



FRIENDSHIP

GRADE 7 – GRADE 9

Teacher Guide



everylivingthing.ca

FRIENDSHIP

celebrate similarities and differences



Friendships are essential to everyone's well-being. For young people, developing healthy relationship skills helps them to feel supported, connected and valued. Finding common ground through shared experiences builds strong connections, while respecting differences fosters appreciation for diversity and the unique qualities each person brings. When students practise friendship rooted in empathy, communication, and respect, they strengthen the skills needed to support success both in school and outside the classroom.

Animals can play an important role in nurturing these skills. Caring for and connecting with animals fosters empathy, responsibility and the importance of belonging. Extending these connections with the environment helps students understand that balance, care and interdependence are essential for the well-being of every living thing.

Discussion Questions:

Present the poster to the class and discuss the following questions. Encourage students to share thoughtful answers and remind them to listen to their classmates.

- What does friendship mean to you, and how does it differ from other relationships in your life? Explain.
- What do you have in common with your friends? What differences do you notice?
- People have many meaningful relationships with others. Why do you think we seek relationships with animals? Explain.
- Think about your pet or another animal you know. How would you describe your relationship? What are the benefits of this relationship for you? For them?
- What responsibilities do people have for their animal companions? Why is it important to take these seriously?
- You may have heard the phrase, "Dogs are a man's best friend." What do you think this means? Do you agree? Why or why not?
- Consider your relationship with the land and/or the environment. How do you interact with it? How do you feel when you spend time in nature?
- Describe the interconnection between people, animals, and the environment. What is our responsibility in this relationship? How do our actions impact animals and the environment? How do animals and the environment affect us?

Activities:

1. Common Connections

Objective: Students will practise initiating and sustaining positive interactions with others by discovering shared interests to help build and maintain healthy relationships.

Extra resources available at: everylivingthing.ca/Friendship



Materials:

- Index cards (one per student)
- Pen or pencil

Instructions:

We often have more in common with others than we think. When we find these shared interests, it is easier to connect, invite someone to join in, or have a conversation – all of which help build and maintain a friendly, welcoming classroom environment.

Explain to students that finding something in common provides a starting point for conversation. Instead of feeling unsure about what to say, you already have a topic to talk about. Knowing more about classmates' interests can also help us find opportunities to include them – inviting someone to join your group project, sitting with them at lunch, or telling them about an activity they might enjoy. Even small connections, like shared favourite animals or sports, can break down barriers and help everyone feel seen and valued.

Individually, have students write down five things they enjoy or are interested in on an index card. This could include activities or hobbies, music, books, places they like to go or causes they care about.

Have students form two lines facing each other. Students will then have a 90-second conversation with the person across from them, trying to find something in common from their cards. Remind students that the words on their cards do not have to be an exact match – use them as a starting point for conversation.

After 90 seconds, one line shifts down one person, and the activity repeats until students have spoken with multiple classmates.

Post-Activity Reflection:

Individually, in small groups or as a class, have students reflect on the following questions:

- Did you find any common interests with someone you might not usually talk to?
- How does knowing more about the interests of others make it easier to include them in the future?
- Why might focusing on what we have in common be a useful way to start friendships?
- What is one takeaway from this activity that will help you make someone feel more included?
- How can you maintain your individuality while still finding connections with others?
- How can shared interests help overcome stereotypes or assumptions?



2. Unconscious Bias

Objective: Students will reflect on their unconscious biases and consider the ways in which biases can affect themselves, others and their relationships.

Materials:

- Animal Association Slides
- Scrap paper
- Pen or pencil

Instructions:

Unconscious biases can affect our relationships with others, including animals. The first step in addressing these biases is to become aware of them.

Open the Animal Association Slides and work through the activity as a class.

Instruct students to take a piece of scrap paper and, silently, write down the first words (or phrases) that come to mind when they see each of the following photos. Remind them that there are no right or wrong answers! Don't overthink it; just write the first things that come to mind.

