



Year 1 Lesson Sequence

Literacy & Dog Safety

A four-lesson sequence using a picture book to develop reading, writing, speaking and listening while opening conversations about safe, respectful and responsible behaviour around dogs.

At A Glance

Suggested age	Year 1 (UK) / approximately 5–6 years
Sequence	4 lessons
Suggested lesson length	45–60 minutes per lesson (adapt as appropriate)
Core text	Buddy & Tilda by Cats Clawson, Picture Book
Main learning areas	Reading, writing, speaking & listening, creative work and dog-safety education
Central idea	Use a familiar story and its characters to help children discuss feelings, choices, consequences and safe interactions with dogs.

Learning Outcomes

- Children engage positively with reading and writing activities.
- Children use descriptive and creative language when talking and writing about characters and adventures.
- Children discuss responsible behaviour around dogs.
- Children have opportunities to practise speaking, listening and role-play.
- Children develop their understanding of key dog-safety messages.
- Children communicate safety advice to others using words and pictures.

Lesson 1 — Exploring Characters

Focus: shared reading, character understanding and descriptive writing.

Learning intention: To talk about characters and use descriptive vocabulary to describe a character.

Success criteria:

- I can talk about Buddy or Tilda and describe what they are like.
- I can choose words that describe a character.
- I can write descriptive sentences about my chosen character.

Suggested sequence:

1. Read Buddy & Tilda together.
2. Talk about the story, characters and themes. Invite children to explain what they notice about Buddy and Tilda and what makes the characters interesting.
3. Model collecting descriptive words and phrases.
4. Children choose either Buddy or Tilda to draw.
5. Children write descriptive sentences about their chosen character.
6. Invite children to share their drawings and sentences with a partner or the class.

Teacher prompts:

- “What is Buddy/Tilda like? What makes you think that?”
- “What does Tilda want to do? How might Tilda feel?”
- “What might Buddy want? How might Buddy feel?”

Lesson 2 — Creating New Adventures

Focus: imaginative storytelling and creative writing.

Learning intention: To create and describe a new adventure for Buddy & Tilda using imaginative and ambitious vocabulary.

Success criteria:

- I can imagine a new adventure for Buddy & Tilda.
- I can describe where the adventure happens.
- I can use interesting vocabulary to develop my ideas.

Suggested sequence:

1. Revisit the characters and key events from the Buddy & Tilda story.
2. Ask children where Buddy and Tilda might go next. Use familiar places such as parks and other outdoor spaces as prompts, while encouraging children to invent their own settings.
3. Collect vocabulary together: places, sights, sounds, movement and feelings.
4. Children plan and/or draw a new adventure.
5. Children write or dictate sentences describing what happens.
6. Share selected adventures and celebrate ambitious vocabulary.

Teacher prompt:

- “Where else might Buddy and Tilda go?”
- “What can they see, hear and do?”
- “How might they feel?”

Lesson 3 — Learning About Dog Safety

Focus: discussion, real-life scenarios and role-play.

Learning intention: To discuss and practise safe, respectful and responsible behaviour around dogs. To encourage communication and discussion with listening and participation.

Success criteria:

- I can talk about ways to behave safely around dogs.
- I can explain what I might do in a situation involving a dog.
- I can listen to other people's ideas and take part in role-play.

Suggested sequence:

1. Revisit Buddy & Tilda, focusing on the dog-safety messages within the story.
2. Ask children what the story teaches us about interacting with dogs. Record their ideas.
3. Introduce simple real-life scenarios, including encountering an unfamiliar dog in a park.
4. Discuss what a child could do to behave safely, respectfully and responsibly in each situation.
5. Use role-play to practise the scenarios. Pause and ask children to explain their choices.
6. Review the key messages at the end of the lesson and check children's understanding.

Teacher note: Keep the discussion grounded in the messages presented in Buddy & Tilda and use the school's established dog-safety guidance where appropriate. If the school has a school dog, the lesson can provide a particularly meaningful context for discussing respectful interactions.

Lesson 4 — Sharing Key Safety Messages

Focus: communicating learning through poster design.

Learning intention: To communicate important dog-safety advice clearly to other people. To support literacy, communication and writing skills with a focus on messaging.

Success criteria:

- I can identify important dog-safety messages from the story and our discussions.
- I can communicate advice using words and pictures.
- I can explain why my chosen message is important.

Suggested sequence:

1. Recap the key dog-safety messages explored in Lesson 3.
2. Look at examples of simple safety posters and discuss what makes advice clear and easy to remember.
3. Children design their own dog-safety posters, using words and pictures to communicate one or more important messages.
4. Children explain their posters to a partner or small group.
5. Display the completed posters in the classroom or share them with another class.
6. Finish by asking: "What would you want another child to remember when they are around a dog?"
7. Consider developing a class or school dog safety poster together

Assessment opportunities

Throughout the sequence, teachers can observe and record:

- Participation and engagement during shared reading and discussion.
- Children's use of descriptive and creative vocabulary.
- Ability to explain character traits and ideas about the story.
- Listening and speaking during discussion and role-play.
- Understanding of safe, respectful and responsible behaviour around dogs.
- Ability to communicate a safety message clearly in the final poster.

Differentiation and support

- Provide vocabulary banks and sentence starters for children who need support with oral or written language.
- Allow children to draw and orally explain ideas before writing.
- Scribe children's ideas where appropriate so that the focus remains on story development and communication.
- Challenge confident writers to expand descriptions, explain reasons for characters' choices or develop a longer adventure.
- During role-play, give children clearly defined roles and rehearse scenarios before asking them to perform independently.

Resources

- Buddy & Tilda picture book
- Paper and drawing/writing materials
- Character or vocabulary prompts
- Scenario prompts for Lesson 3
- Poster paper and colouring materials for Lesson 4
- Further resources available through 'Buddy's Classroom' at www.catsclawson.co.uk include Buddy & Tilda activity sheet and Tilda's Top Tips dog-safety poster plus links to other dog safety resource such as the Pet Education Partnership.

The Learning Journey

Explore → Imagine → Discuss → Share Children first connect with the characters, then create their own stories, use the book to explore real-life dog-safety situations, and finally communicate their learning to others.

“The children absolutely loved it and were eager to talk about the characters and their personalities.”

— Charlotte, Trainee Teacher (Year 1)

Background to this lesson sequence

This sequence is broadly based on the classroom experience shared by trainee teacher Charlotte Jones, who used Buddy & Tilda with a Year 1 class as part of a literacy unit. The book was incorporated into a sequence designed to develop reading, writing, speaking and listening while introducing important messages about staying safe around dogs. The school's own school dog made the topic particularly relevant and meaningful for the children. Many thanks to Charlotte and her class for sharing their experience of using Buddy & Tilda to promote dog safety.

Teacher resource note: This lesson sequence is intended as a practical starting point. Teachers should adapt activities, language and scenarios to suit their pupils, school context and existing dog-safety guidance.

About Buddy & Tilda

Buddy & Tilda was created to promote education and conversations around safe dog-and-child interactions. Its rhyming narrative and colourful illustrations provide an accessible starting point for children to explore characters, feelings, decisions and real-life behaviour around dogs. All profits from the sale of the book are donated to Bristol Children's Hospital, where the author Catherine Clawson works as a manager in children's surgery and Hope Rescue, who Buddy, the star of the book was adopted from in 2021.

If you have any questions, feedback or comments please contact Catherine/Cats Clawson through her email address: catsclawson@hotmail.com ; or reach out through our website www.catsclawson.co.uk we would be delighted to hear from you.

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