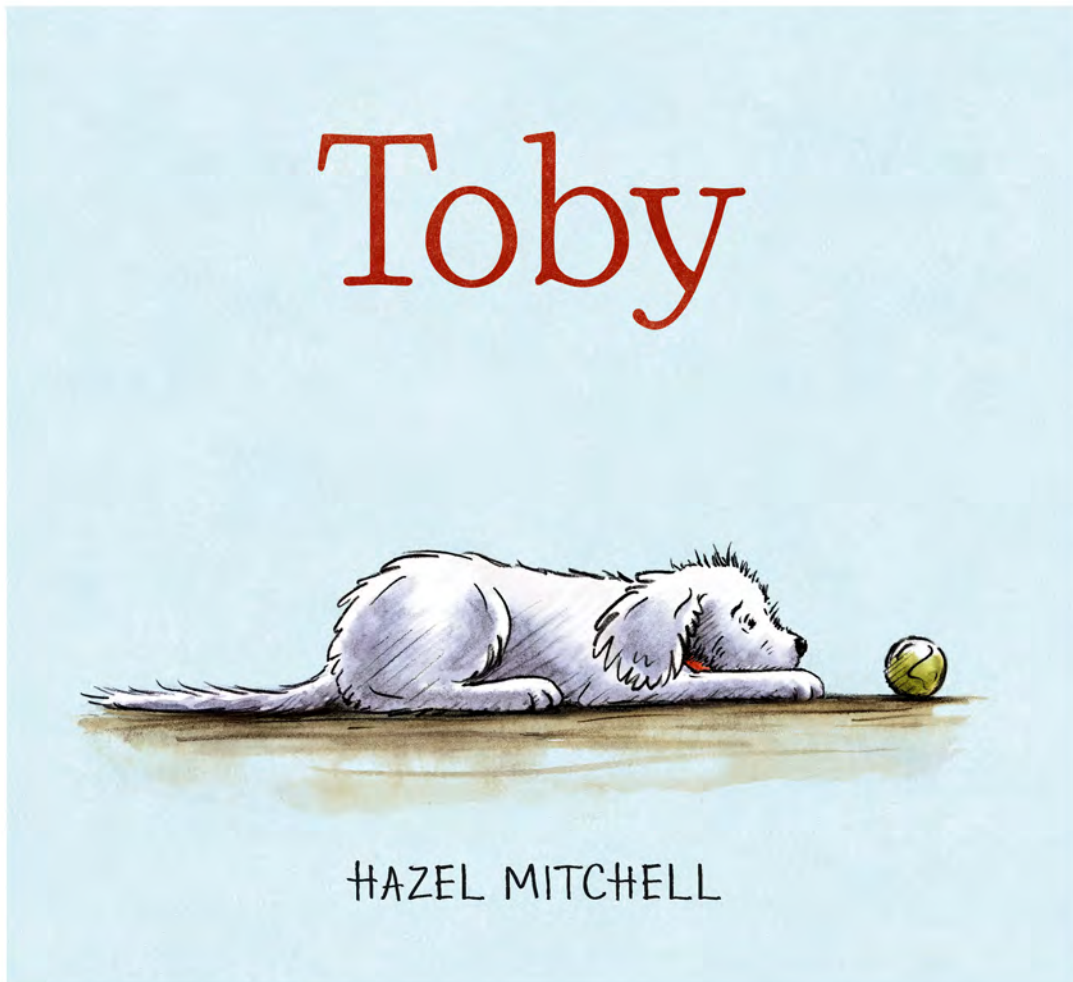


Toby

Teacher's Guide



Written and illustrated by Hazel Mitchell



CANDLEWICK PRESS

Inspired by her own dog's adoption story, illustrator Mitchell's ... first book as author centers on a boy who has moved into a new neighborhood with his (presumably single) father...The highlight of this getting-to-know-you tale is Mitchell's visual channeling of her characters' emotions, both human and canine.
— *Publishers Weekly*

Download Toby activity and information sheets at <http://hazelmitchell.com/toby>

About the Book

When a young boy and his father move from one house to another, they decide to adopt a dog from the local rescue shelter. But their chosen dog, Toby, is having a tough time adjusting to his new life outside the shelter—howling all night, hiding fearfully from his new humans, forgetting where to go to the bathroom and chasing a ball through the flower bed. The boy has promised to train his new companion, and he's trying his best, but Dad is starting to get exasperated. Will Toby ever feel comfortable with his new family and settle into his forever home, or will Dad decide he's not the right dog for them after all?

A heartwarming story about the growing bond between a child and a new pet—inspired by the author's experience with a rescue dog of the same name.

