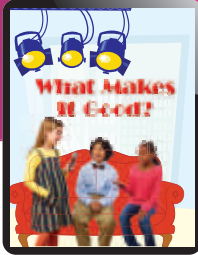


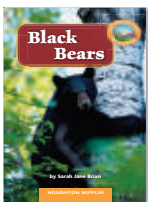
# Lesson 7



## ✓ TARGET VOCABULARY

romp  
strained  
picturing  
wheeled  
shouldered  
frantic  
lunging  
checking  
stride  
bounding

### Vocabulary Reader



### Context Cards



# Vocabulary in Context

1

## romp

For many kids in the 1800s, the trip West was a **romp**. For adults, it was a serious task.



2

## strained

Gold-rush miners **strained** to sift gold from mounds of heavy soil.



3

## picturing

In their imagination, many pioneers were **picturing** owning big cattle ranches.



4

## wheeled

Teams of oxen **wheeled** the wagons around to form a circle for protection.



COMMON  
CORE

**L.5.6** acquire and use general academic and domain-specific words and phrases

- ▶ Study each **Context Card**.
- ▶ Use a thesaurus to find a synonym for each Vocabulary word.

**5 shouldered**

Pioneers may have **shouldered** newborn animals to carry them, just like this farmer.

**6 frantic**

Frightened by the storm, this frenzied herd of buffalo began a **frantic** stampede.

**7 lunging**

These goats, like the ones on farms, enjoy **lunging**, or dashing, at each other.

**8 checking**

Stopping, or **checking**, the wandering ways of sheep is the job of these farm dogs.

**9 stride**

Pioneers who walked had to match their **stride**, or step, to the pace of the wagons.

**10 bounding**

This man is cheered by his happy dog **bounding** forward to greet him.





# Read and Comprehend



## ✓ TARGET SKILL

**Understanding Characters** As you read “Old Yeller,” note the ways in which the narrator, Travis, and his brother, Arliss, are similar and different. Look for text evidence to help you examine their **actions** and their **traits**. By comparing the two characters, you will learn more about who they are and why they behave as they do. Record your details in a graphic organizer like the one shown here.

| Travis | Arliss |
|--------|--------|
|        |        |

## ✓ TARGET STRATEGY

**Visualize** When you **visualize**, you use text details to form pictures in your mind. As you read “Old Yeller,” use sights, sounds, and other details in the text to picture each scene. By visualizing what Travis experiences, you can better understand his actions.



## PREVIEW THE TOPIC

### Responsibility

You may have heard someone described as having “a sense of responsibility.” This sense has nothing to do with hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, or seeing. Rather, it means that the person is dependable. He or she does what needs to be done, even when tasks are hard or unpleasant.

Travis, the narrator of “Old Yeller,” has a strong sense of responsibility. While his father is away, he takes on all of the chores needed to keep the family farm going. As you read the story, you will see that he also feels responsible for keeping his brother safe.



## Lesson 7

# ANCHOR TEXT



### ✓ TARGET SKILL

#### Understanding Characters

Use text details to compare Travis's actions and traits to those of his brother.

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|  |  |

### ✓ GENRE

**Historical fiction** is a story set in the past. It contains characters, places, and events that actually existed or happened, or that could have existed or happened. As you read, look for:

- ▶ realistic characters
- ▶ some made-up events
- ▶ details that show the story took place in the past



**RL.5.3** compare and contrast characters, settings, or events, drawing on details;  
**RL.5.10** read and comprehend literature

#### MEET THE AUTHOR

### Fred Gipson

Fred Gipson was born in 1908 in Texas's Hill Country, which became the setting for many of his stories. He believed that *Old Yeller* was his best book. It won the 1957 Newbery Honor and was made into a movie. Although Gipson died in 1973, his books remain popular classics.



#### MEET THE ILLUSTRATOR

### Marc Elliot

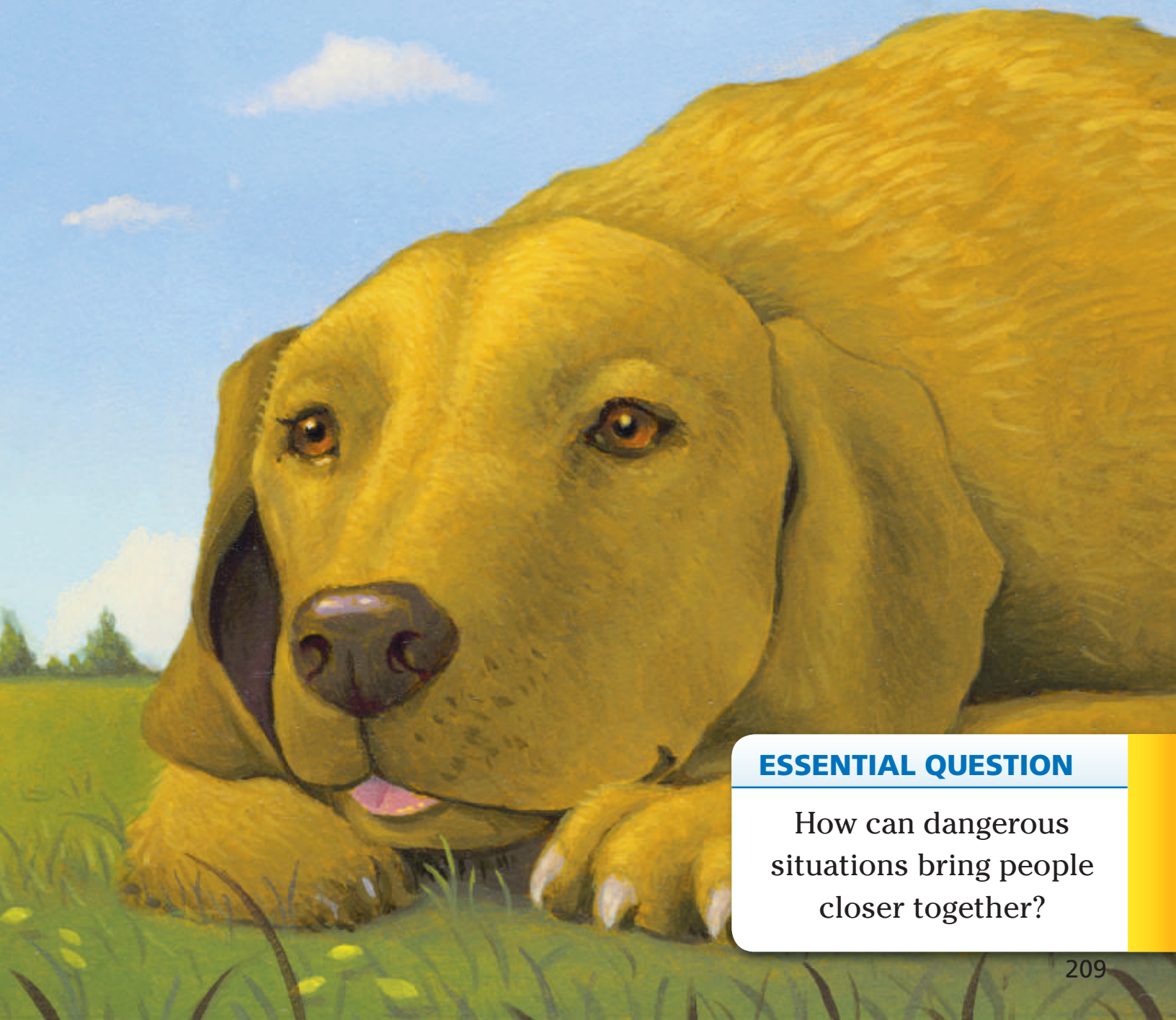
Like many kids, Marc Elliot loved to draw dinosaurs, only Marc was determined to draw them life-sized on taped-together cardboard in his living room. These days, Marc tries to keep his illustrations to a size that will fit between two book covers. He lives on a farm with sheep, two donkeys, and two crazy long-haired cats.





