

# Lesson 7

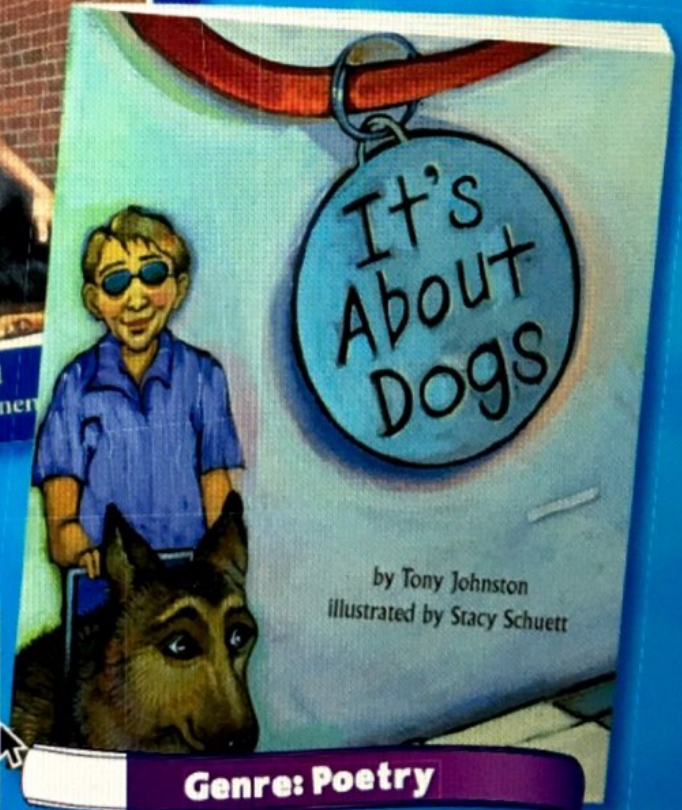
Genre: Nonfiction

## Aero and Officer Mike

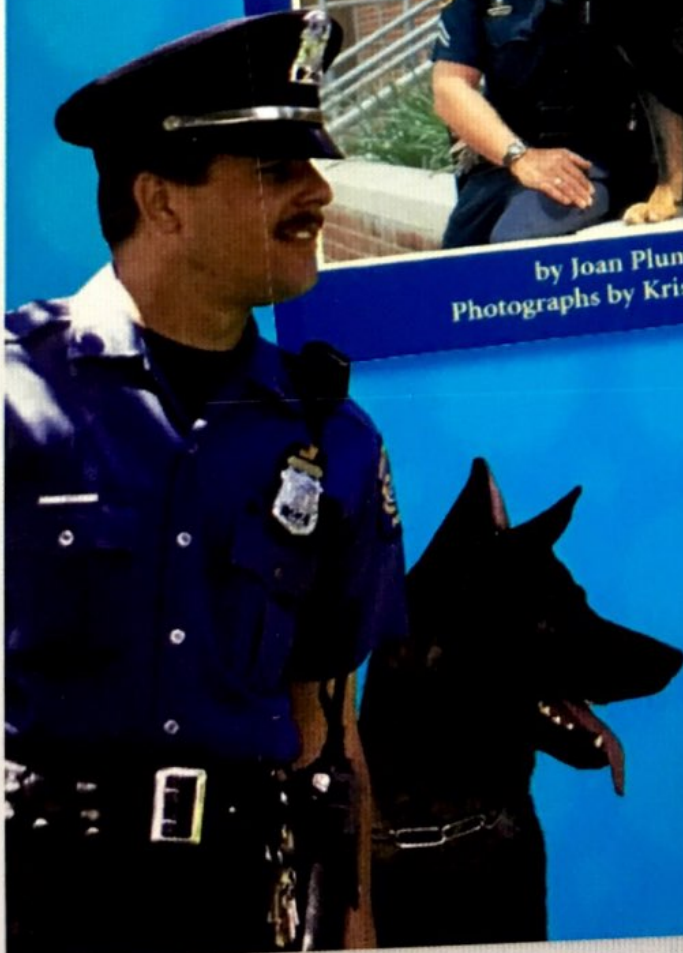
### POLICE PARTNERS



by Joan Plummer Russell  
Photographs by Kris Turner Sinner



Genre: Poetry



# Focus Skill



## Fact and Opinion

Remember that a **fact** is something that can be proved. An **opinion** is a person's feelings about something. You may not share the same opinion as someone else.

To decide if a statement is a fact or an opinion, ask yourself questions such as the following:

- Can this statement be seen or proved?
- Is this what someone thinks or feels but cannot prove?

Identifying facts and opinions can help you know what is true about a topic.

Fact	Opinion

### Tip

Sometimes authors include facts in their statements of opinion. If any part of the statement shows a feeling or belief, then the whole statement is an opinion.



# Aero and Officer Mike

## POLICE PARTNERS



by Joan Plummer Russell  
Photographs by Keri Turner Stansberg

**Nonfiction**

### Genre Study

**Nonfiction** gives information about a topic. Look for

- information about a real person or real events.
- facts about the topic and opinions the author may have.

