

I'M STICKING WITH YOU

BY SMRITI HALLS AND STEVE SMALL

For students aged 5+

PERFECT FOR: A gorgeously funny picture book, which cleverly tackles issues around friendship and is perfect for exploring rhythm and pattern, performance and drama, considering different points of view and studying how an illustrator brings a story to life.

ACTIVITIES INCLUDE: Writing in role, writing a non-chronological report about an animal, comparing animals, drama and role play, adapting and writing your own story.



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SCHUSTER



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

For students aged 5+

1. Spend some time looking at the **front cover**. What can you see? Do you notice anything interesting about the shapes used and the relationship between the characters? What might each character be thinking and feeling? Now, read the blurb. Do you notice anything interesting? **What do you predict will happen** in this story?
2. **What makes a good friend?** What qualities should a good friend have? Do you have to see your best friend every day? Have you ever fallen out with a friend? Why? Did you resolve the problem? How?
3. Read the story as a class. Now **talk about what you liked about it** and what you didn't like about it. Do you have a favourite illustration? Why is it your favourite? Is there anything you found puzzling or confusing? Does the story remind you of any other stories, films, songs or poems you show? Why?
4. Read through the story in pairs and think about what **actions and sound effects** you could add to it. Are there any clues in the story about who should say each part out loud? Rehearse the story and then perform it, with actions and sounds, to the rest of the class. You might even wish to act out the story with puppets!
5. Look at page 3. What do you notice about **Squirrel's body language and facial expressions**? Can you work out why Squirrel is grumpy and fed up? Are there any other instances throughout the book when Squirrel is angry? Why might this be? Perhaps you can create an Emotions Graph and plot Squirrel's changing thoughts and feelings throughout the story?

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6. Spend some time looking at and reading the double page spread which begins, '**We sit by the clifftop...**'. How do your eyes travel around the page? What do you notice first? What do you notice last? Why do you think this is? How do you think Squirrel feels? How do you know? What sort of colours are used by the illustrator? Why might this be?

7. Look at the double page spread which begins, '**Oh. Ok then.**' What does Bear do? Do you feel sorry for Bear? Why? Why not? Do you think Squirrel is surprised and shocked or relieved and happy? Why?

8. Look at the double page spread which begins, '**Actually...**' Why do you think '(Bear...Bear...Bear...)' is written like this? How should this be read? What effect do you think this repetition has? Do you think Squirrel will find Bear? Where do you think Bear is?

9. Spend some time freeze-framing the scene where Squirrel returns to Bear (So lump it or like it...). Think carefully about each character's body language and facial expression. **Write a letter of apology** from Squirrel to Bear. What do you predict Bear will do and say?

10. Why do you think **some of the pages in this book are black and some are white**? At what points in the story are the characters set against a black backdrop? What effect does this have? How are they feeling at these points?



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11. Spend some time reading and exploring '**No Matter What**' by **Debi Gliori**. How is this story similar to 'I'm Sticking With You'? How is it different? Use a Venn Diagram to compare the two stories.

12. Can you find any instances in the story when the **illustrations do not support or match the words**, and are showing us something different? Why might this be? Is it just to make us laugh or do we learn anything else about the characters?

13. What do you think both of the characters **learn by the end of the story**? How have they changed and developed over the course of the story? Choose one word to describe their relationship at the beginning of the book and one word to describe it at the end of the book. Explain your word choices to a partner.

14. What else can you find out about **Smriti Hall and Steve Small**? You might like to read some more of Smriti Hall's other books like 'Two Can', 'The Little Island' and 'My Hand to Hold'. Can you notice any similar themes, characters or storylines?



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SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 1

For students aged 5+

BEFORE READING: WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT BEARS AND SQUIRRELS?

