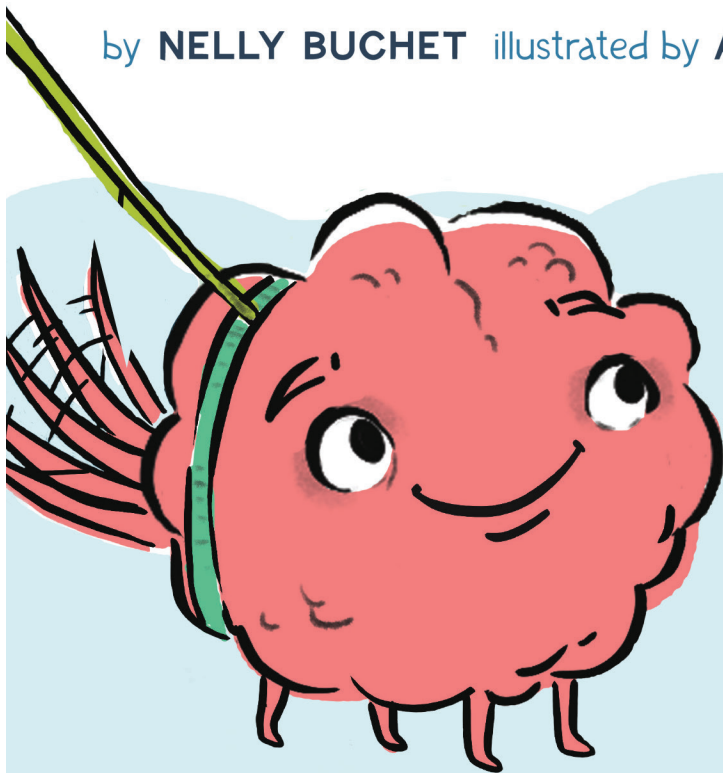
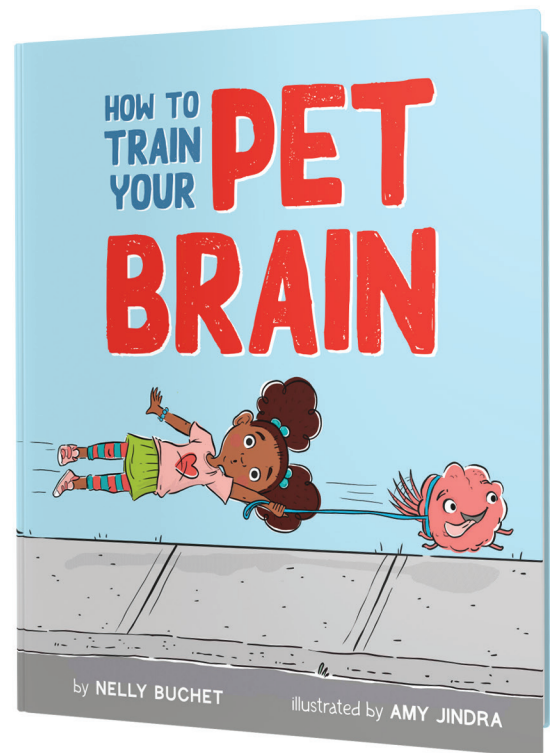


HOW TO TRAIN YOUR PET BRAIN

by NELLY BUCHET illustrated by AMY JINDRA



EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

ABOUT THIS RESOURCE: All of the following activities are designed for students in kindergarten to third grade. They can be adapted and differentiated for other grade levels and student needs. Common Core Standards and Next Generation Science Standards connections are listed below each section if applicable. Educators' Guide created by Kari Allen. Visit her website, kariallenwrites.com, for more information.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

BEFORE READING:

What do we notice about the cover of *How to Train Your Pet Brain*?

How does the illustrator show that the brain is like a pet?

What do we know about brains?

