



## RedRover Readers Program

### Discussion and Activity Guide for

***Freckles and Willie***

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RedRover Readers Discussion and Activity Guide for Freckles and Willie  
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### **Concepts:**

- What does a person do for a dog to show they are friends?
- Why do dogs need consistent attention from a person?
- Why would someone apologize to a dog? How does someone apologize to a dog?

### **Greet the Students**

Ask students if they have ever said “sorry” to someone. Ask students if they have heard of someone saying “sorry” to a dog.

Tell the students they are going to learn about a boy and a dog. The boy must say “sorry” to the dog. Why does the boy say “sorry” to the dog? How does he say “sorry”?

### **Before Reading**

Show the students the cover of the book. Ask students to describe the cover. Show students the title pages. What is Freckles (the dog) doing? What does the card say?

### **Clarify Vocabulary**

What does it mean to be friends?

What does it mean to say “sorry”? What is an apology? When do people apologize to each other?

### **During Reading**

Read the story aloud. While reading, return to the question of how Freckles and Willie show that they are friends.

Pause: For the illustration of Freckles going down to the basement, ask students to imagine how Freckles might be feeling. Ask students to imagine how Willie might be feeling. How has Willie’s behavior (actions) toward Freckles changed? Why?

### **After Reading**

Use questions to explore with students the idea of how a dog and a person show friendship for each other.

- How do Willie’s actions toward Freckles change when he meets Jane?

- How does Freckles respond to the change?
- How does Willie react when he can't find Freckles?
- Why does Willie apologize to Freckles?
- Reread the last sentence of the story, "And when Willie went to sleep that night, Freckles curled up on his feet like a warm pair of slippers." Ask students where else in the story Freckles has curled up like a "warm pair of slippers." Review that illustration (the fourth illustration). What does Freckle's action show to Willie? (forgiveness) Why does Freckles curl up like a warm pair of slippers on Willie's feet?
- Does Freckles have feelings? Do you think dogs have feelings?
- How could Willie have behaved differently to Freckles?
- How could Jane express herself in a kinder way?

### **Activity: Summarizing the story**

On the whiteboard or chart paper, review the story of Freckles and Willie by identifying:

Who are the main characters?

What happens in the story?

Where does the story take place? (What is the setting?)

When does the story take place?

Ask students to think of a response to each question. Then call on one student to suggest a sentence to start the summary. Ask students to silently think of a second sentence. Call on one student to provide a sentence. Continue to summarize as a class, sentence by sentence. Re-read the class summary.

Sample summary: Willie, a boy, and Freckles, a dog, are friends who play together. When Jane moves in, Willie ignores Freckles. Freckles hides in Willie's basement. Willie finds him and apologizes.

Ask:

- How do Freckles and Willie show that they are friends?
- Why do dogs need consistent attention from a person?
- Why does Willie apologize to Freckles? How does he apologize?

## **Extensions**

### **A. A kind card**

Willie makes a card for Freckles. Think of an animal you know or a stuffed animal or imagine an animal. Create a card for the animal. Imagine what the animal would like in the card. What will you say to be friendly and kind?

### **B. What do dogs enjoy?**

Review in the story the activities that Freckles and Willie enjoyed together. Ask students for additional ideas on ways to play (show friendship) with a dog. List ideas on the whiteboard or chart paper.

Have students fold an 8-1/2 x 11 piece of paper into four parts. Ask students to draw in each section an illustration of someone (or more than one person) playing with a dog. What does the dog enjoy? Why? Ask students to explain their illustrations to you.

### **C. Introductions**

*Freckles and Willie* provides an opportunity to talk about how to introduce a dog to a new person.

Ask students:

How does a dog owner introduce someone to the dog? On the whiteboard or chart paper, start a list of “do’s” and “don’t’s”, guiding the students’ responses.

Have students create a poster: “How to Meet a Dog.”

### **D. A Dog for a Day**

Help students better understand what dogs communicate through body language. First have students complete the matching activity below or do the activity as a class together. Discuss as a class the kinds of situations they think these dogs would be responding to, ask, “What would make a dog happy?” “What would make a dog scared or nervous?” “What would make a dog feel threatened?” Then pretend to be dogs together. Lastly, invite students to write and illustrate a story on their own that includes dog body language.

Physically practice a few dog postures with your students using the images below. Get on all fours on the ground and make sure each child has enough room to move around. Start with “happy/relaxed” with your mouth loosely opened, ears relaxed/loose/up but to the side (use your hands to model ears) with a light tail wag (move your back end). Then try raising a hand/paw up while leaning back or away from what is scary with a crouched posture (your head and rear-end lowered) to practice a “frightened/submissive” posture. Then practice a play bow by lowering your

front arms down and sticking your rear-end up in the air to communicate that you are a dog who wants to “play.”

