

COLLECTIBLE STORIES
WITH COLOUR ILLUSTRATIONS

Little Rabbit's Big Surprise



TEACHING GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Suitable for: Children aged 5-8 years old in Years 1-3

Based on: The adventures of a rabbit and her grandfather as they spread kindness to others

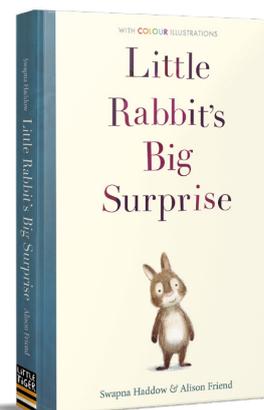
Ideal for: Emerging readers, and especially reluctant readers

Includes: 4x lessons that build towards children making kindness a regular thing in the classroom

Themes: Intergenerational Relationships; Kindness; Friendship; Boredom; Rabbits



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ABOUT LITTLE RABBIT'S BIG SURPRISE

Little Rabbit is bored – everyone else is too busy to play! When her grandfather, Big Rabbit, asks her to help him with his work, Little Rabbit is puzzled – her grandfather doesn't have a job!

But as the two rabbits hop from meadow to woodland visiting their friends and neighbours, Little Rabbit is in for a big surprise...

Little Rabbit's Big Surprise is a heart-warming story about helping others and spreading kindness, with colour illustrations on every page.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR – SWAPNA HADDOW

Swapna Haddow trained as a doctor, but after discovering she didn't like blood, decided on a career change and wrote her first book *Dave Pigeon*, illustrated by Sheena Dempsey, which received rave reviews and went on to win three regional awards in the UK and was shortlisted for the Sainsbury's Children's Book Award. The series is based on two pigeons who find themselves battling predators in an array of madcap scenarios, all the while proving that friendship and teamwork can defeat anything. She has since written more books including additions to the *Dave Pigeon* series, *Little Rabbit's Big Surprise* and a new series called *Ballet Bunnies*. Swapna now lives in New Zealand with her son, her husband and Archie the mini schnauzer. You can usually find Swapna writing, reading or eating Jaffa Cakes. Sometimes you might find her doing all three at the same time.

Find out more about Swapna by following her on social media @SwapnaHaddow or visit her website here: swapnahaddow.co.uk.

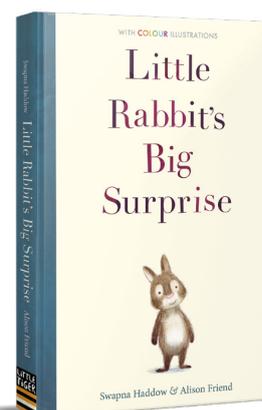
ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR – ALISON FRIEND

Alison has loved painting and drawing for as long as she can remember. She studied Fine Art at Nottingham Trent University and after graduating spent the next three years working as an apprentice stonemason on Nottingham's historic buildings.

Find out more about Alison by following her on social media @afriendillo or see more of her artwork here: eunicemcmullen.co.uk/?illustrator=alison-friend.



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NATIONAL CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES

English: Spoken language

Ask relevant questions to extend their understanding and knowledge

Give well-structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes including for expressing feelings

Reading: comprehension

Develop positive attitudes to reading, and an understanding of what they read, by:

- discussing words and phrases that capture the reader's interest and imagination

Understand what they read, in books they can read independently, by

- identifying how language, structure and presentation contribute to meaning
- drawing inferences such as inferring characters' feelings, thoughts and motives from their actions, and justifying inferences with evidence

Writing: composition

Plan their writing by:

- discussing writing similar to that which they are planning to write in order to understand and learn from its structure, vocabulary and grammar

Develop positive attitudes towards and stamina for writing by:

- writing narratives about personal experiences and those of others (real and fictional)

Science

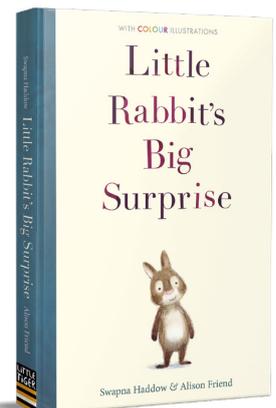
Identify and name a variety of common animals including fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals

Identify and name a variety of common animals that are carnivores, herbivores and omnivores

Identify that most living things live in habitats to which they are suited and describe how different habitats provide for the basic needs of different kinds of animals and plants, and how they depend on each other



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Describe how animals obtain their food from plants and other animals, using the idea of a simple food chain, and identify and name different sources of food