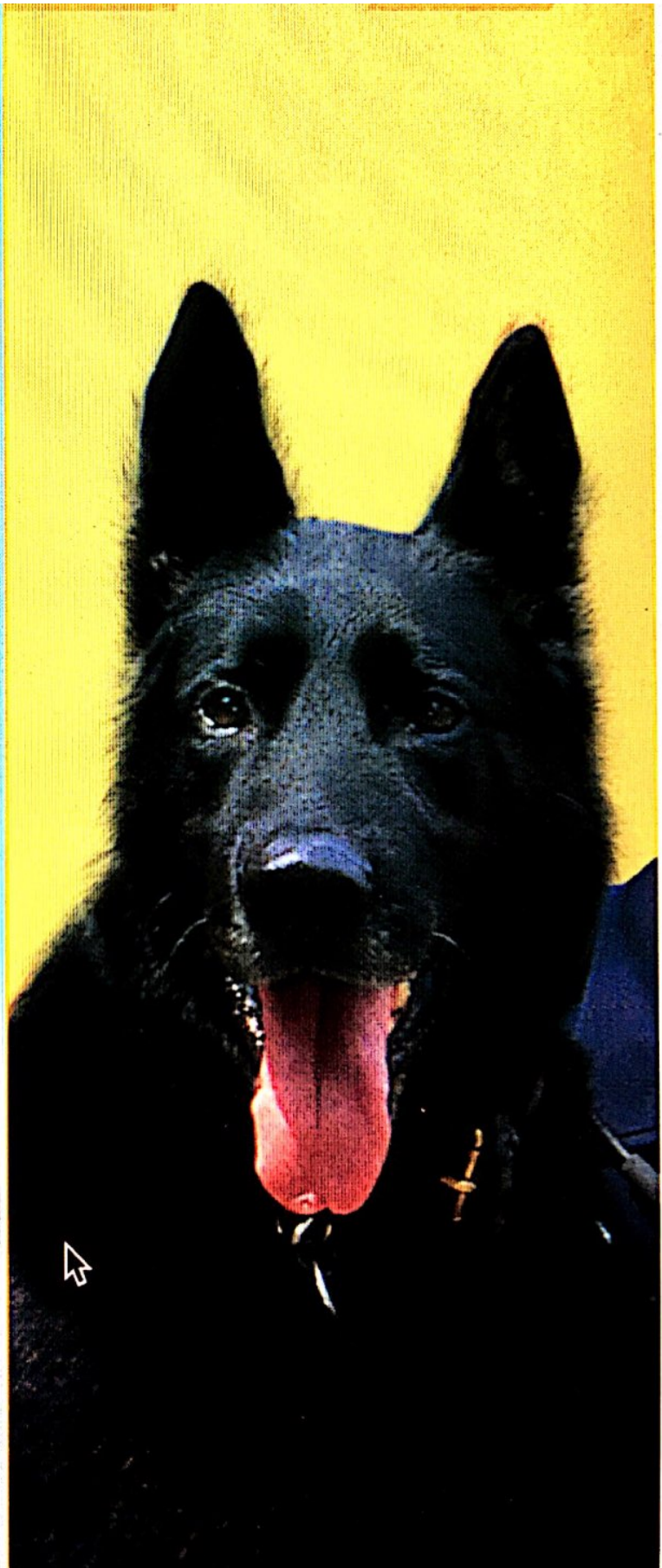
Fact	Opinion

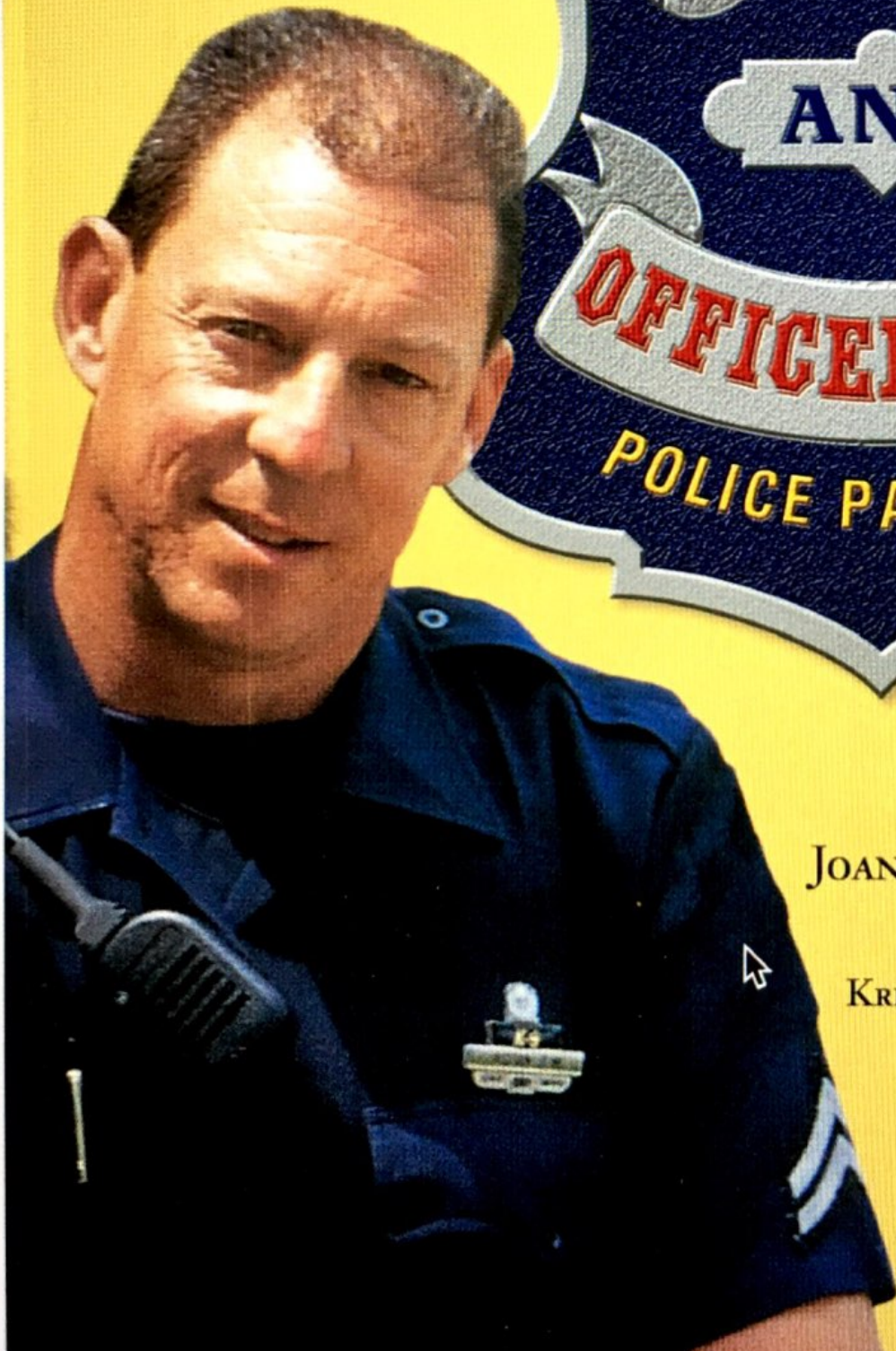
