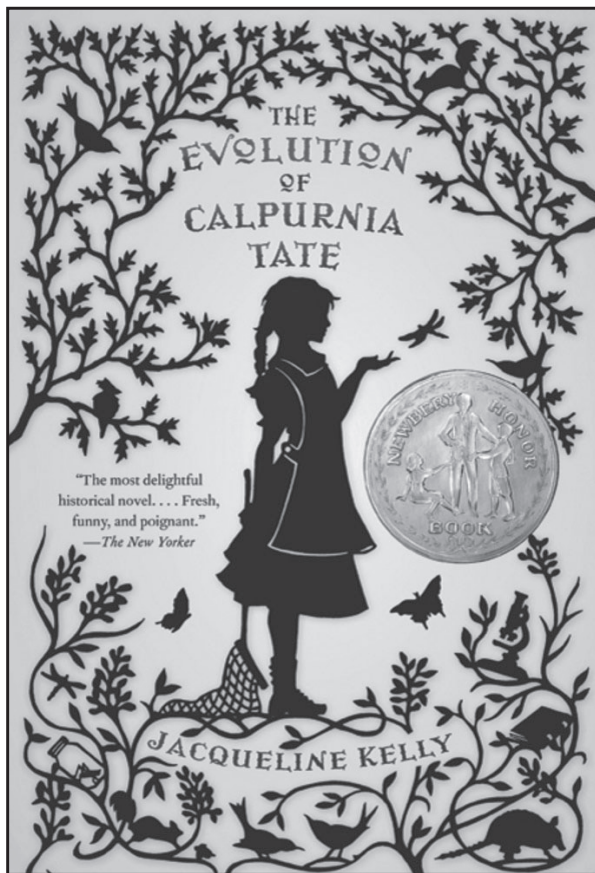


# A TEACHER'S GUIDE TO THE CALPURNIA TATE BOOKS BY JACQUELINE KELLY

FOR  
USE WITH  
COMMON CORE  
STATE  
STANDARDS



## ABOUT THE BOOK:

Living in a small town in Texas and the only girl in a family of seven children, Calpurnia is forced to sew and cook by her mother—who wants her to blossom into a young lady. But all Calpurnia wants is to spend time with her grandfather, an avid naturalist—to walk along the river collecting plant specimens, and to write in her scientific notebook. While all her brothers date and take an interest in her best friend, Lula, Calpurnia dreams of attending the university and becoming a scientist. Will Calpurnia's dream ever be a reality? There is hope in her heart!

HC: 9780805088410 • PB: 9780312659301 • Ages 9–12

To attain specific Common Core grade-level standards for their classroom and students, teachers are encouraged to adapt the activities listed in this guide to their classes' needs. You know your kids best!



[CalpurniaTateBooks.com](http://CalpurniaTateBooks.com)

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Calpurnia Tate Books  
Jacqueline Kelly

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the advantages Calpurnia enjoys as the only girl in her family of seven children?
2. Why is Calpurnia so annoyed by her brothers' interest in Lula? How does Calpurnia decide to handle the situation?
3. How do Calpurnia and her grandfather make their initial connection? What is Grandfather's reaction to Calpurnia's interest in the natural world?
4. Why don't Calpurnia and Lula ever have to perform in another recital after their first one? What is their reaction to the news?
5. Why is Calpurnia upset with Harry when she discovers he is courting Miss Minerva Goodacre? What does Calpurnia do about it that causes Harry to be angry with her?
6. Why is Calpurnia the only grandchild Grandfather spends any time with? How does Calpurnia feel about her grandfather?

CCSS: L.4.1, L.4.3, L.5.1, L.5.3, L.6.1, L.6.3; RL.4.1, RL.5.1, RL.6.1; SL.4.1, SL.5.1, SL.6.1

## WRITING ACTIVITIES

### SCIENTIFIC JOURNALING

Calpurnia often writes notes and draws pictures in her scientific journal. Ask students to write and draw in a journal daily for two weeks and to make scientific observations about the world around them. At the end of the week, ask students to select three of the items they observed and to identify the items by name. Have students meet in small groups of four to five students and share their observations and illustrations.