AFTER/DURING READING:

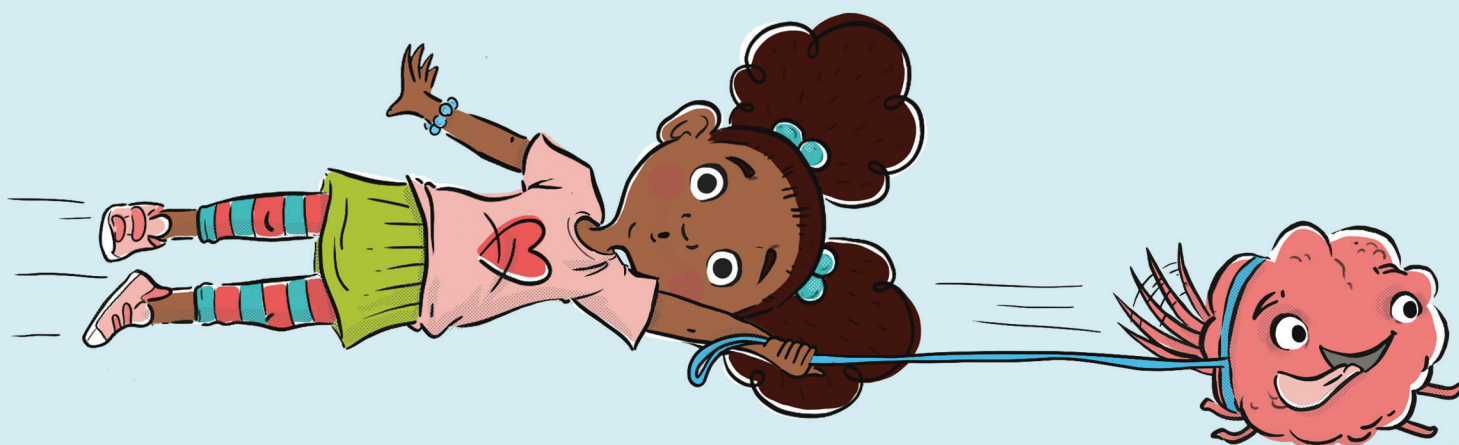
What do you do to help your brain focus and get ready for learning?

What things do you wonder about brains and how they work?

What does the word **mindful** mean to you? How does this book help you think about being mindful?

Discuss the word **metacognition**. What does it mean? When do we think about our thinking? Do we think it is important to think about our thinking? Why?

What are you thinking at the end of the book? How do you want to try to train your brain?



WRITING PROMPTS & ACTIVITIES

Write about a time you learned something new. How did you do it? What kinds of things did you try? What problems did you overcome? (See printable resource “I Trained My Brain to . . .”)

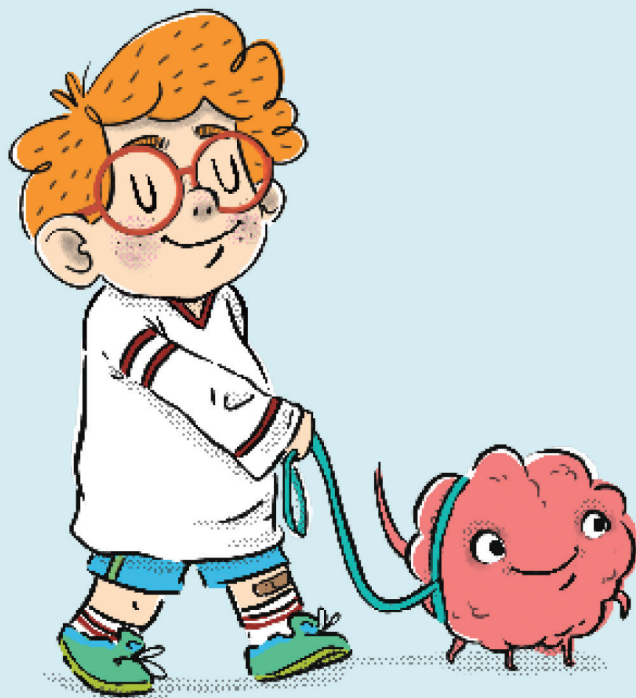
In *How to Train Your Pet Brain*, the author is imagining what it would be like to have a brain as a pet. What do you think would make a good pet? (See printable “A Good Pet.”)