# Old Yeller

by Fred Gipson  
selection illustrated by Marc Elliot



## ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How can dangerous situations bring people closer together?



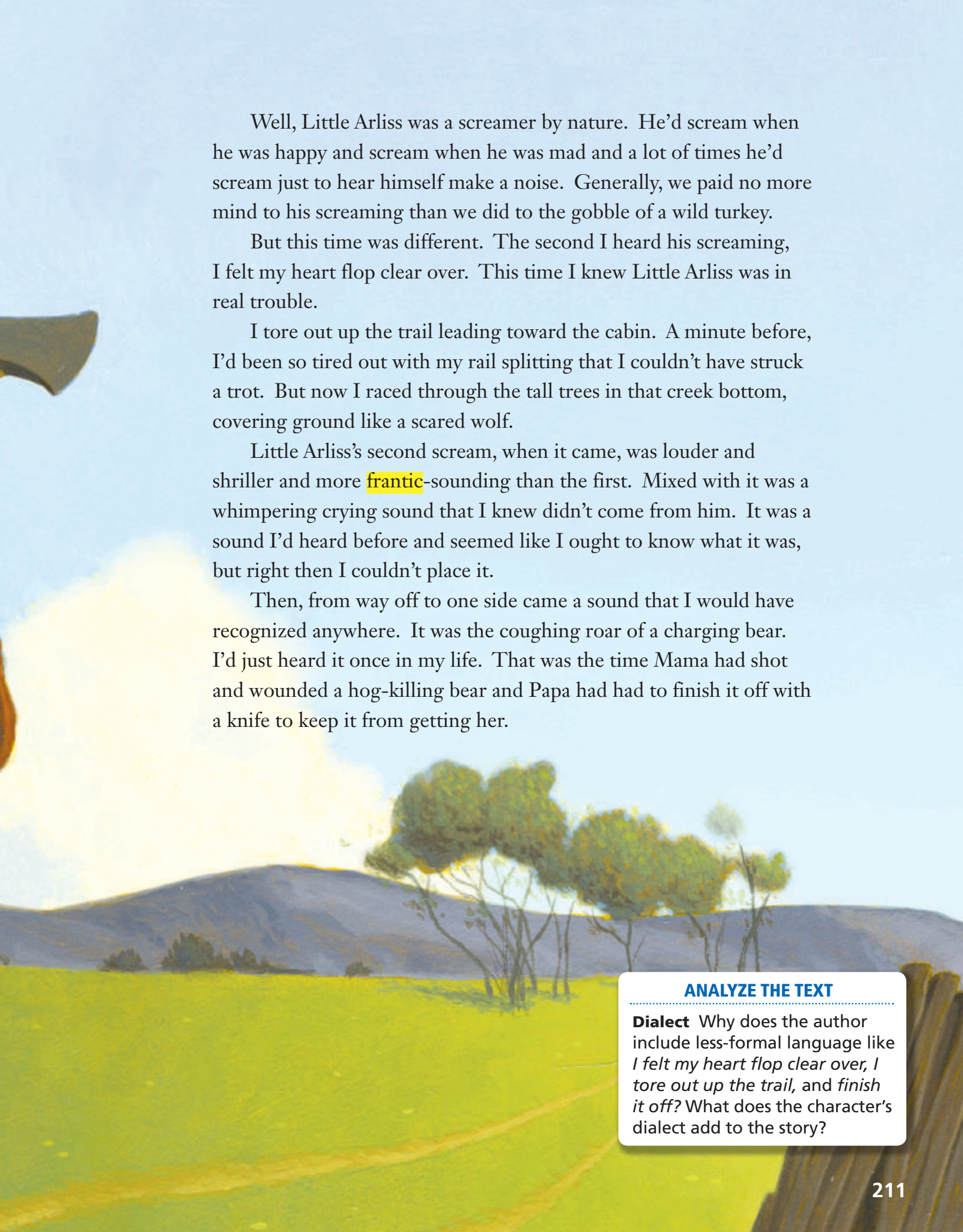
*It is the late 1860s. Travis lives with his family on the Texas frontier. When Papa leaves home to drive their cattle to market in Kansas, Travis must take over Papa's responsibilities. All goes well until a stray yellow dog shows up. Travis's younger brother, Little Arliss, loves the dog, but Travis thinks the mangy animal is nothing but a "meat-stealing rascal." Then one day something happens that changes Travis's feelings about the dog forever.*

Swinging that chopping axe was sure hard work. The sweat poured off me. My back muscles ached. The axe got so heavy I could hardly swing it. My breath got harder and harder to breathe.

An hour before sundown, I was worn down to a nub. It seemed like I couldn't hit another lick. Papa could have lasted till past sundown, but I didn't see how I could. I **shouldered** my axe and started toward the cabin, trying to think up some excuse to tell Mama to keep her from knowing I was played clear out.

