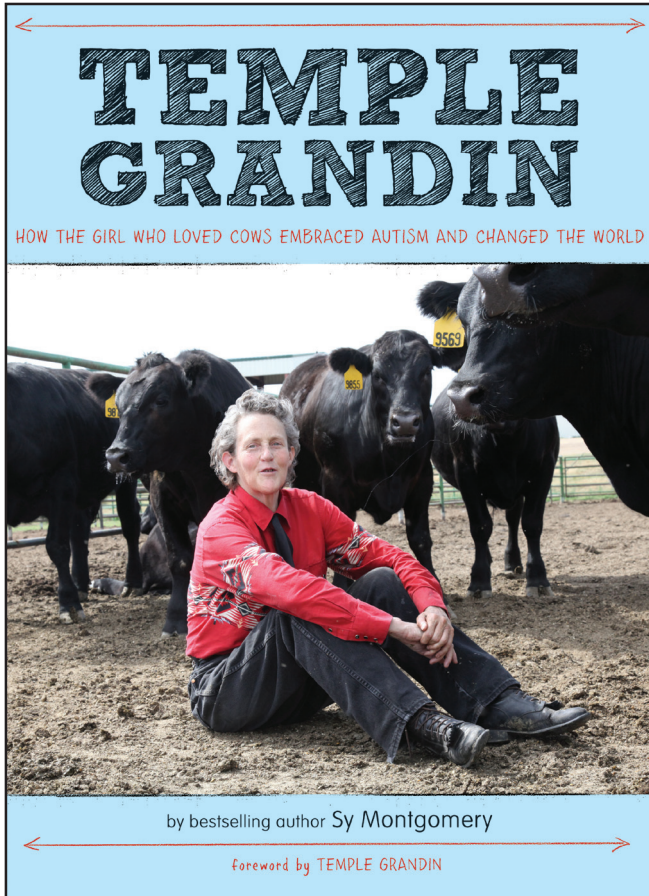


TEMPLE GRANDIN:

How the Girl Who Loved Cows Embraced Autism and Changed the World
by Sy Montgomery



978-0-547-44315-7 \$17.99 CL / \$19.95 CAN

About the Book

When Temple Grandin was born, her parents knew that she was different. Years later she was diagnosed with autism. Temple’s father recommended she be institutionalized, but her mother believed in her. Temple went to school instead. Today, Dr. Temple Grandin is a scientist and professor of animal science at Colorado State University. Her world-changing career revolutionized the livestock industry. As an advocate for autism, Temple uses her experience as an example of the unique contributions that autistic people can make. This compelling biography and Temple’s personal photos take us inside her extraordinary mind and open the door to a broader understanding of autism.

Pre-Reading Activity

Ask students to share what they know about autism.

Discussion Questions

What traits do most people with autism share? How do these traits make it difficult for autistic people to socialize?

In what ways does Temple say autistic people and animals think alike and similarly perceive their world?

Why did Temple’s parents fight about her?

What do you think would have happened to Temple if she had been institutionalized as her father wanted?

Why was Temple’s elementary school a good environment for someone with her disorder?

How did Temple’s experience in elementary school compare to her experience in junior high?

Have you ever seen students with mental or physical disabilities teased or bullied in your school?

Did you do anything to stop it?

What were some things about Temple’s personality that made her difficult for her classmates to understand?

Why did Temple play pranks on her classmates in junior high? How did playing the pranks make her feel?

How have ideas about what constitutes mental illness changed over the years? What is “neurodiversity”?

Temple says, “Animals saved me” (p. 61). In what ways did animals save her?

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How did Temple get the idea for her “squeeze machine” and how did the machine help her? In what way was Temple’s machine “caught in the crossfire between two opposing ideas about the treatment of autism”? (p. 69).

In what ways was the Hampshire Country School an ideal environment for Temple?

How did doors become important symbols for Temple?

What obstacles has Temple had to overcome in her research and work?

What are Temple’s views about raising animals for food? What are your own?

If you know someone who has autism, in what ways is he or she similar and different to Temple? What do you think would be most difficult about having autism?

What does autism enable Temple to do that most people with a “normal” brain cannot do? In what ways has autism helped Temple be successful in her work?

What things has Temple done to improve the lives of animals?

In a sidebar, the author writes: “Doctors, parents, and teachers are asking, should a kid with Asperger’s or mild autism be labeled handicapped—or should he be in a gifted and talented program?” (p. 44). After reading Temple Grandin’s story, what do you think?

Post-Reading Activities

Visit Temple’s websites, www.templegrandin.com and www.grandin.com, to learn more about her autism and animal welfare advocacy and work with livestock.

Write out five questions you would ask Temple Grandin if you had the opportunity to interview her. Share your questions with the class.

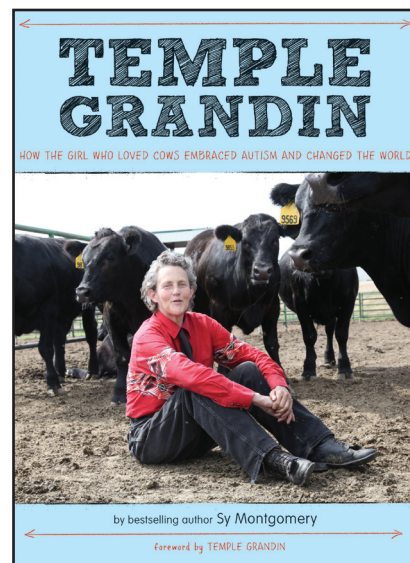
Invite someone who is active in and knowledgeable about animal welfare issues to speak to your class about what he/she does and discuss ways in which students can become involved.

Use print and electronic resources to learn more about factory farming. See the back of the book for resources Sy Montgomery recommends. Assign students to work in small groups to prepare a Power Point presentation on one of these key issues: ethics, environmental impacts, human health impacts, animal health impacts, animal welfare, and the impact on small farmers.

Watch the film *Temple Grandin* (HBO Films) and discuss how it portrays the traits that are common to most people with autism.

About the Author

The Sibert Medal–winning author Sy Montgomery writes for adults and children about animals all over the world. From tarantulas in French Guiana to pink dolphins in the Amazon, Sy explores the shared connections between humans and nature. Like Temple, Sy counts cows among her favorite animals. Sy lives in Hancock, New Hampshire. Visit her at www.authorwire.com.



Guide written by Edward T. Sullivan, a librarian and writer who lives in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.