CCSS: L.4.1, L.4.3, L.5.1, L.5.3, L.6.1, L.6.3; W.4.1, W.4.2, W.4.4, W.4.7, W.5.1, W.5.2, W.5.4, W.5.7, W.6.1, W.6.2, W.6.4, W.6.7

### FAMILY DYNAMICS

Calpurnia's family is unique; the way the members interact is a story within itself. Ask students to select three characters and to create a situation that would be true to the setting. Then have students write a narrative showing how the characters would react and interact based on the way they would in the novel. Students should also include dialogue, actions, and character thoughts in their narratives. Ask students to read their narratives to the class.

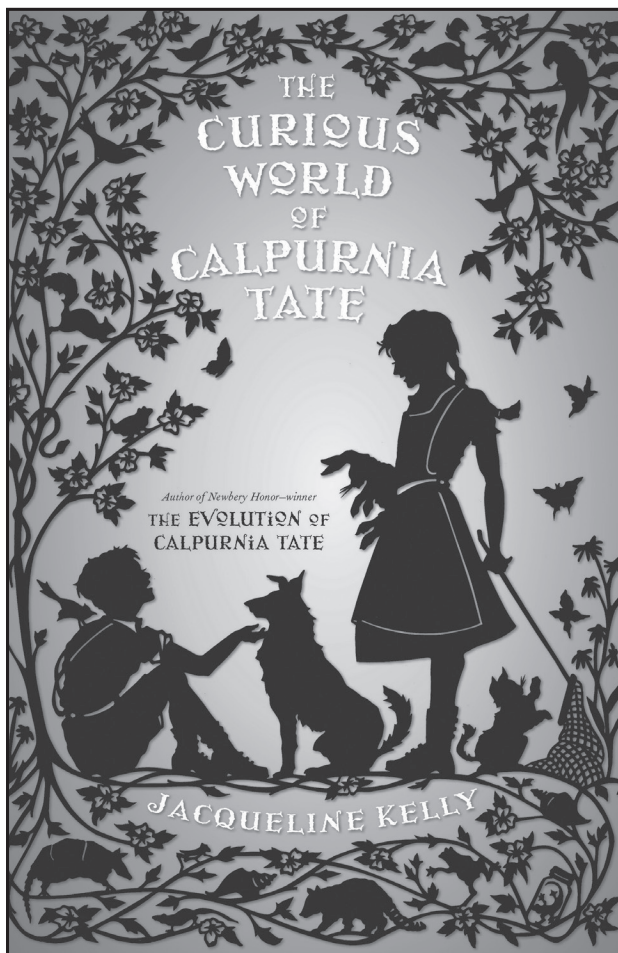
CCSS: L.4.1, L.4.3, L.5.1, L.5.3, L.6.1, L.6.3; W.4.3, W.4.4, W.5.3, W.5.4, W.6.3, W.6.4

### A FRIEND TO DEPEND ON

Calpurnia and Lula form an amazing bond even though they have different interests. Ask students to select a partner and to write a poem-for-two-voices: one voice from Calpurnia's point-of-view and one voice from Lula's point-of-view. Students can use and/or adapt direct quotes from the book, and the poem should accurately reflect both characters. Have students practice reading their poems and perform them for the class.

CCSS: L.4.1, L.4.3, L.5.1, L.5.3, L.6.1, L.6.3; RL.4.1, RL.5.1, RL.6.1; W.4.2, W.4.4, W.5.2, W.5.4, W.6.2, W.6.4





9780805097443 • Ages 9–12

## ABOUT THE BOOK:

After a deadly hurricane hits Galveston, Texas, Calpurnia’s world instantly changes. Her aunt and uncle lose their home, and her cousin comes to live with them. Calpurnia gives up her bed and does her best to befriend her cousin - who seems unwilling to be nice. When a vet also comes to Fentress from Galveston, Calpurnia becomes his assistant – albeit through a strange set of circumstances. Dr. Pritzker helps Calpurnia keep her younger brother, Travis, out of trouble by doctoring the stray, wild animals Travis brings home to make pets. Enjoying her role of assistant and helping animals, Calpurnia proclaims to her family her ambition to become a veterinarian, but, not surprisingly for the times, she is told that girls do not go to veterinary school. Calpurnia, however, refuses to give up hope!

