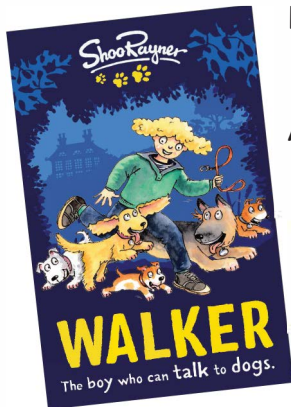


WALKER

The boy who can talk to dogs

Resource Pack



Walker is a funny, thoughtful, adventure novel for children by Shoo Rayner. Can you imagine being able to talk to dogs?

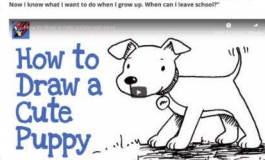
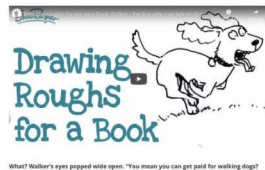
All Walker wants is a dog, but his mother is allergic. So he decides to set up his own business walking everyone else's. This works better than he could have imagined when he finds he can talk to the dogs and understand what they say to him! The dogs tell him of a terrible puppy farm hidden in the wood by Arlington Wherewithall, the richest, most famous man in the area.

Nobody will listen to Walker, so it is down to him and the dogs to stop the farm and save the puppies.

In this resource pack you will find background material, a how-to-draw guide, a comprehension crossword and quiz, word search, colouring sheets and more.

Feel free to print the pages. To save paper, you can print individual pages by selecting that option in your printer dialogue box.

You will find lots of dog and Walker videos at www.shoorayner.com/walker



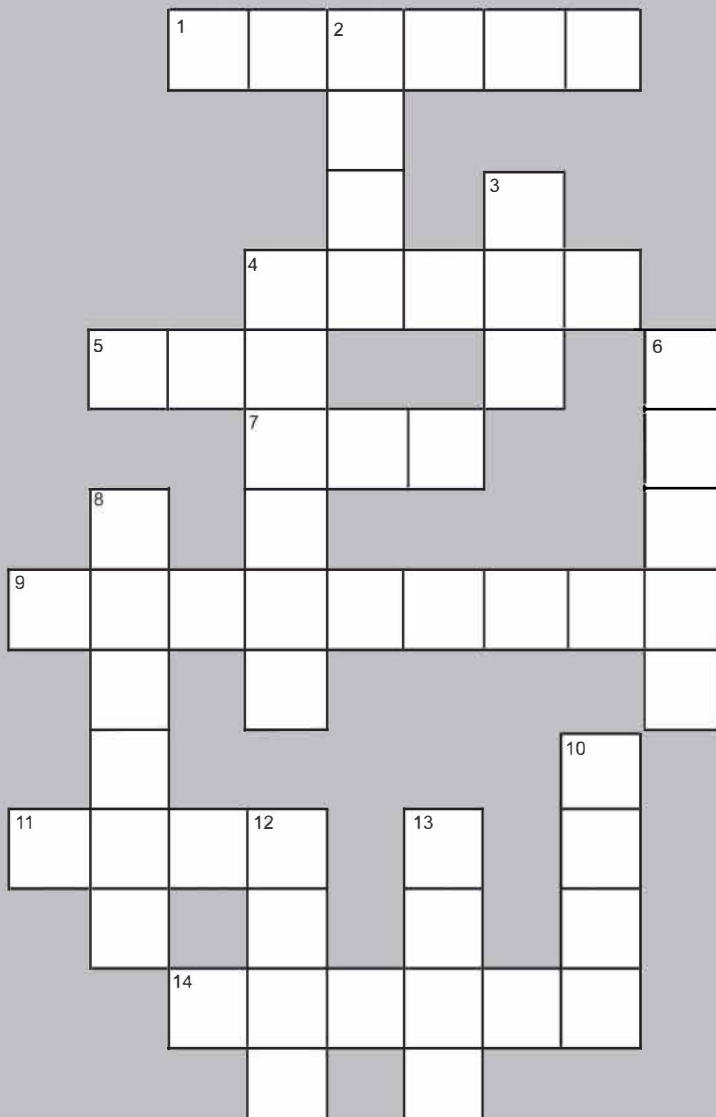
ShooRayner



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Can you solve the crossword puzzle by answering the clues based on the story?



Across

1. Dog that sounds like a search engine.
4. Something extra at the village shop?
5. Drink this with 12 down.
7. Walker has always wanted one of these.
9. Where Jenny Little lives.
11. What Walker can do with dogs.
14. The name of our hero.

