**BEFORE READING**

**About the Story**  *Black Beauty* is a story told from the perspective of an animal. The main character, Black Beauty, has thoughts and feelings like a human. This writing technique is called *anthropomorphism*. It helps the reader understand and relate to Black Beauty better. At the time, much of the world relied on horses to do different jobs. They were not always treated well. As the book became more popular, many people felt sympathy for these “beasts of burden” and fought against their poor treatment. As a result, many laws were introduced to protect horses.

**About the Author**  Anna Sewell (1820–1878) wrote *Black Beauty* with the goal to “induce kindness, sympathy, and an understanding treatment of horses.” She wanted people to treat horses well and to see them as animals that deserved love, attention, and care. Her own love for horses came from an unlikely event, an accident that forced her to use horse-drawn carriages to get around when she was in too much pain to walk.

**About the Setting**  *Black Beauty* is set in Victorian England, a time period defined by the reign of Queen Victoria, who was Queen from 1837–1901. The story is set in the countryside and in the city of London. At the time, horses often worked in the fields of the countryside. They were also used to travel long distances. In the cities, horses were hooked up to carriages. These rides were some of the earliest taxicabs.

**Additional Background Information**  There are many articles about *Black Beauty* available online. The following key words will help you find more information: *Black Beauty; Anna Sewell; Books About Horses*. When searching online, be sure to always use a reputable source.
DURING READING

**Vocabulary**

Panel 1:
*squire* (n) - an owner of a country estate

Panel 2:
*advice* (n) - suggestions about a decision or action

Panel 5:
*groom* (n) - a person responsible for feeding, exercising, and stabling horses

Panel 8:
*exhausted* (adj) – in this context, drained of energy; extremely tired

Panel 12:
*strained* (v) - injured from overuse or using too much effort

Panel 20:
*chill* (n) - a feeling of coldness

Panel 22:
*recover* (v) - to return to a normal state (of health or composure)

Panel 26:
*toil* (n) - long, hard labor
*misery* (n) - great suffering or unhappiness
COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:

1. What happens to Beauty after riding in the rain to fetch the doctor?
2. Describe the kind of treatment that Beauty receives from his different owners.
3. What happens to Beauty at the end of the story?

AFTER READING

Let’s Discuss This story is told in the first person, from the perspective of Black Beauty. Is this a more effective way to connect with the character? Use examples from the story to explain your answer.

Connection with: POLITICS Black Beauty was written to increase awareness of the poor treatment of horses. As the book became more popular, laws were passed to protect the animals. Fighting for a cause you believe in can be very meaningful. Sometimes books can inspire us to change the world. If you wanted to help change the way people think about horses, and support Anna Sewell’s cause, what would you do? How would you convince people to change their attitudes? Design a poster or write a short essay that could improve the treatment of horses.

Read the Book If you would like to read the original version of Black Beauty, you may go to this link to access the book: www.gutenberg.org