**Summary:** A family takes in a homeless dog, naming him Mooch and caring for him. But Mooch is anything but timid. Will his rambunctiousness result in a permanent trip to the dog pound? Clement tells this story of pet ownership using haiku.

**Awards received:**
- Kentucky Bluegrass Award – 2009
- Beehive Awards – 2009

**Reviews:** From *School Library Journal*:
“A stray dog's first day in a family's home is more or less a test of whether he'll get to stay. Of course, the innocent creature lives entirely in the moment, and the human perspective doesn't come into play until the end. Clements shadows the pup closely and maintains a canine's view of everything: food, loving pals, bath time, sunshine, shade, the lure of garbage and household objects to chew, the loneliness of the school bus leaving, and the joy when it returns. The story is familiar but still entirely fresh due to Clements's original presentation. He tells the entire tale in haiku, a remarkably effective vehicle for delivering such a sweet and simple story. The family's deliberation over what to call the dog is captured perfectly with the form's structure: "A dog needs a name./Rags? Mutt? Pooch? No, not Rover./Mooch. Yes. Mooch! Perfect." While each haiku is typically spare, Bowers's vibrant illustrations are busy and bright, filling the pages with the same unbounded energy as the lovable pooch. This joyful tale is guaranteed to evoke storytime cheers.”

Gloria Koster, West School, New Canaan, CT

- **Author Information:** Andrew Clements [http://www.andrewclements.com/](http://www.andrewclements.com/)
- **Illustrator Information:** Tim Bowers [http://www.timbowers.com/](http://www.timbowers.com/)

**Discussion Questions:**
- What is a haiku?
- Who first sees the hungry dog on the back steps?
- What does the mom in the story do for the dog?
- What does the family decide to name the dog?
- Why do you think they called the dog Mooch? What does the word mooch mean?
- What does the dog play in to get smelly and dirty?
- What is decided at the family meeting?
- After looking at the illustrations, can you tell how the dog and its owners feel? In what ways did the illustrator show that?
- What does the reader learn about caring for a dog from this title? Do you believe it shows what is really involved in caring for a pet?
- Talk about a time when a pet of yours behaved badly. What did you do? What did you learn from that experience?

**Curricular Activities**
- Reading/oral language – have the students read haiku out loud. Discuss *Dogku*. Since there are many breeds of dogs, have students read about one and write about it.
o Writing – write your own haiku after explaining what haiku is and demonstrating with other examples. Write a story or journal from the point of view of the animal.

o Math – Poll classmates on their favorite dog breeds and graph the results. Do research on how much it costs to care for a dog for a year, including grooming, food, vet visits.

o Science – Have students do research on dogs’ sense of smell and then have them pretend to be dogs on a nature walk and discover and record the kinds of things a dog might smell and find on a walk. (Or if they have dogs at home, have them pay attention and record what their dogs discover in nature when walking them)

o Social Studies – Have students create a list of jobs that they may have to do at home or school. Then discuss responsibility and what that means in relation to the list they created. Tie it in directly with Dogku and pet responsibility. Finally, have students create a poster using whatever media they would like that describes the list of responsibilities required to do a certain job that they do routinely.

o Art – design a poster about pets up for adoption at the Humane Society or local Animal Shelter. Draw a picture of a favorite dog.

o Drama – Perform the haiku the students have written. Perform haiku written by Jack Prelutsky.

o Music – Students can create Japanese musical instruments using household items like Kleenex boxes, paper towel rolls, etc.

o Technology – Students can create a Powerpoint presentation on haiku – what it is, its history, different haiku books.

o Cooking/food – Dog Biscuit Mix in Jar (see craft @ http://www.bellaonline.com/articles/art14693.asp) or here (http://www.dltk-holidays.com/xmas/recipes/dogbiscuits.htm)

