



Priscilla to the rescue

Age: Upper KS2 (years 5 and 6)



Subjects:

KS2: English

Learning objectives

- Plan and complete a written account using information gathered from research.
- Appreciate that animals, such as pigs, form close bonds with those they are close to, and possess remarkable abilities that often go unnoticed, including displaying acts of compassion toward those they care about.

[Link to curriculum coverage](#)

Overview: Pupils use various sources to learn about the true story of a pig named Priscilla who helped rescue a boy from a lake. The children then write up an account of the incident for a (fictional) True Animal Heroes website.

Resources

- *Meet the animals!* film
- *Talk time* questions
- Note-taking sheet (optional)
- Copies of the *Account of Priscilla to the rescue* (From Real Animal Heroes, 1997)
- Copies of a newspaper report from 1984
- Copies of Farm show magazine cutting from 1985
- *Priscilla to the rescue* ppt:
 - Image of Priscilla in a water bath (slide 1)
 - Link to Priscilla rescue recreation video (25 sec) on YouTube from Animal Voice South Africa (slide 2)
 - Longer 49 sec version of the recreation film from CIWF *Animals and Us* video (slide 3)
 - Paul Harvey - *Priscilla the Life Saving Pig* radio report from 1984 (slide 4)
 - Newspaper cutting from 1984 (slide 5)
 - Farm show magazine cutting from 1985 (slide 6)
- Writing frame

[Visit the website to download or order resources](#)



Starter

- Tell the pupils that they are going to watch a short film about farmed animals who live in animal sanctuaries and that they are then going to hear a true story of an amazing pig called Priscilla who did a very surprising thing.
- Pupils watch the *Meet the animals!* film and during the Talk time breaks discuss some of the suggested Talk time questions (available on the website)
 - If pupils are watching the *Meet the animals!* film for a second time, provide them with a Note-taking sheet to help them record notes.
 - After the film, ask pupils if anything that the animals did surprised them. For example, chickens counting, pigs playing with a treat ball, pigs sitting for treats, lambs wagging their tail when being fussed.
- Ask pupils if they know of any unusual or heroic things that animals have done to help people or other animals (such as pets warning their human companions of a house fire, pigeons carrying important messages during times of war or dogs rescuing people buried in fallen buildings following an earthquake).

Main

- Display the slide of Priscilla in a water bath (ppt slide 1) and read the account of Priscilla to the rescue (From Real Animal Heroes).
 - Show Priscilla rescue recreation video on YouTube (ppt slide 2 or 3)
 - You could also play the Paul Harvey - *Priscilla the Life Saving Pig* radio report from 1984 (slide 4)
- Class discussion:
 - How would you describe Priscilla's behaviour?
 - Why do you think she did what she did?
 - How would you have felt about Priscilla if she had rescued you?
 - What does her action tell us about animals like Priscilla?
- Tell pupils that they have been asked to write an account of the story for a True animal heroes website.
Provide pupils with copies of:
 - The newspaper report from 1984
 - Farm show magazine cutting from 1985

(The above documents can be downloaded and are also on slides 5 and 6 of the Priscilla to the rescue ppt)

You may want to explain that this happened back in 1984 before social media and YouTube.

If time permits, suggest that they further investigate the event online.



- Provide each pupil with a copy of the writing frame to assist them in composing their account.
Tell them that they can illustrate their article with a drawing or a photo printed from the internet.

Plenary

- Possible discussion points:
 - Would you keep a pig as a pet?
 - Is it right to give pigs names and to keep them on a lead?
 - Should animals like Priscilla be treated differently because they have done something unusual or heroic?
 - Why do we treat some animals such as Priscilla as heroes, but rear others in factory farms and eat them?
- Ask pupils to discuss with their neighbour three things that they have learnt, or that surprised them, in the lesson.

Ask for volunteers to feedback on what they have learnt or what surprised them.

Suggestions for follow up activities

- Draw a *Priscilla to the rescue* comic strip to tell the story of the event.
- Ask pupils to research on the internet to find other instances where animals displayed bravery or performed remarkable feats to assist people or other animals.

Set them the task of writing up a report on one of them and reporting back to the class on what they found.

Resources appendix

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|---|------------|
| • Note-taking sheets | pp 4 & 5 |
| • <i>Account of Priscilla to the rescue</i> | p6 |
| • Newspaper report | p7 |
| • Farm show magazine cutting | p8 |
| • <i>Priscilla to the rescue</i> ppt | p9 |
| • Writing frame | pp 10 & 11 |



Note-taking sheet (Version 1)



Meet the animals! film - Note-taking sheet



What do all farmed animals need?

What did you learn about the pigs?

What did you learn about the sheep?

What did you learn about the chickens?

Why did farmer Jay give away his cows?

Visit the [website](#) to download this sheet.

Note-taking sheet (Version 1)



Meet the animals! film - Note-taking sheet



?



What do all the animals need? 1) _____

2) _____ 3) _____

4) _____ 5) _____

?



What did you learn about the pigs?

?



What did you learn about the sheep?

?



What did you learn about the chickens?

?



Why did Farmer Jay give away his cows?

Account of Priscilla to the rescue



Info sheet

Account of Priscilla to the rescue



Info sheet



One hot summer's day, Carol Burk and her 11-year old son, Anthony, went swimming in their local lake. They were joined by Priscilla, a two-month old piglet they had raised. Priscilla loved the water and was a great swimmer... but Anthony was not.