Down

2. Arlington's gamekeeper.
3. The type of dog in trouble at the puppy farm.
4. Anje's jacket is covered in these.
6. Walker lost his.
8. The pattern on the rabbit.
10. One of Arlington's pointers.
12. Winner of the old-timer's category at the dog show.
13. Jenny is very good at making this.



WALKER

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Word Search

Can you find the names of ten dog breeds hidden in this word search square?

N	Q	K	W	T	E	K	T	R	H
L	H	F	O	E	S	E	E	E	U
A	P	K	E	D	H	V	R	V	S
B	O	X	E	R	E	L	R	O	K
R	O	O	O	I	E	E	I	E	Y
A	D	S	R	I	P	O	E	E	T
D	L	T	N	A	D	U	R	E	F
O	E	A	U	Y	O	R	K	I	E
R	P	U	G	P	G	I	F	E	I
S	R	N	Z	T	W	G	U	E	X



WALKER

The boy who can **talk** to **dogs**

ShooRayner



WALKER

The boy who can talk to dogs

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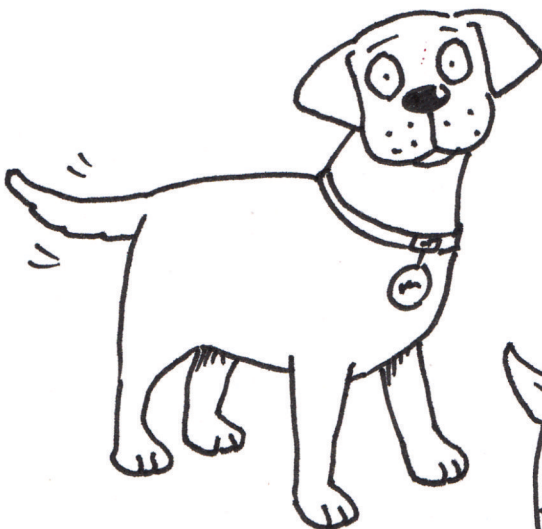
Walker and Stella



