

Story Summary

Award-winning author-illustrator Mies van Hout celebrates the fun (and sometimes bumpy) stages of friendship as monster friends play, fight, and reconcile.

Set against Mies van Hout's iconic black backgrounds and utilizing the same vibrant pastel style of the internationally

bestselling *Happy*, each spread of *Friends* shows a pair of childlike monsters portraying a single verb, from play to tease to fight, reconcile, and cuddle. This critically acclaimed picture book is both a beautiful art book and a valuable tool for social-emotional learning. Carefully crafted “monster” characters express an emotional depth that is visually stunning and relatable to children and adults alike.

“Van Hout expertly conveys the emotional peaks and valleys of each friendship; the monster’s eyes and expressions speak volumes.”—*Publishers Weekly* ★
Starred Review

Mies van Hout is the author and illustrator of the picture books *Happy*, *Friends*, *Surprise*, *From One to Ten*, and *This Is My Daddy*, among others, which have been hugely popular in Europe and North America. She studied graphic design at the Arts Academy in Groningen, the Netherlands, and has worked as a freelance illustrator and graphic designer since 1989. Her distinctive paintings are cheerful and bold, and her work has been published in more than twenty countries.

Picture Book Ages 3–10 | ISBN: 978-1-77278-291-2 |
Pages: 24

BISAC CODES

JUV039060 - JUVENILE FICTION / Social Themes /
Friendship

JUV052000 - JUVENILE FICTION / Monsters

JUV019000 - JUVENILE FICTION / Humorous Stories

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Comprehension, Visual Arts, Drama, Reading and Writing,
Oral Communication

READING LEVEL

Fountas & Pinnell: LB

Lexile measure: NP

This Guide Contains:

Activity	Main Subject Area	Specific Skill and Topics
Read-Aloud	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehension • Visual Arts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activate prior knowledge • infer, predict, and make connections • elements of artistic design—line, texture, expression
Puppet Retell	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language Retell • Drama 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create puppets for retelling the story
Explore a Different Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual Arts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create 3D characters with clay
Compare and Contrast Mies van Hout Texts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • read and compare two Mies van Hout books
One Word Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oral Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use one word at a time (including the words from the text) to create an oral language story
Our Friendly Monster Story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual Arts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students create their own friendly monster for a class book
Connect the Emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing • Health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make connections between emotions

The Read-Aloud

For this activity, teachers can choose the discussion points most appropriate for their particular group of students.

Learning expectations:

Students will:

- identify reading comprehension strategies (e.g., activate prior knowledge, infer, predict, make connections) and use them before, during, and after reading to understand the text.

You Will Need:

- *Friends by Mies van Hout*
- *Markers*
- Chart paper

How To:

Before Reading

Open the front cover to show the full illustration on the front. Invite students to share what they see in the illustration. Ask them if they think the illustrations are animals or monsters? Invite them to wonder if it matters *what* they are and explore why or why not based on their answers (link to inclusiveness, accepting all). Ask students what emotions they think the characters are feeling. Have students describe the features of the illustration that make them think a certain feeling or emotion is happening for the character (e.g., play—laughing, smile; cry—tears on cheek). Tell students that sometimes a book has an author and an illustrator. Share that this story has an author/illustrator (someone who writes the story and draws the pictures). Ask students if they have read any books before by this same author/illustrator.

During Reading

- Look through the pages of the book slowly as a class. Pause at each spread to discuss the vocabulary word on the pages. Have

students turn and talk with a classmate near them about each word and brainstorm together whether they have ever been in a situation where they felt the emotion on the page.

- On a subsequent reading, look at the artwork on each spread throughout the book. Ask students to identify the colors used by van Hout and ask if they think that the colors match the emotion listed. For example, red is generally identified as someone being angry; blue—sad. Invite students to predict how the illustrations would change if they were on a white background? As students explore the artwork colors on each page, have them also identify the art concepts of line, expression, and texture. Do different emotions have different lines and intensity? Embarrass vs. Play; Cry vs. Ignore, etc. Explore the options on how the author/illustrator uses both chalk and pastel to create each illustration.