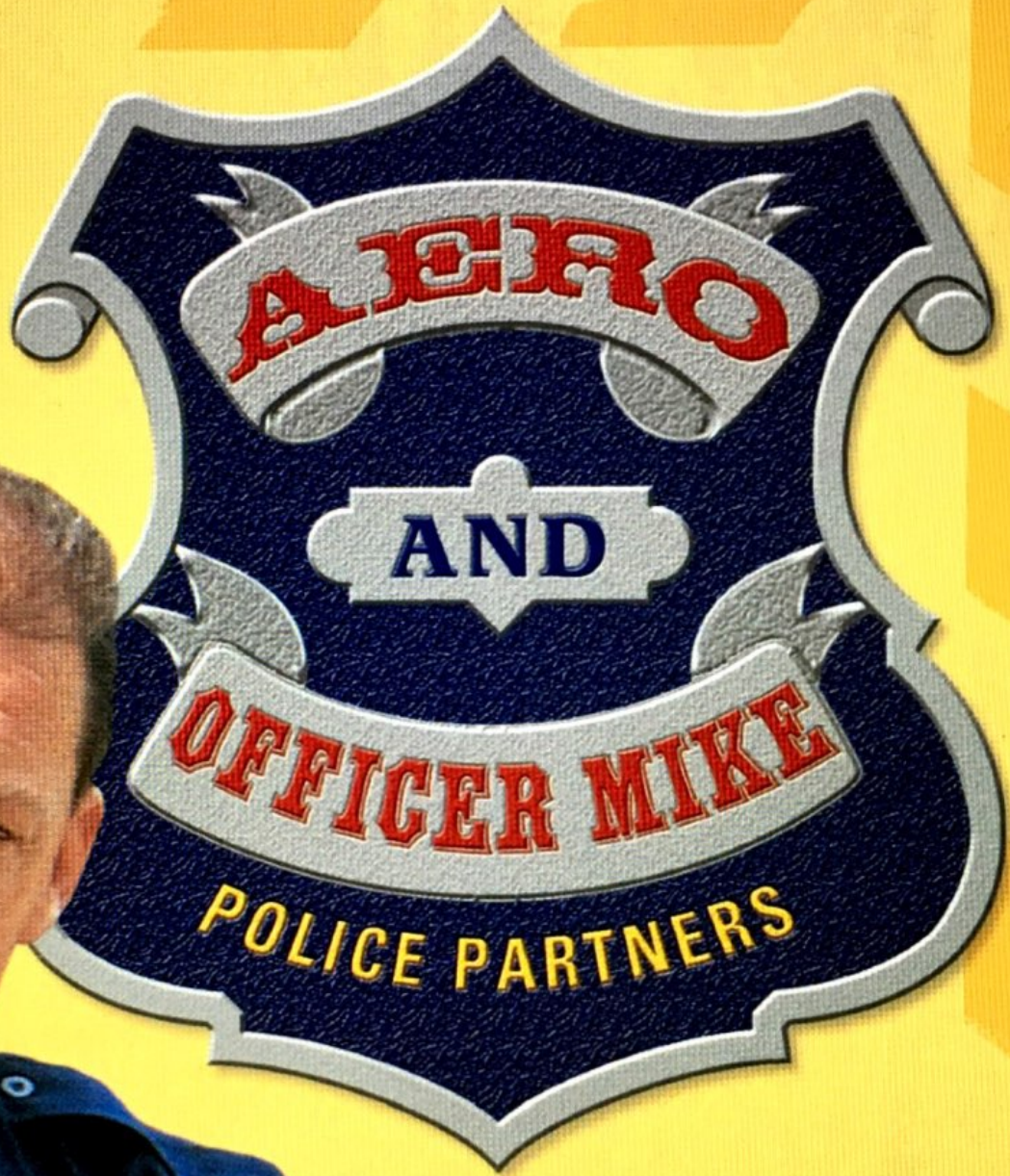
### Comprehension Strategy