Show each animal slide (seven in total) for approximately 30 seconds each. Note: Students should have enough time to write down their initial reactions, but not so much time that they overthink the task.

After going through all seven animal slides, discuss the following questions as a class:

- What patterns did you notice in the words you wrote down?
- What do the animals you described with 'positive' words have in common?
- What do the animals you described with 'negative' words have in common?
- What do you think influenced the words that you chose? *Past experience, knowledge, bias, etc.*

As a class, define the words 'bias' and 'unconscious bias.' Explain to students that biases and assumptions are completely normal – they help the brain make shortcuts. However, biases can also lead to unfair treatment of people and animals. Ask students:

- How might biases impact relationships?
- Can you think of examples where biases led to people or animals being treated unfairly? *Black cats taking longer to be adopted in animal shelters, glue traps for mice and insects, etc.*

Through small group discussion or individually, have student reflect on the following:

- Has there been a time when someone's bias has negatively impacted you?
- How can you prevent your biases from harming others?

3. Exploring the Human-Animal Bond



Objective: Students explore the human-animal bond and consider how healthy relationships with animals are built on trust, care and connections – just like they are with people.

Materials:

- *Watch how a dog helped one veteran conquer his PTSD* CBC Video (6:01)
- Various materials depending on project format
- 'Veteran with PTSD finds dog therapy beats medication' CBC article (optional)

Instructions:

The human-animal bond is a mutually beneficial relationship between people and animals. While this connection has existed for thousands of years, it has evolved over time. Historically, humans and animals formed working relationships: animals offered protection and service, while humans provided food and shelter. Today, pets are often seen as important members of the family, contributing to the emotional, social, and developmental well-being of children and adults.

As a class, watch the CBC video 'Watch how a dog helped one veteran conquer his PTSD'.

Important note: *The video may not be appropriate for all classrooms as some footage includes images and sounds of war. Preview to ensure it is suitable for your class.*

Alternatively, students can read the CBC article.

Pre-Viewing Discussion Questions:

- Do you have a personal relationship with an animal? If so, how does this relationship impact you? Encourage students to consider impacts on their mental, physical, social and emotional well-being.
- What is a service dog?
- Have you seen a service dog before? If so, describe the situation.
- What are some reasons someone might require a service animal?

Post-Viewing Discussion Questions:

- Why does Chad need a service dog?
- What are some of the ways Norman helps Chad?
- How would you describe the relationship between Chad and Norman? How is their relationship different than a typical pet-owner relationship?
- What bonds do you have with animals?



Discuss with students that Norman is a service dog trained to assist veterans dealing with PTSD. He performs specific tasks to meet Chad's needs. Part of the reason why Norman can help Chad is because of the human-animal bond.

After discussing the video and reflecting on the relationship between Chad and Norman, invite students to explore their own experiences with animals and the bonds that they share. This could be their pet(s), a friend's pet, farm animals, observing wildlife, etc. Have students reflect on an animal they have a connection with and that has impacted them in

a positive way.

Have students create a project to showcase this bond. Students can highlight their human-animal bond through a poster, slide presentation, written reflection, poem, or a format of their choice. Encourage students to be creative!

To help students get started, share the following guiding questions. Encourage students to address as many of the following as possible.

Guiding Questions:

- What animal are you focusing on and what role do they play in your life?
- What makes this relationship meaningful to you?
- How has the animal supported your mental, emotional, social and/or physical well-being?
- What responsibilities do you have in this relationship?
- What feelings or memories do you associate with this animal?
- How is the human-animal bond shown in your project?

Have students share their finished projects with the class via wall displays, short presentations, or small group shares. Encourage students to ask questions or make comments that elicit additional information when their classmates are sharing their project.



GRADE 7 CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

HEALTH & LIFESKILLS

RELATIONSHIP CHOICES: *Students will* develop effective interpersonal skills that demonstrate responsibility, respect and caring in order to establish and maintain healthy interactions.

