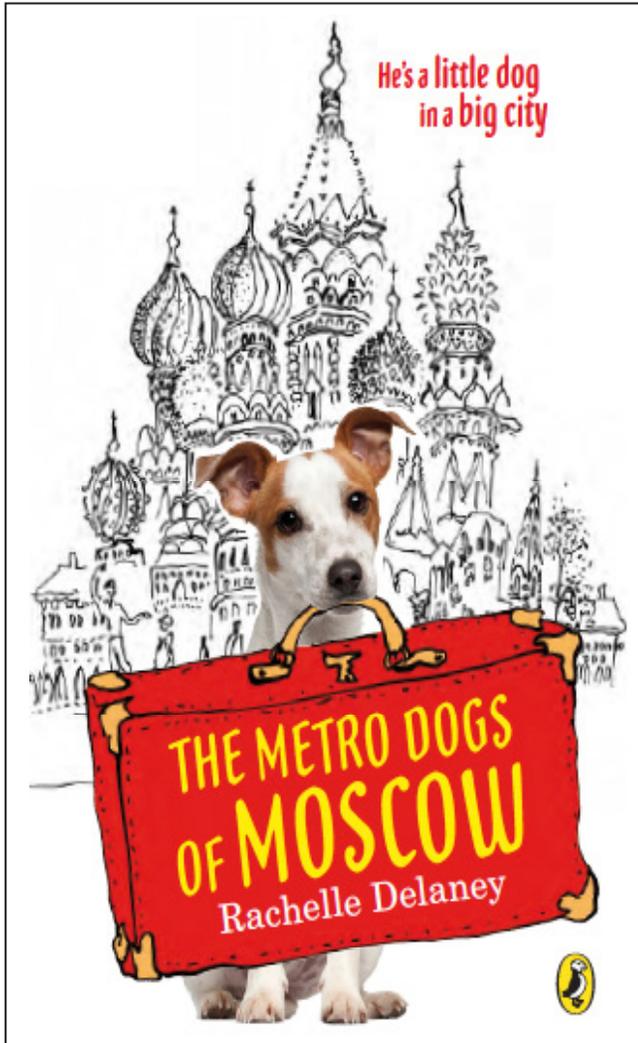


The Metro Dogs of Moscow



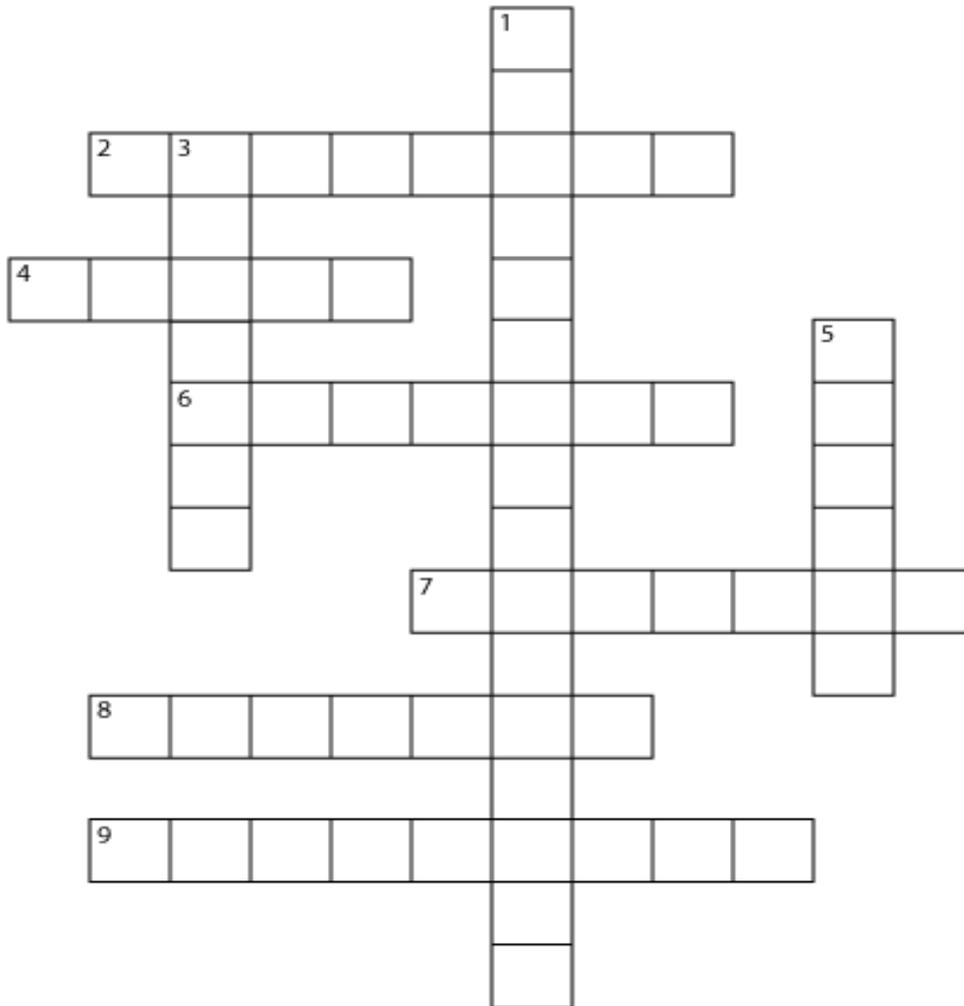
Teachers Guide

A collection of activities to accompany the novel.

Suitable for Grades 3 through 6.

Activity 1

Crossword Puzzle



Across

2. A Dutch dog breed (Hint: Beatrix is this kind of dog.)
4. The neighbourhood in Moscow where JR lives.
6. Boris's stolen goods.
7. A former fortress within a Russian town or city.
8. The street artist who stole the stray dogs of Moscow.
9. The dog breed JR dislikes most.

Down

1. The metro dogs' favourite food stand.
3. Where George, Johanna, and John work.
5. The city JR and George lived in before moving to Moscow.

Answers on last page.

Tracking down the Metro Dogs

The idea for this novel came from a newspaper article Rachelle read, which described some stray dogs in Moscow that had learned to take the subway to get around the city. Sensing an excellent story, Rachelle immediately hopped online to find out more. And the more she read, the faster the story unfolded in her mind.

But she didn't write the novel right away. For about two years, she read every article she could find about Moscow's stray dogs, and took notes about possible characters and plot elements. Finally, once she was certain she knew the story and characters, Rachelle sat down and wrote *The Metro Dogs of Moscow* from start to finish.

There was just one problem. Having never been to Moscow, or anywhere in Russia, she could only base her descriptions of the city on what she read online. She knew it wasn't enough. So she set out (her patient mother in tow) to visit Moscow, and take in the sights, smells, and sounds of the city—and hopefully find some stray dogs.