**Monitor comprehension—**

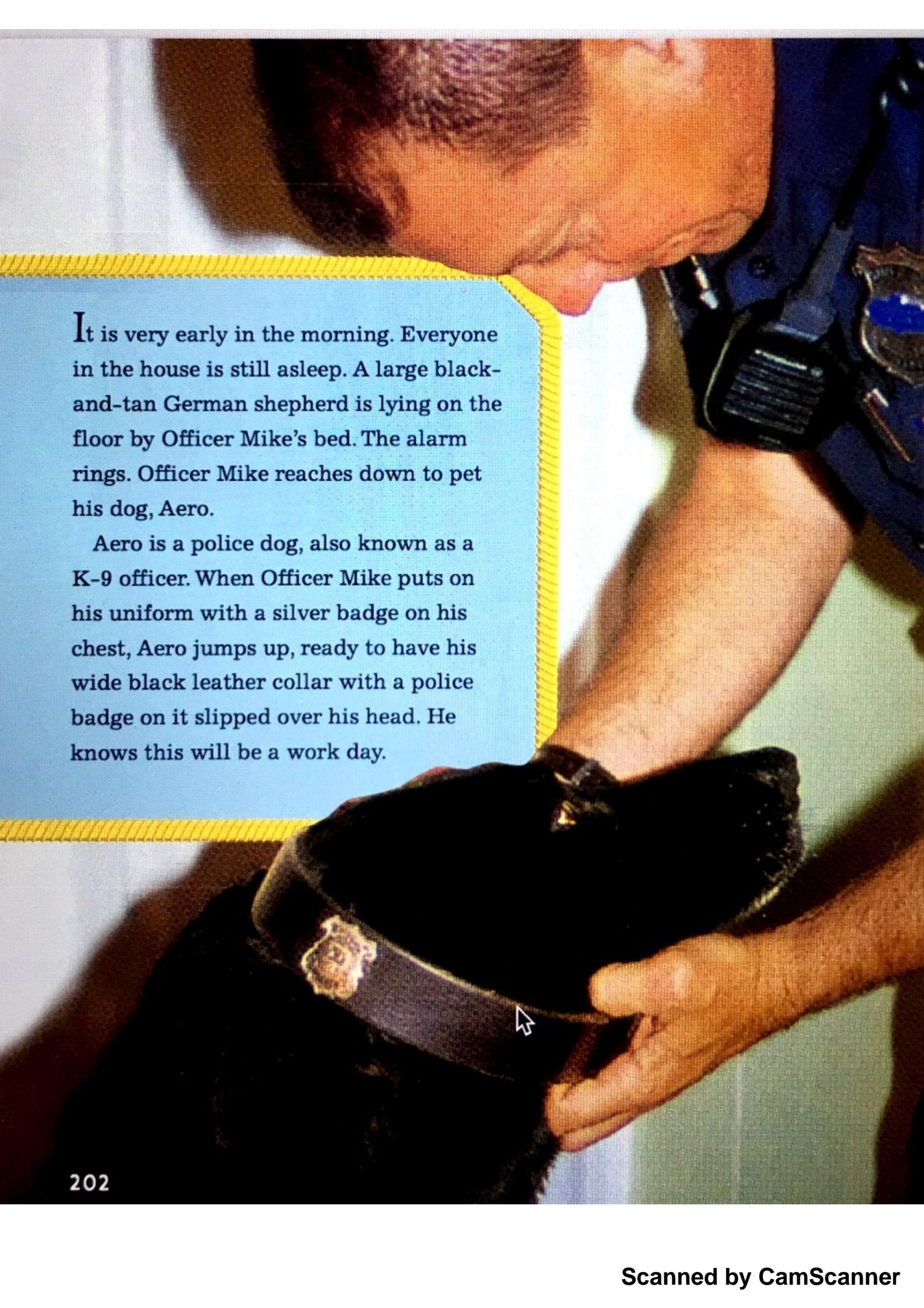
**Reread** a passage if something seems confusing or doesn't make sense. You may have missed an important point.





BY  
JOAN PLUMMER RUSSELL

PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
KRIS TURNER SINNENBERG



It is very early in the morning. Everyone in the house is still asleep. A large black-and-tan German shepherd is lying on the floor by Officer Mike's bed. The alarm rings. Officer Mike reaches down to pet his dog, Aero.

Aero is a police dog, also known as a K-9 officer. When Officer Mike puts on his uniform with a silver badge on his chest, Aero jumps up, ready to have his wide black leather collar with a police badge on it slipped over his head. He knows this will be a work day.

## WORK AND PLAY

Officer Mike and Aero are partners. They work together. They practice together. They play together.

Aero, with his powerful nose, can do many things Officer Mike cannot. He can sniff and find lost children. He can sniff and find lost things.

Police dogs are very strong and well trained. They have to be ready to go anywhere they are needed. They can be very fierce when they are helping to catch criminals. They can run faster than any human being. But when police dogs are not working, they are gentle pets that like to have their tummies scratched.

Aero's most important jobs are to help and to protect his partner, Officer Mike. Together, Aero and Officer Mike patrol in all kinds of weather. Some weeks they patrol from early morning until dinnertime. Some weeks they sleep in the daytime and work all night.





## ON DUTY

Aero is always eager to jump into the back of the police car. Officer Mike's car is different from other police cars. There is no back seat. The floor is flat and covered with carpet for Aero to lie on. There is a water bowl built into the floor, and a small fan keeps Aero cool in the summer. Screens cover the windows so no one can reach in and pet him.