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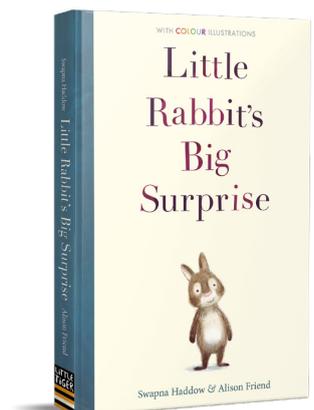
Be able to show what constitutes a good friend

Learn about behaving responsibly

Recognise and respond appropriately to a wider range of feelings in others



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LESSON OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

Lesson 1: Rabbit Relationships

Objectives:

- To understand the needs, social aspects and habits of rabbits
- To list the stages in the life cycle of a rabbit

Outcomes:

A class conversation about rabbits, their habits and their characteristics; a comparison of domestic and wild rabbits using a Venn diagram; and a completed life cycle of a rabbit diagram.

Lesson 2: Being Bored

Objectives:

- To help children to reflect on the experience of feeling bored
- To become aware of the present moment and marvel at its wonder

Outcomes:

An introduction to the feelings of boredom; a consideration of a strategy to combat boredom; and the creation of an invention to solve the problem of boredom.

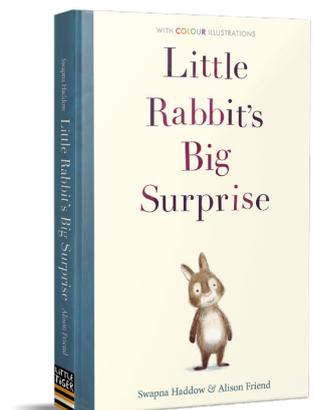
Lesson 3: Friendship Feelings

Objectives:

- To define 'friendship' and explore the positive attributes of a friend
- To consider that we should try to make time to help one another



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Outcomes:

A class conversation about friendship and why we like having friends; the ranking of the personal qualities of a good friend; and a consideration of how to make time to help others.

Lesson 4: Kindness Can Make a Difference

Objectives:

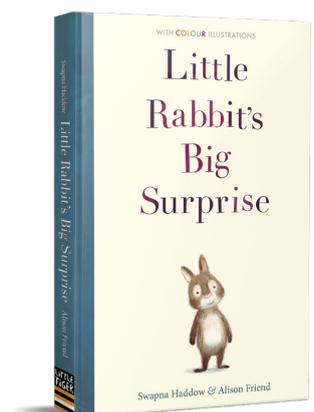
- To consider the importance and impact of being kind and how making others happy can make us happy too
- To introduce the idea of doing small acts of kindness via the story of *Little Rabbit's Big Surprise*

Outcomes:

A reflection about kindness; a paper chain activity to show the power of kindness and how it connects us all; and the introduction of a method to reward kindness in the classroom.



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LESSON ONE: RABBIT RELATIONSHIPS

Questions:

- Do you know what a rabbit is?
- Have you ever seen a rabbit? Have you ever held a rabbit?
- Are all rabbits the same?

Task 1:

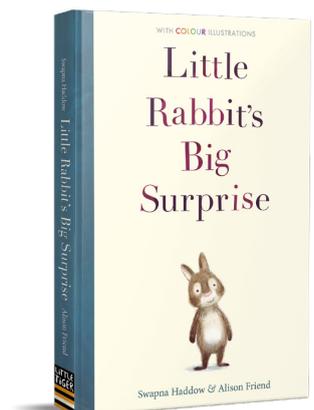
Discuss the topic of rabbits with the children, relating it to their own personal experiences of owning rabbits if any of them have them. Explain how rabbits are mammals, which means they are warm-blooded, have backbones and hair, and that there are around thirty different species of wild rabbits. Learn about different types of rabbits, their habitats and diet, and special physical features that help them survive in the wild. Discover more about them such as how rabbits like to live in groups, and they can be found in grasslands, forests, meadows and even deserts! Some rabbits like to create burrows, or dig holes and tunnels in the ground. This is where they often give birth to their young. Males are called bucks, and females are referred to as does. Highlight how rabbits are herbivores, which means they eat only plants and that a wild rabbit would probably prefer grasses or leaves for lunch rather than the carrots you see in cartoons or stories. Discuss their physical characteristics and their special body features that help them to survive in the wild such as sharp, long claws, which help them to dig their burrows for protection; long ears, which are not only cute but provides them with sensitive hearing that can help them to locate predators; egg shaped bodies; strong hind legs and colouring that helps them to blend in easily with their surroundings to camouflage them and escape other animals that want to eat them. After researching rabbits, ask children to write a non-chronological report about rabbits using the information they have found out about them.

