

Read the short story. Then answer each question.

## We Also Serve

Some of those who serve and protect us do so on wings, paws, or hooves. Animals such as horses, dogs and pigeons have been our faithful cohorts in times of conflict. They do not understand war. What they do understand is hard work and loyalty.

Maria Dickin saw the value of these acts of service. She wanted to find a way to bring to light the work of animals in war.

Maria started giving out a medal for animal acts of courage. The Dickin Medal is bronze with the words "For Gallantry" and "We Also Serve" written on it. The medal's ribbon is striped in green, dark brown and sky blue. These colors stand for water, earth and sky. They also represent services of naval, land and air forces.

The first Dickin Medals were given out in 1943. They went to three pigeons named White Vision, Winkie and Tyke. Each pigeon carried a message of distress from a downed plane. Each bird flew many grueling miles to reach help. Two of the pigeons battled severe weather on their journey. In each case, the pigeon SOS helped to find and save the crew.



## Grade 4 Reading Comprehension Worksheet

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While pigeons flew lifesaving missions, fearless horses served with ground forces. Their ranks included a police horse named Upstart. Upstart was on patrol in London when a bomb exploded close by, showering him and his rider with rubble and broken glass. In spite of the chaos, Upstart remained calm. This allowed his rider to focus on controlling the scene and not his horse. Upstart got his Dickin Medal in 1947 for his quiet service in the face of difficult duty.

More often overlooked than pigeons and horses are the cats of service. In an eighty years period, only one has ever been awarded the Dickin Medal. A 17-year-old British sailor found Simon on the docks of Hong Kong. The sailor drafted the black and white tomcat into service aboard his ship. He thought a cat might be just what the ship needed to keep the rats in check. The sailor had no way of knowing the cat's true value.

Simon was the rat catcher on duty when the HMS Amethyst came under attack. He suffered burns on his back and face. Shrapnel from a shell blast hit him in the legs. The attack left the ship stranded for several weeks. Despite his wounds, Simon continued to stand between the rats and the limited food supply. He even made daily rounds to help lift the morale of his injured shipmates.



## Grade 4 Reading Comprehension Worksheet

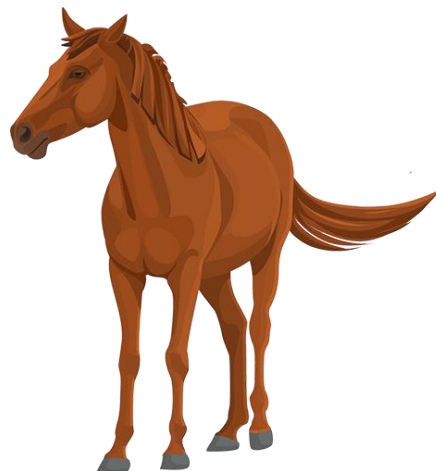
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Not to be outdone in the line of duty are man's best friend. A pair of guide dogs are among those to receive a Dickin Medal. Salty and Roselle served blind owners who worked at the World Trade Center. They were on duty the day of the terrorist attack. More than 70 floors lay between the dogs, their owners and safety. Panic grew as the stairwell filled with people.

Feeling hopeless, trapped in the stairwell, Salty's owner took off her leash. He thought his dog had a better chance alone. Salty chose duty over her own safety and stayed with her owner. Roselle was panting from the heat and fumes by the time she reached the ground floor with her owner. She paused only long enough to drink from a puddle of water. Both owners reached safety in time, thanks to their guide dog's loyalty.

Many noble animals served before Maria started the Dickin Medal. Their bravery inspired a one-of-a-kind award in 2014. This honor went to a war horse named Warrior. The medal was presented in memory of all the brave animals who helped in the First World War.

Over the years the Dickin Medal has become well known around the world. There is no greater honor for an animal serving in conflict.



**Questions:**

1. Fill in the blank.
  - a. The ribbon of the Dickin Medal has stripes in \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
  - b. The first animals to receive the Dickin Medal were \_\_\_\_\_ carrying a message of \_\_\_\_\_ from downed \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. While on patrol in \_\_\_\_\_, a bomb showered Upstart and his rider with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

2. True or False?

The first Dickin Medal was given to a cat named Simon.	True	False
Pigeons flew many miles in bad weather to deliver messages.	True	False
The Dickin Medal has become well known around the world.	True	False
Salty and Roselle were police horses.	True	False
A special medal was given in honor of animals serving in WW1.	True	False

3. Pick one of the animals discussed in the story and decide if you think they acted from instinct or training. Explain why.

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**Answers:**

1. Fill in the blank.

- a. The ribbon of the Dickin Medal has stripes in green, dark brown and sky blue.
- b. The first animals to receive the Dickin Medal were pigeons carrying a message of distress from downed plane.
- c. While on patrol in London, a bomb showered Upstart and his rider with rubble and broken glass.

2. True or False?

The first Dickin Medal was given to a cat named Simon.	True	<u>False</u>
Pigeons flew many miles in bad weather to deliver messages.	<u>True</u>	False
The Dickin Medal has become well known around the world.	<u>True</u>	False
Salty and Roselle were police horses.	True	<u>False</u>
A special medal was given in honor of animals serving in WW1.	<u>True</u>	False

3. Pick one of the animals discussed in the story and decide if you think they acted from instinct or training. Explain why.

*Answers will vary.*