



The Four Friends

Discuss the title.

Display slide 1 from the Google Slides. Then transition to slide 2: allow some discussion for the question: Can friends be different from each other and still be close? Why or why not?

Introduction to the story.

- Explain that today we are going to read a story from the Pañcatantra, a very old book of animal tales from Ancient India. These stories were told long ago to teach people lessons about friendship, problem-solving, and wisdom . (See slide 3.)

Meet the Characters

Using slide 4, discuss the main characters. Allow students to discuss the question with a partner: What strengths do you think each friend might bring to the group?

Key Vocabulary

See Slides 5-10

Spend a few minutes discussing each of the words on slides 5-10. Allow students to share examples relating to each of the words.

Pre-Reading

See Slide 11

Discuss the following question: Do you think friends need to be alike to get along? Why or why not? If you were lost or in trouble, what qualities would you want in a friend? Allow students to freely walk around the room discussing this with classmates for two minutes.

During Reading

See Slides 12-14

Allow students to discuss each of the questions shown on slides 12, 13, and 14 as you read. Pause at appropriate times to allow for clarification and reflection.

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Post Reading

See Slides 15-17.

Allow students to discuss each of the questions shown on slides 15-17. Consider discussing each question using a whole group approach or a Think-Pair-Share strategy.

Connect to Your Life.

See Slide 18.

Using the provided worksheet, have students draft a response to the Connect to Your Life question.

Extension Activities

- Teamwork Role Play
 - In small groups, students act out the story or create a new scene where the friends face a different problem and solve it together.
- Create a Fifth Friend
 - Students invent a new animal character who joins the group. They write or draw how this friend's special skill would help solve problems.
- Compare and Contrast
 - Read another *Pañcatantra* or animal friendship story (e.g., *The Lion and the Mouse*). Use a Venn diagram to compare friendship lessons.
- Teamwork Challenge Game
 - Give students a task that requires cooperation (e.g., building a small tower with limited materials, solving a puzzle together).

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Original Story

The Four Friends (A Tale from the Pañcatantra, Book 2, *Kākolūkīyam*).

Once upon a time, in a quiet forest glade near a clear lake, there lived a mouse named Hiranyaka. He had made a cozy little home under the roots of a tree and lived a peaceful life nibbling on grains and seeds.

One day, a crow named Laghu-patanaka flew down and landed nearby. He was curious about the mouse and said, “Little mouse, I see you every day, and you seem wise and happy. Will you be my friend?”

The mouse looked up and replied, “Why not? Friendship doesn’t depend on size or species. If your heart is true, you are welcome.”

And so the mouse and the crow became great friends.

A few days later, a deer named Chitranga came running through the woods and joined them, panting and frightened.

The mouse and the crow asked what was wrong.

Chitranga said, “I’m always scared of hunters. I have no one to rely on.”

The crow replied, “Then stay with us. We are building a circle of trust. You’ll be safe here.”

The deer was grateful. The three now played together, shared stories, and rested together every day.

One morning, they saw a tortoise slowly walking toward the lake. His name was Mandaraka. He had overheard the animals laughing together and wanted to join them.

The crow whispered, “A tortoise? He’s so slow!”

But the mouse said wisely, “Friendship is about heart, not speed.”

The deer added, “If he wants to join us, let him.”

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And so the tortoise became the fourth member of this unlikely group. They all became close friends, each with their own strengths—the crow could fly, the mouse could chew through anything, the deer was fast, and the tortoise was calm and steady.

One day, Chitranga the deer didn't show up. His friends searched. They split up; the tortoise went one way, the mouse another, and the crow flew back and forth in between them. By luck it was the tortoise who found him - caught in a hunter's net! The tortoise cried, "We must help him!"

Laghu-patanaka the crow quickly flew to find Hiranyaka the mouse. The mouse came running and gnawed through the net, freeing the deer. But just as they were about to leave, they heard footsteps—the hunter was returning! Chitranga ran and the mouse scurried into the grass. The crow flew into the trees. But poor Mandaraka the tortoise couldn't move fast enough. The hunter saw him and took him away in a sack.

The remaining three friends regrouped. The crow came up with a plan. The deer would lie in the hunter's path, pretending to be dead. When the hunter put down the tortoise to grab the deer, the crow would swoop down to distract him. Meanwhile, the mouse would cut open the sack.

Everything worked perfectly. As the hunter went for the deer, thinking it was an easy prize, the crow cawed and flapped around his head. Hiranyaka bit open the sack, and the tortoise crawled out quietly. Then the deer leapt up and ran! The hunter was left confused and empty-handed.

And so the four friends returned to their lakeside home, safe and happy. From that day forward, they were even more united, knowing that true friends will do anything to help one another.

Moral of the Story: Real friendship sees no difference in shape, size, or species. With trust and teamwork, even the weakest can overcome danger.

Connect to Your Life – *The Four Friends*

Name: _____

Think About It: In the story, four very different animals become close friends. They show kindness, trust, and teamwork, proving that friendship isn't about being the same—it's about helping each other.

1 Making Friends with Someone Different

Have you ever made friends with someone who was very different from you?

- Who were they, and what made them different?
- What did you learn from that friendship?

2 Working Together as a Team

Think about a time you and your friends worked together to solve a problem.

- What was the problem?
- How did teamwork help you solve it?

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3 Qualities of a Good Friend

What makes a good friend? Write three qualities you think are most important in a friend.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Optional Drawing Activity:

Draw a picture of you and your friends helping each other, just like the animals in the story.