

THE SECRETS OF MY SNOOT

ABOUT:

I read an article about the structure of dogs' noses and how each nostril acts independently of the other. They have 300 million olfactory receptors compared to a human's five million. Their noses are one thousand times, or more, sensitive than human noses at detecting an odor. They can sniff out cancer, a seizure before it happens, anxiety, and can be trained to alert diabetic handlers in advance of high or low sugar levels. This factoid helped me introduce the title of my book because dogs view their world through their noses as well as their eyes. It also dovetailed into the story of his and Hazel's adventure which is about decision-making and how our decisions affect others as well as ourselves.

PURPOSE:

As I mentioned, the purpose of this story is to help children identify with Winston's desire to go exploring with Hazel even though it meant breaking the rule about leaving his yard. Hazel teases him into going with her and he makes a bad decision. When Winston returns he discovers how his breaking the rules affected Sugar. Then he realizes what might have happened to him. After Winston tells his story and the children have identified with him, it is my hope that his words of wisdom will give his young readers guidance when they find themselves faced with a similar decision.

SUGGESTIONS:

While this story focuses on Winston making a poor decision, it is also important to stress the results of making a good decision, even though it may seem hard. What if Winston had decided to stay in his yard while he watched Hazel run to the park? Be prepared to bring up some things Winston could do to help his disappointed feelers. Then relate these things to what children could do.

IDEAS:

- Make a chart of the interior of a dog's nose and what it can do.
- Have a therapy dog trainer or owner come to speak to your class, and if they are allowed, bring their pup with them.
- Study different ways dogs' noses are used, such as bomb-sniffing, cadaver-sniffing, drug-sniffing, and different health conditions.
- Introduce famous service dogs, military dogs, police dogs, etc.