INTERACTIONS

Students will:

- R-7.5 examine the characteristics of healthy relationships, and develop strategies to build and enhance them; e.g., peer, opposite sex

GROUP ROLES AND PROCESSES

Students will:

- R-7.8 analyze the potential effects of belonging to a group, team, gang

SOCIAL STUDIES

SKILLS AND PROCESSES

DIMENSIONS OF THINKING

Students will:

7.S.1 develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking:

- determine the validity of information based on context, bias, source, objectivity, evidence and/or reliability to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AS A DEMOCRATIC PRACTICE

Students will:

7.S.5 demonstrate skills of cooperation, conflict resolution and consensus building:

- consider the needs and perspectives of others

COMMUNICATION

Students will:

7.S.8 demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy:

- elicit, clarify and respond appropriately to questions, ideas and multiple points of view in discussions
- listen to others in order to understand their perspectives

LANGUAGE ARTS

General Outcome 4: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to enhance the clarity and artistry of communication.

4.3 Present and Share

Present information

- present ideas and opinions confidently, but without dominating the discussion, during

GRADE 7 CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

small group activities and short, whole class sessions

Demonstrate attentive listening and viewing

- ask questions or make comments that elicit additional information; probe different aspects of ideas, and clarify understanding

GRADE 8 CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

HEALTH & LIFESKILLS

RELATIONSHIP CHOICES: *Students will* develop effective interpersonal skills that demonstrate responsibility, respect and caring in order to establish and maintain healthy interactions.

INTERACTIONS

Students will:

- R-8.5 develop strategies for maintaining healthy relationships

GROUP ROLES AND PROCESSES

Students will:

- R-8.8 describe and explain the positive and negative aspects of conformity and dissent as they relate to individuals in a group or on a team

SOCIAL STUDIES

SKILLS AND PROCESSES

DIMENSIONS OF THINKING

Students will:

8.S.1 develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking:

- determine the validity of information based on context, bias, source, objectivity, evidence and/or reliability to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AS A DEMOCRATIC PRACTICE

Students will:

8.S.5 demonstrate skills of cooperation, conflict resolution and consensus building:

- consider the needs and perspectives of others

COMMUNICATION

Students will:

8.S.8 demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy:

- elicit, clarify and respond appropriately to questions, ideas and multiple points of view in discussions
- listen to others in order to understand their perspectives

LANGUAGE ARTS

General Outcome 4: Students will listen, speak, read, write, view and represent to enhance the clarity and artistry of communication.

4.3 Present and Share

Present information

- plan and facilitate small group and short, whole class presentations to share information

Extra resources available at: everylivingthing.ca/Friendship



GRADE 9 CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

HEALTH & LIFESKILLS

RELATIONSHIP CHOICES: *Students will* develop effective interpersonal skills that demonstrate responsibility, respect and caring in order to establish and maintain healthy interactions.

INTERACTIONS

Students will:

- R-9.5 describe and analyze factors that contribute to the development of unhealthy relationships, and develop strategies to deal with unhealthy relationships

GROUP ROLES AND PROCESSES

Students will:

- R-9.8 analyze skills required to maintain individuality within a group; e.g., self-respect, assertiveness, refusal skills

SOCIAL STUDIES

SKILLS AND PROCESSES

DIMENSIONS OF THINKING

Students will:

9.S.1 develop skills of critical thinking and creative thinking:

- determine the validity of information based on context, bias, source, objectivity, evidence and/or reliability to broaden understanding of a topic or an issue

SOCIAL PARTICIPATION AS A DEMOCRATIC PRACTICE

Students will:

9.S.5 demonstrate skills of cooperation, conflict resolution and consensus building:

- demonstrate a positive attitude regarding the needs and perspectives of others

COMMUNICATION

Students will:

8.S.8 demonstrate skills of oral, written and visual literacy:

- elicit, clarify and respond appropriately to questions, ideas and multiple points of view in discussions