THEMES

A lonely boy longs for a new friendship. Adopting a dog seems the answer, but Toby is fearful and gets things wrong. Dad doesn't think he's the right dog for them. With the persistence of the boy and Toby's eventual co-operation everything turns out well, proving that you should never give up. A story of friendship, patience and persistence that will engage children and encourage them to consider the emotions of both boy and dog, helped by the visual mood and appeal of the illustrations.

BEFORE YOU READ THE BOOK

Talk about the different parts of a picture book and why they're important— the front and back cover, spine, dust cover, flaps, endpapers, title page and publisher's information page.

Look at the cover of the book. What is the title and who is the book by? What does an author or author/illustrator do?

What do you think Toby is feeling in the illustration on the cover?

Ask if anyone has a dog? Or a pet? Where did they get the pet from?

MAKE PREDICTIONS

Show the beginning-endpapers of the book. Who is the boy? What's happening to him? How is he feeling? What else can they discover from the image? Can they predict what the story might be about?

Now show the title page. What is Toby doing? How's he feeling? How might that relate to the picture of the boy on the endpapers? What will happen next? What might the book be about?

READ THE BOOK

Look at the pictures with the group as you read. Ask the students how they think Toby/the boy/Dad is feeling throughout the book.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

First, help the students summarize the story in their own words.

- Why did the boy want to adopt a new pet?
- Why do think Toby is scared and shy? What is he afraid of?
- What does the boy do to help Toby settle in to his new home? How do you think this relates to the emotions of the boy as he moves to a new house?
- What does Dad say to the boy when Toby won't play with him? How does that help the boy and Toby?
- Dad gets mad when Toby does things wrong. Why is Dad upset? Do you think he is tired or angry? Why? How does the boy try to make things right?
- When the boy decides to train Toby what does he use to help him learn about dog training?
- Training isn't going well with Toby. Why doesn't the boy give up? What does he do?
- The boy sees a girl and her dog sometimes. What do you think he is thinking about them?
- When Toby is doing well at training, why is the boy still worried?
- How does Toby make things right in the end? What helped to Toby to overcome his fears? Explain why?
- Do you have any idea why the boy lives alone with his Dad?
- How is Toby different at the beginning and the end of the book?
- The illustrations are often in pale shades of blue and brown. How does this make you feel about the mood of the book? Red is used in the book in certain areas. What areas are these? Why do you think this is?
- Is there anything else you notice about the book? Which part of the story did you like best?



CONNECTIONS

- Do you have a pet? Have you ever adopted a pet from an Animal Rescue Shelter? Share your pet's story with the group.
- The boy is feeling lonely after moving house and the big changes that this means for him. Have you ever moved house? How did you settle into your new neighborhood and make friends? Do you think this was the right time for the boy and Dad to adopt a pet?
- The boy gives a special stuffed rabbit that belongs to him to Toby to comfort him. Do you have (or have you owned) a special toy or stuffy that comforts you?
- Toby doesn't always get things right first time and doesn't understand what the boy wants him to do. The boy is frustrated and disappointed, but he doesn't get angry with Toby. He is patient and, although it is hard work, he tries and tries again until Toby trusts him and knows what to do. Have you ever had to keep trying hard and not given up to get something right?
- When the boy is training Toby he reads a book to learn how to help Toby . Have you ever read a book to find out how to do something? What did you the book to teach you? Talk in a group or with a partner about your experience.



ACTIVITIES

Write a prequel and/or a sequel to TOBY

Create your own prequel story about what might have happened to Toby before the boy adopted him from the animal rescue shelter. What had happened to Toby and why was in the shelter? Look at the cover illustration and the title page. Where do you think Toby came from?

Write a sequel to the story, following on from the endpaper illustration of the boy and Toby in the park. What happens next after you close the book? Share your stories with the class and illustrate them if you like. Discuss your different ideas as a group.

Making a list of adjectives

Read the book again, looking closely at the illustrations. Have the class say what emotions Toby, the boy and the Dad are feeling as you go through the story. Pin a large piece of paper up on the board and make a list. How many adjectives can they think of ... sad, scared, happy, fearful, excited? Find as many as they can.

After you have a list of the adjectives written down, look for opposites to each and write them on the paper next to them. For example 'happy – sad', 'fearful – brave', 'upset – calm'. Do they show how Toby changes in the story?

Charades

Play charades using the emotional adjectives you have collected. The adjectives can be written down on pieces of paper and each student takes one from a container. They have to mime the emotion to the rest of the group and the group has to guess it. Take it in turns to mime an emotion.

Pet Project

Draw a picture of your pet. If you don't own a pet, draw a picture of one you'd like to have. Use your imagination, it doesn't have to be a dog or cat - it could be a dinosaur or a whale! Start a *pet picture wall* and put your drawings up for everyone to see.

