

Where This Fits in Your Year

Vermont · Grade 5 · English Language Arts

Black Beauty (Read-Along)

Natural instructional unit

Literary comprehension, theme, character change, and evidence-based response

Place this pack in Grade 5 in Vermont during a literature sequence focused on moving from explicit details toward interpretation.

Lessons 2-4 establish the evidence base through Duchess's advice, the flooded-bridge sequence, and Ginger's change across two periods of her life. Lesson 5 then asks students to state a general idea about humane treatment and connect it to several parts of the narrative.

The sequence is strongest where students must return to the text and explain what specific details show. The Ginger lesson requires a before-and-after comparison grounded in explicit evidence, while the bridge lesson asks students to explain how one event changes the outcome. Lesson 7 extends that work into writing: students make a bounded claim, choose three relevant details, paraphrase them, and explain Black Beauty's movement from hardship to recovery and security.

Use this as a compact literature-comprehension and evidence-based response sequence rather than as a complete Grade 5 language arts unit.

Curriculum placement based on the student work required in this lesson pack.

<- All books

Black Beauty (Read-Along)

Book 5628 · Grade 5

7 lessons, each with a full and a short version

1. Full Plan

TIME	70 minutes
OBJECTIVE	Develop six text-dependent products and synthesize an evidence-based response about the effects of humane care.
STUDENT	Six skill products and one integrated synthesis.
PRODUCT	
FOCUS	How treatment shapes Black Beauty and Ginger across the narrative.

Essential question

How does patient, humane care affect Black Beauty at different stages of his life?

Materials

Verified book source Prepared cited passages identified by the source-evidence locators Student response materials

Lesson sequence

1	Key details · 10 min Identify four lessons Duchess gives young Black Beauty about behavior and work. Prepared text: Passage 2
2	Sequence and structure · 10 min Build a three-step chain for the flooded-bridge episode and explain how stopping changes the outcome. Prepared text: Passages 7, 8, 9
3	Character development · 10 min Compare Ginger at Birtwick with her later condition in London using explicit details from both moments. Prepared text: Passages 6, 14
4	Compare details · 10 min Compare gradual railway training with the tight check-rein as two human-controlled experiences with different effects. Prepared text: Passages 4, 12
5	Central idea and theme · 10 min State a general idea about humane treatment and connect it to Duchess, Ginger, and Black Beauty's recovery. Prepared text: Passages 2, 6, 15
6	Evidence-based writing · 10 min Trace Black Beauty from hardship to recovery and security using three paraphrased details. Prepared text: Passages 3, 12, 15, 16
7	Synthesis · 10 min Answer the essential question with evidence from at least three stages of Black Beauty's life. Prepared text: Passages 2, 4, 6, 12, 15, 16

Teacher guidance

Evidence rationale: The retained passages form a coherent arc: early guidance, danger and judgment, the effects of treatment, contrasting human practices, recovery, and final security.

Expected answer:	Patient, humane care helps Black Beauty develop trust, overcome fear, recover physically, and reach security; harsh or restrictive treatment produces pain, fear, and exhaustion.
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Assessment

Look for:

- Uses explicit details rather than unsupported motives.
- Keeps events in textual order where sequence matters.
- Connects treatment to observable effects.
- States the theme as a general idea, not a plot summary.
- Uses evidence from at least three different stages in the synthesis.

Teacher note. Preview the cited episode in context. Use neutral, source-bounded language; do not require personal disclosure; and distinguish story events from safe real-world conduct.

Short version · 20 minutes

1	Character development · 5 min Contrast Ginger at Birtwick and later in London. Prepared text: Passages 6, 14
2	Central idea and theme · 5 min State the central idea about humane treatment. Prepared text: Passages 2, 6, 15
3	Evidence-based writing · 5 min Trace hardship, recovery, and security with three details. Prepared text: Passages 3, 12, 15, 16
4	Synthesis · 5 min Answer the essential question with three evidence points. Prepared text: Passages 6, 12, 15, 16

2. Key details

TIME	20 minutes
OBJECTIVE	Identify explicit advice given to Black Beauty and explain its main parts.
STUDENT	A list of four lessons from Duchess's advice, with one sentence explaining what the advice has

PRODUCT	in common.
FOCUS	Duchess's advice to young Black Beauty.