- 1) What do you think you already know about bears and squirrels? Can you find some pictures of them and **use adjectives and similes to describe each creature to a partner?**
- 2) What do you think bears and squirrels **eat**? Where do they live?
- 3) In small groups, **carry out some research into bears and squirrels** around the world, using the template below to make notes:

	DIET	HABITAT	APPEARANCE (SIZE,WEIGHT)	INTERESTING FACTS
SQUIRRELS				
BEARS				

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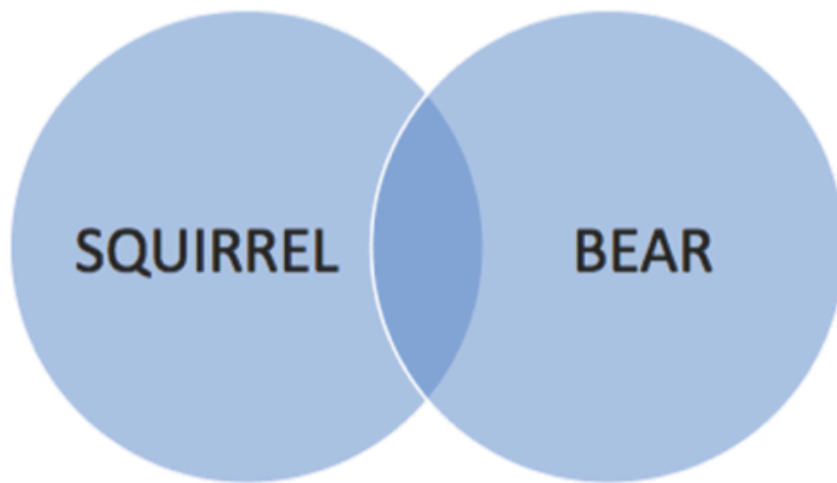


SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 1

For students aged 5+

BEFORE READING: WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT BEARS AND SQUIRRELS?

4) Next, use this information to compare and contrast the two animals. Use a **Venn Diagram** to explore how they are similar and how they are different.



5) Now, use your research and notes to **write a report** about either a squirrel or a bear. You could include a title, sub-titles, pictures and diagrams, a simple food chain to show what your animal eats, interesting facts and a quiz at the end to test your reader.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 2

For students aged 5+

DURING READING: WHAT SHOULD BEAR DO?

- 1) Stop at the part of the story where **Squirrel tells Bear that it's getting crowded** and that they'd like to be on their own. Do you think Squirrel is right to have said this, even though it upsets Bear? Does Bear deserve to be treated like this?
- 2) Choose one of the characters and write an **inner monologue** to show their feelings. Is Bear hurt? Angry? Upset? Betrayed? How does Squirrel feel? Relieved? Cross? Guilty? **Freeze-frame this scene in pairs**, thinking about each character's body language and facial expression. Is there a difference between what your character is saying and what they're feeling?
- 3) **What should Bear do?** Should they run away or stay and sort things out? As a class, create a **Conscience Alley**. One side of the class should be voices persuading Bear to run away. The other side of the class should persuade Bear to stay. Take it in turns to play Bear walking through the alley of voices. How do you feel? When you reach the end of the alley, what will you do? Run? Stay? Write a paragraph exploring your feelings and decision.
- 4) Perhaps you could create another Conscience Alley now, encouraging Squirrel to **explore their feelings and decisions**. Should Squirrel tell Bear to just leave them alone or should they try to talk to Bear about the issue?



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SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 3

For students aged 5+

DURING READING: YOU'RE STUCK WITH ME

1) Look at the part of the story where **Squirrel realises that they miss Bear**. Have you ever had to apologise to someone before? Have you ever fallen out with a friend? How did you feel? How did you resolve your problems? Who should apologise? Squirrel or Bear? Or maybe you think both of them need to apologise?

2) **Squirrel should not apologise as Bear was being annoying**. Do you agree? Why? Why not?

