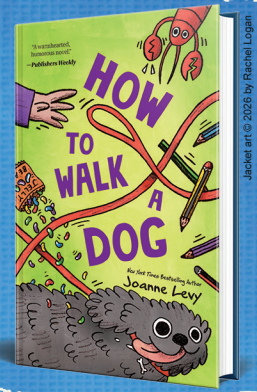


HOW TO WALK A DOG

New York Times Bestselling Author
Joanne Levy
TEACHING TIPS



ABOUT HOW TO WALK A DOG:

Asher Abrams has his ADHD under control—most of the time—even if he asks a lot of questions, can be forgetful, and is often impulsive. But he's also creative and clever and fearless when it comes to standing up for the people he loves. Like his best friend, Gillian Benjamin. At least, she used to be his best friend until last summer when they had a huge fight, one that he's never quite understood. After he catches her shoplifting in the grocery store, Asher learns that Gilly's life has changed dramatically; her mom has disappeared, leaving her and her dad with nothing but a pile of debt. When Gilly's period arrives unexpectedly at school, she is bullied. Asher is determined to normalize periods so no one gets shamed about this natural part of life. It doesn't bother him that he's a boy talking about the stigma around periods—that's the whole point, isn't it? Asher convinces Gilly to help film a movie about periods for his school passion project. When their silly PSA goes viral will their newly healed friendship be able to handle the attention?

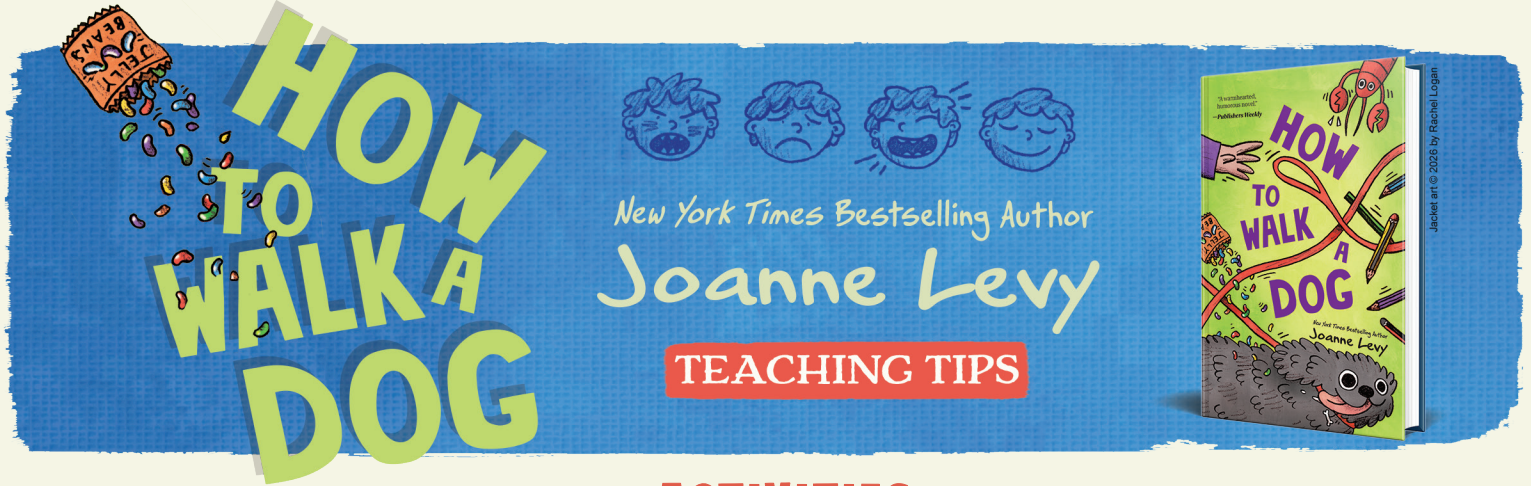
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What do you think was the author's purpose in writing this book? How did she succeed in achieving this purpose?
2. Discuss your favorite scene from the book. Why does it stand out to you? What makes it meaningful?
3. Asher has ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder) and uses all kinds of techniques to organize his thoughts, like footnotes, doodles, and lists. How do you organize your thoughts? Have you found any unique ways of communicating or journaling?
4. Asher's classmate, Gilly, runs away from him after he catches her stealing. If you were Asher, what would you have done in this situation? How would it have made you feel?
5. Part of period stigma stems from a lack of discussion and honest communication about menstruation. Why do you think that is? What can be done to fight the stigma and make people who menstruate feel more supported?
6. Can you think of other topics that have a stigma around them or are difficult for people to talk about? Why do you think that is?
7. The cover of *How to Walk a Dog* shows Teddy, the lovable dog Asher offers to walk when Teddy's owner recovers from an injury. Have you ever helped out a neighbor or someone in your community? How did the relationship begin, and how did you each benefit from the collaboration?



