



## American Lion

### *Sample lesson plan*

Set in the rugged western United States, *American Lion* presents true stories of the majestic North American cougar told by people who experienced the mountain lion up close. From the Rock Creek Canyon battle of the killer lion and shepherd dog to the invisible guest in the hayloft, these encounters are terrifying, heartwarming and as thrilling as the native cats themselves.

### Read out loud!

The teacher can model by reading the first paragraph of a chapter. Then, students can read one by one or in groups, a chapter at a time. This can take several classes or sessions.

You will encounter some new vocabulary that you can note and discuss:

solitary	antelope	hayloft
balance	pronghorn	tranquilizer
two-leggeds	rodent	construction foreman
footbridge	canines	inherited
confident	ramshackle	biologist
invisible	ruckus	jaguar
vanished	packer cubes	canyon
cougar	tumbledown	adrenalin
sightings	crossbuck fence	Ruger Vaquero
bobcat	orphans	beau
lynx	carcass	butte
predator	commotion	arroyo
prey	winched	sagebrush
fireplace	wildlife	saddle
coyote	fieldwork	stirrups
tribes	radio collars	coexist
cunning	hibernating	motto
trickery/trickster	wilderness	extermination

Here are related **videos** to begin discussions:

- *National Geographic* video on mountain lions and their social bonds:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utK9mhiN56M>
- It is rare to see a mountain lion, but what if you do??  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v1Sxtz0UpEI>
- Here is a 30-minute film about Wind River Reservation and its people:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lrcfBa5gZiU>

Class **activities and discussions:**

- The mountain lion has many names. Can you remember them?
- Why is it called the American lion?
- Other animals are introduced. Try to find a picture of each of these:
  - bear
  - coyote
  - badger
  - marmot
  - sheepdog
  - elk
  - Aussie shepherd
  - stallion
  - antelope
  - jaguar
- Native American people are featured in the stories. Can you find them in the book? What is their relationship to the mountain lion?
  - Nez Perce
  - Eastern Shoshone
  - Plains Indians
  - Arapahoe
- The author tells some stories from the point of view of the mountain lion. How does that help the story?
- What happened to the mountain lion who lived in Charlie Jansen's barn? A clue is "Shaw's .30 -.30 Winchester."
- There are many stories about the mountain lion, the Big Cat, in this book. What is your favorite, and why? Is there another meaning to the story?

**Geography**: Find these places from the book on a map.

- Medicine Bow
- Rocky Mountains
- Wyoming
- Rock Creek Canyon
- Wind River Reservation
- Fort Washakie
- Laramie

**Official jobs**: Official characters play big parts in the book. Can you describe the job and responsibility of each of these?

- Wyoming Game and Fish Department
- Bureau of Land Management
- Tribal Police
- County Sherriff
- U.S Forest Service



**American Lion** by R. Timothy Rush, read by Steven Mendel

Putting a finger on the text while listening to the audio can improve language fluency. Help readers engage with the content in two modalities... it's fun!

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