After Reading

- Use dance elements to have students show how their bodies would look for each emotion—play (jumping, hopping, skipping); bore (slumped arms and shoulders, head down); tease (running, pointing); fight (mimic the arm motions of what fighting might look like but don't let students actually put hands on one another); cry (slow walking, head back a bit); ignore (walking in opposite directions, head turned to the side); embarrass (walking to the corner of the outdoor space or gym, hands in front of our bodies); hope (fast walk, fingers crossed); make up (slow walking or running, hands outstretched); trust (balancing on leg); laugh (on back, feet in the air, laughing); and cuddle (hands hugging own torso/body).
- Ask students if they think that all friendships feel only happy to each other all of the time? Share with students that it is normal to have different feelings at various times. Not being happy with a friend sometimes doesn't mean that the friendship is over. Part of being a good friend is working through different feelings about situations that happen together.
- Create a list of different emotions we can feel with friends that go beyond those in the book. Use chart paper to record student ideas.
- Go through the book again focusing only on the words this time. Have students clap the syllables in each word.
- Gather students in a circle. Do a fun dramatic activity with them where you throw the word. One person gets a turn to throw a word (hands are empty when they throw) to another student. They will have to say the word and the name of the student prior to throwing so there isn't any misunderstanding. The student who catches the word shows a face mimicing for the word thrown to them.

Activity 1: Puppet Retell

Learning Expectations

Students will:

- create paper puppets to use in support of a retell of the story.

You Will Need:

- *Friends* by Mies van Hout
- white cardstock
- jumbo popsicle sticks
- pastels, markers, pencil crayons

Lesson:

1. Read *Friends* by van Hout.
2. Put students in pairs. Assign the pair of students an emotion from the book. One student in the pair will create a monster, the other partner will create a different monster. Both monsters will depict the emotion on the page that they are assigned.
3. Once their artwork is complete, the students will work together as a class to do a dramatic retell of the entire story.
4. Have students present their work to another class or to their reading buddies (if that applies).

Activity 2: Explore a Different Medium

Learning Expectations

Students will:

- use a new medium (clay) to create a 3D character of one of the illustrations in the book, while considering color choice to reflect feeling based on their emotion choice.

You Will Need:

- *Friends* by Mies van Hout
- different colors of clay.

Lesson:

1. Read *Friends* by van Hout.
2. Project one of the illustrations from the book for all students to see. Point out different 2D and 3D shapes students see.
3. Model for students how to create 3D spheres, rectangular prism, and cylinders with clay. You can also model how to create a half moon shape, or allow the students to have full creative control and create their own shapes.
4. Demonstrate how to make a thin tail with the clay.
5. Have students reflect from the *During Reading* process about whether they think color applies to an emotion or feeling. Have students brainstorm in pairs about what color they want to create their monster.
6. Have students create their monster using different colors and details like van Hout does in the book.
7. Have students present their creation to another student who chose the same emotion (you can assign partners to make sure that each emotion has two figures created).
8. After students have shared their creations with their partners, set up a gallery walk with students. This can look different depending on your space. If students have individual desks, you can put the desks to the outside of the classroom/space and have students put their creation on their desk. After each student has their creation displayed, students go around the classroom looking at the similarities and differences of the other art pieces.

Activity 3: Compare and Contrast Mies van Hout Texts

Learning Expectations

Students will:

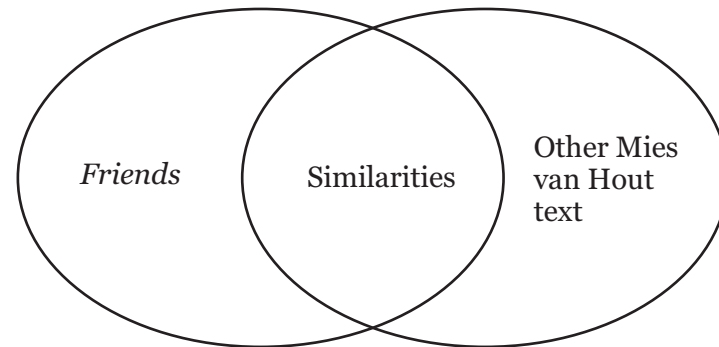
- read two different texts by Mies van Hout and then compare and contrast both texts on a venn diagram chart.