Essential question

What specific lessons does Duchess teach Black Beauty about behavior and work?

Materials

- Verified book source
- Prepared cited passages identified by the source-evidence locators
- Student response materials

Lesson sequence

1	Launch · 3 min Read the prepared passage and mark each direct instruction Duchess gives. Prepared text: Passage 2
2	Sort the advice · 5 min Group the advice under gentleness, willingness, careful behavior, and self-control. Prepared text: Passage 2
3	Evidence check · 5 min Verify that every listed lesson is explicitly supported by the passage. Prepared text: Passage 2
4	Student product · 5 min Write four lessons and one sentence describing what they have in common. Prepared text: Passage 2
5	Exit check · 2 min Name one behavior Duchess warns Black Beauty against and explain the corresponding positive behavior. Prepared text: Passage 2

Teacher guidance

Evidence rationale: The passage directly states Duchess's instructions and the behaviors she wants Black Beauty to avoid.

Expected answer:	Duchess advises him to be gentle, willing, well-mannered, and not to bite or kick even in play.
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Model: Duchess presents good character as gentleness, willing work, careful movement, and self-control.

Support and extension

Above: Rank the four lessons by how much they matter later in Black Beauty's life and justify the ranking.

Below: Use the stems: "Duchess tells him to..." and "She warns him never to..."

Assessment

Look for:

- Names at least four explicit instructions.
- Uses only details stated in the prepared passage.
- Distinguishes advice from later events or interpretation.

Short version · 10 minutes

1	Focus · 2 min Identify Duchess's direct instructions. Prepared text: Passage 2
2	Evidence move · 5 min Select four instructions and match each to the behavior it promotes or prevents. Prepared text: Passage 2
3	Product · 3 min Write the four-item list. Prepared text: Passage 2

3. Sequence and structure

TIME	20 minutes
OBJECTIVE	Order the flooded-bridge episode and explain how one event changes what can happen next.
STUDENT	A three-step event chain plus one cause-and-effect sentence.
PRODUCT	
FOCUS	The flooded-bridge sequence.

Essential question

What happens from the moment Black Beauty reaches the bridge until the party returns safely?

Materials

- Verified book source
- Prepared cited passages identified by the source-evidence locators

- Student response materials

Lesson sequence

1	Launch · 3 min Identify the exact moment the danger sequence begins. Prepared text: Passages 7, 8, 9
2	Order events · 5 min Arrange Beauty's refusal, the toll-gate warning, and the master's realization in order. Prepared text: Passages 7, 8, 9
3	Cause and effect · 5 min Explain why Beauty's stopping matters before anyone knows the bridge is broken. Prepared text: Passages 7, 8, 9
4	Student product · 5 min Write "first / next / finally," then add one sentence explaining the causal link. Prepared text: Passages 7, 8, 9
5	Exit check · 2 min Identify the event that prevents the travelers from entering the river. Prepared text: Passages 7, 8, 9

Teacher guidance

Evidence rationale: The three prepared passages provide consecutive stages and a clear causal relationship.

Expected answer:	First Beauty refuses to advance; next the toll-gate man reveals the bridge is broken; finally the master recognizes that Beauty's refusal saved the party.
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Support and extension

Above: Explain how the delayed warning increases suspense because the reader sees Beauty resist before the reason is known.

Below: Complete: "First, Beauty _____. Next, the toll-gate man _____. Finally, the master _____."

Assessment

Look for:

- Places all three events in textual order.
- Explains that stopping prevents the travelers from entering the river.
- Uses at least one detail from each selected passage.

Short version · 10 minutes

1	Focus · 2 min Locate the three turning points. Prepared text: Passages 7, 8, 9
2	Evidence move · 5 min Order them and explain why the first changes the outcome. Prepared text: Passages 7, 8, 9
3	Product · 3 min Write the three-step chain. Prepared text: Passages 7, 8, 9

4. Character development

TIME	25 minutes
OBJECTIVE	Describe how Ginger changes across two periods of her life using explicit evidence.
STUDENT	A before-and-after comparison supported by two cited details from each period.
PRODUCT	
FOCUS	Ginger under kind and harsh treatment.

Essential question

How does Ginger change between her time at Birtwick and Black Beauty's later meeting with her in London?