Best Friend's Thank you Letter

The boy in the story wanted a friend. Who is your best friend? It could be a pet or a person. Write a short description of them. Include the best things about them and why you like them. You could illustrate it with a picture and send it to them as a thank you letter for being your best friend.

Learning Book Corner

Think of a book that has helped you learn about something you needed to do (not a story). What did you need to learn and how did it help you? Write a book recommendation. As a class you could start a library section on your class bookshelf of books that teach something and share them with your fellow students.

Explore Fiction/Non-fiction

Explore the differences between fiction and non-fiction. In the story Toby lives in a *fictionalized* setting with a boy and his Dad. Look at the author's note at the end of the book. Toby is a REAL dog. You can read about how Hazel Mitchell adopted Toby and his real life. If the author had written an account of this it would have been non-fiction. Look at the books on your classroom shelf. Point out fiction and non-fiction. Write a story about a real pet, animal or your favorite stuffy and put them in a 'fictionalized' setting. Can you think of a new family and new adventures for them?

Singing

Sing a song about a pet! How many songs do you know about dogs, cats and other animals? Sit in a circle and sing your songs as a group. You could even change the lyrics of the song to include the name of your pet!

Theatre

Choose one student to be the boy and another student to be Toby. Have them act out the emotions and actions observed when reading the book. Act out the sequence of the boy training Toby and Toby not doing the correct things. Then have the boy training Toby when he's doing the right things and talk about the differences – the emotions that they both use and the movements they make. Then act out the sequence in the garden when Toby is playing with his ball and ruins Dad's flowers. The teacher can play Dad!

Find out about Animal Shelters

Arrange a visit to an Animal Shelter or have a classroom skype session with one of the workers or volunteers at a shelter. Find out how they look after the animals and where the animals come from and how they are found new homes. Look online for stories of rescued pets. Afterwards, make up your own 'Adoption Poster', featuring Toby or another animal. Write a description of the pet underneath the illustration of the animal you've drawn. Put your 'lost pet' posters in a display area. Write about what you found out about adopting animals and when is the best time to adopt a pet and why. Think about the qualities you should look for in a pet. Remember how the boy and Dad wanted different dogs at the rescue shelter? How did they choose Toby?

Animal Training

Find out about how to train a pet and start a wall board in your classroom to post the information. You could add text and illustrations and cut out pictures from magazines. How do pets communicate and what signals do they give us? For example - wagging their tail. This is called 'non-verbal' communication. What does verbal communication and non-verbal communication mean? Name verbal signals and non-verbal by researching them online. You could look at all kinds of animals and how they communicate with each other and with humans. Illustrate your wall board with images of dogs doing training activities.

Ask a dog trainer and their dog to come and talk to your class. Find out about competitions and sports for highly trained dogs. Can you think or find out about any special jobs in our world for highly trained dogs? What kind of career can you have working with trained dogs?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hazel Mitchell has always loved drawing and still cannot be reliably left alone with a pencil. She has illustrated many books for children including *Imani's Moon*, *One Word Pearl*, *Animally* and *Where Do Fairies Go When It Snows?* 'Toby' is her author-illustrator debut from Candlewick Press. Her work has received several awards and been recognized by Bank Street Books, Learning Magazine, Reading is Fundamental, Foreword Reviews, NYCReads365, Society of Illustrators of Los Angeles, Charlotte/Mecklenburg, Chicago and Maine State libraries among others.



Originally from England, where she attended art-college and served in the Royal Navy, she now lives in Maine with her poodles Toby and Lucy and a cat called Sleep.

See more of her work at www.hazelmitchell.com.

Repped by Ginger Knowlton, Curtis Brown Ltd.

Q&A

How did you come to use Toby as a character in a book? Why did you put him in a fictionalized setting?

As soon as I adopted Toby I began to think I'd like to write a story about him. He'd had a difficult start in life and was very scared of many things. The way his character developed as he began to become more confident and curious touched my heart and I wanted to share this in a story. Sometimes in a new situation we can all get scared. Plus, he is very cute to draw! I gave him a fictional setting with a new boy and dad owners, because I wanted young readers to have a character in the story to relate to. I liked the idea of the emotional bond between the boy and Toby and exploring how that worked.

The boy in the book has just moved house, which can be quite a big change for a young person. Is this based on your own experience as a child?

Moving house can be an exciting time for a child, but it can be difficult, especially if it's a new neighborhood and school and you leave your friends behind. Both the boy in the story and Toby are going through the same kind of experiences in a way, perhaps that's why they have a close friendship. They have to deal with many of the same problems and overcome them. I think I did include some of my own experiences. My mother was a single parent, which is possibly why the boy's dad is on his own – but the readers can decide that for themselves. We had to move several times during my childhood. I left my friends behind and had changed schools, which meant I had to keep adjusting to new places and making new friends.

