



RedRover Readers Program

**Discussion and Activity
Guide for**

***The Restricted Adventures of Raja:
Becoming Rover***

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RedRover Readers Discussion and Activity Guide for Buddy Unchained
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Concepts

- What emotions do cats and dogs express? How can we tell?
- How are cats, dogs and people different? How are cats, dogs and people the same?
- What choices do we have when we see someone upset or in trouble?

Before Reading

Write these questions on the board for students to think about while you read the book:

Can dogs and cats feel emotions? If so, how can we tell?

What choices do we have when we see someone upset or in trouble?

Clarify Vocabulary

- What is a conversation? (talk between two or more people in which thoughts, feelings, and ideas are expressed) On page 4, what do you think AJ has in mind by a “dog conversation” with his Mom?
- What is a responsibility? (a task or job you are expected to do) What does it mean to “take responsibility? (to act independently or to do your job without being asked)

Ask students to think about the questions you wrote on the board as they listen to the story.

During Reading

Project the e-book onto a screen. You can use a finger pinch to zoom in closer. Read the story aloud and make sure all the children can see the illustrations. Use the Warrior Practice and Warrior Knowledge questions (starting on page 4) that are embedded into the book to guide the discussion as you read. These appear as icons that you can click on to open. Be careful not to ask so many questions or delve into the Warrior Knowledge so much that you lose their attention for the story. Generally, asking 3 to 4 questions and opening 2 pieces of Warrior Knowledge during the reading serves as a good guideline.

Tips for Asking Questions

1. Ask one question at a time. After you ask a question, listen to whatever response they have. Avoid answering for them, correcting their answers or praising their responses.
2. Avoid asking too many questions or extending the conversation so much that you lose the feel for the story. Each time you read the story together, you can choose to focus on different Warrior

Practice questions. You can also ask kids whether *they* want to open the Warrior Practice or Warrior Knowledge.

3. Ask clarifying, open-ended questions to deepen their awareness of their thinking and to help keep their responses truly their own:

“Tell me more about that.”

“Why do you think that?”

“What in the story or illustration makes you think that?”

If you're working with more than one child, ask the others, “What do you think?” or “Does anyone think anything different?”

4. Ask questions to deepen their self-awareness:

“Have you ever felt that way?” (“When?”/“Tell me about that.”)

“How would you feel if you were in this situation?” (“Would you do anything different?”)

“Can you show me what your face looks like when you feel that way?” (Show them what your face looks like, too!)

After Reading

Ask: Why do you think AJ wants a dog in the beginning of the story? Can people be friends with an animal? What does that friendship look like?

Ask: Can cats feel emotions? If so, how can we tell? Go back to page 11 and go through the Warrior Knowledge content if you haven't already.

Ask: Can dogs feel emotions? If so, how can we tell? Go back to the Warrior Practice and Knowledge content on the last panel on page 15 and the first panel on page 17 if you haven't discussed already.

Ask: On page 9 in the story, why does Raja go through the book portal to Earth even though it's restricted? What choices do we have when we see someone upset or in trouble?

Ask: Rutherford is accused of not taking responsibility (something that is your job or duty to deal with). Do you agree? If so, why do you think he's not taking responsibility? What are ways you act responsibly in your life?

Activity: Emotion Game

Pair up students. Ask them to take turns acting happy, sad, scared or mad. To help them act, ask them to think of something that recently made them feel each of these emotions. Have one partner make observations about what the second partner's face looks like. Optional: Have the students share what this was like. Was it harder to act or describe the emotions? Were any emotions harder than others?

Activity: Practicing Responding with Empathy

Pair up students. Ask them to imagine their best friend has just told them they don't want to play with them and have them take turns with their partners acting sad about this. Have their partner respond to their sadness. Ask the students to share as a class what their partner did when they acted sad. Then repeat the activity; this time, have the students practice "just being with the person," saying sincerely, "I'm sorry that you are sad," or "It's OK, I'm here for you." Or they can just touch a shoulder or arm if they feel like they are sharing some of their partner's sadness, too. Tell them not to say anything else. (If this activity is too difficult for them, you could also model this with another teacher or adult.) Then have the students share as a class which responses they liked the best. Have them compare the two experiences. For example, if they gave advice or told their partner things like, "Don't be sad," or "At least I'm still your friend" during the first round, ask the students what it was like to be given advice versus just feel like someone was there; that they were not alone; they were "being felt." Guide the students towards understanding that the goal of responding empathetically is to not give advice, but simply help someone "feel felt." Empathy is connecting with someone. Nonverbal communication, like just touching a shoulder or arm or mirroring another's emotional state, can also communicate empathy, that you are paying attention; that you "see or feel" with another.

Extension Activities: Choose one or more depending on time and interest

A. Friendship Book

As a class, ask students to share stories of animals they have been friends with or animals they imagine being friends with in the future. Ask them what they think makes a good friend and write these qualities on the board.

Give each student an 8-1/2 x 11 piece of drawing paper or cardstock. Invite students to illustrate a real or imaginary friendship between themselves and a cat, a dog, a person or another animal, showing at least one of the qualities of friendship on the board. Bind all of the pages together and create a title page for this class book.

B. Activity: Compare and Contrast

Draw a chart on a board or chart paper, using the sample template below. Review the chart together, referring to pictures in the story to complete it as needed.

Pick 1-2 basic emotions (happy, sad, fear, anger/aggression) and using a different chart for each emotion, compare how cats, dogs and people show this emotion.

After this activity, discuss how students might feel and what students might do (what behaviors would they respond with) if they came across an animal or person displaying the behaviors in the chart.

Emotional State: _____

	People	Dogs	Cats
Eyes			
Ears			
Mouth			
Body			
Other behaviors			

C. Taking Responsibility Design Activity

As a class, brainstorm all the ways the students take responsibility in their classroom or at home. Ask, "Why do you think it is important to take responsibility?" Have students use the process of Design Thinking to individually or as a class come up with ways to take more responsibility in their home, community or classroom.

Steps to do this may include:

1. Interview a parent or teacher to establish the need or brainstorm as a class ways that students not acting responsible are causing problems (needfinding/understanding others' perspectives/empathy).
2. Brainstorm with classmates (in small or large group) ideas to address the needs or problems identified in the first step.
3. Test 1-3 of the ideas.
4. Change the ideas based on feedback from parents, teachers or classmates. For more about Design Thinking, visit: <http://dschool.stanford.edu/redesigningtheater/the-design-thinking-process/>