Materials

- Verified book source
- Prepared cited passages identified by the source-evidence locators
- Student response materials

Lesson sequence

1	Launch · 4 min Create two headings: "At Birtwick" and "In London." Prepared text: Passages 6, 14
2	Birtwick evidence · 5 min Collect details describing Ginger's behavior and disposition under kind treatment. Prepared text: Passage 6

3	London evidence · 5 min Collect details describing her later physical condition after hard use. Prepared text: Passage 14
4	Student product · 8 min Write a before-and-after comparison that connects each condition to the treatment described in the text. Prepared text: Passages 6, 14
5	Exit check · 3 min State the largest change without assigning Ginger an unsupported motive. Prepared text: Passages 6, 14

Teacher guidance

Evidence rationale: One passage records growing trust under kind treatment; the later passage documents visible bodily damage after relentless labor.

Expected answer:	At Birtwick Ginger becomes gentle, cheerful, and affectionate; later she is thin, swollen, misshapen, and short of breath.
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Model: Kindness at Birtwick accompanies growing trust, while later hard work leaves Ginger visibly exhausted and damaged.

Support and extension

Above: Explain what the contrast suggests about the lasting effects of treatment, while distinguishing evidence from inference.

Below: Use a two-column organizer and complete: “At Birtwick, Ginger _____. Later in London, she _____.”

Assessment

Look for:

- Accurately describes Ginger at Birtwick.
- Accurately describes Ginger in London.
- Connects each description to treatment without presenting unsupported motives as fact.

Short version · 10 minutes

1	Focus · 2 min Set up the two-period comparison. Prepared text: Passages 6, 14
2	Evidence move · 5 min Select two details from each period. Prepared text: Passages 6, 14

3	Product · 3 min Write the before-and-after comparison. Prepared text: Passages 6, 14
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5. Central idea and theme

TIME	25 minutes
OBJECTIVE	State a central idea about humane treatment and connect it to evidence from multiple parts of the narrative.
STUDENT	A one-sentence theme statement followed by three brief evidence connections.
PRODUCT	
FOCUS	How humane care shapes behavior and well-being.

Essential question

What central idea about humane treatment is developed through Duchess, Ginger, and Black Beauty's recovery?

Materials

- Verified book source
- Prepared cited passages identified by the source-evidence locators
- Student response materials

Lesson sequence

1	Launch · 4 min Separate a theme statement from a plot summary. Prepared text: Passages 2, 6, 15
2	Evidence 1 · 4 min Use Duchess's advice as evidence about guidance and behavior. Prepared text: Passage 2
3	Evidence 2 · 4 min Use Ginger at Birtwick as evidence about kindness and trust. Prepared text: Passage 6
4	Evidence 3 · 4 min Use Black Beauty's recovery as evidence about rest, nourishment, and gentle care. Prepared text: Passage 15

5	Student product · 7 min Write one general theme statement and three evidence connections. Prepared text: Passages 2, 6, 15
6	Exit check · 2 min Revise any sentence that merely retells what happened. Prepared text: Passages 2, 6, 15

Teacher guidance

Evidence rationale: The three passages show early guidance, improvement in a kind home, and physical recovery through humane care.

Expected answer:	The text suggests that patience, guidance, nourishment, and gentle treatment help horses develop trust, good behavior, health, and willingness.
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Support and extension

Above: Qualify the theme by explaining why kindness does not immediately erase every injury or fear.

Below: Use: “The story suggests that animals respond to humane treatment by _____. This appears when _____.”

Assessment

Look for:

- States a general lesson rather than a plot summary.
- Connects the theme to all three passages.
- Uses cautious interpretive language such as “suggests.” Short version · 10 minutes

1	Focus · 2 min State the central idea in general terms. Prepared text: Passages 2, 6, 15
2	Evidence move · 5 min Attach one brief detail from each passage. Prepared text: Passages 2, 6, 15
3	Product · 3 min Write the theme statement plus three evidence notes. Prepared text: Passages 2, 6, 15

6. Compare details

TIME	20 minutes
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OBJECTIVE	Compare the effects of two different human approaches on the same horse.
STUDENT	A comparison with one shared axis and two clear differences.
PRODUCT	
FOCUS	Gradual railway training versus the tight check-rein.

Essential question

How do Black Beauty's experiences with railway training and the tight check-rein differ?