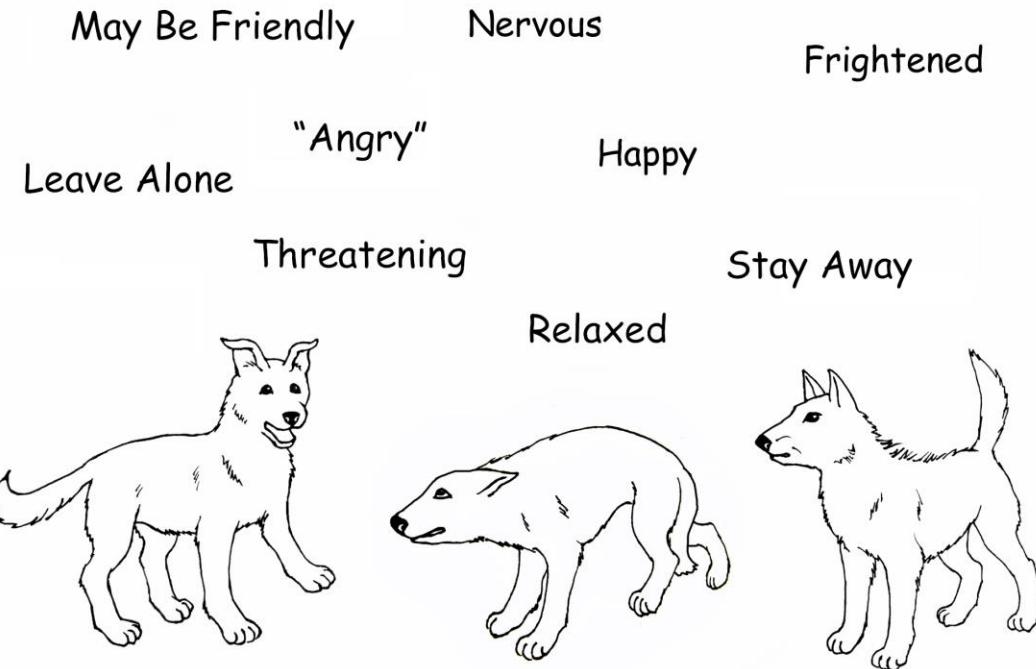
Now ask students to think about what it would be like to be a dog for one day? Ask, “What would you want to do if you were a dog for a day?” “What would you think about?” “Where would you go?” “What would you look like as a dog doing all of these things throughout your day?”

Invite students to write a story and complete this sentence, “If I was a dog for a day, I would...” Encourage students to include illustrations. The dog body language should match what is happening in their story. For example, “If I was a dog for a day, I would go to the dog park and play.” [Picture of a dog doing a play bow or looking happy/excited]. “After the dog park I would go to my favorite pet store to get yummy treats.” [Picture of a dog with a wagging tail/ relaxed mouth.] “On the way to the pet store I saw a huge truck that scared me.” [Picture of a dog who is frightened.] “At night I’d curl up with my human brother while he read books.” [Picture of a happy/content dog curled up.]

### **At the End of the Lesson**

Ask students to reflect on the questions, “What did you learn from today’s book and discussion that you didn’t know before?” You can do this with the whole group, in a sharing circle or related class meeting format, by having students fill out index cards, or other formats as you choose. We recommend that you have a variety of formats. After getting a sense of what the students learned, reinforce key themes that they mentioned and add perhaps one or two that you would like them to keep in mind from the key concepts. Also discuss any follow up assignments or take home materials. Remember the students’ responses to the question, “What did you learn?” to add to your report about this reading.

Draw a line from each picture to the three words that describe it.



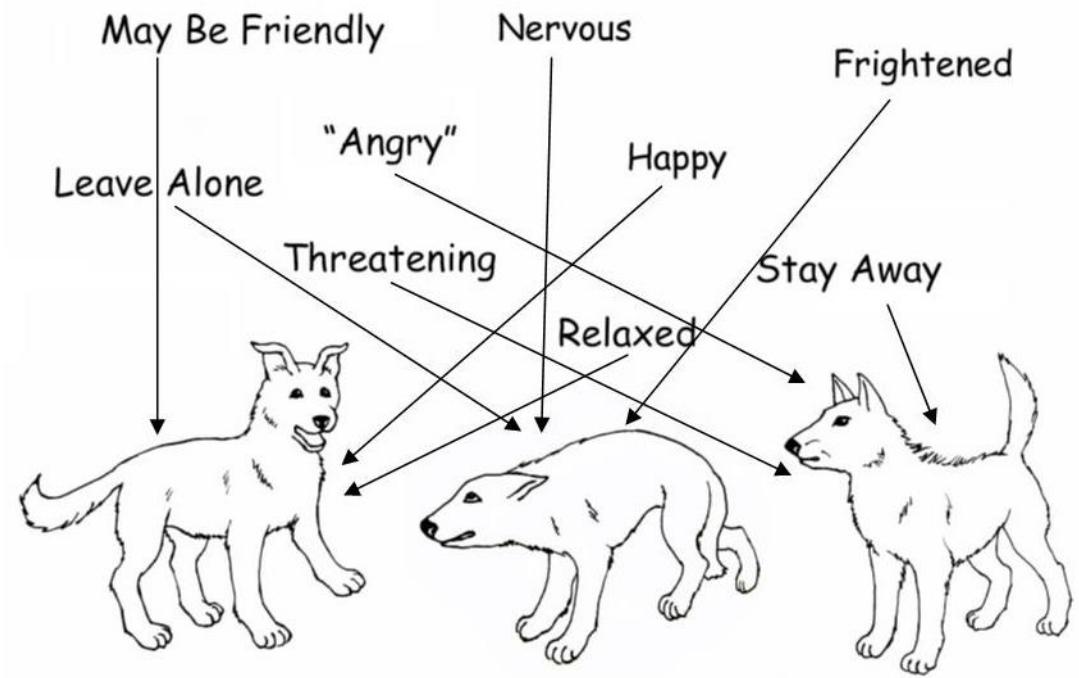
Sarah Wilson, SarahWilsonDogExpert.com

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Answer key

Draw a line from each picture to the three words that describe it.



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