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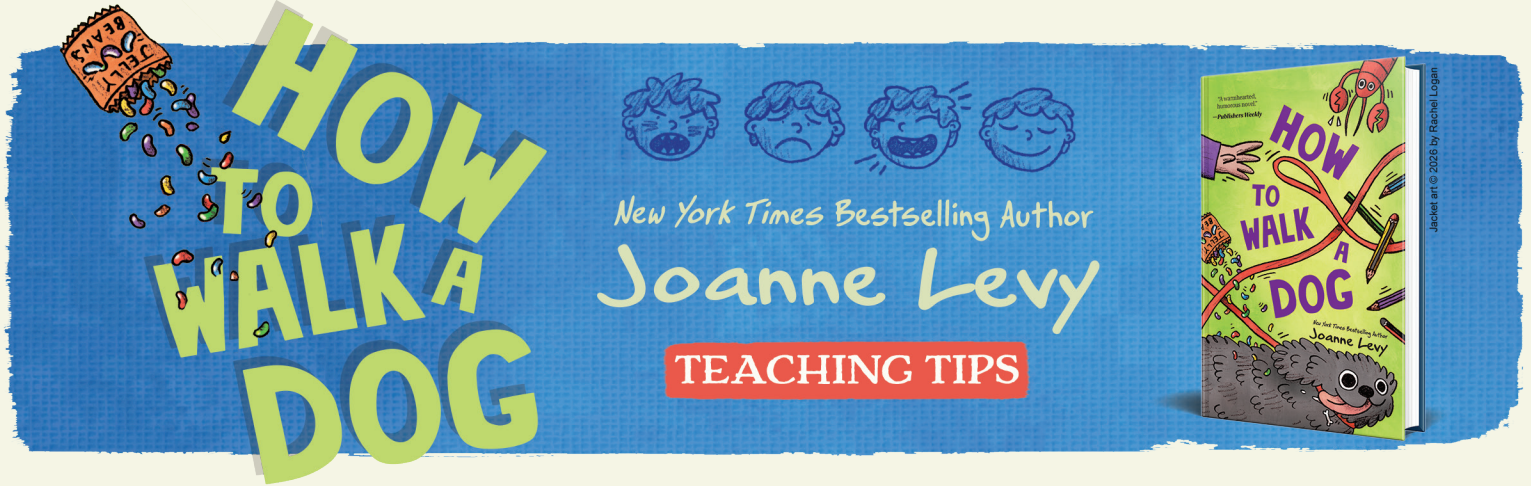
ACTIVITIES

1. At the dog park, Asher comes up with imaginary names and personalities for other people's dogs. Visit a dog park or pay attention to animals in your neighborhood if you are able. From what you observe, what are the physical and emotional qualities of the dogs there? Doodle a picture of each pooch and give them names that you think suits them.
2. In *How to Walk a Dog*, Asher and Gilly create a PSA (Public Service Announcement) around period stigma awareness, which is eventually used in an advertising campaign. Do you think their PSA was successful in achieving their goals? Why or why not? Create your own PSA or a poster about a cause that you care about.
3. Even though Asher doesn't experience periods, he feels very strongly about supporting others who do to make the world better and more fair for them. Is there a subject you feel as strongly about? Why is it important to you? Write 3 reasons why.
4. The title *How to Walk a Dog* refers to Asher's relationship with Teddy and his growing confidence as he's given the responsibility of caring for a dog. Come up with a new title that amplifies another aspect of Asher's story. To what part of the story does your new title refer and why did you choose it?
5. Create a alternative cover for *How to Walk a Dog* with your new title, featuring your favorite part of the book. You can imagine it any way you like!



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6. Write or film a book review of *How to Walk a Dog*. You can include a brief plot summary (no spoilers!), what you like/don't like about the book and why, how you feel about the characters and the plot, how the book made you feel or whatever you feel inspired to say about the book.
7. Using old magazines, make a collage that represents themes, scenes, and/or characters from the book.
8. Assemble a musical playlist for the book of songs that fit with the themes or make you think of the characters or the story.
9. Start a book club with some friends so you can discuss *How to Walk a Dog* and other books. Choose a book each month to read and discuss. Take turns choosing what to read. Hint #1: talk to your local librarian as some public libraries have book club kits so everyone can read at the same time. After reading *How to Walk a Dog* for your book club, get in touch with the author at joanneblevy@gmail.com and she'll send you bookmarks for everyone in your book club.

GROW YOUR VOCABULARY

Use a dictionary to find the meaning of these words or use context clues from the book to help you understand their definitions. Can you use each word in a sentence of your own?

- | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Absently | 4. Empathy | 7. Intently | 10. Stigma |
| 2. Commentary | 5. Exclaim | 8. Passionate | 11. Storyboard |
| 3. Embarrassing | 6. Instinct | 9. Proclamation | |

AUTHOR BIO

Joanne Levy is an acclaimed and prolific writer for tweens. Her books regularly make state, province and library reading and prize lists. *Sorry For Your Loss* was a finalist for the prestigious Governor General's Award for Young People's Literature and won the Canadian Jewish Literary Award. She is also one of the authors of the New York Times bestseller *Let it Glow*, co-written with Marissa Meyer. She was inspired to write *How to Walk a Dog* when her husband was diagnosed with ADHD as an adult. Joanne lives in Southern Ontario, Canada with her husband and a small menagerie.

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