You have illustrated several books for children. Which is your favorite?

That is always a hard question! I think my favorite book is always the one I am going to work on next! *Toby* is a special book for me as it's my first as author and illustrator, and about my own dog. I enjoy the experience of working on different kinds of books. *Imani's Moon*, which is a book about an African tribal girl, was interesting because I had to research Africa. A totally different book is *Where Do Fairies Go When It Snows?* - I liked doing that one because I got to draw lots of little things and tiny houses which was fun!

Apart from Toby, do you have any other pets?

I have another poodle called Lucy, who is a white, standard poodle and twice as big as Toby, who is a miniature poodle. I also have a black cat called Sleep. I've had lots of animals in my life though ... about 15 dogs, several cats and 2 horses.

How long does it take you to complete a new picture book from the idea to final proofs?***What kind of changes to you have to make to words and pictures?***

It really depends on the type of book. Chapter books, with black and white illustrations, have to be done quite quickly in about 2 months. Picture books can take 6 months to a year or more. As *Toby* is my first book as both author and illustrator it's a different experience. It took 1 year 6 months from first idea to sending the publisher the final art. THEN you have to wait for the book to be published and sent to bookstores.

What comes first, words or pictures?

With *Toby* it was pictures. I was drawing him all the time before I started thinking of his story. There's not very much text in the book, mostly dialogue and some narrative lines, so really the words and pictures came together. I did a lot of note writing about how the story would go when I started to make the sketches for the pages.

Toby has a muted color palette except for the bright red on Toby's collar and the boy's shoes.***Why did you use those colors?***

I was going to make the book black and white, but the art director for the book and I decided that light colors would be better. Except for the bright red on Toby's collar and the boy's shoes and that was deliberate. I wanted an emotional connection between the dog and boy and the color portrays this in the illustrations. There's no other use of bright red in the book.

What is your typical workday like?

I get up earlyish, maybe 6.30am. I make a cup of tea, let the dogs out and then sit down at my computer and check email and social media and reply to anything urgent. If I'm working on a book I usually get straight into work. I will break for lunch, do some exercise (such as swimming in the local lake in summer) or sit in the garden with the dogs. Then I go back to work in the afternoon until my husband comes home. Sometimes I work in the evening and at the weekends if I have a deadline to meet.

Where do you have your studio and what is it like?

My studio is on the second floor of our house and has big windows looking over the fields. One side has my computer, scanner, printers and the other has my drawing board and a workspace for laying out work in progress. And, of course, lots of bookshelves and storage. I have a comfy armchair for reading in and a woodstove in winter. Toby usually sits on a futon by the fire, Sleep curls up in the chair and Lucy stretches out on the rug next to me. I listen to BBC radio when I work.

Do you prefer writing or drawing?

I love them both! I've always earned my living as an artist, so that's more natural. Writing is totally different and uses a different part of my brain. To be able to do both of these things as a career is wonderful.

When did you start drawing and were you inspired by any teachers in your schools?

I honestly can't remember not drawing or making things. It's what I did when there was nothing else to do. Art was my best subject at school and I drew on everything, all my books and notes. The teacher who inspired me most was one I had for art from 16-18 called Mr. Fulford. He loved art himself and believed in my work. In fact he was the one who encouraged me to pursue a career in art and to go to college. And I will always thank him for that.

Do you have any suggestions for teachers and parents to help young readers, writers and artists develop?

Make sure children have ready access to books – in the home, at school, in the car. If they see you reading they'll copy you. Talk about books with them, read aloud and ask them to read to you. Make sure they are active members of their library and guide them toward books that will interest them. There are books to hold the attention of every level and every age. Encourage them to seek them out. Take young artists to museums and galleries ... let them see as much art as possible!



COMMON CORE STANDARDS

This classroom guide is suitable for preschool through second grade. Content enables teachers to use 'TOBY' in English Language Arts, Art, Drama and Social Studies curricula, in accordance with common core standards.



Links for Toby Online

EMAIL TOBY @
meettoby@outlook.com

Find out more about Toby, his book and download activity sheets

<http://www.hazelmitchell.com/Toby>

Toby on Twitter

[tweet@meetToby](https://twitter.com/meetToby)<http://www.facebook.com/meettoby/>

Watch Toby's Book Trailer

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9TgIF-6Yo1o>

Buy Toby's book

<http://www.indiebound.org/book/9780763680930>

[http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/toby-hazel-mitchell/1123282586.](http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/toby-hazel-mitchell/1123282586)

Copyright

Toby. Copyright © 2016 by Hazel Mitchell.

Reproduced by permission of the publisher, Candlewick Press, Somerville, MA.

Download Toby activity and information sheets at <http://hazelmitchell.com/toby>