That's when I heard Little Arliss scream.





Well, Little Arliss was a screamer by nature. He'd scream when he was happy and scream when he was mad and a lot of times he'd scream just to hear himself make a noise. Generally, we paid no more mind to his screaming than we did to the gobble of a wild turkey.

But this time was different. The second I heard his screaming, I felt my heart flop clear over. This time I knew Little Arliss was in real trouble.

I tore out up the trail leading toward the cabin. A minute before, I'd been so tired out with my rail splitting that I couldn't have struck a trot. But now I raced through the tall trees in that creek bottom, covering ground like a scared wolf.

Little Arliss's second scream, when it came, was louder and shriller and more **frantic**-sounding than the first. Mixed with it was a whimpering crying sound that I knew didn't come from him. It was a sound I'd heard before and seemed like I ought to know what it was, but right then I couldn't place it.

Then, from way off to one side came a sound that I would have recognized anywhere. It was the coughing roar of a charging bear. I'd just heard it once in my life. That was the time Mama had shot and wounded a hog-killing bear and Papa had had to finish it off with a knife to keep it from getting her.

#### ANALYZE THE TEXT

**Dialect** Why does the author include less-formal language like *I felt my heart flop clear over*, *I tore out up the trail*, and *finish it off*? What does the character's dialect add to the story?



My heart went to pushing up into my throat, nearly choking off my wind. I **strained** for every lick of speed I could get out of my running legs. I didn't know what sort of fix Little Arliss had got himself into, but I knew that it had to do with a mad bear, which was enough.

The way the late sun slanted through the trees had the trail all cross-banded with streaks of bright light and dark shade. I ran through these bright and dark patches so fast that the changing light nearly blinded me. Then suddenly, I raced out into the open where I could see ahead. And what I saw sent a chill clear through to the marrow of my bones.

There was Little Arliss, down in that spring hole again. He was lying half in and half out of the water, holding on to the hind leg of a little black bear cub no bigger than a small coon. The bear cub was out on the bank, whimpering and crying and clawing the rocks with all three of his other feet, trying to pull away. But Little Arliss was holding on for all he was worth, scared now and screaming his head off. Too scared to let go.

How the bear cub ever came to prowl close enough for Little Arliss to grab him, I don't know. And why he didn't turn on him and bite loose, I couldn't figure out, either. Unless he was like Little Arliss, too scared to think.

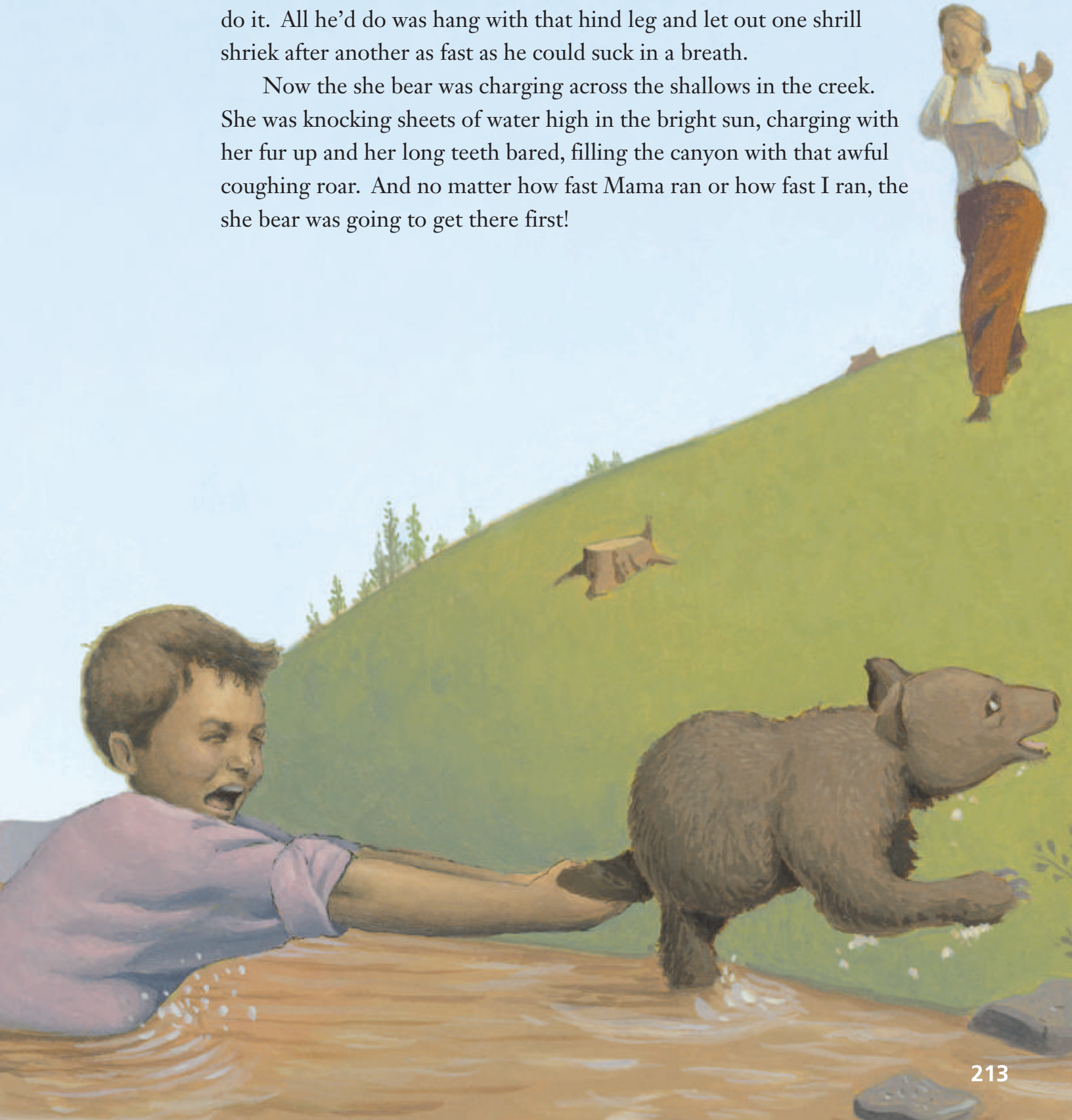
But all of that didn't matter now. What mattered was the bear cub's mama. She'd heard the cries of her baby and was coming to save him. She was coming so fast that she had the brush popping and breaking as she crashed through and over it. I could see her black heavy figure piling off down the slant on the far side of Birdsong Creek. She was roaring mad and ready to kill.



