

OLD YELLER

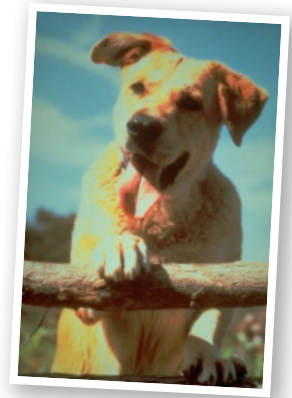


Synopsis

The eldest Coates boy is forced to become the man of the family when his father leaves on a cattle drive. Protecting his mother and younger brother becomes his sole responsibility. While Travis is at first reluctant to embrace Old Yeller, this quickly changes as he observes the dog's loyalty and dedication to the family. Old Yeller protects the family from snakes, raccoons, bears and many other dangerous animals in the area. The dog eventually wins the heart of the entire Coates family and is adopted as one of their own.

Discussion Questions

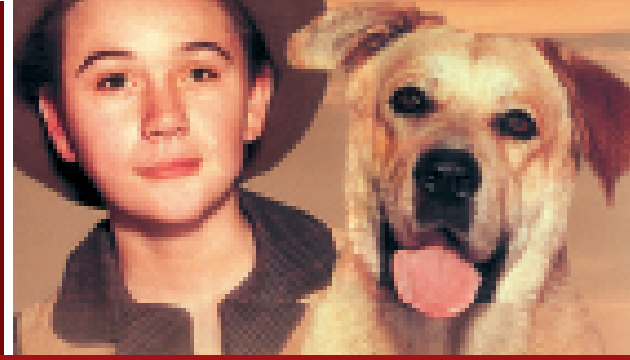
- Old Yeller is a loyal dog to Travis and Arliss. What is the importance of having a pet in a child's life?
- Did you grow up in a family with a dog? What role did the dog play in your family?
- Travis at first doesn't want Old Yeller, but he soon becomes quite attached to the dog because of his loyalty and protection of his family. Have you ever had to warm up to a pet before you truly appreciated it?
- If you live in the city and have a dog, what are some of the differences between the way you interact with your dog and the way Travis and Arliss interact with Old Yeller?
- Travis' friend Lisbeth gives him a new puppy after Old Yeller is attacked by the wild pig, but Travis doesn't accept her gift and makes her cry. Why do you think Travis treats Lisbeth the way he does?
- After Old Yeller gets sick, Travis is scared to have a new dog. When Travis' dad comes home from his cattle drive, he tells Travis that he "can't afford to waste the good part fretting about the bad. That makes it all bad." Have you ever had something happen that caused you to focus too much on the bad and not enough on the good? Is Travis' dad's advice something that can help you?



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Activities

- *Old Yeller* was set in post Civil War Texas, around 1870. This was over 100 years ago! Make a list of five differences between the time period when *Old Yeller* took place and today. What are some of the most interesting differences? Do you think you'd rather live then or now?
- Travis and Arliss lead a pretty exciting life full of outdoor adventures with bears, wild pigs and even wolves. They don't have TV to watch and instead spend their days farming, branding pigs and being outside from sunrise to sunset. Learn what it could have been like to have a life like Travis and Arliss by visiting a living history museum near you.



Get Involved

- Hydrophobia, the disease that causes many of the animals around the Coates home to become sick is also what we know today as rabies. While rabies isn't very common in dogs in America because we have vaccinations to prevent the disease, it is still important to take care of the animals around you. Some animals might not have people to make sure they get the right shots and vaccines. Take time to volunteer your time at your local humane society or think about contributing food or other pet supplies to help keep the animals well fed and comfortable.
- *Old Yeller* takes us back in time and shows us what it was like to live in post Civil War Texas. What can you do in your community to help preserve history so that in the future others can see what it was like to live in the early 21st century? Here is a websites to get you started:
 - National Historic Landmarks Program: www.nps.gov/history/nhl

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