Task 2:

Show the children a video on how to care for an indoor pet rabbit. Discuss the similarities and differences to how an indoor pet rabbit and a wild rabbit live in terms of the food they eat and the places they create for shelter. Link this to Little Rabbit and Big Rabbit in the book. Compare the similarities and differences using a Venn diagram. If possible, ask the children's families to see if anyone can bring in a live rabbit for the class to see and touch. This will help in learning about having a rabbit for a pet and the care it would need.



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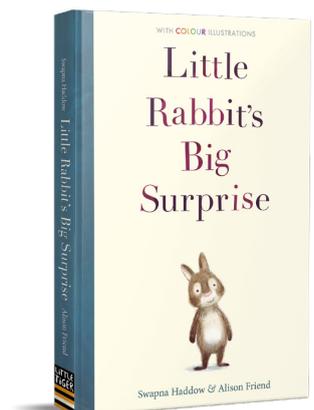
Some of the things children can learn from temporarily caring for a rabbit in the room would be feeding the rabbit, giving it water, cleaning the cage, etc. Making a class chart is a good way to keep a record of who took care of the rabbit and what day in order for everyone to get a turn taking care of it. Prior to this task, check to make sure no one in your class is allergic to rabbits, animal fur, etc.

Task 3:

Share more with the children about the life cycle of a rabbit. Teach them the four main stages of a rabbit's life: baby, young adult, middle age, and geriatric, and what rabbits are like at each of these life stages. Find out more about how a rabbit is considered a baby until it is 1 year old, and that baby rabbits are called kittens. Kittens look very different from adult rabbits when they are first born. Their ears and eyes are closed, and they have much less fur. They are fed on their mother's milk and cannot do anything without their mothers for the first three weeks of their lives. Remind children that rabbits like all mammals, including humans, are initially fed on milk from their mothers. Explain how as the baby mammals get older, they move towards a diet that makes use of the natural resources around them, such as grass for rabbits. But digesting grass is very hard, and special bacteria are needed by baby rabbits to help them. Present the stages of a rabbit's life cycle in a scientific diagram.



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LESSON TWO: BEING BORED

Questions:

- What is it like to be 'bored'? Where do you feel boredom in your body?
- Why do we get bored? What are some ways to overcome boredom?
- Can being bored lead to being creative?

Task 1:

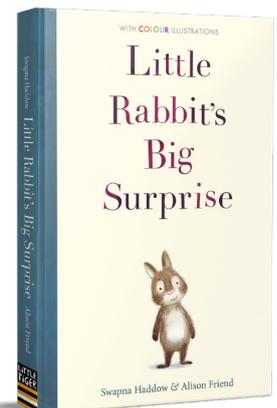
Ask the children when was the last time they felt bored. Do they ever feel bored at home, in school or doing something else? Discuss when someone says 'I'm bored!' in class or describes an activity or a lesson as 'boring'. How would they feel? How does everyone else feel? Link this to how Little Rabbit describes being bored at the start of the book. Describe why she is feeling bored and relate this to similar feelings that the children have experienced. Suggest how when we are asked to be silent for a few minutes or engage in an activity that does not bring instant attention to our senses, we claim that it is boring. Highlight how this could be because of the rapidly-changing and technological world we live in where information is all around us, and given to us in an immediate and fast-paced way. However, should we consider that perhaps the problem does not lie with the things we deem to be boring, but with us? How long is it after we have got the latest toy, game or clothes that the intense feeling of excitement wears off and we start to get bored? Then we start to look for the next new thing – and so the cycle goes on. Could it be that we are endlessly and relentlessly looking for distraction? Could it be what we really mean when we say something is boring is that it is not distracting us enough? Talk more about the feelings of boredom and identify them using a mindmap.

Task 2:

Following on from Task 1, recap the feelings of boredom and ask the children to act out a scene where they are 'bored' to depict these feelings in a visual way. What can children spot? Daydreaming? Expressions of disgruntlement? Sighs? Comment on how these are all commonly associated feelings of boredom. Ask the children to consider how they stop being bored and suggest ways in which you prevent yourself from becoming bored. It might be that you read a book, draw a picture or practice mindfulness. Discuss as a class how feelings of boredom have actually led to inventions and creativity from some of the most pioneering thinkers in the world from engineering and science to art and literature.



