

BRINDLE BOOK CO.

RUFFING IT ACROSS AMERICA

The Charm-ing Adventures of Sassafras

EDUCATOR RESOURCE PACKET

A Charm-ing Beginning - Volume One

Inside This Packet

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Bring Sassy to Your Readers

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Ruffing It Across America: The Charm-ing Adventures of Sassafras

Dear Educator,

I am pleased to introduce *Ruffing It Across America: The Charm-ing Adventures of Sassafras*, a children's adventure series created to encourage young readers to explore not only books, but the world around them.

Volume One, *A Charm-ing Beginning*, follows Sassafras - Sassy to her friends - a six-week-old bulldog whose search for her family becomes an adventure filled with new places, unexpected friendships, problem-solving, responsibility, kindness, and lessons learned along the way.

While Sassy's story is first and foremost an adventure, the series was designed to give educators opportunities to extend reading beyond the final page. Geography, nature, history, writing, observation, character development, and community are woven naturally into Sassy's travels across America.

Companion materials have also been developed to support young readers, including Sassy's Adventure Passport, reading-comprehension activities, printable educational activities, and Junior Explorer certificates. These materials can be used in classrooms, libraries, reading programs, homeschool settings, or simply to encourage independent reading.

Enclosed is an Educator / Accelerated Reader Request & Evaluation Packet, including a sample ten-question reading-comprehension quiz and teacher answer key. The information is provided to make it easier for educators to evaluate the book for their own reading programs and, where appropriate, request or create an Accelerated Reader quiz.

My hope for Sassy has always been simple: that children enjoy the adventure enough to keep turning pages - and finish the story a little more curious about where those pages might take them next.

Thank you for taking the time to meet Sassafras and consider *Ruffing It Across America* for your young readers.

Warmly,

C.C. McGuinty
Cynthia Yearick
Author, *Ruffing It Across America*
Brindle Book Co.
BrindleBookCo.com
Hello@brindlebookco.com

RUFFING IT ACROSS AMERICA

Educator Guide & Lesson Ideas

A Charm-ing Beginning — Volume One

For Grades 3–6 • Ages 8–12

Ruffing It Across America: A Charm-ing Beginning was written first and foremost as an adventure. But as Sassafras travels, young readers encounter opportunities to explore geography, nature, problem-solving, friendship, responsibility, observation, and the importance of helping others.

These ideas are designed to help educators extend Sassy's adventure beyond the book without turning reading into a chore. Use one activity or use them all. Adapt them for your classroom, library, homeschool group, or individual reader.

Follow Sassy Across America — Geography

Have students trace Sassy's journey on a map as she travels from place to place.

Students can:

- Locate each state and community Sassy visits.
- Identify neighboring states and major geographic features.
- Estimate distances between stops.
- Discuss how landscape, weather, plants, animals, and communities change as Sassy travels.
- Use **Sassy's Adventure Passport** to record places explored in the book and in real life.

Extension: Ask students to choose a place they would like Sassy to visit next and explain why.

Put the Adventure in Order — Reading & Sequencing

Sassy's journey is filled with unexpected turns, new friends, and problems to solve.

Ask students to select five or ten important events and arrange them in chronological order. For each event, have them identify:

What happened? • What caused it? • What did Sassy do? • What happened because of her choice?

Extension: Remove one event from the sequence and ask students how the rest of Sassy's journey might have changed.

What Would You Do? — Problem-Solving

Sassy doesn't begin her adventure with a plan. She learns by watching, listening, asking questions, accepting help, and sometimes making mistakes.

Choose a problem Sassy encounters and stop before revealing the solution.

Ask:

What does Sassy know?

What doesn't she know?

What choices does she have?

Which choice would you make? Why?

Afterward, compare the students' solutions with Sassy's.

Sassy's Nature Notebook — Science & Observation

Sassy learns a great deal simply because she pays attention to the world around her.

