This book is composed of six stories about Henry Huggins and his escapades after he finds Ribsy near the drugstore one day. The fun begins as Henry unsuccessfully attempts to take the dog home on the bus. A worried Mrs. Huggins calls the police who bring Henry and Ribsy home safe and sound.

Henry's responsible nature becomes evident as the story progresses through the many hilarious episodes. Henry attempts to raise guppies until the jars they are in fill his room, picks thousands of night crawlers to raise money to replace a lost football, plays a humiliating role in a Christmas operetta, enters Ribsy in an ill-fated dog show, and finally meets Ribsy's original owner.

Henry definitely has a knack for making mistakes, but he learns from the mistakes and in the end, when he is faced with losing Ribsy to his original owner, his inner character is revealed. Scooter devises a plan to see which boy Ribsy will choose, and Henry agrees to it even though he knows his dog might choose the other boy.

**Open-Ended Questions**

Use these open-ended questions as the basis for class discussions, student presentations, or extended writing assignments.

**Initial Understanding**

Henry always seemed to get into trouble. What were some of the predicaments Henry had to handle? What could Henry have done differently?

He had a difficult time trying to get Ribsy home on the bus. He threw Scooter's football into a passing car's window. He kept all the guppies as they multiplied.

**Literary Analysis**

How did Ribsy change Henry's life?

On the first page, Henry complained that nothing interesting happened to him until Ribsy came along. Ribsy got him out of playing the little boy. Ribsy brought joy to Henry and the neighborhood kids.
Inferential Comprehension
How did the author show Henry was a responsible boy?

Henry earned an allowance. Henry saved his money and knew its value. Henry owned up to his mistakes. Henry took good care of Ribsy. Henry worked hard to take care of the guppies. He also was very clever in ways to raise money, especially to replace the football.

Constructing Meaning
How did the story show Henry was a lucky boy?

He turned misfortune into fortune. The green paint on his head prevented him from playing Timmy. The pink powder earned Ribsy an award instead of disqualifying him from the competition.

Teachable Skills

Understanding Literary Features  One idea that is repeated throughout the book is taking responsibility for one's actions. Henry is very sincere about his responsibility to others, as well as correcting his mistakes. He is especially resourceful in earning money for that football. Have students discuss what it means to be responsible. Ask them if they damaged or lost someone's property, how would they handle it? They can role-play with other students, each pretending to be the one who lost something, or the one whose object was lost. Have them brainstorm ideas on how to replace the lost or damaged item.

Understanding the Author's Craft  This story is written in the third person, but the thoughts of the dog are not made clear. For a writing assignment, have students re-write the section of "Henry and Ribs" where Henry first encounters the dog. Write about how the dog ended up on that particular street, as well as why Ribsy chose Henry to be his new owner. What did Ribsy think when he first saw Henry?

Describing Actions or Events  In "The Pale Pink Dog," Henry prepares Ribsy for a local dog show.

In it, the dogs are judged, and then they progress through the rounds. For a project, have students research how dog shows and competitions are run. Some famous competitions are the Westminster Dog Show and the Eukanuba Cup. Have them learn about judging standards, as well as the differences between show and obedience competition. Another idea, considering Ribsy is a mixed breed, would be to learn about such groups as A.M.B.O.R (American Mixed Breeds Obedience Registry), which offers competition and titles for mixed breeds.