

*** SPARK**

Friends Help Friends, Always

GRADES 1–5

TYPE
NARRATIVE
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL
LEARNING

PRESENTED BY
CARTOON NETWORK

Students use illustrations as entry points to write stories about friendship from a new perspective.

WHAT YOUR STUDENTS WILL LEARN

Students consider the perspective of other character(s) to write stories that highlight the importance of being kind.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

- Cartoon Network Character Illustrations — print, project, or share

WHAT YOU WILL DO

This Spark comes from a lesson developed as part of the Inclusion Storytelling Project, a collaboration between 826CHI, 826 National, and Cartoon Network’s award-winning “Stop Bullying: Speak Up” campaign. The Spark is centered on writing as a vehicle for Social-Emotional Learning and is designed to encourage youth to share their individual stories about kindness and empathy in an effort to stop bullying before it starts.

Before you begin, either print, project, or share the Cartoon Network character illustrations, which feature one or more Cartoon Network characters. You may also choose to add images of characters from other representational works of art.

Start the activity with a Gallery Walk. Whether you place the illustrations around the room or ask students to click through the images on their own devices, students should spend a couple of minutes viewing each picture, paying special attention to the character(s) in each. Students should note the details that stand out to them in their notebooks. Tell students that after viewing the four images, they will choose one illustration to use as inspiration for a new story.

Next, share the two prompts on empathy and friendship with your students. For both prompts, if students are familiar with the character they chose, ask them to imagine a new, original back story for the sake of the activity.

Option A:

Are there more than two characters in your illustration?

If so, include something in your story about how they became friends! Here are some questions to help you along:

- • How did they meet? Describe the setting and situation in vivid detail. What do they say to each other?
- Did they like each other when they first met? Dislike each other? Or feel neutral? Give a few details about their first impressions.
- What was the main event which brought them together as friends? Were there any challenges to becoming friends?

Now, imagine that you are one the characters in your illustrations. Who are you? Write from the character’s perspective using “I” to narrate the story. What’s the best thing about being friends with the other character? What do you admire about them?

Option B:

Do you have only one character in your illustration?

If so, imagine that they are someone you know who is having a bad day. Maybe you’re best friends with them, or maybe you’re just acquaintances, or maybe this is the first time you’ve ever met each other. Why was the character having a bad day? What do you do to help them feel better?

To close the activity, ask students to get into groups based on the illustration they chose so that all students who selected the same image can share their work. Ask students to read part or all of their story with group members and listen for common themes across their writing.