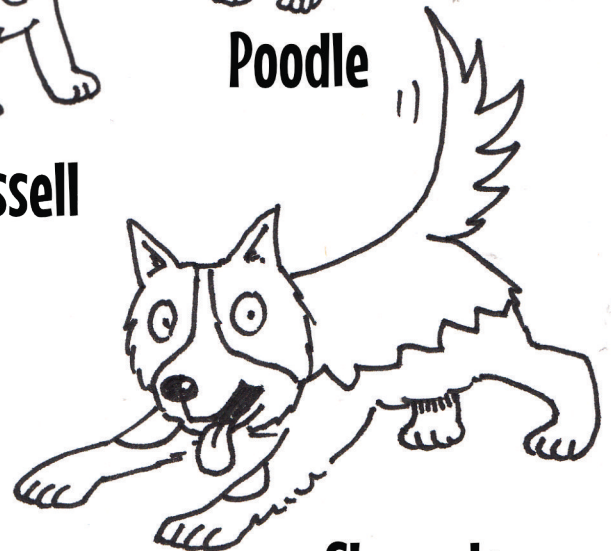
Jack Russell



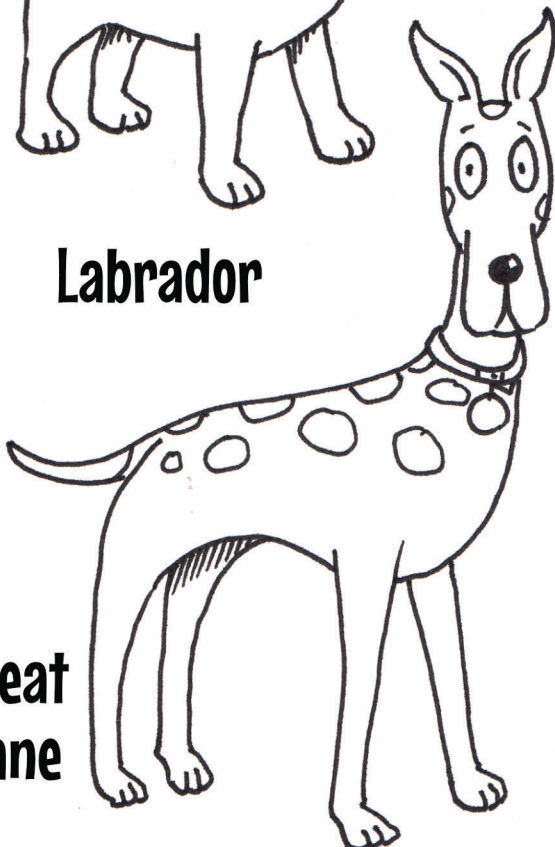
Poodle



Labrador



Sheepdog



**Great
Dane**

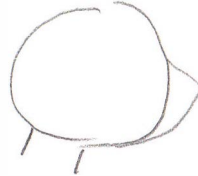


Collie

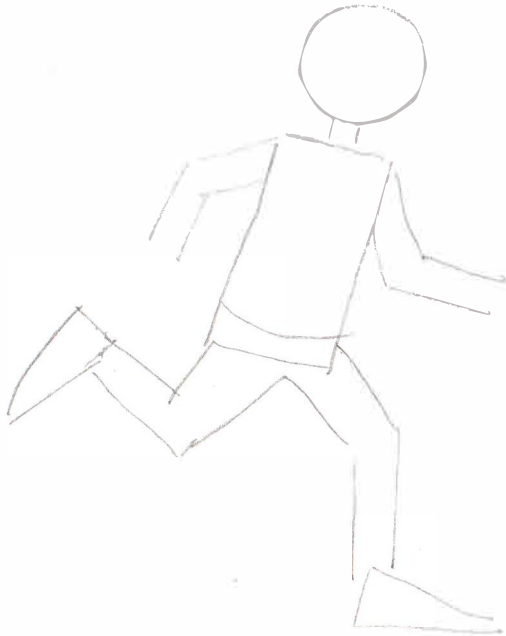
Draw a plan first.
Draw gently in
pencil so you can
rub out mistakes
easily.



Draw Walker's hair first, then two curves for his ears. Join them to his chin and then draw eyes, nose, mouth, neck and collar.

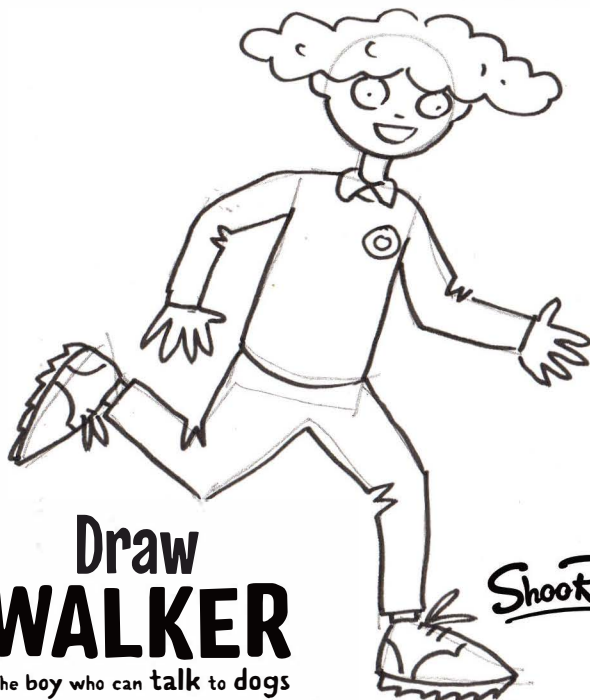


Make a plan for Stella too. Draw her ears first and then her face. Draw her nose and leave a spot of white for shininess, then draw her neck and collar.



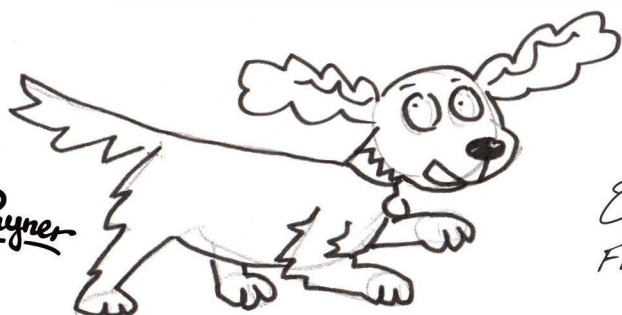
When you draw a plan for a drawing, use simple shapes – boxes, circles and triangles – to outline the drawing.

If you then draw over in ink, you can rub out the sketch lines to make a clean picture.



**Draw
WALKER**
The boy who can talk to dogs

Shoorayner



WALKER

The boy who can talk to dogs

Walker Quiz

Now that you've read *Walker, the boy who can talk to dogs*, can you answer these questions about the story?