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do the people in Fentress and the mayor of Galveston refuse to listen to Captain Tate’s prediction about the storm? Why is he so sure the storm is going to occur? What other options does Captain Tate have to warn the people?
2. When Calpurnia’s grandfather begins to teach Calpurnia about air pressure, he has Calpurnia make a barometer even though he already has one. Calpurnia says, “This is going to be one of those lessons about learning something from the ground up” (page 30). What does she mean by that statement? What other lessons does she learn from the ground up?
3. Why is Aggie so unfriendly toward Calpurnia? How does Calpurnia negotiate with Aggie to get what she wants from Aggie?
4. How do Calpurnia and her grandfather try to help Travis overcome his repulsion of blood and guts? Why is it important for him to be able to look at blood without getting sick?
5. How does Calpurnia prove to Dr. Pritzker that she can handle the job of his assistant? Why is Dr. Pritzker so surprised by Calpurnia’s actions and knowledge?
6. Calpurnia is overwhelmed by the secrets Travis and Aggie ask her to keep. What are those secrets? Why is Calpurnia willing to cover for both Aggie and Travis?

CCSS: L.4.1, L.4.3, L.5.1, L.5.3, L.6.1, L.6.3; RL.4.1, RL.5.1, RL.6.1; SL.4.1, SL.5.1, SL.6.1



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# WRITING ACTIVITIES

## CALPURNIA'S CHARACTER

Have students look at the character of Calpurnia and the changing role of women. First ask students to create a T chart. On the left-hand side students should describe Calpurnia's character and the role she played in her family and society in 1900. Then, ask students to add to their T chart on the right-hand side and to describe how Calpurnia would be treated by society and her family in the 21st century. Students should use this comparison to help them describe the changing role of women from 1900 to 2000 in the fields of education and the work force. Students should conduct additional research to determine what caused the changes and the additional ways the role of women has changed. Have students create a skit highlighting the changing role of women in society. Students should practice and present their skits to the class.

CCSS: L.4.1, L.4.3, L.5.1, L.5.3, L.6.1, L.6.3; W.4.2, W.4.4, W.4.7, W.5.2, W.5.4, W.5.7, W.6.2, W.6.4, W.6.7

## FROM SEARS ROEBUCK CATALOGUE TO AMAZON.COM

On page 130, Calpurnia expresses amazement that a person could buy anything from the Sears Roebuck Catalogue. Today, Amazon.com might be the place people use to buy anything and everything. In small groups, ask students to trace the journey of commerce and technology from the Sears Catalogue to Amazon.com. Students may use a timeline or other graphic organizer to represent the changes. Using their graphic organizer, students should write an essay explaining the evolution of commerce through technology. Students should present both their essay and graphic organizer to the class. After sharing, post student work around the room.

CCSS: L.4.1, L.4.3, L.5.1, L.5.3, L.6.1, L.6.3; W.4.2, W.4.4, W.4.7, W.5.2, W.5.4, W.5.7, W.6.2, W.6.4, W.6.7

## NEVER A STRAY; ALWAYS A PET

Travis has a soft heart for animals, and his desire to take care of orphaned animals leads to huge problems and possible health risks, but Travis persists. Ask students to write a persuasive letter from Travis's point of view to his parents or a school administrator trying to convince them to keep one of the animals he has found.

CCSS: L.4.1, L.4.3, L.5.1, L.5.3, L.6.1, L.6.3; W.4.2, W.4.4, W.4.7, W.5.2, W.5.4, W.5.7, W.6.2, W.6.4, W.6.7

For a detailed description of the Common Core State Standards used in this guide please visit [www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org).



Common Core activities written by Susan Geye, Everman ISD Coordinator of Library Services



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