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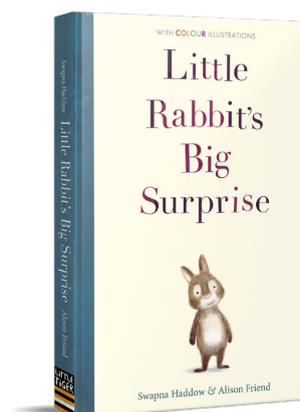
Explain how, in the past, if people were bored of a problem, then they would have had to think about this problem, how to solve it and start to work things out by themselves. Discuss a range of strategies that children can do the next time they feel 'bored' and ask them to consider what they really mean when they say they are 'bored'. Have they ran out of energy to complete the task, are they distracted or do they just not want to do the task anymore? Introduce one way of combating boredom in finding peace within ourselves and practise spending a few moments now, just being still and quiet and absorbing the present moment looking around, daydreaming and thinking about what you can see, hear and imagine. Children may want to doodle at the same time.

Task 3:

Following Task 2, get the children to think about a problem that they are 'bored' of in our world. It could be something such as feeling like it always rains, the toast always landing butter-side down or something similar. Ask the children to come up with marvellous, ingenious and bonkers inventions and machines that can solve this problem. Encourage them to stretch their creativity, imaginations and problem-solving skills as much as they can with their plans to develop their ideas, create a prototype if possible and curate an exhibition to showcase and share their thinking.



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LESSON THREE: FRIENDSHIP FEELINGS

Questions:

- What does it mean to be a friend?
- Why do we have friends?
- How can we show we are friendly?

Task 1:

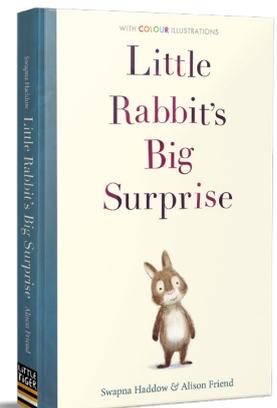
Gather the children in a circle and begin to talk about friendship. Ask the children: Why do we need friends? What do friends do? What are friends like? Consider all responses and, if possible, elicit some examples of good friends and friendly acts. What makes someone a good friend? What is a good friend like? Consider the range of responses together and discuss the qualities of a good friend. Can you make a list of common suggestions? Write one-word summaries of what makes a good friend. Ask the children to think about their friends and why they like them so much. Explain how it's important to have lots of different friends, and that we may have one special or 'best' friend, but we also need other people ... and they need us! By spending time with lots of different people, we gain different experiences. The gift of friendship is one to be shared with lots of people. Encourage the children to think of the positive benefits of friendship by completing the following sentence 'I like to have friends because...'. They may want to write their answers down to this and share them with the class by standing up, sitting down or just putting them inside the circle.

Task 2:

Using some of the qualities listed in Task 1, recap the qualities of a good friend. Highlight some of the attributes such as trust, kindness, forgiveness and other qualities the children suggest. Ask children if they can define these qualities. Are they confident to give examples to show what trust means in a friendship situation or what forgiveness means? Or do they not know what these words mean? Share the definitions of each word, using a dictionary if required. After doing this, choose a selection of the most important attributes to you as a teacher and role model to the children, and explain why you have chosen these qualities in the friendships you have or want. Ask the children to individually complete a Diamond 9 ranking pyramid to order, evaluate and rank the different friendship traits that mean the most to them and to discuss their choices, thinking reflectively and explaining their reasoning behind them.



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Extension:

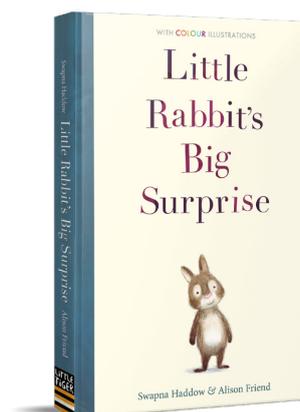
Display the following statement on the board "We can't all be best friends, but it's good if we can be friendly to everyone." Discuss this statement with the class, reinforcing the idea that we can't be best friends with everyone or necessarily like everyone but we can still be kind and amiable to everyone. Use the board to display the answers given by the children, and debate the statement if you have a difference of opinion within the classroom.

Task 3:

Share how sometimes, we feel very busy or too involved in what we are doing to help other people. Use examples to help the children to understand, such as they've wanted their mum or dad to do something with them or for them and they've told them that they were too busy. Or perhaps your parents have asked you to do something for them and, because you were busy playing, you haven't done as you were told. Link this to the story where Little Rabbit feels like everyone else is too busy to play with her, and she feels very busy on her adventures with Big Rabbit. But when she sees that her actions are having a positive effect, she realises that we should try to make time to help one another. Ask children to stop and think about how they can make time for others to help them as a friend. What can they do to be less busy and be more in the moment? Share suggestions as a class to inspire others to take the time and make the time.