For hours, Anthony, his mother and Priscilla played hide-and-seek in the shallow waters. Finally, Anthony grew tired, and his mum turned to get ready to leave. When she turned back, Anthony was far out in the water and struggling. She started swimming towards him and so did Priscilla. Despite being very tired from swimming all day, the little pig reached Anthony first. He grabbed for her halter and lead. In his panic he pulled too hard and went under, this time taking Priscilla with him!

Now both Anthony and Priscilla were drowning, and he weighed almost four times more than she did. Priscilla struggled to get to the surface of the water. Finally, with enormous effort, she succeeded. With Anthony clinging to her small body, Priscilla swam back to shore.

Priscilla, like all pigs, has a very long memory. Years after the rescue, she still became upset whenever she saw young children playing near the water.

(Adapted from: Real Animal Heroes, by Paul Drew Stevens 1997, Thanks for PETA)

Visit the [website](#) to download this sheet.

Newspaper report (UPI 1985)



Info sheet



United Press International

Priscilla, a swimming pet pig, does the pig paddle as Carol Burk snuggles her 11-year-old son, Anthony

Melton. The pig saved the boy from drowning in Texas's Lake Somerville.

Swimming pig saves boy

HOUSTON (UPI)—Priscilla, a swimming pet pig, saved the life of a youngster who ventured too far out into Lake Somerville, the boy's mother said yesterday.

Carol Burk took her 11-year-old son, Anthony Melton, and a friend's pig swimming a week ago yesterday near Brenham State School, where Anthony resides.

Anthony followed her into the deep water as she took Priscilla out for a dip. "I told my son to stay

Youngster grabs collar of pet, is pulled ashore

back—he didn't listen to me," Burk said. "Just as I was letting Priscilla go, he got out too far."

"He went down once, then he went down another time," said Burk, adding she couldn't reach the boy before Priscilla did. "I told him to catch hold of Priscilla's leash. Then they both went down. I thought,

'My God, I've lost them both.'"

Burk said Priscilla then swam toward shore, pulling Anthony behind her until his feet touched bottom. Anthony held onto the pig's collar throughout the ordeal, she said.

"I never appreciated pigs until I got her," Burk said. "She's a beautiful pig."

The unlikely heroine is the pride of her owner, Victoria Herberta, who says Priscilla spends most of her time on the front porch and has her own wading pool.

"I walk her every evening around 7 o'clock," Herberta said.

Priscilla weighs about 22 pounds and is not expected to top 100 pounds. "She loves dog food, tuna fish sandwiches, pimento cheese sandwiches, chocolate chip cookies and she loves to drink Mountain Dew," said Herberta.

Newspaper report (UPI 1985)



Info sheet

Farm show magazine cutting



Info sheet

HOUSTON PIG IS NATIONAL HERO

Priscilla The Pig Saves Drowning Boy

Priscilla the pig has become a national hero for saving an 11-year-old boy from drowning. Priscilla's owner, Victoria Herberta, Houston, Tex., explains what happened.:

"Every weekend in the summer, I'd take Priscilla to an area lake or river to go swimming with my friends. She loves to swim.

"While swimming, we'd always keep a harness and leash on Priscilla so she'd stay in range. One of my friends was swimming with Priscilla, holding the leash. My friend's 11-year-old son was supposed to stay on shore but wandered into the water and stepped into a drop-off which was about 6 ft. deep. He yelled for help, getting his mother's and Priscilla's attention. His mother let go of the leash and Priscilla swam to the boy who grabbed onto her harness.

"Both the boy and Priscilla went under two times, but the second time Priscilla came up she was able to swim to shore with the boy."

For her feat, Priscilla received the Stijlman Award from the American Humane Association for heroism — the first time a pig's received the award since its inception in 1928. Since receiving the award, Priscilla has been on TV shows and in People magazine.

At the time of the near-drowning, Priscilla, a Yorkshire-Duroc-Hampshire cross, was 3 months old and weighed 22 lbs. She now weighs 100 lbs.

Herberta says teaching Priscilla to swim wasn't too difficult. "I took her down to the lake and would hold her on top of the water so she'd pedal her legs. She didn't like the water much at first. The sixth time I took her out I just let go of her and she learned to swim on her own," says Herberta.

Where do you keep a pig in Houston?

Why, in the house of course. Priscilla is house-trained and has her own bed and run of the house.

Visit the [website](#) to download this sheet.

Account of Priscilla to the rescue



Slide 1



Slide 2



Link to Priscilla rescue recreation video (25 sec) on YouTube from Animal Voice South Africa

Slide 3



49 sec version of the recreation from CIWF *Animals and Us* video

Slide 4



Paul Harvey - Priscilla the Life Saving Pig radio report from 1984

Slide 5



Newspaper cutting from 1984

Slide 6



Farm show magazine cutting from 1985

Visit the [website](#) to download these PowerPoint slides.

Writing frame



Info Sheet

Writing frame



Worksheet

Pig Saves Child from Drowning!

This is a picture of:

Yesterday afternoon, _____

The child's mother said " _____

"

Writing frame



Info Sheet

Writing frame



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Visit the [website](#) to download this sheet.