Write your own “How to _____ a _____” piece. Brainstorm possibilities as a group to help get the ideas flowing!

The first line of the book is “Your brain is like a pet.” Introduce and define similes. Brainstorm a class list of other things your brain could be like. Turn it into a class piece of writing or use the “My Brain Is Like . . .” printable for individual writing.

After finishing a big project or unit, write a reflection piece about your study. (See printable resource “Learning Reflection.”) Some guiding questions for the reflection piece:

1. What was your favorite part?
2. What part felt easy? Why do you think it felt that way?
3. What was hard? Why do you think it was hard for you?
4. What questions do you still have? What are you wondering?



VOCABULARY INTRODUCED

IN *HOW TO TRAIN YOUR PET BRAIN*

-
1. Patience 2. Stubborn 3. Habits 4. Control 5. Mindful/Mindfulness

OTHER ACTIVITIES

1. Design and create your own memory game.

- Cut a piece of cardstock into 10–20 squares or rectangles (you could also use index cards).
- Draw pictures on your cards. Make sure to draw TWO of each picture.
- Can you design a theme for your deck?
- Lay out a grid with your cards. Take turns with a partner flipping over two cards at a time. If it's a match, you collect it. If not, flip the cards back over and let your partner have a turn. The player with the most matches at the end of the game wins!

Extension: Topic of Memory Cards could be connected to classroom curriculum.



OTHER ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

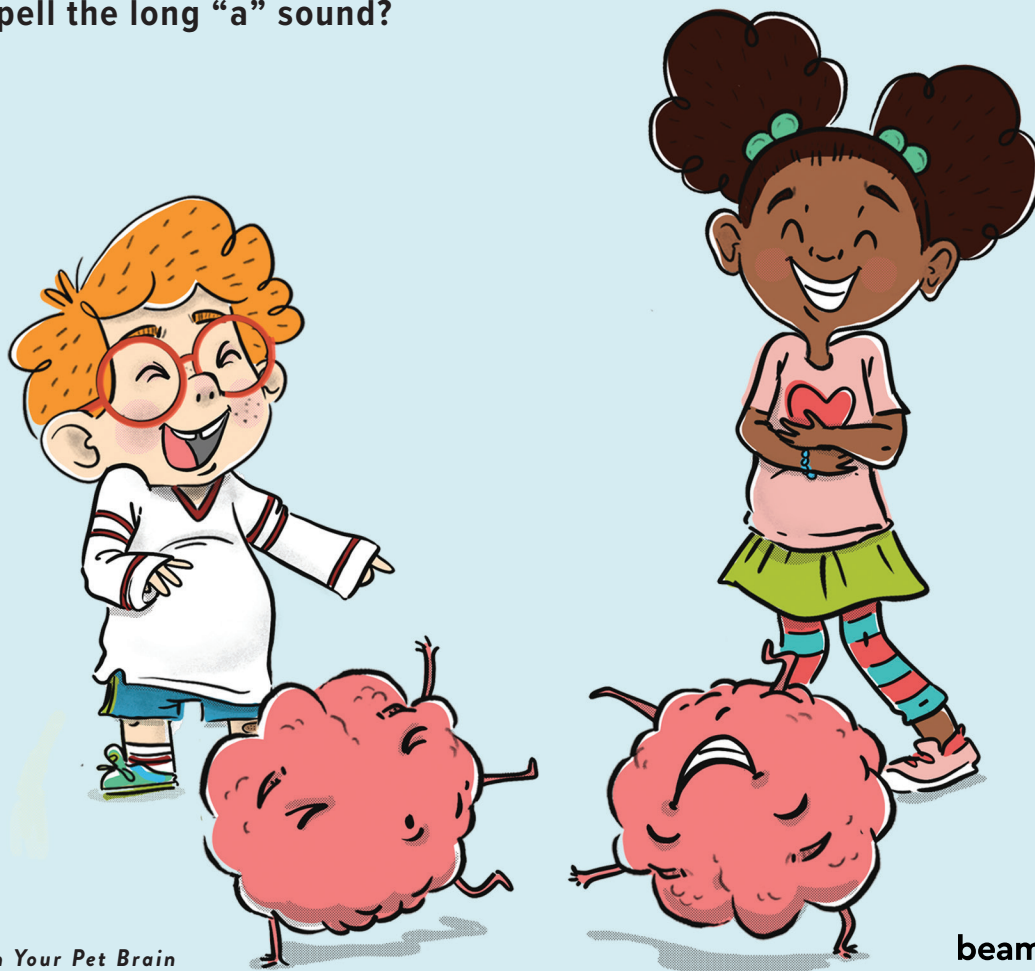
2. Play “I’m Going on a Picnic” but with a topic you have been studying in class. Take turns listing things in an oral memory game.