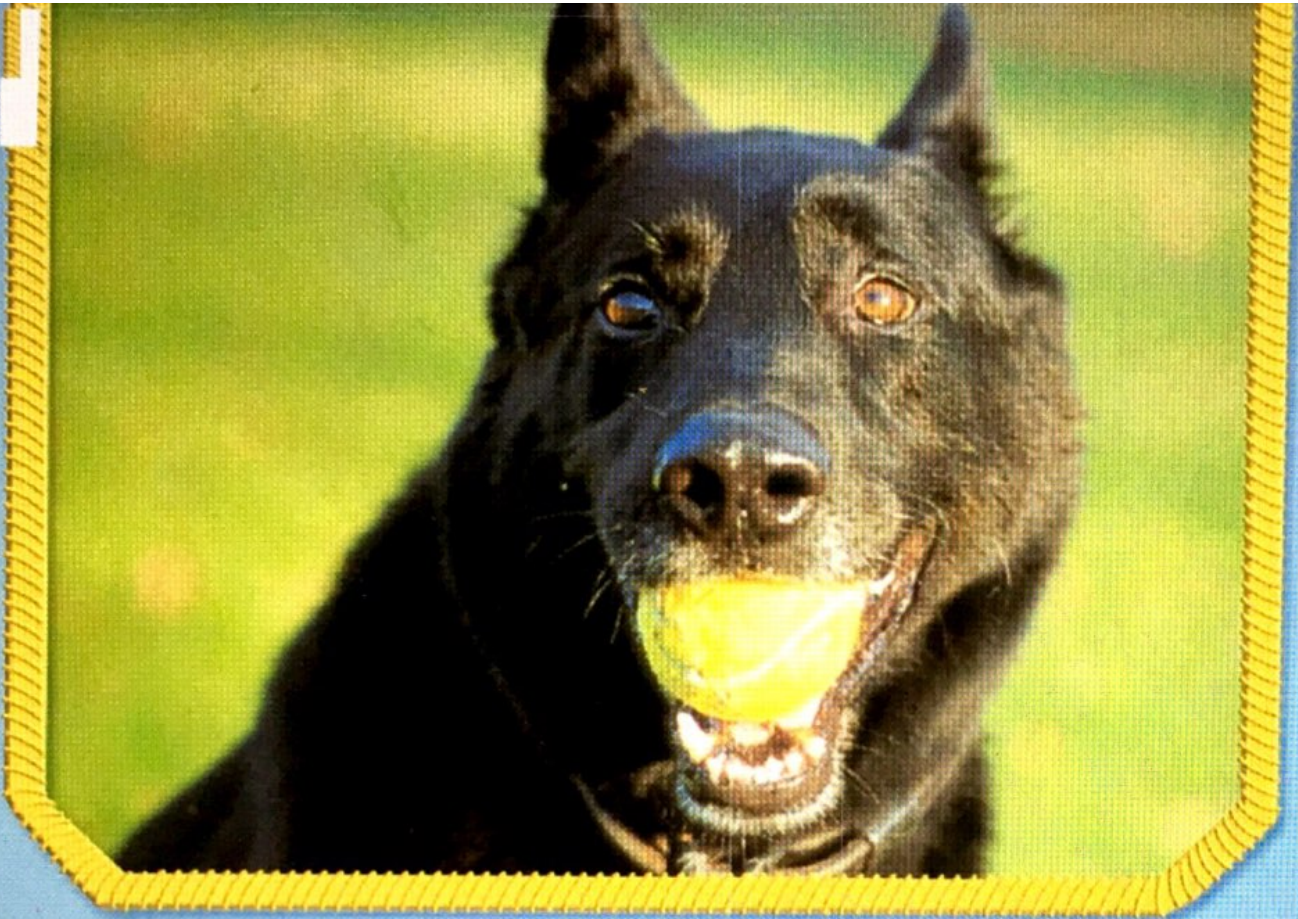


When Aero is on duty, he's not allowed to play. Officer Mike sits in the driver's seat, but Aero will not let anyone else sit in the front until Officer Mike tells Aero it is OK.

Aero knows that one of his jobs is to protect the police car. When Officer Mike leaves the car, he either opens the front window for Aero to jump through or uses a remote control to open the back door when he needs Aero's help.







## TIME FOR A BREAK

When Aero and Officer Mike have been in the police car for a few hours, Aero will need to take a break. Aero pushes his head against his partner's head to let him know. Officer Mike parks the cruiser as soon as he can and says to Aero, "Go be a dog!" Aero knows he'll also have time to explore a little and maybe chase a tennis ball while they are stopped.





## SIGNALS AND COMMANDS

Officer Mike can talk to Aero in different ways. One way is to use hand and arm signals. When Mike's hand is outstretched, it means "stay." When Mike's arm is raised, it means "sit." When his hand is flat, it means "down."

Aero is very loyal to Officer Mike and wants to obey him. He likes to hear the words "Good dog!" He tries to please his partner all the time.

Aero can understand short commands like "Find him!" or "Stop him!" and "No barking!" Aero can also understand some commands in Czech, the language spoken where he was born and where he began his training as a police dog.

## K-9 TRAINING

Aero's training never ends. Several times a month Aero and Officer Mike train with other officers and their K-9 partners. One exercise the police dogs do is to run through an obstacle course. The dogs practice getting over, under, around, and through difficult spots.

