

CLASSROOM GUIDE

Grades
2-5

RANGER in *TIME*

BY KATE MESSNER



Meets Educator Standards Including Common Core—SEE INSIDE

About the Books

Meet Ranger! He's a time-traveling golden retriever who has a nose for trouble . . . and always saves the day!

Ranger has been trained as a search-and-rescue dog, but can't officially pass the test because he's always getting distracted by squirrels during exercises. One day, he finds a mysterious first aid kit in the garden that transports him to important moments in history!

In *Rescue on the Oregon Trail*, Ranger travels to the year 1850, where he meets a young boy named Sam Abbott. Sam's family is migrating west on the Oregon Trail, and soon after Ranger arrives, he helps the boy save his little sister. Ranger thinks his job is done, but the Oregon Trail can be dangerous, and the Abbotts need Ranger's help more than they realize!

In *Danger in Ancient Rome*, Ranger travels to the Colosseum, where there are gladiator fights and wild animal hunts! Ranger befriends Marcus, a young boy who Ranger rescues from a runaway lion, and Quintus, a new volunteer gladiator. Can Ranger help Marcus and Quintus escape the brutal world of the Colosseum?



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About the Author

Kate Messner is the author of *The Brilliant Fall of Gianna Z.*, winner of the E.B. White Read Aloud Award for Older Readers; *Capture the Flag*, an SCBWI Crystal Kite Award winner; *Hide and Seek*; *Manhunt*; and the Marty McGuire chapter books, which are illustrated by Caldecott-winning artist Brian Floca. A former middle-school English teacher, Kate lives on Lake Champlain with her family and loves reading, walking in the woods, and traveling.

Visit her online at www.katemessner.com.

Questions for Writing & Discussion as You Read Ranger in Time

1: RESCUE ON THE OREGON TRAIL

Chapter 1: What would you take with you on the Oregon Trail? What might you have to leave behind?

Chapter 2: Based on what you know about Ranger, would he make a good search-and-rescue dog?

Chapter 3: If you were Ranger, what clues in this chapter might let you know that you'd traveled to a different time and place?

Chapter 4: Why does Ranger decide to go along with the Abbotts as they set out on the Oregon Trail?

Chapter 5: The road west was long, dusty, boring for kids, and sometimes dangerous. What would be the most challenging part of the journey for you?

Chapter 6: The young people have varied attitudes about the trip, from Amelia's curiosity, to Sam's sense of adventure, to Lizzie's boredom and impatience. If you were out on the trail with your family, which character would you act most like?

Chapter 7: Sam talks a lot about "Mr. Palmer's guidebook" for the trail. How might the family's trip have been different without a resource like this?

Chapter 8: Why do you think Sarah finally begins to talk about her family at Independence Rock?

Chapter 9: Why do you think Ranger feels "sad and tired" at the end of this chapter?

Chapter 10: Of all the things Sam has seen and experienced on the Oregon Trail, what would have been your favorite? What would have scared you the most?

Chapter 11: Ma and Ranger are both nervous about the river at Three Island Crossing. Why does this part of the journey make them so uncomfortable?

Chapter 12: How has Ranger's search-and-rescue training prepared him to help at Three Island Crossing? Make a prediction about what might happen next.

Chapter 13: Compare Ranger's work in this chapter to his search-and-rescue training with Luke and Dad. How is it similar? What's different?

Chapters 14–15: Why do you think the first aid kit started to hum when it did, when it stayed quiet through so much of the journey?

2: DANGER IN ANCIENT ROME

Chapter 1: Why does Marcus dream of being a gladiator when he knows it's a dangerous life with limited freedom?

Chapter 2: When Ranger goes back in time, how does he recognize that he's no longer at Luke's soccer game?

Chapter 3: Why do you think Marcus says he's able to handle a lion when he's had no training?

Chapter 4: Why does Quintus say he's not going back? What changed his mind about being a gladiator?

Chapter 5: Based on what you know so far about the ancient Roman amphitheater, whose fault is it that the lion came after Marcus? If Marcus had been hurt, who should have been held responsible?

Chapter 6: Would Marcus make a good gladiator? Why or why not?

Chapter 7: What parts of everyday life in ancient Rome are similar to the way we live today, and what are the differences?

Chapter 8: How well did Ranger's search-and-rescue training prepare him to help during the fire?

Chapter 9: Why do you think Marcus tries so hard to help Quintus prepare for his fight?

Chapter 10: What are Ranger's feelings in this chapter? If you were Ranger, how might you try to get home?

Chapter 11: Before the fight, Marcus tells Quintus, "You must not submit. No matter what." Is this good advice?

Chapter 12: Why do you think gladiator fights were so important in ancient Rome?

Chapter 13: Why does Marcus go against the rules and rush into the arena? Would you have done the same thing?

Chapters 14–15: In the final scene at the arena, an old servant tells Marcus, "Today, you and your dog gave them the one thing they love more than blood. You gave them a story." What do you think he means?