The trip turned out to be a great success. Rachelle toured the Kremlin, took in St. Basil's Cathedral, rode the subway, and even visited other Russian towns and cities like St. Petersburg and Novgorod. She quickly realized that the real Moscow was nothing like the one she'd described in her story (for one thing, it was much, much colder), so she took lots of notes and later re-wrote many of the descriptions.

Though she never actually spotted any stray dogs on the subway (though many people assured her they were there), she did encounter strays all over Russia, including one that had made himself the guardian of the Kremlin in Novgorod. Not only did the trip help her understand and describe Russia, it gave her ideas for many more stories.

Writing challenge:

Think of a story you once read or heard that stuck in your mind. Or open today's newsletter, and find one that interests you. How could you make it into a longer story, adding characters and details from your imagination? What kind of research might you do to make it better?



Lost in Moscow: an online scavenger hunt

JR's friends are scattered all over Moscow, and he needs to herd them all together. But all he has is a series of clues to help him find them. Using the novel and your online research skills, help JR figure out where each of his friends went, so he can reunite them.

1. John Cowley took Robert and Pie to see a former Russian leader who died in 1924. His body has been carefully preserved for all these years! What is that leader's name, and where is his body kept?
2. Beatrix went to see the ballet, at the most famous historic theatre in Russia. Where did she go?
3. Ania took the metro to see the statue of Malchik, the dog who was stabbed on the subway. Which station did she go to?
4. Boris prefers the literary sights. He went to pay his respects at the former home of the author who wrote War and Peace. What's this author's name?
5. Diego is more interested in learning more about Sputnik. What is this, and what museum might he have visited?