Aero had to learn how to walk up and down very steep, open stairs. He also had to learn to walk over a large, open grating, the kind you often see on city streets. At first he spread his paws to help keep his balance. His legs began to quiver, and he whined a frightened cry. He had to practice over and over. Officer Mike kept saying, "Good boy, you can do it." Aero was brave and trusted his partner, but he still does not like open gratings or steep stairs.



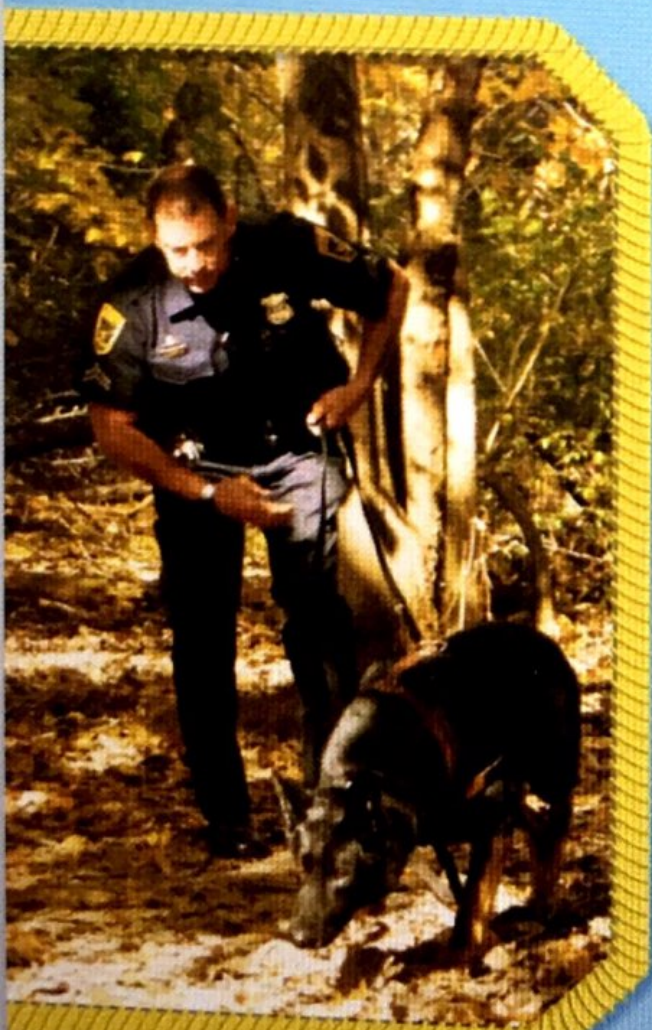




## AERO'S SENSE OF SMELL

K-9s have very powerful noses—hundreds of times more powerful than human noses. That's why one of Aero's most helpful talents on the police force is his ability to find things by smell.

When children play hide-and-seek, they may think they are well hidden. Their dog can find them right away. The same is true when a child is lost or wanders away from home. Aero can find the child by using his sense of smell. Each person has a scent that is different from everyone else's scent. Even twins do not smell the same. A person's unique smell comes from the food he or she eats, the soap and shampoo he or she uses, the clothes he or she wears, and the place he or she lives.



## AT THE VET'S

Aero goes to Dr. Morse, a veterinarian, for regular checkups. Aero must lie still on a table while the doctor examines him. Once Aero had a small infection on his neck. Dr. Morse gave him some medicine so he would get better. Because a police dog works so hard and has such an important job, he needs to be healthy. At the end of the checkup, Dr. Morse lifts Aero to the floor, pets him, and says, "Good dog."

