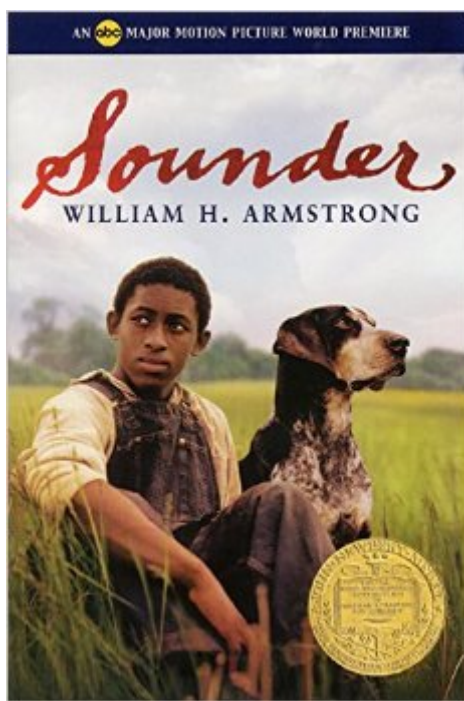


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# Sounder



## Synopsis

Set in the Deep South, this Newbery Medal-winning novel tells the story of the great coon dog, Sounder, and the poor sharecroppers who own him. During the difficult years of the nineteenth century South, an African-American boy and his poor family rarely have enough to eat. Each night, the boy's father takes their dog, Sounder, out to look for food and the man grows more desperate by the day. When food suddenly appears on the table one morning, it seems like a blessing. But the sheriff and his deputies are not far behind. The ever-loyal Sounder remains determined to help the family he loves as hard times bear down on them. This classic novel shows the courage, love, and faith that bind an African-American family together despite the racism and inhumanity they face. Readers who enjoy timeless dog stories such as *Old Yeller* and *Where the Red Fern Grows* will find much to love in *Sounder*. Supports the Common Core State Standards

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 900 (What's this?)

Paperback: 116 pages

Publisher: HarperCollins; Revised edition (December 24, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0064400204

ISBN-13: 978-0064400206

Product Dimensions: 0.2 x 4.2 x 7.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (328 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #18,763 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #30 in [Books > Children's Books >](#)

[Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1800s](#) #167 in [Books > Children's](#)

[Books > Animals > Dogs](#) #370 in [Books > Children's Books > Classics](#)

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 and up

## Customer Reviews

You gotta walk that lonesome valley. You gotta walk it by yourself. Ain't nobody else gonna walk it for you. You gotta walk it by yourself. -Jesus Walked this Lonesome Valley, (American Spiritual) In the Author's Note to the copy of this book that I just read, William Armstrong, who was white, says that he first heard this story from an old black teacher who used to worship at his local church : It is the black man's story, not mine. It was not from Aesop, the Old Testament, or Homer. It was

history--his history. I don't know whether it is, in fact, a true story, but as Armstrong's own assertion acknowledges, it is the stuff of myth. Sounder is the loyal coon hunting dog of a family of black sharecroppers. At the heart of the tale is the oldest son in this family, plagued by loneliness, helpless rage, and a burning desire to learn to read. The owner of the land they live on has been careful to space families out, presumably so that they won't band together, so they basically have no neighbors and it is too far for the boy to walk to school. The boy's parents are strong willed, and his mother is deeply religious, but they are very reserved. The boy is very much alone, more so because he can't read, and Sounder is very nearly his best friend. Even this rather isolated world is shattered though when the father is sent to prison for stealing a ham and the men who come to take him away shoot Sounder in the process. The story of how first Sounder and then the family heal themselves and of how the boy eventually learns to read are really moving. The fact that only Sounder is given a name in the story adds to the mythic quality and the mother's constant singing of "Lonesome Valley" imparts a Biblical touch. It may be too powerful for younger kids, but teens and even adults will love it. GRADE : A

In the nearly 35 years since it was published, SOUNDER has lost none of its original power or impact. That's not only the mark of great children's literature, it's the mark of great writing at any level. SOUNDER is the story of a poor African American family in the late 19th century south. Sounder, the family's hunting dog, is responsible for much of the family income: he finds and tracks game that the father can eat and sell. Problems arise when the local white sheriff and his men think the family has become a little too prosperous. An event then happens which becomes a turning point in the oldest boy's life. (The story is told with painful honesty from his point of view.) Author Armstrong masterfully drops the reader into a different era, an era we would like to forget. It's not a comfortable time and it's not a comfortable story, but it is a powerful one. The story is a simple one, but Armstrong paints on a large canvas, full of description so vivid and true that we feel we're there, walking on the cold ground, smelling the countryside, and even feeling the wetness of the tears and blood. I believe it's significant that Sounder is the only character named in the book. This is the boy's story, but it could be any boy. He represents a sort of "every man," or "every child," if you will. The boy learns several important lessons along the way, some of them coming from unlikely sources. SOUNDER is one of those stories that not only entertain children, but teach them valuable lessons in human nature, relationships, and learning. A very, very important book for us all. 116 pages with illustrations

I think the book, *Sounder*, by William H. Armstrong, was very good. The story is about a boy who has a dog named Sounder. The family is poor so the father must steal to feed his family. His father is taken to jail and Sounder tries to protect him but gets hurt. What I thought was interesting about this book is the story is based upon William Armstrong's teacher's life experience of this. I enjoyed the way it made me think about the story in different ways. I enjoyed the characters because they had distinct personalities. For instance, the boy was very determined to find his father, and the other characters thoughts and emotions were very well described. All of the story elements together helped me picture the story as if I had witnessed it. The setting was described in great detail just like the plot and the characters were also. It was amazing that everything about the book could seem so real. The thing I enjoyed most in the story was the way the dog's bark was described. It was described with beautifully written similes and metaphors to portray how it sounded. The dog, Sounder, was named for it's bark because people could hear the bark louder and richer than any other dog's bark. For all of these reasons I will highly recommend this book with five out of five stars. There were only two things in this story I did not like very much. One is the abruptness of the time periods. In one paragraph it went from seasons to years. Another is that not very much detail about the boy when he was searching for his father was given. Overall though, I felt this book was one that should be read more than once.

*Sounder* is a very depressing book. It tells the story of an African-American family and their coondog, Sounder, living in the harsh life of the South. The story takes place in the cabin of a sharecroppers home and the outlying town. After the mans arrest, the boy, his mother, and Sounder must face the hardships without the father. We really encourage you to read this book.

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