



## Friendship Unit Grade 4 • Ages 9-11

### TIME FRAME

Preparation: 10 minutes  
Instruction: 30-40 minutes

### MATERIALS

Unusual Friendship, New York Times clip 6:20min: <http://www.nytimes.com/video/us/1194817103175/anunusual-friendship.html>

RAK Journals

[Kindness Concept Posters](#): Caring, Respect, Helpfulness

### LEARNING STANDARDS

Common Core: CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.4.1, 2

Colorado: Comprehensive Health S.3, GLE.1, EO.a,b,e; Reading, Writing and Communicating S.1, GLE.1, EO.a,b.

[Learning standards key](#)

# True Friendship

Students will explore what true friendship looks like and name some of the qualities of a true friend.

## Lesson Background for Teachers

While the video for this lesson is called “Unusual Friendship”, you may want to point out that these are true friendships. A true friendship involves **caring**, **respect**, loyalty, **helpfulness** and commonality.

## Key Terms for Students

Consider writing key terms on the board before class to introduce vocabulary and increase understanding.

**FRIEND** Someone you enjoy spending time with and respect.

**CARING** Feeling and showing concern for others.

**RESPECT** Treating people, places and things with kindness.

**HELPFULNESS** Assisting or serving in a kind way.

## TIPS FOR DIVERSE LEARNERS

Students might benefit from:

- Having a little longer time to think before answering the questions.
- Having a partner who writes down their responses on the poster or in their RAK journals.

## Resources

Any book or video about unusual animal friendships.

Psychology Today Article: What Makes a True Friend  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/happiness-in-world/201002/what-makes-true-friend>

RAK lessons teach kindness skills through a step-by-step framework of **Inspire, Empower, Act** and **Share**.

The **Share** step in the first lesson of each unit is intended to set the tone for teaching kindness.



## Share (3 mins)

Turn to the person next to you and, without saying a person's name, tell them about your closest **friend**.

## Inspire

### An Unusual Friendship (15 mins)

#### Option 1 (with video)

Before watching the Unusual **Friendship** clip, explain: *In this clip, a newspaper reporter talks about a **friendship** between a refugee from Burma and a boy from Georgia. As you watch this clip, think about what makes them good **friends**.*

*Note: While this video is called "Unusual Friendship", you may want to point out that these are true friendships. A true friendship involves caring, respect, loyalty, helpfulness and commonality.*

#### Option 2 (without video)

If you can't stream the clip, write the bulleted statements on the board (which are from the **friendship** clip). Ask students to turn to a partner (or assign partners) and discuss the statements and what other qualities make a **friend**. Have students share with the class and write any other qualities on the board.

- A **friend** is loyal and you can trust that person to keep a secret.
- A **friend** doesn't lie and is honest.
- A **friend** helps a friend when they need it.
- A **friend** doesn't say mean things or say things behind your back.
- A **friend** takes care of you and comforts you when you are sad.
- A **friend** may have the same interests.
- A **friend** includes a friend no matter what.
- A **friend** shows respect.
- A **friend** doesn't keep secrets.

*Now I am going to share a story from The New York Times about a **friendship** between Soung, a refugee from Burma who has been diagnosed with dwarfism and Dante, a boy from Georgia, which is a southern state in the United States.*

Point out Burma and Georgia on a map. You may want to explain that dwarfism is a genetic or medical condition that causes short stature. The average adult with dwarfism is about 4 feet tall.

*These two boys attend a school in Georgia, where students come from many different countries. Many of the students have never been to school before or don't speak English. One teacher wonders what it is like for the new students to go to a school where they don't understand anything except "Sit down!" or "Listen!" Moving to a new place can be difficult, but imagine what it would be like if you had to go to school where you can't understand any of the words! Have you ever moved? What was that like? Did you have to make new **friends**? Could you speak the language in your new school?*

*In class, Dante started to help Soung with the work, they played soccer on the playground and pretty soon, Soung was calling Dante on the phone. Dante's mom said Soung would just call and say "Dante, Dante, Dante" over and over on the phone. What would you think if someone did that? Would you want to play with that person? Would it be easy or hard for you to be friends with someone who didn't speak the same language as you?*



The RAK paradigm is the framework for teaching and building kindness skills.





## Empower

### True Friend Discussion (5-15 mins)

Discuss the following questions:

- What did you think of this story?
- What qualities of **friendship** do Dante and Soung show?
- What are some of the challenges they face in their **friendship**?
- How do they show **caring** and love to each other?
- How do good **friends** show respect to each other?
- How do they help each other?

### Wrap Up (5 mins)

To gauge understanding of the material, choose from either the evaluation or reflection questions as discussion, writing or journal prompts. Consider providing additional time for deeper evaluation and reflection as needed.

### Evaluation Questions

- What does it mean to be a **friend**?
- What did you learn from these boys about what it means to be a **friend**?
- How can you show **caring** and **respect** to your **friends**?

### Reflection Questions

- What makes a true **friend**?
- Did you learn anything from Dante and Soung?
- Can we be **friends** with anyone?

### Summary

*Today we heard about two true **friends**. Having an open heart allows us to have **friends** in who we may not have considered before. These boys show **respect**, **caring** and **helpfulness** to each other, these are genuine ways of being kind.*



## Act (2 mins)

### Kindness Minute

*Being kind to ourselves is important. We can even be our own **friend** by showing **caring** and **respect** to ourselves! Tell the person next to you what makes you a good **friend** to others.*

### Kindness in Action

True **friendship** involves **care**, **respect** and **helpfulness**. Find a picture on the internet or in a magazine that shows a true **friendship**. Write why you think this is true of the picture.

