice of music, casting of characters, visuals, and language create an overall feel for the book. Feel free to include any suggestions on how you would change or edit the trailer. OR...
 6. Create your own book trailer.
 7. In Fall 2018, HarperCollins Children's Books will publish the sequel to *The Unlikely Story of a Pig in the City*. Brainstorm a list of possible story ideas, including where the story might pick up and what it will be about. Will Josie really leave gymnastics? Will she work at Dr. Stern's vet clinic? Will Sully be her boyfriend? How will her family dynamics shift after Hamlet's gone?

Then, predict what adventure Josie Shilling will be up to next and write a 500-word synopsis of your imagined sequel.