

*Rez Dogs*  
**Discussion Guide**  
Grades 3 - 7

**Before Reading: to activate schema, build background knowledge, and set a purpose.**

- Before reading, have a class discussion to activate prior knowledge about life on a reservation and terms that correspond
- Think about the COVID-19 pandemic or another time when you were isolated from other people. What gave you comfort during this time?
- Frontload vocabulary (see vocabulary list)

**During Reading: to engage students, check for understanding, and make connections.**

- How did Malian get a dog? (Ch. 1)
- What happened to the dogs when they stayed behind? (Ch. 2)
- What does rez dog mean? How does it differ from city dogs?(Ch. 2)
- Why did Malian not want to sign for the package? (Ch. 3)
- Why did they call her Macintosh? How did Malian show she's responsible? (Ch. 4)
- Explain Malian's situation and how she differs from her classmates? (Ch. 5)
- What happened to the Native kids in the 90's? Who were the Wintons? (Ch. 5)
- Where is the Sky Road? (Ch. 6)
- What is the significance of Grandma's story of how dogs came to be around humans? How did it relate to Malsum? (Ch. 6)
- Why do you think Malsum wouldn't go into the house? (Ch. 7)
- How did Malian handle the social worker? How did Malsum save Malian? (Ch. 7)
- What is the significance of the saying "All the old stories are so alive that even when you rear one of them again, that story may decide to show you something new." (Ch. 8)
- How would the new tower help the reservation? (Ch. 9)
- What is the significance of her grandparents stories about "the creator." (Ch. 9)
- What is the meaning behind the mustache? (Ch. 10)
- To whom does her parents compare her to? Why? (Ch. 10)
- Compare Malian grandfather's school experience with hers, was his experience similar or different than hers?(Ch. 10)
- What would the Indian Health Services do? Why? (Ch. 11)
- What do you think Grampa Roy meant when he said, "In a way, we've been through all this before.?" (Ch. 12)
- Why did Ms. Mendelson share her story? (Ch. 13)
- Why do you think Malsum came into the house? (Ch. 14)
- What did Malian learn from the rez? (Ch. 15)

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**After Reading: to summarize, question, and reflect.**

- **Micro-/Meso-/Macro Environment Systems: Levels of Setting\*:** Notice the name and the aspects of a character's environment. This may be based on the author's information or on what you can infer based on text details. Then, think about which of these is important based on the conflicts that the character is experiencing.
- **The Influences on Character\*:** Consider all the influences on the character - the problem(s) the character is facing, the other characters with who he or she comes in contact, and the setting of the story. Notice how the character interacts and reacts to these different forces. What effect(s) do characters, setting, and problems have on how the character acts earlier and later in the story?

**If your students enjoyed this book...**

- Encourage them to continue to discuss it and refer to it in other lessons and conversations.
- Let them explore more about the topic by reading other books with similar themes, structure, characters, or content.