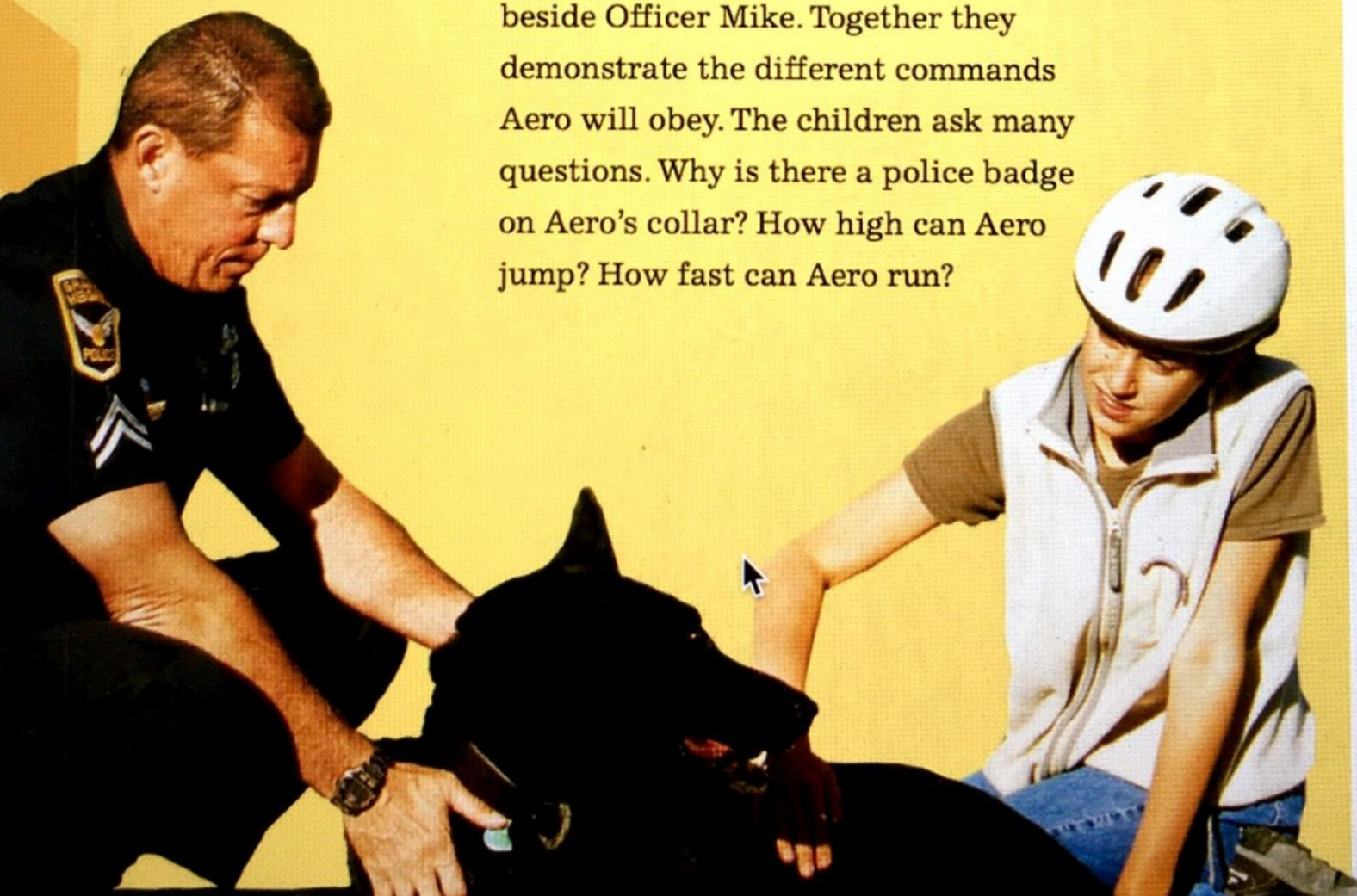


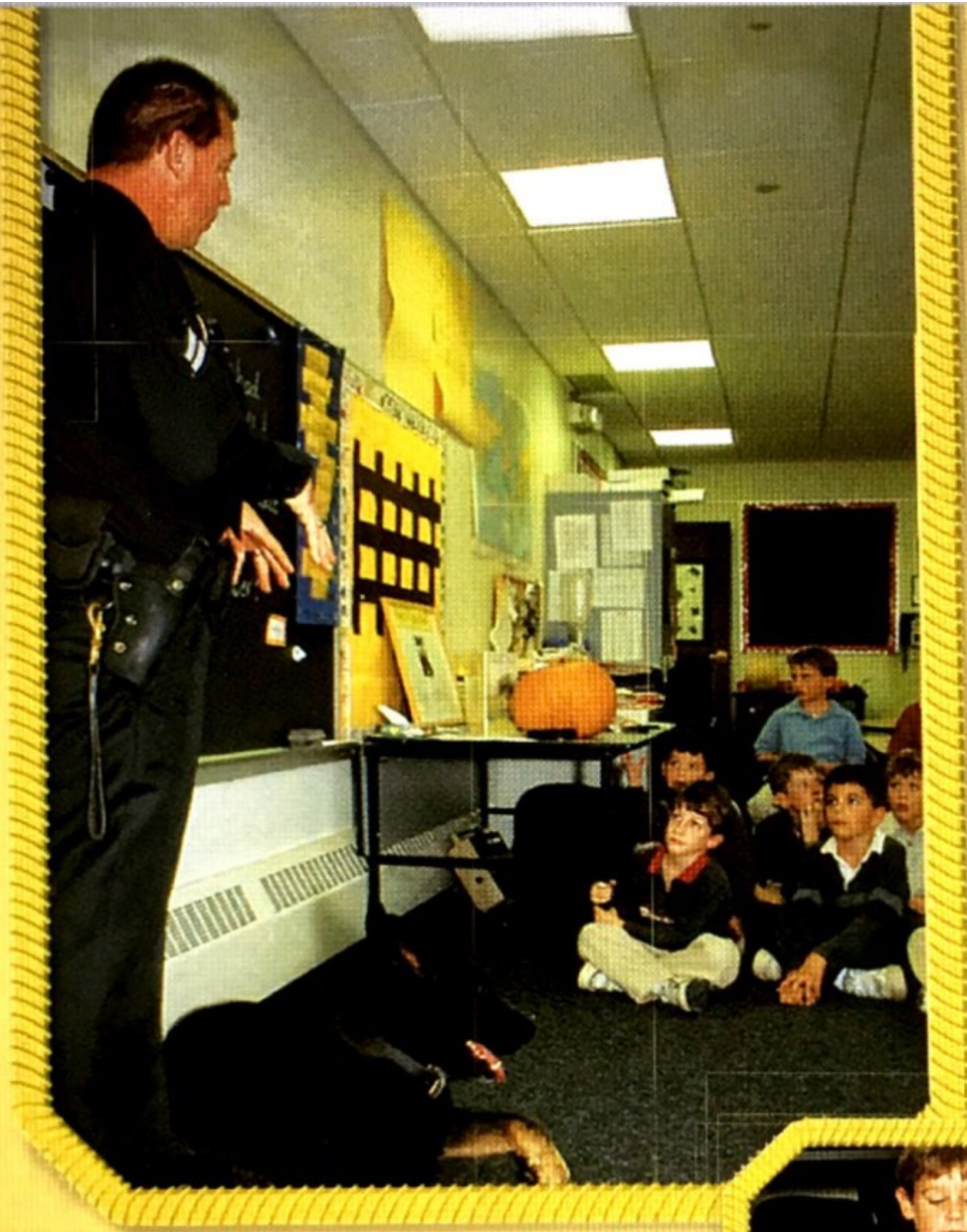


## VISITING IN THE COMMUNITY

Nurses and teachers often write to the chief of police to ask if Aero can visit children in their hospital or school. Aero likes children and is always gentle with them. He is even gentler when visiting a sick child. He lies down, staying very still and quiet so the child won't be afraid of him.