1. What is the name of the village where Walker lives?

2. How much does Walker get paid to walk Stella every week?

3. What is the name of the dog who lives at the shop?

4. What does Walker lose in the woods?

5. What did the dogs chase at the village fête?

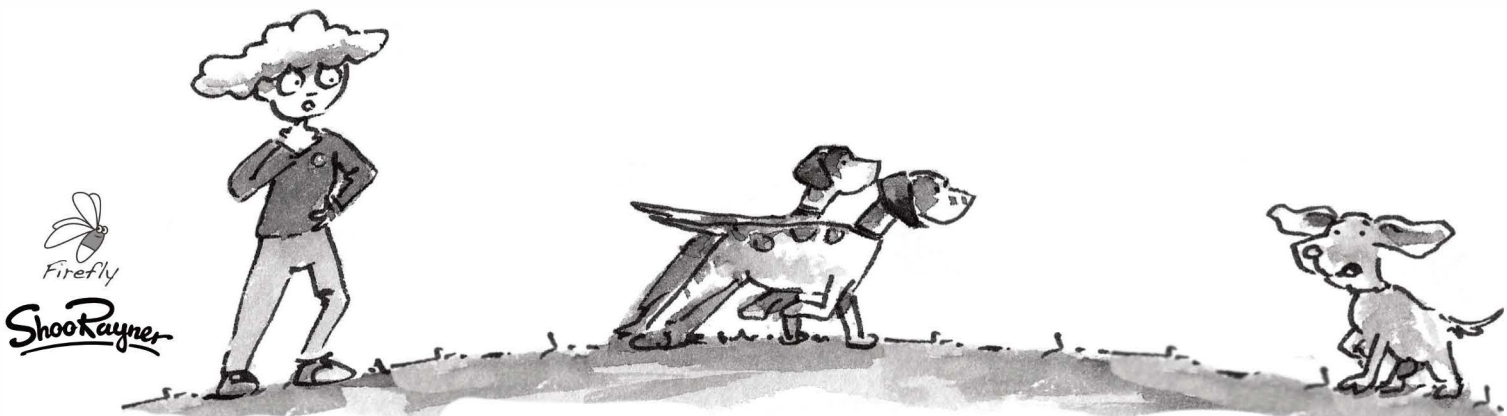
6. Where is the big meeting held?

7. What is the name of Arlington's gamekeeper?

8. Why does Arlington want Jenny Little's House?

9. What is the name of Walker's dad's cat?

10. What are the first words that Stella says to Walker?





Questions about **WALKER**

The boy who can talk to dogs

What inspired this story?

I'd seen an horrific news report of a raid on a puppy farm and was particularly disturbed by the callous nature of the perpetrators. I felt there was a story there that I'd like to explore, but it's a tricky subject to present to children.

Then, in the writer's room at the Wigtown Book Festival, I met a Dog Listener. Dog listeners learn to read dog's language and behaviour. As they told me what they did, the whole story came together in my head.

I thought it would be just amazing if you could go one stage further and actually talk to dogs. I decided to explore the idea of a close relationship between a boy and his dog – made more intense because Walker is not allowed to have a dog of his own. He doesn't know about his "super powers", but is driven by a passion, a deep need to have a dog, and works out a way to satisfy his yearnings.

When the baddie, Arlington Wherewithal, drifted into my imagination, I knew I had to write the story. He is such a great villain to write. Walker and Arlington are destined to meet again!

What do you hope children will get out of reading it?

Most of all, I want children to enjoy a good old-fashioned adventure, with a great hero and a heart-warming relationship at the centre of the story, which is threatened by a really horrible bad guy!

I want children to inhabit the character of Walker as they read the book, to feel that they can be practically creative with their ideas, like Walker, and not only talk to dogs, but observe and make deductions, be entrepreneurial, be prepared to take on the world and leave it a better place.

What did you enjoy most about writing it?

I truly inhabit the characters while I write them. I suppose it's a kind of acting. It is so much fun, "being" a ten-year-old, let loose with a dog you can talk to. When I wrote their first conversation, I had chills – it was like I was there.

I find walking in the forest really helps free the mind and lets ideas flood in. While I was writing, I noticed that dogs, out on walks with their owners, began to treat me differently, coming up to me to say hello. Were they trying to tell me something?

Writing villains is good fun too! Luckily I have a wonderful editor who reins me in, otherwise I've no idea just how bad Arlington Wherewithal could really be!

What was the biggest challenge the book presented and how did you overcome it?

Describing the puppy farm was the hardest part of writing *Walker*. Puppy farms are real, not fantasy. I didn't want to write a horror story to terrify children.

The puppy farm was the physical centre of the story, like a black hole drawing all the strands of the story together into an inky darkness. I had to keep reminding myself that the real story is about a boy who can talk to dogs, and let that uplifting theme guide me. It involved empathy, imagination and lots of re-writing.