Nonfiction Connections: A Note from the Author

About Search-and-Rescue Dogs

Ranger is a fictional search-and-rescue dog, but he's based on the thousands of real-life working dogs that save lives every day. In the real world, search-and-rescue dogs don't work alone like Ranger. They go out on calls with their handlers. These are people who have trained with their dogs for years. Handlers understand their dogs' signals and behaviors.

Like Ranger, real-world search-and-rescue dogs have an excellent sense of smell. They can pick out specific scents in the air and follow them to find people or objects with human scent. Ranger is forced into many different situations involving air scenting, tracking, and water rescue. However, most real search-and-rescue dogs are trained to do one or two specific jobs.

Many different kinds of dogs can be trained for search-and-rescue work. Some common breeds include German shepherds, golden retrievers, Labradors, and Belgian Malinois. Before a dog and handler can be called out on real-life searches, they must train together. This training may last two years or more. They have to pass tests for each type of search-and-rescue situation.

In wilderness settings, search-and-rescue dogs are often used to locate missing children or elderly people who have wandered off. They can also find hikers who are lost in the woods or mountains.

Search-and-rescue dogs are also called in after disasters. They can help find people trapped in rubble after a building collapses due to an earthquake or tornado. With its great sense of smell, a dog can tell rescue workers which damaged buildings have people inside and which don't. That way, crews spend their valuable time where it's most likely to save lives.

When I was doing research for the Ranger in Time series, I read many books about search-and-rescue dogs and interviewed a number of handlers. I also spent time with Oakland and Easton, who are part of the Champlain Valley K-9 Unit. Watching them train was an incredible experience. I was so impressed with the way these dogs did their work, especially when I was the hidden volunteer being found. I ran through a field into thick brush and crouched behind a big old log. I thought I was hidden so well, but Easton found me in seconds by following my scent. Like Ranger, he earned his pets and praise for a job well done.



Photo © Kate Messner.



Research and Writing

Putting It All Together

Write your own Ranger story!

If you could send Ranger on a search-and-rescue mission anywhere in history, where would you send him?

After you've read the Nonfiction Connections piece about search-and-rescue dogs, brainstorm a list of events from history where such help might have made a difference. Was there a fire or other disaster in your city a long time ago, or do you have a favorite period of history where Ranger would have opportunities to help? Once you've made your list, choose the idea that most captures your imagination. Now it's time to learn more...

Taking Notes

In order to write a Ranger story, you'll need to do some research, taking notes on both search-and-rescue dogs and the time period in history you've selected. You can use this two-column note-taking chart to get started. Remember, when you take notes, you don't need to write in complete sentences. Just write down key words and phrases for the most important ideas, like you see in the sample notes from the first column below.

TIPS FOR RESEARCH

Search-and-Rescue Dogs:

Use the "Nonfiction Connections: About Search-and-Rescue Dogs" article and additional research to take some notes on how they do their work. You'll use these details in your story!

My Historical Event: _____

Use resources in your library to find more information about your historical event. Be sure to write down what happened, when and where it happened, who was involved, and what it was like. Think about what Ranger would have seen, heard, and smelled if he'd been there.

RESEARCH NOTES

Search-and-Rescue Dogs:

- go on calls with handlers
- great sense of smell

My Historical Event: _____

Date: _____

Location: _____

Once you've finished your research chart, choose a main character—a boy or girl from the time period you chose—and put that character in some kind of danger. Send Ranger back in time just when his help is needed most, and you're off and running with your story!

Ranger in Time

Written by Kate Messner • Illustrated by Kelley McMorris • Ages 7–10



Ranger in Time #1: Rescue on the Oregon Trail
 HC: 978-0-545-63915-6 • \$17.99 (CAN \$19.99)
 PB: 978-0-545-63914-9 • \$5.99 (CAN \$6.99)
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Available January 2015



Ranger in Time #2: Danger in Ancient Rome
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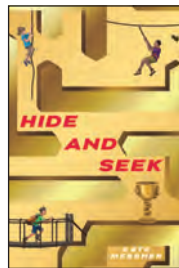
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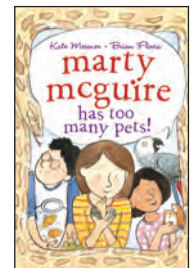
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Common Core State Standards Referenced in This Guide

*Questions for Books 1 & 2 correlate with the following Common Core Standards:

Reading Literature

Key Ideas & Details, Craft & Structure, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RL 1.1; 1.4; 1.9; 2.1; 2.3; 2.5; 2.6; 2.7; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 3.9; 4.1; 4.3; 5.1; 5.2; 5.3

*The Nonfiction Connections/Putting It All Together activity correlates with the following Common Core Standards:

Reading Informational Text

Key Ideas & Details, Craft & Structure, and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RI 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 2.1; 2.2; 2.3; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3; 4.1; 4.2; 4.3; 5.1; 5.2; 5.3

Writing

Text Types & Purposes, Production & Distribution of Writing, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge

W 1.3; 1.5; 1.7; 1.8; 2.3; 2.5; 2.7; 2.8; 3.3; 3.4; 3.5; 3.7; 3.8; 4.3; 4.4; 4.5; 4.7; 4.8; 5.3; 5.4; 5.6; 5.7; 5.8



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