And worst of all, I could see that I'd never get there in time!

Mama couldn't either. She'd heard Arliss, too, and here she came from the cabin, running down the slant toward the spring, screaming at Arliss, telling him to turn the bear cub loose. But Little Arliss wouldn't do it. All he'd do was hang with that hind leg and let out one shrill shriek after another as fast as he could suck in a breath.

Now the she bear was charging across the shallows in the creek. She was knocking sheets of water high in the bright sun, charging with her fur up and her long teeth bared, filling the canyon with that awful coughing roar. And no matter how fast Mama ran or how fast I ran, the she bear was going to get there first!









I think I nearly went blind then, **picturing** what was going to happen to Little Arliss. I know that I opened my mouth to scream and not any sound came out.

Then, just as the bear went **lunging** up the creek bank toward Little Arliss and her cub, a flash of yellow came streaking out of the brush.

It was that big yeller dog. He was roaring like a mad bull. He wasn't one-third as big and heavy as the she bear, but when he piled into her from one side, he rolled her clear off her feet. They went down in a wild, roaring tangle of twisting bodies and scrambling feet and slashing fangs.

As I raced past them, I saw the bear lunge up to stand on her hind feet like a man while she clawed at the body of the yeller dog hanging to her throat. I didn't wait to see more. Without ever **checking** my **stride**, I ran in and jerked Little Arliss loose from the cub. I grabbed him by the wrist and yanked him up out of that water and slung him toward Mama like he was a half-empty sack of corn. I screamed at Mama. "Grab him, Mama! Grab him and run!" Then I swung my chopping axe high and **wheeled**, aiming to cave in the she bear's head with the first lick.

A yellow dog is running through a field of tall grass. The dog is in the foreground, moving from left to right. Its body is a bright yellow color, and its tail is long and bushy. The grass is green and tall, with some blades reaching up towards the dog. The background is a light blue sky.

### ANALYZE THE TEXT

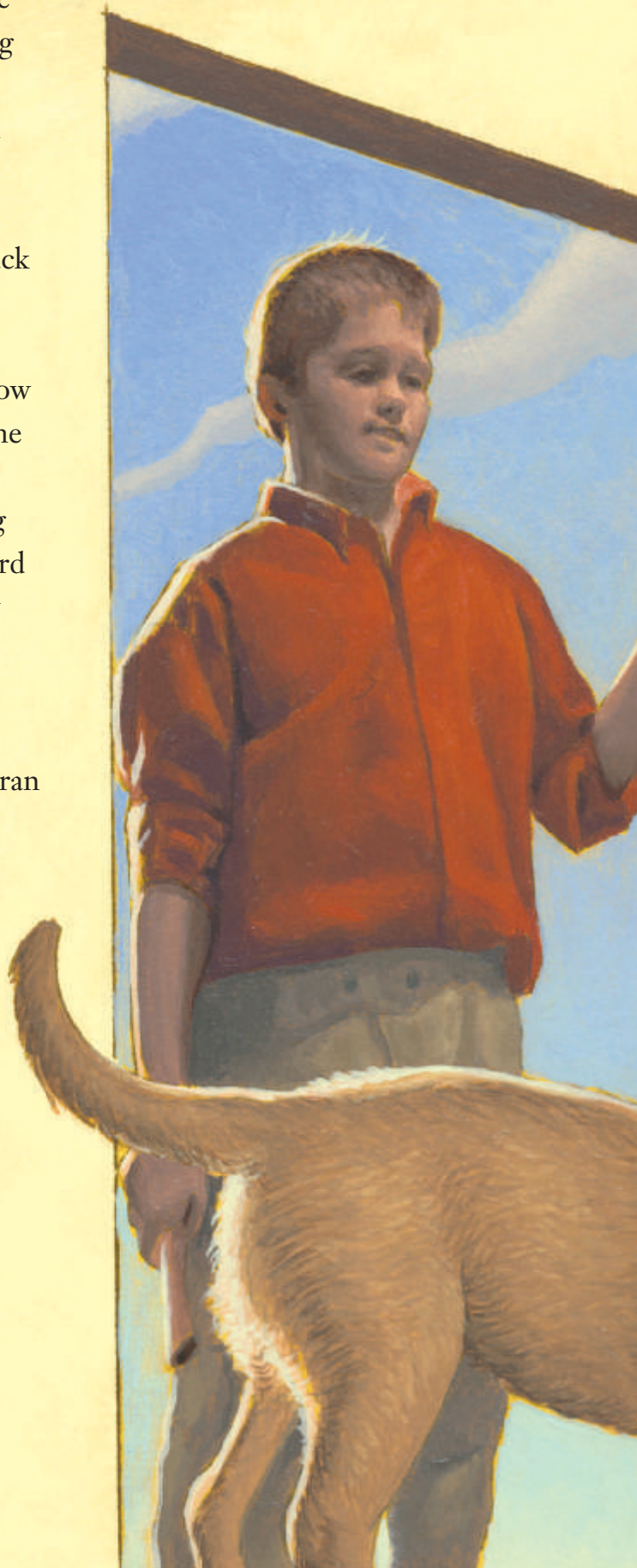
**Author's Word Choice** The author uses words such as *lunging*, *roaring*, *scrambling*, and *slashing* to provide sensory details. How do these words help you picture what is happening in the story?



But I never did strike. I didn't need to. Old Yeller hadn't let the bear get close enough. He couldn't handle her; she was too big and strong for that. She'd stand there on her hind feet, hunched over, and take a roaring swing at him with one of those big front claws. She'd slap him head over heels. She'd knock him so far that it didn't look like he could possibly get back there before she charged again, but he always did. He'd hit the ground rolling, yelling his head off with the pain of the blow; but somehow he'd always roll to his feet. And here he'd come again, ready to tie into her for another round.

I stood there with my axe raised, watching them for a long moment. Then from up toward the house, I heard Mama calling: "Come away from there, Travis. Hurry, son! Run!"

That spooked me. Up till then, I'd been ready to tie into that bear myself. Now, suddenly, I was scared out of my wits again. I ran toward the cabin.