Player 1: “I’m going on a picnic and I’m bringing _____.”

Player 2: “I’m going on a picnic and I’m bringing (what Player 1 said) and _____.”

Repeat the process until you can’t anymore!

3. Create a class list of questions/wonderings about the brain and how it works. Students can do individual research to find out the answers or invite a brain expert in to answer the questions. (e.g., doctor, surgeon, psychiatrist).
4. Use *How to Train Your Pet Brain* to explore the long “a” vowel sound. *How to Train Your Pet Brain* uses the words train and brain a lot. What other words can you think of that rhyme? What other words have the same “ai” vowel team? What other ways can you spell the long “a” sound?



OTHER PICTURE BOOK TEXTS

THAT CONNECT TO *HOW TO TRAIN YOUR PET BRAIN*

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL BOOK CONNECTIONS

Cat Dog Dog: The Story of a Blended Family
by Nelly Buchet, illustrated by Andrea Zuill

The Can't Do board books by Nelly Buchet,
illustrated by Pau Morgan:

Can't Do It!
Can't Sleep!

The Book of Mistakes by Corinna Luyken

The Rabbit Listened by Cori Doerrfeld

M Is for Melanin by Tiffany Rose

MINDFULNESS BOOKS AND ACTIVITY DECKS

Mindful Kids: 50 Mindfulness Activities for Kindness, Focus, and Calm
by Whitney Stewart, illustrated by Mina Braun

A Handful of Quiet: Happiness in Four Pebbles
by Thich Nhat Hanh

The Mindful Tots board book series by Whitney Stewart, illustrated
by Rocio Alejandro (also available in Spanish)

Loving Kindness: Happy Feelings for Little Ones

Rest and Relax: Sleepy Time for Little Ones

Animal Antics: Focus and Fun for Little Ones

Tummy Ride: Calming Breaths for Little Ones

BRAIN BOOKS

Brains! Not Just a Zombie Snack
by Stacy McNulty, illustrated by Matthew Rivera

The Brain Is Kind of a Big Deal
written and illustrated by Nick Seluk

Science Comics: The Brain: The Ultimate Thinking Machine
by Tory Woollcott and Alex Graudins



COMMON CORE & NGSS CONNECTIONS

FOR *HOW TO TRAIN YOUR PET BRAIN*

4-LS1-2 Use a model to describe how animals receive different types of information through their senses, process the information in their brain, and respond to the information in different ways.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.4

Ask and answer questions about unknown words in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.1

With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.7

With prompting and support, describe the relationship between illustrations and the story in which they appear (e.g., what moment in a story an illustration depicts).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.10

Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.1.B

Build on others' talk in conversations by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.