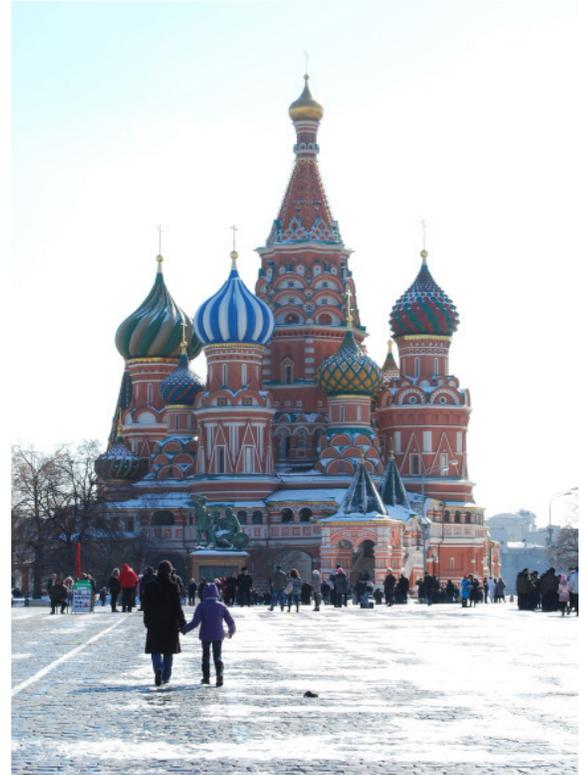
Answers on last page.

About the Moscow Metro System

The Moscow Metro system is 308.7 km long, with 12 lines and 186 stations. Every day, about 6.6 million passengers use it, making it one of the busiest subway system in the world. Its construction began back in the 1930s and continued throughout World War 2, when some metro stations were used as air raid shelters. During the Cold War (the period between 1945 and 1991 when western countries like the U.S. had tense relations with communist nations like the USSR), Russia built the deepest parts of the metro. Its leaders planned to use them as shelter in case of nuclear war (which of course never happened).

The Moscow Metro is renowned for its amazing architecture -- many stations have beautiful statues and mosaics, marble walls, and chandeliers. Like Boris said, they were built as palaces for the people's enjoyment.

Hop online and do an image search for the Moscow Metro stations. Some of the most famous ones are Mayakovskaya station, Komsomolskaya station, and Kievskaya station.



Activity 4

Dog Talk

Our canine friends express themselves very differently from humans. Using the novel, the Internet, and books from your library, find out how a dog would express each of the following feelings, then describe or draw it in the space below:

AGGRESSION



ANXIETY

BOREDOM

EXCITEMENT

FEAR

Survival Tactics

In *The Metro Dogs of Moscow*, the stray dogs had many tricks and tactics that helped them survive on the streets. They stole food using strategies like the Bark-and-grab and the Sit-and-look-cute. They rode the metro to get around the city. They made a comfortable headquarters out of a secret room in the (name) metro station.

Imagine yourself as a stray dog in your own town or city. Use this page to describe or draw your own survival tactics. What would you eat and how would you acquire it? Where would you live, and how would you keep warm? How would you get around? Let your imagination run wild!



Activity 6

Not Your Average Fashion Show

In *The Metro Dogs of Moscow*, Filip Filipov puts on a very different kind of fashion show, with dirty stray dogs and models wearing rags.

Now it's your turn to dream up a bizarre fashion show, and design the clothes it would feature. Who would your models be? (Zombies? Pirates?) Where would it take place? (A deserted island? An abandoned school?) Use the space below to design some outlandish outfits, and put on a show no one will forget!



Answers

Activity 1

Across:

2. Keeshond
4. Arbat
6. Sausage
7. Kremlin
8. Filipov
9. Dachshund

Down:

1. Kroshka Kartoshka
3. Embassy
5. Dublin

Activity 3

1. Lenin; Red Square
2. The Bolshoi Theatre
3. Mendeleyevskaya Station
4. Leo Tolstoy
5. Sputnik was the first satellite launched into space; the Museum of Cosmonautics

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