But like it was, Old Yeller nearly beat me there. I didn't see it, of course; but Mama said that the minute Old Yeller saw we were all in the clear and out of danger, he threw the fight to that she bear and lit out for the house. The bear chased him for a little piece, but at the rate Old Yeller was leaving her behind, Mama said it looked like the bear was backing up.

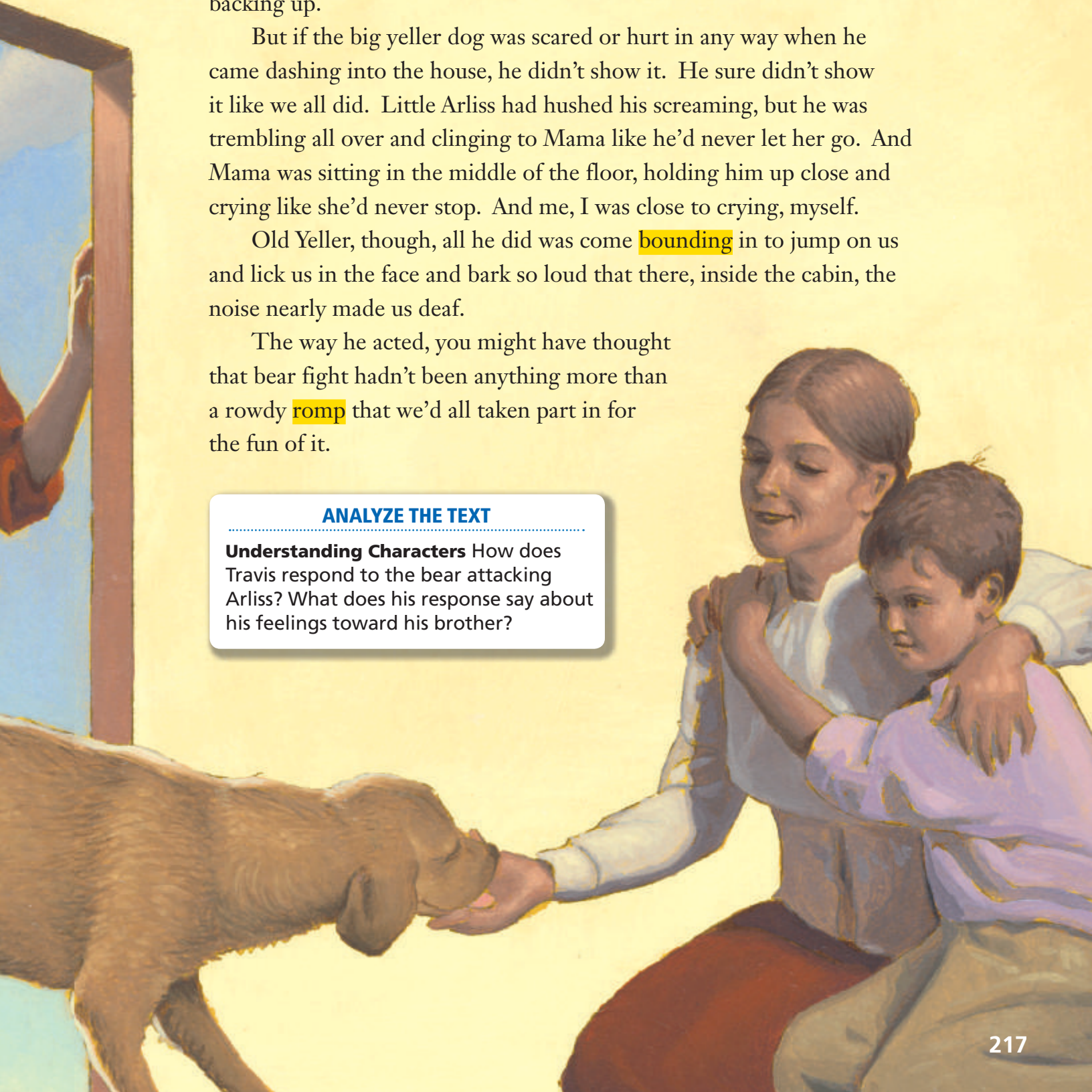
But if the big yeller dog was scared or hurt in any way when he came dashing into the house, he didn't show it. He sure didn't show it like we all did. Little Arliss had hushed his screaming, but he was trembling all over and clinging to Mama like he'd never let her go. And Mama was sitting in the middle of the floor, holding him up close and crying like she'd never stop. And me, I was close to crying, myself.

Old Yeller, though, all he did was come **bounding** in to jump on us and lick us in the face and bark so loud that there, inside the cabin, the noise nearly made us deaf.

The way he acted, you might have thought that bear fight hadn't been anything more than a rowdy **romp** that we'd all taken part in for the fun of it.