3) In pairs, imagine that one of you is Squirrel and one of you is another friend (not Bear!). **Role-play an imaginary phone conversation** where Squirrel is explaining what has happened to a friend. Explore Squirrel's thoughts and feelings and motivation. Why did you send Bear away? How do you feel now? A partner should play the role of another one of Squirrel's friends (perhaps the frog!) and think about what advice you could give to Squirrel. Afterwards, switch roles.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 3

For students aged 5+

DURING READING: WHAT SHOULD BEAR DO?

5) Now, **write two diary entries**, one as Squirrel and one as Bear, describing the moment where Squirrel apologises to Bear. How might each of the characters describe the situation? Do they have different views about what happened and why it happened? Remember to include chatty, informal language and write in the past tense.

EXAMPLE 1:

Dear diary, I began today feeling cross. Squirrel has been horrible to me! All I've ever wanted was to be a great friend, play together and spend ALL our time together. Why did Squirrel send me away? When I saw Squirrel running towards me, I felt puzzled....

EXAMPLE 2:

Dear diary, I've made a mistake! I THOUGHT I wanted peace and quiet and to be on my own. But I miss Bear so much. He was so much fun and always made me smile and took me on adventures. I realised I had to do something to save our friendship...

6) Finally, **read your diaries out**, thinking about your expression and how to show the characters' feelings.

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 4

For students aged 5+

AFTER READING: FRIENDSHIP RECIPE

- 1) **What does it take to be a good friend?** Should a good friend always tell the truth, for example? Do best friends ever argue? Must you have the same interests, hobbies and passions as your best friend?
- 2) Spend some time looking at examples of **instruction texts and recipes**. You could even look through a piece of tracing paper and create a labelled drawing of what an instruction text looks like, including how it's set out and what features should be included.
- 3) Alternatively, you could use the following labels (equipment list, bullet points, steps written in chronological order, words like 'First' and 'Next', top tips, diagrams etc) and **place them on your instruction text to match the features**.
- 4) Now, create an imaginative list of the ingredients and equipment you might need to create a **Friendship Recipe**. For example, you could include a handful of truth, a sprinkle of laughter, a teaspoon of love and so on.



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SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 4

For students aged 5+

AFTER READING: FRIENDSHIP RECIPE

5) Can you write your own **step-by-step recipe for creating the perfect friendship**? For example:

First, take a handful of truth and carefully place it in your mixing bowl.
Next, generously sprinkle a good dose of laughter and fold the ingredients together...

6) Alternatively, you might want to write your own **friendship poem**, focusing on the senses. You could use the following structure:

Friendship sounds like...

Friendship feels like...

Friendship smells like...

Friendship tastes like...

Friendship looks like...

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 5

For students aged 5+

AFTER READING: I'M STICKING WITH WHO?

- 1) Spend some time exploring the **structure of the story**. You could create a comic strip, story map or a series of freeze frames to order the events in the story.
- 2) Which words or phrases are **repeated**? Why might this be? Can you identify the rhyming words and structure? Does this change at any point? Why?
- 3) Spend some time as a small group or in pairs thinking about **different characters** and the friendship issues they might face. Think about how the story might change if the characters were altered – what might happen, for example, if the two friends were a crocodile and a mouse? What problems might they face?
- 4) **Where might your characters live?** Think about where your story might take place? A swamp? A rainforest? An icy glacier? A scorching desert?
- 5) **Plan a new story** which explores friendship and how your two different characters feel throughout the story. How are your characters similar and different? Perhaps the crocodile is always angry and snappy, and the mouse is calm and quiet, for example. Will the mouse tell the crocodile they need to be alone, but then realise that they need their friend after all? Will the crocodile change their behaviour?

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITY 5

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AFTER READING: I'M STICKING WITH WHO?

6) You could **use a shoebox to create a 3D diorama** showing some of the settings in your book and use models or puppets to act out your new story.

7) You might wish to **perform your story** to the class and then film it or write and illustrate your own version of 'I'm Sticking With You'. As a challenge, you could try and make your story rhyme, too!

8) Finally, can you **teach your new story to the class and perform it together?**

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