Have students keep a small nature notebook for a week. Each day, record something they notice outdoors—a plant, animal, insect, cloud formation, temperature change, bird behavior, tracks, sounds, or other observations.

Encourage students to separate:

What I observed from **What I think it means.**

That simple distinction introduces an important part of scientific thinking: observing before drawing conclusions.

The Meaning Behind the Charms — Character & Community

The charms Sassy collects are more than souvenirs. They remind her of people, places, experiences, and lessons from her journey.

Choose one of Sassy's charms and discuss:

Who gave it to her?

What happened when she received it?

What does it help Sassy remember?

Why might that memory matter later?

Then ask students to design a charm representing something important in their own lives—a person, place, accomplishment, lesson, or act of kindness.

Students may draw the charm and write a short explanation of its meaning.

Small Paws, Big Choices — Character Development

Throughout her adventure, Sassy encounters characters who help her—and opportunities to help others.

Look for examples of:

Kindness • Courage • Patience • Responsibility • Curiosity • Friendship • Perseverance

Ask students to find an example from the story and explain **what the character did** rather than simply naming the trait.

Extension: Discuss how small actions can make a large difference to someone else.

Write Sassy's Next Stop — Creative Writing

Imagine Sassy arrives somewhere she has never been before.

Students choose a real American location and write a short Sassy adventure there.

Include:

Where does she arrive?

What does she see, hear, and smell?

Who does she meet?

What problem occurs?

How does she help—or receive help?

What charm might represent the adventure?

Older students can research the location first and incorporate real geography, history, wildlife, landmarks, or local traditions into their stories.

Become a Junior Explorer

Learning doesn't have to stop when the book closes.

Encourage students to continue exploring through **Sassy's Adventure Passport**, classroom activities, nature observations, reading challenges, community projects, or their own adventures.

When your young readers have completed their adventure, recognize their curiosity and effort with a **Junior Explorer Certificate**.

A Note to Educators

There is no single “right” way to use Sassy's adventures.

Read the story together. Follow the map. Investigate something that sparks a question. Talk about a difficult choice. Design a charm. Go outside and observe something. Or simply let a child enjoy the book.

Because sometimes education begins with something very simple:

A child wondering, “What happens next?”

Small Paws. Big Adventures. Endless Possibilities.

Warmly,

C.C. McGuinty

Author, Ruffing It Across America

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Educator / Accelerated Reader Request & Evaluation Worksheet

A companion worksheet for *Ruffing It Across America: A Charm-ing Beginning, Volume One*



Verified Book Information

Title: Ruffing It Across America
Series: The Charm-ing Adventures of Sassafras
Volume: A Charm-ing Beginning - Volume One
Author: C.C. McGuinty
Publisher: Brindle Book Co.
ISBN-13: 979-8-952495-00-5
Publication Year: 2026
Format: Paperback | 6 x 9 in. | 244 pages
Publisher Audience: Ages 8-12 | Grades 3-6
Language: English

Renaissance Quiz-Suggestion Information

These fields mirror the current public 'Suggest an Accelerated Reader Quiz' form.

Quiz language: English Español **Estimated interest level:**

Book title:

Author first name: **Author last name:**

ISBN: **Publisher:**

Series name: **Publication year:**

Educator / Requester Information

First name: **Last name:**

Email: **School name:**

Submission / follow-up note:

Sample Reading-Comprehension Quiz

10 multiple-choice questions based only on the published 244-page edition

Student: _____ Date: _____ Score: _____ / 10

1. Why does Sassy first leave the safety of the whelping box?

- A. She wants to find a toy.
- B. She follows Momma's scent.
- C. Katarina calls her.
- D. She hears Charlie's truck.

2. How does the puppy eventually get the full name 'Sassafras'?

- A. Charlie reads it on her collar.
- B. Scarlet chooses it from a book.
- C. Katarina names her after the sassafras tree.
- D. Hazel names her at the bakery.