- Related Books
  o Haiku books:
    - *One Leaf Rides the Wind* by Celeste Davidson Mannis; illustrated by Susan Kathleen Hartung
    - *If Not for the Cat* by Jack Prelutsky; illustrated by Ted Rand
    - *Cool Melons Turn to Frogs: The Life and Poems of Issa* by Matthew Gollub; illustrated by Kazuko Stone
    - *Guyku: A Year of Haiku for Boys* by Bob Raczka; illustrated by Peter H. Reynolds

  o Fictional picture books about dogs as pets
    - *Smooch Your Pooch* by Teddy Slater; illustrated by Arthur Howard
    - *Wanted: The Perfect Pet* by Fiona Roberton; illustrated by Fiona Roberton
    - *The Dog Who Belonged to No One* by Amy Hest; illustrated by Amy Bates
    - *My Dog, Buddy* by David Milgrim
    - *Help Me, Mr. Mutt!: Expert Answers for Dogs with People Problems* by Janet Stevens; illustrated by Susan Stevens Crummel

  o Dog Pet Care: nonfiction
    - *Dogs: How to Choose and Care for a Dog* by Laura S. Jeffrey
- Why Do Dogs Drool: And Other Questions Kids Have About Dogs by Suzanne Buckingham Slade; illustrated by Cary Pillo

- Other titles by Clements:
  - Chapter Books:
    - Frindle
    - The Landry News
    - The Janitor's Boy
    - The School Story
    - The Jacket
    - Things Not Seen
    - A Week in the Woods
    - The Report Card
    - The Last Holiday Concert
    - Lunch Money
    - Things Hoped For
    - Room One - A Mystery or Two
    - No Talking
    - Things That Are
    - Lost and Found
    - Extra Credit
    - We the Children
    - Jake Drake, Bully Buster
    - Jake Drake, Know-it-all
    - Jake Drake, Teacher’s Pet
    - Jake Drake, Class Clown
  - Picture Books:
    - Bird Adalbert
    - Noah & the Ark & the Animals
    - Big Al
    - Mother Earth's Counting Book
    - Santa's Secret Helper
    - Billy & the Bad Teacher
    - Who Owns the Cow?
    - Double Trouble in Walla Walla
    - Temple Cat
    - Bright Christmas - An Angel Remembers
    - Workshop
    - Circus Family Dog
    - Big Al and Shrimpy
    - Because Your Daddy Loves You
    - Slippers at Home
    - Naptime for Slippers
    - Slippers at School
    - Slippers Loves to Run
    - A Million Dots
    - The Handiest Things in the World
Early Readers:
- Brave Norman
- Delores and the Big Fire
- Ringo Saves the Day
- Tara and Teree, Fearless Friends

Other titles by Bowers:
- Cool Dog, School Dog by Deborah Heiligman
- Princess Pig by Eileen Spinelli
- First Dog written by J.Patrick Lewis and Beth Zappitello
- Shampoodle written by Joan Holub
- Puss in Boots by Lisa Findlay
- Gorgonzola A Very Stinkysaurus by Margie Palatini
- Custard Surprise by Bernard Lodge
- Fun Dog, Sun Dog by Deborah Heiligman
- Matilda’s Humdinger by Lynn Downey
- The Bravest of the Brave by Shutta Crum
- Sherman Crunchley by Laura Numeroff and Nate Evans
- A New Home by Tim Bowers
- The Little Whistle series by Cynthia Rylant
- The News Hounds in the Great Balloon Race by Amy Axelrod
- The Six Voyages of Pleasant Fieldmouse by Jan Wahl
- The Rabbit Club by Jan Wahl
- The Adventures of Underwater Dog by Jan Wahl
- Pajamas by Livingston and Maggie Taylor
- The Toy Circus by Jan Wahl
- One Wide Sky by Deborah Wiles
- Sometimes I Wonder if Poodles Like Noodles by Laura Numeroff
- Sam and Jack: Three Stories by Alex Moran

Websites for further study or enrichment:
- Simon & Schuster’s website about Andrew Clements [http://authors.simonandscuster.com/Andrew-Clements/1146268](http://authors.simonandscuster.com/Andrew-Clements/1146268)
- Kids Read page for Andrew Clements [http://www.kidsreads.com/authors/au-clements-andrew.asp](http://www.kidsreads.com/authors/au-clements-andrew.asp)