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LESSON FOUR: KINDNESS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Questions:

- What is kindness?
- How can we be kind?
- Why does being happy towards others make us feel happy too?

Task 1:

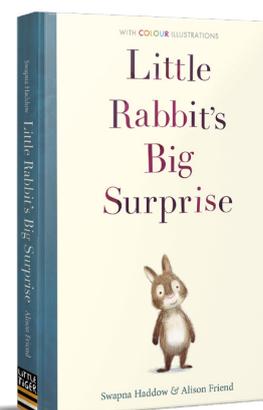
Ask the children what they think the words 'kind' or 'kindness' mean. Responses might include being nice to someone, helping a friend out and sharing with a friend. Make a list of suggestions of kindness on the board. Ask the children whether they can remember a time when someone was kind to them and share your experiences together. If possible, share a time from your own experience when someone being kind made a difference to you. Point out that: kindness matters; our actions make a difference and often, our kindness can lead to something far better happening. Explain that we should be kind because we care about other people. Also highlight how research and science shows that kindness is also good for us. Ask the children to think about why this might be. How can we show kindness today? How can we brighten someone else's world? Encourage the children to try to think of one simple thing that they can do to brighten someone's day today.

Task 2:

Ask the children whether they think that kindness can make a difference to people. Link this to the actions of Little Rabbit in the story and how her kindness towards Mole, Granny Hedgehog and Dormouse led to them feeling happy. Explain that, by being kind, we make our world a nicer place to live. It makes people feel happier and it encourages more people to be kind. Introduce children to random acts of kindness through exploring World Kindness Day and Random Acts of Kindness Day which are national days to celebrate and raise awareness of random acts of kindness. Share with children the mission of The Random Acts of Kindness Foundation which is to make kindness the norm in our schools, workplaces, homes and communities. Ask them to make a list of something kind they could do for each day of the week to begin to make kindness a regular thing in our classroom. Consider how kindness helps our school to become an inclusive, welcoming community where children make active choices to be kind and helpful. Ask children: are you a builder or a bulldozer?



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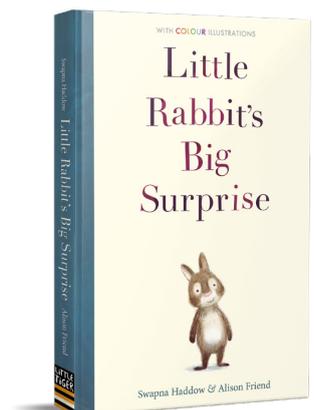
Explain the meaning of this analogy in that 'builders' help to build people up and make them feel better by choosing to say nice things whereas 'bulldozers' act destructively and push people down by choosing to say hurtful things. To encourage children to be 'builders' and reflect on how they have already used kindness in the classroom, invite the children to make a list of kind acts that they have completed. Using a paper chain, make a chain of kindness links. Help them to think of somebody they have shown kindness to or somebody who has helped them. Write their names on the link. Demonstrate how to bend the strips into a circle or link, thread and glue together. Remind children to keep the words on the outside of each link so they can be read over again. Make a long chain of kind acts and hang it up in the classroom to remind children to be kind and that their kindness is interconnected.

Task 3:

Start a kindness jar in the classroom to collectively record and reward your acts of kindness. Invite the children to put a marble or button inside the jar each time they do something kind. When it is full, the class can have some special 'reward time' when they can choose an activity to do for themselves.



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FURTHER IDEAS AND ACTIVITIES

Read more books that explore the subject of helping others and showing kindness together such as *Kind* by Alison Green; *Kindness Makes Us Strong* by Sophie Beer; and *Bloom Bloom* by Anne Booth and Robyn Wilson-Owen.

Introduce some healthy snack ideas during this rabbit-based book theme by encouraging children to have carrots for snack time or sampling some carrots in a healthy eating lesson.

Make your own books about rabbits to demonstrate their knowledge of rabbits. These books could be displayed on the classroom bookshelf for all to read.

Encourage pupils to think about friendships by creating a wall of friendship displaying the qualities of good friendships, the things friends can give to one another, and the benefits of forming new and different friendships. The display could include keywords about friendships, photos of friends, or general writing about friendships too.

Investigate where rabbits live and watch videos of deserted burrows to show their shape and structure. After watching, children could create a model of a burrow.



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