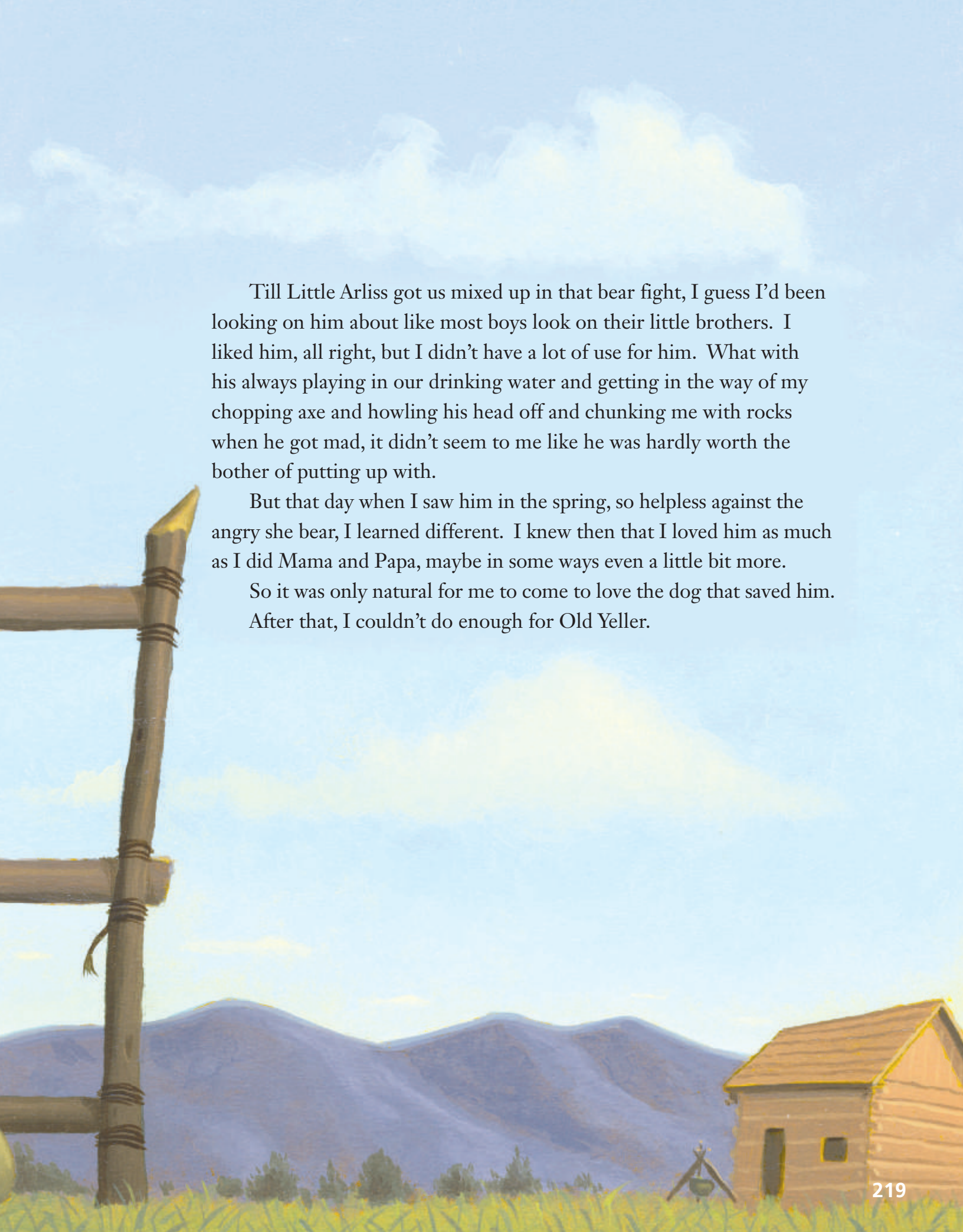
#### ANALYZE THE TEXT

**Understanding Characters** How does Travis respond to the bear attacking Arliss? What does his response say about his feelings toward his brother?









Till Little Arliss got us mixed up in that bear fight, I guess I'd been looking on him about like most boys look on their little brothers. I liked him, all right, but I didn't have a lot of use for him. What with his always playing in our drinking water and getting in the way of my chopping axe and howling his head off and chunking me with rocks when he got mad, it didn't seem to me like he was hardly worth the bother of putting up with.

But that day when I saw him in the spring, so helpless against the angry she bear, I learned different. I knew then that I loved him as much as I did Mama and Papa, maybe in some ways even a little bit more.

So it was only natural for me to come to love the dog that saved him. After that, I couldn't do enough for Old Yeller.





# Dig Deeper

## How to Analyze the Text

Use these pages to learn about Understanding Characters, Author's Word Choice, and Dialect. Then read "Old Yeller" again to apply what you learned.

### Understanding Characters

The story of "Old Yeller" is told through the eyes of its **main character**, Travis. Readers learn not only what Travis does and says, but also what he thinks and feels.

In the selection, Travis and his little brother, Arliss, are caught in the same conflict. Readers learn about Arliss through his actions and what Travis tells about him. Comparing the two characters reveals more about each one's personality and their relationship.

Look closely for details that tell you about Travis and Arliss. Think about their different reactions to situations. What do you learn about Travis from his response to events? What do you learn about Arliss?

| Travis | Arliss |
|--------|--------|
|        |        |



**RL.5.3** compare and contrast characters, settings, or events, drawing on details; **RL.5.10** read and comprehend literature; **RF.5.4a** read on-level text with purpose and understanding; **L.5.3b** compare and contrast varieties of English in stories, dramas, or poems



## Author's Word Choice

**Sensory language** is language that helps readers see, hear, and experience what happens in a story. Recall the scene from “Old Yeller” in which Travis first realizes that a charging bear is after Little Arliss. The author uses words and phrases such as “popping,” “breaking,” and “awful coughing roar” to build the intensity of the moment and to make readers feel as if they are in the scene with Travis.



## Dialect

**Dialect**, a variety of English associated with a certain place or group of people, adds realism to historical fiction such as “Old Yeller.” On page 210, Travis uses expressions such as “worn down to a nub” and “I couldn’t hit another lick” to describe how tired he is after chopping wood. These expressions fit his character and the story’s setting. They also help establish Travis's voice as he begins to narrate the story.





# Your Turn



## RETURN TO THE ESSENTIAL QUESTION



Review the selection to prepare to discuss this question: *How can dangerous situations bring people closer together?* Take turns sharing your insights in a small group. Elaborate on each other's comments.



### Classroom Conversation

Continue your discussion of “Old Yeller” by using text evidence to explain your answers to these questions:

- 1 How does the setting affect what happens in the story?
- 2 Is Travis a good choice for the narrator of this story? Explain.
- 3 What conclusions about life on the frontier can you draw from the story?