While each state has different SEL standards and competencies, here are a few listed from the state of California to see how *How to Train Your Pet Brain* can connect to an SEL curriculum:

1.B.1. Students recognize, label, and understand basic emotions in themselves and know that more than one emotion can be experienced at once. Students are aware of how emotions can affect their body.

1.B.2. Students recognize the intensity of their emotions and can name increasingly complex emotions. Students identify when they feel stressed or anxious.

2.A.1. Students practice noticing their emotions, where they experience them in their bodies, and using those signs to choose strategies to express feelings in helpful ways. Students practice strategies that help them to sustain joy and feel calmer, patient, focused, and energized.

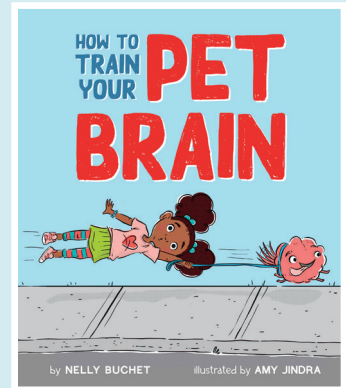
2.B.2. Students know and use simple stress management practices. Students engage in mental and physical health-promoting activities in ways that are within their control.



ABOUT THE BOOK

Your brain is like a pet in need of training. By you.

How does it feel to smile, or to stick out your bottom lip? Told from the perspective of a child, *How to Train Your Pet Brain* invites readers to explore how their minds and bodies work together to process their emotions by following two characters learning to train their pet brains. Hilarious illustrations paired with grounded language show children that big feelings are okay in this mindfulness book that is truly accessible to all children, especially people (like the author!) who find that mindfulness can be hard.



ABOUT THE CREATORS



NELLY BUCHET is the author of 2021 Irma Black Award winner and ALA Notable Book *Cat Dog Dog: The Story of a Blended Family* (Schwartz and Wade at Penguin Random House, 2020, with art by Andrea Zuill). She is also the author of the Can't Do! board book series (Bonnier Books UK, 2021, with art by Pau Morgan), *How to Train Your Pet Brain* (Beaming Books, 2022, with art by Amy Jindra), and the upcoming *Abuelito* (Kind World Publishing, with David Corredor Benavides, with art by Anna Sanfelippo, 2023), *Rocks Don't Talk* (Union Square Kids, with art by Andrea Zuill, 2023), *Big Sister, Long Coat* (NorthSouth Books, with art by Rachel Kastaller, 2023), and *The Weather Keeper* (Enchanted Lion Books, 2023).

