KSRA Common Core Literacy Lessons

Intermediate Book Format
Book Title: *Rags: Hero Dog of WWI A True Story*
Author: Margot Theis Raven
Illustrator: Peter Brown
Publisher: Sleeping Bear Press
Year of Publication: 2014
ISBN: 9781585362585
Genre: Narrative nonfiction
Age Range: Ages 7-10
Readability Level: Grade 4 (Lexile 740, GRL R)
Awards:
- 2016 Teachers' Choice Awards for Children's Book, Winner, 2016
- 2016 Storytelling World Awards, Winner, 2016
- 2016 New York State Reading Association Charlotte Award, Winner, 2016
- Comstock Read Aloud Book Awards, Commended, 2015
- 2014 USA Best Books Award - Children's Picture Book: Hardcover Non-Fiction Category, Short-listed, 2014
- Keystone to Reading Book Award 2016

Book Summary: During the First World War, Private James Donovan meets a stray dog on the streets of Paris. Donovan and the members of the First Division soon adopt the dog as a sort of mascot, and name him Rags, because of his scruffy appearance. There is no official rank or division for dogs in the army, but Rags does his part, accompanying Donovan to the Front and making himself useful delivering messages and cheering up the troops. In 1918, both Donovan and Rags are seriously injured by a blast, and they are sent to a hospital. Both are sent back to the United States to recover, where Donovan sadly dies. Rags lives on to be adopted by a military family and he lives out his life on an army base. After his death, Rags was buried with full military honors.

Curriculum Connections:
Social Studies Connections: Veteran's Day, Memorial Day, World War I
Science Connections: Dogs, Pets
Character Education Connections: Friendship, Perseverance, Loyalty

PACCS:	CC1.3.6A Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments. (A loyal dog befriended a soldier and all of the soldiers benefitted.) CC1.3.6B Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly, as well as inferences and/or generalizations drawn from the text.

Activating Strategy:	Utilize a picture splash to create mental images of WWI, Paris during WWI, and the Battle of Argonne. Complete a pass around paragraph in small groups to access prior knowledge about canine soldier mascot dogs. Check student work by using a Give One Get One approach to build a network of connections. The teacher should start and alternate sharing ideas with the students. Create an ongoing chart of ideas that reveal the value of these mascot dogs and their missions as they lifted the spirits of our battle weary troops. Think about a special relationship you have had. What made it special and enduring? What made that person likable?
Key Vocabulary:	Wits alone, infantry, signalman, runner, through thick and thin, belly-to-dirt, going west on us The following show the use of similes and phrases to describe Rags and his supportive relationship to Donovan: dark as a pocket, eyebrows look like fuzzy caterpillars, read Donovan's wires like a book, his voice calmed him like a nap in the sun, sprayed metal like hard rain
Teaching Strategies:	Teach students the Restate Answer Cite Explain (RACE) strategy. Then use the strategy as a format for discussing and answering explicit prompts that require information from the text, such as "List the ways in which Rags helps the soldiers complete their military missions" or "Describe how all the soldiers in Donovan's unit are better off because of Rags' loyalty to Donovan." Then have students discuss and answer these explicit prompts orally or in writing or both. Do the same for implicit prompts, starting with opinion prompts that allow students to cite text and meld that with their own knowledge, such as "Do you think it is appropriate to have dogs serve alongside humans in a war? Explain." As before, have students discuss and answer these implicit prompts orally or in writing or both. For older students, use the story of Rags as starting point to formulate arguments for or against having animals serve alongside humans in a time of war. Have students articulate their arguments through peer discussion and/or in writing. Explain that good writers sometimes infuse dialogue into informational books in order to add interest and drama to their stories. Point out passages in the book where Margot Theis Raven uses the device of dialogue. Then challenge student writers to add dialogue to a book passage that currently contains no dialogue.
Summarizing Strategies	Identify character traits that apply to both Rags and Private Donovan. After deciding on a trait to focus on, label a T chart with Rags on the left and Private Donovan on the right. Making use of the entire book, cite text and illustrations that give evidence for the character trait as it is displayed in Rags and in Donovan.

	Create a timeline for Rags. Include events and information found in the book's preface and epilogue, as well as its main body.
	Obtain copies of the picture books *Laika: Astronaut Dog* (Owen Davey) and *Stubby the Dog Soldier* (Blake Hoena). Compare and contrast the lives of these dogs with the life of Rags. Then identify a theme or themes common to all three books.