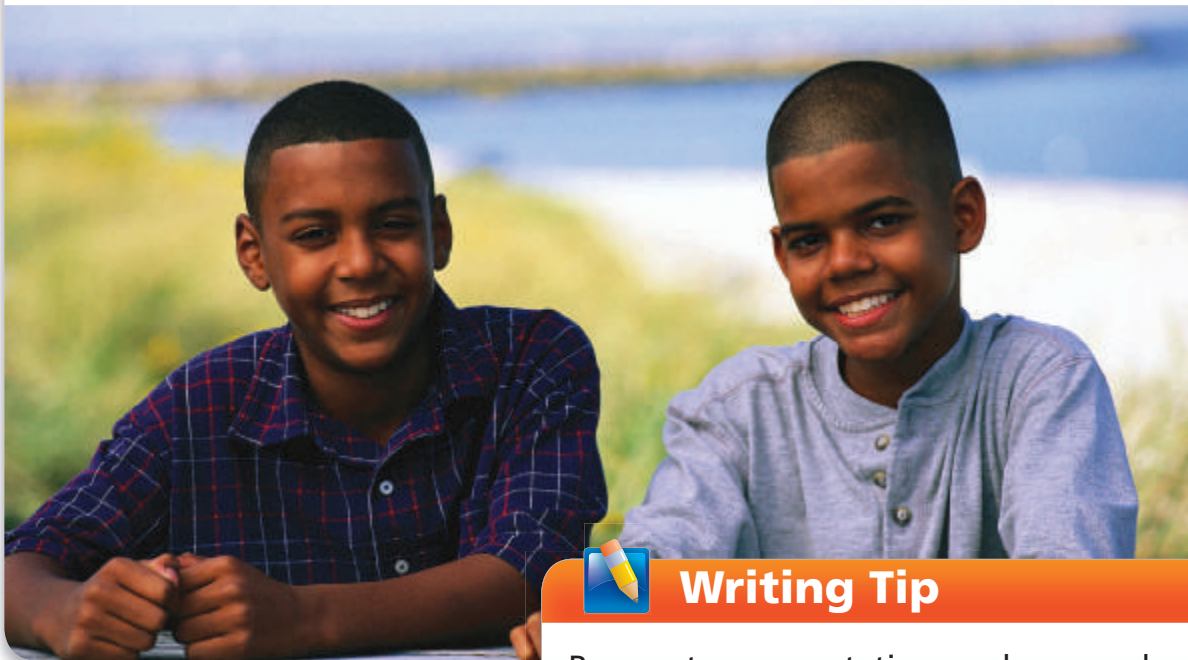
## DISCUSS CHARACTER GROWTH

**Partner Talk** How do Travis's feelings toward his brother change during the story? With a partner, discuss how the incident with the bear affects Travis. Then evaluate whether his change in perspective is believable, based on your ideas about how real people react and feel in such situations. Share your observations with the class.



## WRITE ABOUT READING

**Response** To determine the theme, or message, of a short story, think about how the main character responds to conflict. For example, how does Travis react when his brother is in danger? Write a paragraph explaining how Travis's actions reveal a general message about life or people. Support your ideas with quotations and other text evidence.



### Writing Tip

Be sure to use quotation marks around phrases or sentences that you take directly from the text. Include only those details that support your main idea.



**RL.5.1** quote accurately when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences; **RL.5.2** determine theme from details/summarize; **W.5.9a** apply grade 5 Reading standards to literature; **W.5.10** write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames; **SL.5.1a** come to discussions prepared/explicitly draw on preparation and other information about the topic;

**SL.5.1c** pose and respond to questions, make comments that contribute to the discussion, and elaborate on others' remarks



## Lesson 7

# PERSUASIVE TEXT



### ✓ GENRE

**Persuasive text**, such as this readers' theater, seeks to convince the reader to think or act in a certain way.

### ✓ TEXT FOCUS

**Persuasive techniques**, such as the authoritative tones used by the experts being interviewed in this selection, are used to sway readers' thinking or call readers to action.



**RI.5.10** read and comprehend informational text

## Readers' Theater

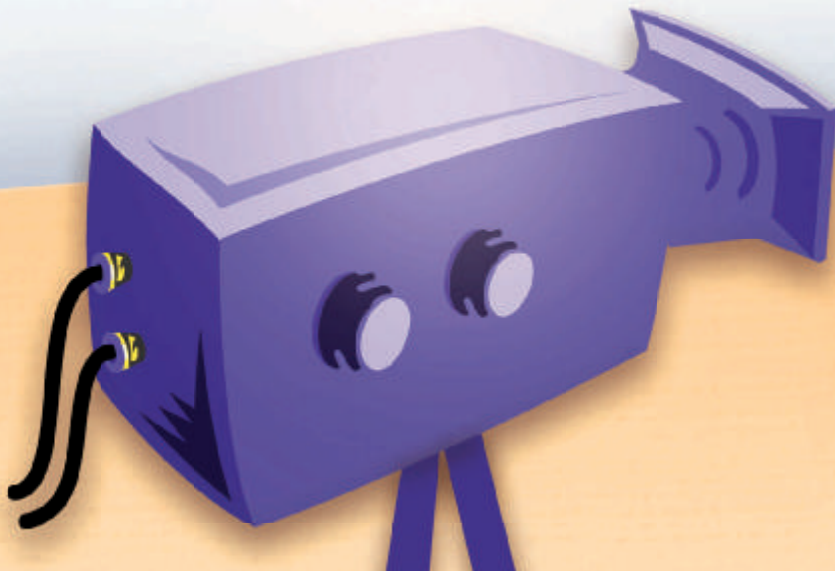
# What Makes It Good?



by Cynthia Benjamin



**Host:** Welcome to *What Makes It Good?*, the movie review show that asks the experts if a movie is accurate enough to be good. Today we are reviewing the film version of *Old Yeller*, and we have two experts with us. One is historian Lester Year, who writes about life on the nineteenth-century Texas frontier. The other is animal expert Kay Nyne.

First up is our animal expert. What makes *Old Yeller* good?





**Kay Nyne:** The accurate portrayal of animals makes *Old Yeller* good. If the bear squeaked like a mouse, or if Old Yeller ran away from his owners, then you would not believe the story.

For instance, I loved the scene with Old Yeller bounding into the cabin to lick Arliss in the face! We know that dogs often lick their masters on the face or hand, so it makes sense that Old Yeller would lick the young boy after saving him.

I also thought the way Old Yeller went lunging at the attacking bear in a frantic attempt to save Arliss was very realistic. Dogs are loyal animals. In fact, dogs and people have lived together for more than ten thousand years! Mother bears are fiercely protective of their cubs. I have no problem picturing a bear attacking if she thought her cub were in danger. It is details like these that make the movie believable and exciting.





**Lester Year:** Now wait a minute! That fight between Old Yeller and the bear was exciting, I admit. But what makes the movie truly great is its historical accuracy. If Travis had broken his stride, wheeled around and seen the bear, then dialed 9-1-1 on a cell phone, you would not believe it.

But he does not carry a cell phone. He has shouldered an ax. I hope you noticed the ax. It was an excellent example of an important 1860s tool. Living on the frontier was no romp on the playground, and pioneers depended on their tools for survival.

