



Running words: 475

## Book Summary

This story looks at friendship and how good friends help and look out for each other. Crow, Deer, Rat, and Turtle are friends. One day, Deer is caught in a hunter's trap. Crow, Rat, and Turtle find her, but just after they rescue her, the hunter returns and captures Turtle. Deer, Crow, and Rat refuse to abandon their friend. They trick the hunter and are able to free Turtle. In the end, the four animals realise the value of good friends.

## Themes

Animals, birds, and insects;  
Problem solving; Relationships

## Features of the Book

- The information contained in the illustrations
- Content words for discussion: *friend, rescue, thank*
- Phonics and phonemic awareness: consonant blends - *sh, st*; long vowel sounds - *arrived/behind/hiding/high/idea/nice/tied*; short vowel sounds - *hid/it/in/is/limped/tricking/untill/vanished/whispered*; word endings - *ed*

## Strategies

*The Four Friends* introduces and reinforces the following strategies:

- making predictions;
- forming opinions;
- determining author's purpose.

## Materials

- Copies of the Sentence Strips reproducible for this book, cut and ready for use
- Copies of the BM, pencils

# The Four Friends

retold by Paul Mason

## Introducing the Text

Begin by asking the students to think of the times they have helped a friend or a friend has helped them.

Write their answers in a list.

- *What did you or your friend do?*
- *How did you feel when your friend helped you?*
- *How did you feel when you helped your friend?*

## Reading the Text

Hand one book to each student. Ensure that the content words (*friend, rescue, thank*) are integrated naturally into the discussion. An understanding of these terms will help the students appreciate the author's purpose and the decisions the characters make in the story. Encourage the students to use the information in the illustrations and text to make predictions, then to revise or confirm these as you work through the book.

## Cover

Together, read the title and the name of the author on the cover and the title page. Look at the illustrations.

- *What animals do you see?* (crow, deer, rat, turtle)
- *What do you predict this story is about?* (a tale about four animals who are friends)

## Page 2

- *Where are the animals?* (in the forest by a lake or river)
- *Do you think they are friends?* (Yes, they are relaxed and smiling.)

Read the text together. Confirm that the four animals are friends.

## Page 3

- *How have the animals' expressions changed from page 2?* (They look worried.)
- *Who is missing?* (Deer)

Read the text together. Confirm that Crow, Rat, and Turtle are worried about Deer, who is missing. Have a student point out the speech marks on the page. Remind the students that these marks indicate who is speaking in the story.

- *Do you think the friends will find Deer?*

## Pages 4 to 5

- *What is happening on these pages?* (Crow has found Deer caught in a trap.)

Read the text together. Confirm that Crow has found Deer, and she is caught in a trap.

- *How do you think the friends will rescue Deer?*

## Page 6

- *What are Crow and Rat doing?* (pecking and chewing the rope)

Read the text together. Confirm that Crow and Rat have freed Deer. Discuss how each friend has different skills to help each other.

- *Did you correctly predict how Crow and Rat would rescue Deer?*
- *How does Deer feel about her friends after they rescued her?* (grateful)

## Page 7

- *Why did it take Turtle so long to reach the friends?* (she moves very slowly)

Read the text together. Confirm that Turtle has finally arrived.

- *What do you think the hunter will do if he finds Turtle?* (catch him)

# The Four Friends

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## Pages 8 to 9

- *What is happening on these pages?*  
(The hunter has caught Turtle while the other friends hide in the forest.)

Read the text together. Confirm that the hunter has caught Turtle. Discuss why Deer wants to help rescue Turtle.

- *What do you think Deer's idea is?*

## Pages 10 to 11

- *What is happening on these pages?*  
(Deer distracts the hunter so Turtle can escape.)

Read the text together. Confirm that Deer has tricked the hunter by distracting him, so Crow and Rat can rescue Turtle.

- *What is your opinion of the hunter?*
- *Do you feel sorry for him, or are you glad that Deer and Turtle escaped?*

## Page 12

- *Are the friends out of danger?*  
(Yes, they're smiling again.)

Read the text together. Confirm that the friends are safe.

- *How does Turtle feel about his friends after they rescued him?*  
(grateful)
- *How do his friends feel about Turtle?* (they are grateful for his friendship)
- *Why do you think the author wrote this story?* (to show how friends help one another)

## Revisiting the Text

- Revisit the list the students made at the beginning of the story telling of times they have helped a friend or a friend has helped them. Have them compare those times with the events in the story. Did the students feel grateful to the friends who helped them? How did they feel when they helped a friend?
- Find and list the “sh” and “st” consonant blends in the story. With the students, add other words they know that contain these blends.
- Write the words *arrived/behind/hiding/high/idea/nice/tied* and *hid/it/in/is/limped/tricking/until/vanished/whispered* in two columns on the board. With the students, create a list of other words that contain the long “i” sound and words that contain the short “i” sound.
- Find and list the words in the story that end in “ed”. With the students, add other action words (verbs) that they suggest. Help them turn these verbs into their past tense forms (ending in “ed”).

## Following Up

- Encourage the students to add another chapter to the story in which Rat or Crow need their friends' help. Have them think of a situation where Rat or Crow would need help and how their friends and their different skills could rescue them in that situation. Ask the students to include dialogue between the characters and to use descriptive language to set the scene and relate events.
- Give the students copies of the BM for this story. They can write the events from the story in order in the blank boxes.