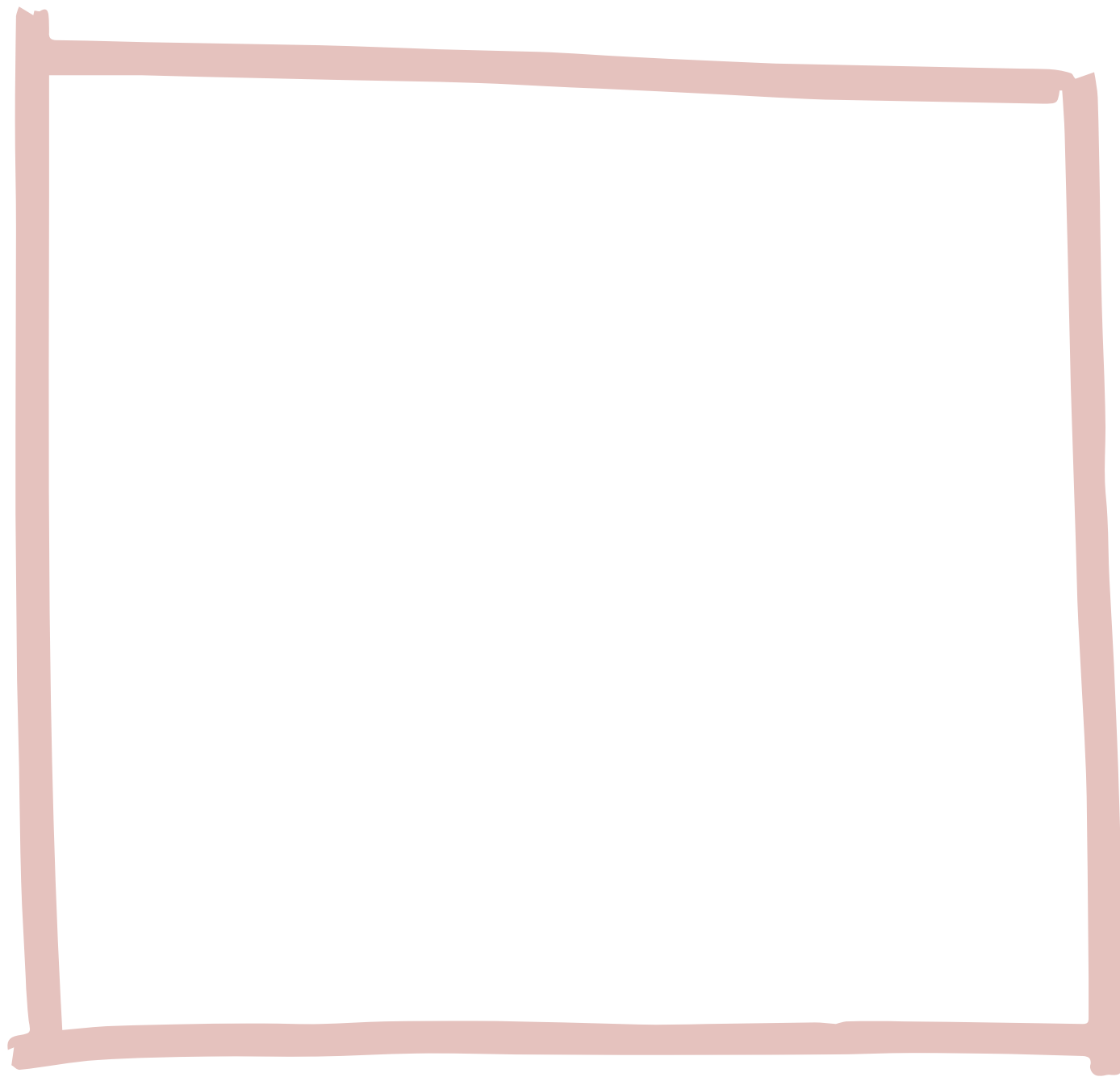
Born in Paris, Nelly studied philosophy at McGill University, where she created a nonprofit project that brings picture books to refugee children in orphanages and libraries. For her work she was awarded a Dalai Lama Fellowship and Quebec's most generous grant recognizing youth entrepreneurship and social justice. She has taught nonviolent conflict resolution in schools and spoken at the Bologna International Book Fair. French-American, Nelly splits her time between New York and Berlin. @nellybuchetbooks



AMY JINDRA is a designer and illustrator who enjoys developing characters and scenes that tell a story, create a connection, and warm the heart. She lives in Cleveland, Ohio. Find her on Instagram @jindraillustrations.

Name:

Date:



I trained my brain to _____

Name:

Learning Reflection

What was your favorite part?

What part came easily to you?

What part was hard? Why do you think it was hard?

What questions do you still have? What are you still wondering?

If you were to do this again, what you would differently?

What is something you really want someone else to know about your work or your learning?

Name:

MY BRAIN IS LIKE A....

Handwriting practice lines for the first section. Each line set consists of a solid top blue line, a dashed middle red line, and a solid bottom blue line. There are five such sets of lines available for writing.

BECAUSE...

Handwriting practice lines for the second section. Each line set consists of a solid top blue line, a dashed middle red line, and a solid bottom blue line. There are five such sets of lines available for writing.

Name: _____

Date: _____

I think a good pet would be
a _____ because...

Handwriting practice lines consisting of solid top and bottom lines with a dashed middle line, repeated 10 times for writing the response.