Ah, now that scene of Old Yeller licking Arliss after checking the bear's attack may be very accurate as far as dog behavior is concerned. But more important, the cabin looks very realistic, down to the notches holding the logs in place. If the cabin had wallpaper, you would have strained to believe the scene. That is why historical accuracy is more important.

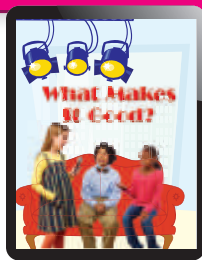
**Host:** We are almost out of time. Let's summarize. *Old Yeller* is a good movie because it is . . .

**Kay Nyne:** Scientifically accurate.

**Lester Year:** Historically accurate.

**Host:** Well, they may never agree. Audience, I guess you have to decide for yourself what makes it good!





# Compare Texts

## TEXT TO TEXT

**Analyze Viewpoint** In “What Makes It Good?” Lester Year makes a clear argument about “Old Yeller” and provides evidence to support it. Identify Lester Year’s viewpoint. Then make a list of all the ideas and text evidence from “Old Yeller” that supports his viewpoint. Include those that he mentions from the film, as well as those you find in the text. Use your list to write a sentence or two explaining how the ideas and text evidence work together to form a solid argument.



## TEXT TO SELF

**Write About an Animal** Think about an experience you have had with an animal, or an experience you would like to have. Write a narrative paragraph about the experience. Include details that convey your thoughts and feelings. Draw a picture to accompany your paragraph, and provide a caption for your drawing.



## TEXT TO WORLD

**Compare Dialects** The authors of “Old Yeller” and “Off and Running” (Lesson 3) use types of dialect to make their story characters realistic. With a partner, create a T-Map listing examples of dialect from each story. Compare and contrast the unique words and phrases found in each dialect. Discuss whether you think the dialect helps define the characters who use it, and why.



**RI.5.8** explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support points; **W.5.4** produce writing in which development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience; **W.5.10** write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames; **L.5.3b** compare and contrast varieties of English in stories, dramas, or poems



# Grammar



**What Is a Direct Object?** A **direct object** is the word in the predicate that receives the action of the verb. It can be a noun or a pronoun, a word that takes the place of a noun. A **compound direct object** is made up of two or more words that receive the action of the same verb.

| Verbs and Objects   | What Receives the Action   |
|---|--|
| <p>action verb    direct object</p> <p>The boy swung his axe.</p>                           | <p>Axe receives the action of the verb <i>swung</i>.</p>                       |
| <p>action verb    compound direct object</p> <p>He chopped big logs and small branches.</p> | <p><i>Logs and branches</i> receive the action of the verb <i>chopped</i>.</p> |

An **indirect object** usually tells to *whom* or to *what* the action of the verb is done. The indirect object comes between the verb and the direct object.

action verb    indirect object    direct object

The boy gave his brother a treat.

*Brother* tells to whom the treat was given.

## Try This!

The action verb in each sentence is printed in bold type. Find the direct object. Then find the indirect object, if one is used.

- 1 Mom **wrote** Dad a letter.
- 2 She **described** the big fight.
- 3 Our dog **protected** my brother and me.
- 4 We **gave** our dog great praise.

You can improve the flow of your writing by combining sentences in which the direct objects receive the action of the same verb. First, identify the subject, verb, and direct object of each sentence. Then combine the sentences, using *and* or *or* to join the direct objects.

### Separate Sentences



The brave dog fought a bear.



The brave dog fought a mountain lion.

### Combined Sentence with Compound Direct Object



The brave dog fought a bear and a mountain lion.



### Connect Grammar to Writing

As you revise your compare-contrast essay this week, see where you can create compound direct objects to combine sentences. Combining sentences will help make your writing smoother.






**W.5.2a** introduce a topic, provide an observation and focus, group related information/include formatting, illustrations, and multimedia; **W.5.2b** develop the topic with facts, definitions, details, quotations, or other information and examples; **W.5.2e** provide a concluding statement or section; **W.5.5** develop and strengthen writing by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach

# Informative Writing



 **Word Choice** The author of "Old Yeller" uses vivid descriptions and action to tell a great story. You can analyze descriptions and events in a story to compare and contrast parts of it in your writing.









Stefania drafted a **compare-contrast essay** to explain how Old Yeller and the bear are alike and different. Later, she added quotations and precise details from the text to support her ideas.

Use the Writing Traits Checklist below as you revise your writing.



## Writing Traits Checklist

-  **Ideas**  
Did I develop my topic with quotations and examples?
-  **Organization**  
Did I explain my comparisons and provide a conclusion?
-  **Sentence Fluency**  
Did I vary the structure of my sentences?
-  **Word Choice**  
Did I use precise words and details from the text?
-  **Voice**  
Is my writing clear and informative?
-  **Conventions**  
Did I use correct spelling and grammar?

## Revised Draft

The most exciting scene in "Old Yeller" is when Old Yeller fights the mother bear in order to protect Arliss. The author describes both animals as ready to fight. The bear "roaring mad and ready to kill." is protecting her cub and Old Yeller is and "roaring like a mad bull." protecting Little Arliss. When Old Yeller sees that Little Arliss is in danger, he ~~takes action.~~ runs at the bear and knocks her off her feet

# Old Yeller and the Bear

by Stefania Almeida

The most exciting scene in “Old Yeller” is when Old Yeller fights the mother bear in order to protect Arliss. The author describes both animals as ready to fight. The bear is protecting her cub and “roaring mad and ready to kill.” Old Yeller is protecting Little Arliss and “roaring like a mad bull.” When Old Yeller sees that Little Arliss is in danger, he runs at the bear and knocks her off her feet. The bear stands her ground, as well. She keeps fighting until the end when Old Yeller outruns her and goes back to the family’s house.

The main difference between the two animals is their size. The bear is much bigger and stronger than Old Yeller. This size difference does not scare Old Yeller, though. He acts on his protective instincts and takes on an animal three times his size. The bear is brave, as well. She believes her cub is in danger and is willing to do anything to protect it. Once Old Yeller knows that Arliss and the rest of the family are out of danger, he stops fighting. Though the bear chases him for a bit, she eventually gives up, too, and probably returns home with her cub. Both animals do what is necessary to protect those they care about.

## Reading as a Writer

**Which details made Old Yeller’s and the bear’s similarities and differences clear? Where in your writing can you make similarities and differences more clear?**

**In my final paper, I used quotations and precise details from the text to support my ideas.**