Tell me a bit about how you became an illustrator, and then also a writer.

I did a lot of art and design jobs when I left school. I was even a sign writer – I wrote signs on boats and buses, trucks and shopfronts. Later, I got so bored being a civil servant, drawing maps for the Land Registry, I decided to go to Cambridge College of Arts and Technology (CCAT) – now Anglia Ruskin University. I was incredibly lucky to have been taught by children's author and illustrator, Colin McNaughton, who spotted where my talents lay and encouraged me to be a children's book illustrator.

I had an amazing editor who put me together with, the then relatively unknown, Sir Michael Morpurgo. She gave me two life-changing lessons, the first on illustration and the second on editing. Around the same time, I got my first computer, on which I could write – and read back what I wrote.

Now I realised I was a bit dyslexic at school – even I couldn't read my handwriting. I failed my English O-level three times. I guess I was the kid in the class least likely to become an author!

What are the benefits of illustrating your own books?

I know what to do from the start and know what the characters look like already. I'm composing the illustrations as I write the scene, sometimes leaving things out of the text because I know the illustration will do the job much better.

The downside is that you rarely get criticised by editors, maybe because they think you know what's best for the book? A bit of constructive criticism will always make an illustration better, as it does with writing. I'm illustrating a book for someone else at the moment – it's based on a play for children – so the author has a very clear visual sense of what they want. It's quite refreshing, they are pushing me to do new things – things I've not quite dared to do before. It's exciting!

Which comes first - the pictures or the story?

The idea comes first. It can be just a name or a title that summons up a whole landscape in my imagination. I guess you'd call it the moment of inspiration that gets me excited and maintains my interest. I can "see" the story playing inside my head. You have to grab those moments and start making notes and sketches before the moment fades. Then comes the graft and craft of shaping and pulling it all together.

I rarely start the business of writing until I have a fairly good idea of what the character looks like and the style of illustration, the hinterland and background of the story. My sketchbook will start filling up with character development sketches until, suddenly, there they are – staring back at me on the page and I know I have got them and I'm ready to write.

Sometimes I draw maps so I'm sure where everything is. I drew quite a complicated map for *Walker* – it has a whole village and housing estate in it – I had to work out all the footpaths between the houses and where they open out on the High Street, then where the shop and the zebra crossing are, so the whole story works and flows. I looked at real maps to work out how the back gardens of corner houses are shared out. That has nothing much to do with the story, but I needed it to be clear in my head.

What is the biggest lesson you have learned about writing for children?

Children love adventure and magic! Reading is such a personal, private, intense experience. Children become the hero or heroine as they read and go on the journey with the characters as if they are in the story. Reading is a brilliant rehearsal for things life may throw at you.

Children are real people, they just haven't grown very tall yet. They have the same hopes and fears and dreams as adults do. They haven't had time to learn as much, though, so I try to show them something about life and how other people are. But, just like adults, children don't like being preached to or not being told the truth.

There are ways of explaining complicated things to children that are clear, that satisfy their curiosity, but don't confuse them with too much complexity or with things that are beyond their experience. I find that grown-ups respond to simplicity and clarity too.

I make how-to-draw videos on YouTube. They are really designed for children – breaking the drawing down to the basics and showing how it all goes together. I find most of my audience are in their 50s! The usual story is that they were discouraged from drawing at school and now they want to try again and are picking up where they left off.

What is the most rewarding thing about your job?

What I really love is hand-selling my books, chatting with kids and their parents after I've given a talk somewhere, signing the book for them. It's incredible that someone has such faith in me and something I dreamed up out of nowhere, enough to pay me for it. It's even better when they come back and tell me how much they enjoyed the book and want to know when the next one is coming out?

Quiz Answers

1. Foxley
2. Ten pounds
3. Boss
4. His phone
5. A Tartan Rabbit (1 / 2 marks allowed!)
6. In the Village Hall
7. Osmo
8. So he can build houses behind it on Foxley Field
9. Lucy Lou
10. "I need a poo!"

Discussion/writing ideas

Walker is quite the businessman! He found a way to do what he loves and to get paid for it. What would you really love to do? How could you get started, and how could you get paid for it?

Arlington and Osmo's shed is not a nice place to bring puppies into the world. Would it be OK to run a puppy farm in a "dog palace" with lovely food, silk cushions and servants to walk dogs three times a day?

If you could talk to dogs, what would you say? What secrets would you share with them?

If you could talk to dogs, what would **they** say? What secrets could they tell you about their owners?