Materials

- Verified book source
- Prepared cited passages identified by the source-evidence locators
- Student response materials

Lesson sequence

1	Launch · 3 min Name the shared comparison axis: a human-controlled experience that initially causes discomfort or fear. Prepared text: Passages 4, 12
2	Railway training · 4 min Identify what changes as Beauty repeatedly learns the trains are harmless. Prepared text: Passage 4
3	Check-rein · 4 min Identify the continuing physical effects of the tight rein. Prepared text: Passage 12
4	Student product · 7 min Write a comparison that states the shared axis and two differences in outcome. Prepared text: Passages 4, 12
5	Exit check · 2 min Explain why one experience becomes manageable while the other remains harmful. Prepared text: Passages 4, 12

Teacher guidance

Evidence rationale: Both passages show Black Beauty responding to human-controlled experiences, but one is safe habituation and the other is continuing physical restraint.

Expected answer:	Gradual exposure to harmless trains allows fear to fade, whereas the tight rein causes pain, breathing trouble, tenderness, and exhaustion.
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Support and extension

Above: Explain why the outcomes differ even though both experiences initially cause discomfort.

Below: Complete: "With the trains, Beauty eventually _____. With the check-rein, he continued to _____."

Assessment

Look for:

- Identifies treatment and its effects as the comparison axis.
- Explains the positive result of gradual railway exposure.
- Explains at least two harmful effects of the check-rein.

Short version · 10 minutes

1	Focus · 2 min Name the shared comparison axis. Prepared text: Passages 4, 12
2	Evidence move · 5 min Select one outcome from the train episode and two from the check-rein episode. Prepared text: Passages 4, 12
3	Product · 3 min Write the comparison. Prepared text: Passages 4, 12

7. Evidence-based writing

TIME	25 minutes
OBJECTIVE	Write a concise explanation of Black Beauty's movement from hardship to recovery and security.
STUDENT	A focused paragraph with a claim, three paraphrased evidence details, and explanation.
PRODUCT	
FOCUS	Black Beauty's trajectory from suffering to a secure home.

Essential question

How does the author trace Black Beauty's journey from suffering toward recovery and security?

Materials

- Verified book source
- Prepared cited passages identified by the source-evidence locators
- Student response materials

Lesson sequence

1	Launch · 4 min Set a bounded claim: this paragraph traces hardship, recovery, and security rather than summarizing the entire book. Prepared text: Passages 3, 12, 15, 16
2	Hardship · 4 min Select one detail showing loss or damaging treatment. Prepared text: Passages 3, 12
3	Recovery · 4 min Select one detail showing restored health through rest and humane care. Prepared text: Passage 15
4	Security · 4 min Select one detail showing the stability of Black Beauty's final home. Prepared text: Passage 16
5	Student product · 7 min Write the paragraph and explain how each detail advances the trajectory. Prepared text: Passages 3, 12, 15, 16
6	Exit check · 2 min Check that evidence is paraphrased and that the final sentence explains resolution rather than merely ending the summary. Prepared text: Passages 3, 12, 15, 16

Teacher guidance

Evidence rationale: The selected passages trace Black Beauty from loss and painful restraint to physical recovery and lasting security.

Expected answer:	Black Beauty experiences death and severe mistreatment, but rest and humane care restore his health before he reaches a secure final home.
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Model: Black Beauty's life includes painful losses and damaging treatment, yet sustained rest and kindness rebuild his strength and lead to a home where he no longer fears being sold.

Support and extension

Above: Analyze how the peaceful final memory of Birtwick strengthens the resolution.

Below: Plan with three boxes labeled “Hardship,” “Recovery,” and “Secure home,” then write one sentence for each.

Assessment

Look for:

- Presents a bounded claim about hardship and recovery.
- Uses evidence from at least three selected passages.
- Paraphrases evidence rather than copying a full evidence atom.
- Explains how the ending resolves Black Beauty’s uncertainty.

Short version · 10 minutes

1	Focus · 2 min State the trajectory claim. Prepared text: Passages 3, 12, 15, 16
2	Evidence move · 5 min Choose one detail each for hardship, recovery, and security. Prepared text: Passages 3, 12, 15, 16
3	Product · 3 min Write a compact evidence-based paragraph. Prepared text: Passages 3, 12, 15, 16