When Officer Mike and Aero visit schools, Aero rests on the floor beside Officer Mike. Together they demonstrate the different commands Aero will obey. The children ask many questions. Why is there a police badge on Aero's collar? How high can Aero jump? How fast can Aero run?





Officer Mike carefully answers the questions. Aero's badge shows everyone that he is a working police dog. He can jump over an eight-foot wall when he is chasing a criminal. He can run very fast, about forty miles an hour. Even the fastest person can only run about twenty-four miles an hour.





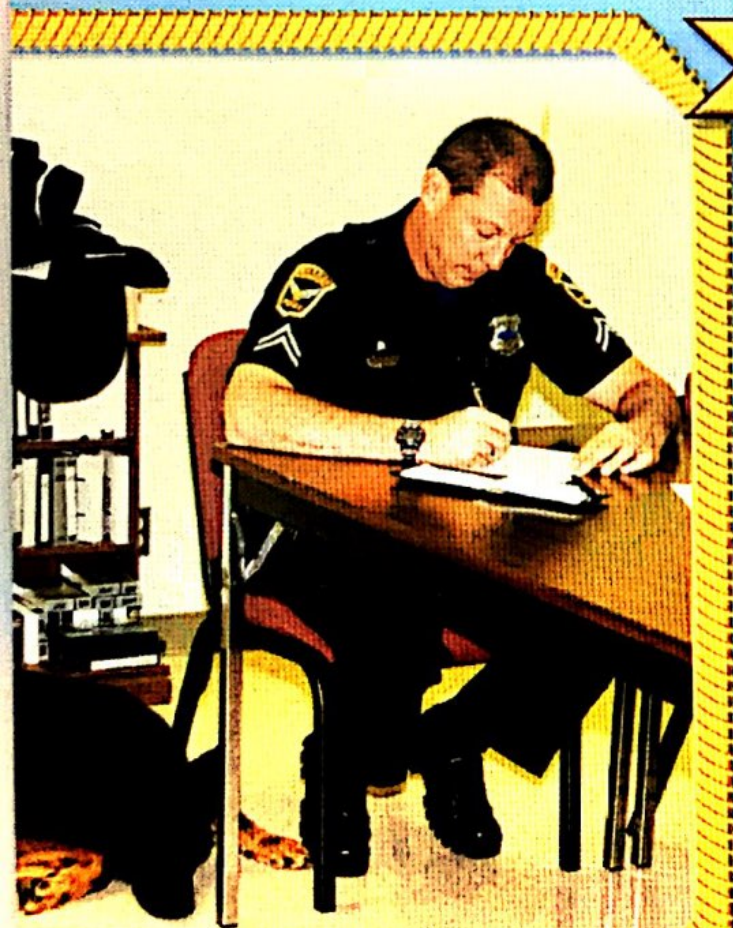
## PETTING AERO

Children often want to pet Aero. Officer Mike tells them the rules. Never try to pet a strange dog until you ask permission from the owner. Never come up behind Aero. He might get frightened and snap at you. Never ever hug a K-9 around the neck. Walk up to a police dog slowly from the front so he can see you. Let him sniff your hand. Pet his head and ears gently. Talk to him softly.



## BACK AT THE STATION

At the end of a twelve-hour work shift, there is always a final job to be done at the police station. After talking with his friends on the force, Officer Mike sits down and writes a report for the police chief about the whole day or night. Aero lies down by Officer Mike's chair.




## FELLOW OFFICERS

After the report is written, Officer Mike and Aero go home together. When Officer Mike goes to bed, Aero will plop down on the floor near the bed. He lays his head on his paws, and with a sigh goes to sleep near his best friend. Neither of them knows what surprises tomorrow's patrol will bring, but they are well prepared. They both love being police officers.



# THINK CRITICALLY

- 1 Read this sentence from the selection:  
“Together, Aero and Officer Mike patrol in all kinds of weather.” How can you tell that this is a fact?  **FACT/OPINION**
- 2 Why is Aero’s sense of smell important to the police? **IMPORTANT DETAILS**
- 3 Do you think Aero is smarter than most other dogs? Why or why not? **EXPRESS PERSONAL OPINIONS**
- 4 How can you tell that the author thinks K-9s help people? **DRAW CONCLUSIONS**
- 5 **WRITE** How do K-9s help the police do their jobs? Give examples from the selection to support your answer.

 **EXTENDED RESPONSE**

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## MEET THE AUTHOR

Joan Plummer Russell says that she was always encouraged to write. Even so, she was never interested enough in any topic to write a book about it. That changed when she met Officer Mike and Aero.

To prepare to write her first book, the author rode along with Officer Mike and Aero twice a month for two years. She took notes, took photographs, and tape-recorded many conversations. Some of her tapes are filled with Aero's barking!

Joan Plummer Russell was fascinated with what Aero could do. She found great joy in watching a well-trained K-9 team.



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