You Will Need:

- *Friends* by Mies van Hout
- Another Mies van Hout text of your choice
- chart paper
- markers

Lesson:

1. Read *Friends* by van Hout and another text of your choosing by the same author/illustrator.
2. On a piece of chart paper, draw a venn diagram.
3. Each book will get its own circle. Similarities between both texts goes in the middle where the two circles overlap. Differences between the texts go under each respective circle.
4. Have students examine both texts and look for similarities and differences like: character creation, art medium used, setting vs. no setting, types of words used, etc.
5. Write their ideas onto the venn diagram on a piece of chart paper.



Activity 4: One Word Story

Learning Expectations

Students will:

- use the nouns and verbs from the story vocabulary to create a classroom “one word” story as an oral language activity.

You Will Need:

- *Friends* by Mies van Hout
- index cards with words from the book on them

Lesson:

1. Read *Friends* by van Hout.
2. After reading the story, invite students to sit in a community circle.
3. Explain that the class is going to work together to tell a story by having each student say one word at a time. Each student will get a turn by saying a word as they go around in a circle and share their word.
4. Choose a student to start (or if there are any volunteers who would like to go first). The first student starts the story (e.g., The, Once, etc.). Then go to the student beside them and follow in a clockwise direction.
5. The rules are that the story can be silly but it has to include all words from the story (play, bore, tease, fight, cry, ignore, embarrass, hope, make up, trust, laugh, cuddle).
6. For students who might struggle with coming up with a word, you can give them one of the vocabulary cards (index cards with words from the story on them).

Activity 5: Our Friendly Monster Story

Learning Expectations

Students will:

- create a classroom story that is based on the framework of the text *Friends* by Mies van Hout.

You Will Need:

- *Friends* by Mies van Hout
- chart paper, white paper, black construction paper, chalk, pastels, crayons, pencils

Lesson:

1. Read *Friends* by van Hout.
2. Brainstorm a list of words that describe being a good friend. Record student ideas on chart paper.
3. Have students choose one of the words listed on the chart.
4. Give students a piece of white paper. Have them do a practice drawing (sketch) of their friendly monster using pencil. Students should show their rough draft to the teacher.
5. Once the drawing has been seen and feedback has been given by the teacher, give students a piece of black construction paper for them to create their good copy using the medium of their choice (pastels, chalk, crayons or any combination of the three).
6. After all students have completed their art pieces, decide how you would like to assemble the book. You can create a title page with the title, “Our Class Friendly Monster Story” or “Friendly Monsters in Grade ____.”
7. Consider laminating the pieces for longevity of the book.
8. Punch holes into the side of the pages. You can assemble with ribbon, binder rings, string or if you have access to a binding machine, you can bind together the book.
9. Consider sharing the story with another class or putting it in the library for others to enjoy.

Activity 6: Connect the Emotions

Learning Expectations

Students will:

- use writing to make a connection between a word used in van Hout's *Friends* text with another emotion for how they feel in a described event.

You Will Need:

- *Friends* by Mies van Hout
- pencils
- When I Feel sheet (included on the next page)
- coloring pencils or markers

Lesson:

1. Read *Friends* by van Hout.
2. Choose a few of the words from the text to use for sentences for your students. For example, choose *laugh* and have students put *laugh* in the first blank spot on the *When I Feel* sheet. It will read: When I laugh, I feel _____ because... Students can use the word bank to describe what they feel in a certain situation they describe.
3. Once the sentence is completed, the student can draw details to show the situation and feelings they described in their sentence.
4. After students have completed their picture, have students label parts of their drawing to show where they represented the feelings in their chosen situation.
5. For oral language practice, have students read their sentences and show their pictures to either small groups or the whole class, depending on the needs of your students.

When I Feel...

When I _____, I feel _____ because _____

Word Bank:

sad happy silly loved excited mad angry worried safe glad

Bibliography

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<https://www.dcp.edu.gov.on.ca/en/curriculum/elementary-health-and-physical-education/grades/grade-1/strands>

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