3. After Sassy flies off the skateboard, where does she end up?

- A. Inside Charlie's mailbag.
- B. Under Eli's mill wheel.
- C. On Bella's truck seat.
- D. In Scarlet's jewelry case.

4. According to Scarlet, who should receive one of Sassy's little paw-print charms?

- A. Anyone who gives Sassy food.
- B. Only members of Sassy's family.
- C. Friends who truly help and become part of her journey.
- D. Anyone who asks for one.

5. What is Sir Percival Bartholomew Ashcroft the Third?

- A. A raccoon.
- B. A fox.
- C. A goose.
- D. A groundhog.

6. What special keepsake does Eli give Sassy at the gristmill?

- A. A tiny loaf of bread.
- B. A polished ear-of-corn charm.
- C. A brass key.
- D. A wooden wheel charm.

7. Why does Bella agree to help Sassy continue her journey?

- A. She wants Sassy to work at the Cozy Crumb.
- B. She believes friends should help each other along the way.
- C. She wants Sassy to deliver something for her.
- D. She needs Sassy to show her where to go.

8. Which signs help Sassy understand that a storm may be coming at Ashcroft?

- A. Cooler wind, darkening clouds, and birds becoming quiet.
- B. A warm breeze, bright stars, and louder birds.
- C. Dry leaves, a full moon, and barking dogs.
- D. Morning fog, flowers closing, and a rainbow.

9. What does Rosemary want Sassy to remember when she sees the carrot charm?

- A. Good things such as kindness and patience take time to grow.
- B. Carrots are the most important crop at Ashcroft.
- C. Every traveler should carry food.
- D. Gardens are easier than traveling.

10. Why does Sassy scramble into the back of Don's moving truck in Georgia?

- A. She wants to hide from Don.
- B. She is chasing a butterfly.
- C. She is trying to save Carl, the runaway cabbage.
- D. She is looking for her skateboard.

Teacher Answer Key & Evaluation Notes

Sample quiz answer key plus space for local-school review

Answer Key

1. **B** Sassy follows Momma's scent and leaves the whelping box to search for her.
2. **C** Katarina first calls her Sassy; the sassafras tree inspires the fuller name Sassafras.
3. **A** After the skateboard launch, Sassy ends up in Charlie Chute's mailbag.
4. **C** Scarlet says paw-print charms belong to friends who truly help and become part of Sassy's journey.
5. **A** Sir Percival Bartholomew Ashcroft the Third is a raccoon.
6. **B** Eli gives Sassy a polished ear-of-corn charm from his family's gristmill tradition.
7. **B** Bella agrees to help because she believes friends should help each other along the way.
8. **A** Sassy notices cooler wind, darkening clouds, and birds becoming quiet before the storm.
9. **A** Rosemary uses the carrot to symbolize quiet growth in kindness, patience, friendship, and character.
10. **C** Sassy climbs into the truck bed to save Carl after he rolls free toward the tailgate.

Educator Evaluation

Suggested areas for review: reading comprehension, sequence, character development, geography, cause/effect, problem-solving, kindness/community, nature and observation.

School library / independent reading

Classroom reading / literature study

Homeschool reading / comprehension

Geography / travel enrichment

Kindness / character discussion

Author visit / literacy event

Local / Future AR Record

ATOS / Book Level:

Interest Level:

AR Points:

Quiz Number:

Quiz Release / Approval Date:

School-created Quiz ID / Notes:

Additional notes:

PAW RUFFING IT ACROSS AMERICA PAW

The Charm-ing Adventures of Sassafra

OFFICIAL ADVENTURE READER CERTIFICATE

This certifies that

has completed Volume 1

A Charm-ing Beginning

*You followed Sassy's first pawprints,
met new friends, collected the memories,
and completed the very first adventure!*

PAW *The road goes on... and so does the adventure.* PAW

Date Completed: _____



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