

Seesaw Po

Author: Kyle Mewburn

Illustrator: Katz Cowley

Synopsis

Po and his friends love playing in the playground and are keen to give everything a go. They race to the swing, which they think is empty, only to discover a tiny ant sitting on the seat. Po's friend tries to shoo the ant away so that she can play on the swing, but Po thinks that even though the ant is small, it was there first and deserves a turn. Po pushes the ant on the swing, and when the ant is finished, the others get to play on it. Uta, Madi and Raff all have a turn on the swing, and soon it is Po's turn. But Po is a hippopotamus so he weighs a lot, and no matter how much they try, his three friends are unable to play with him on the playground equipment. Tired, Po's friends wander off home leaving Po alone. Then something extraordinary happens to Po – his kindness towards the ant is repaid in a most unexpected way.

Text Type

Seesaw Po is a delightful illustrated story about friendship. Featuring animals as the main characters, the story has broad appeal for children and young people. The story is simple but has a clear message. Po's kindness towards the ant is repaid at the end of the story when the ants join forces in order to let Po play on the seesaw. As well as portraying the idea that 'what goes around comes around', *Seesaw Po* also illustrates the importance of teamwork.

Seesaw Po features beautiful watercolour illustrations that provide interest and humour.

Sharing the Story

Seesaw Po can be read aloud by the teacher or read individually by students.

Introducing the Story

Have students study the cover of the book and read the blurb.

- Which character do you think Po is?
- What do the illustrations suggest about the setting of the story?
- What is sitting on the swing when Po and his friends arrive at the playground?
- Look at the illustration of Po sitting on the seesaw. What possible problems do you think he might encounter?
- How is Po kind to the ant? How do you think this kindness might be repaid?

Comprehension and Discussion

- What do you like doing in your spare time? Do you go to the playground very often? What is your favourite thing to play on in the playground?
- What are the names of Po's friends? What kind of animals are they? Why do they love the playground so much?
- How do you know that Po and his friends like the swing the most?
- What happens when the Po and his friends reach the swing?
- What does Uta say to the ant? Why do you think she says this?
- Who pushes the ant on the swing? What does this suggest about his character?
- What does the illustration of the ant on the grass crawling away from the shadows suggest about the ant's size?
- What is Po really good at?
- What happens when Po sits on the swing? Why do you think the word 'p-u-s-h-e-d' has been written like this?
- Describe the expression on Po's face when he realises that his friends can't push him on the swing.
- What difficulty does Po face on the slide? What happens when he jumps on the roundabout?
- How do Po's friends try and help him on the seesaw?
- How do you think Po feels when he realises that he can't play on any of the toys in the playground?
- Why do Po's friends go home? Are they good friends? Why/why not?
- What happens when Po is sitting on the seesaw all alone?
- Why do you think the ants decide to help Po?
- One ant can't lift Po on the seesaw but millions can. What message can you take from this?
- Do you think this would have happened if Po hadn't helped the ant on the swing first? Why/why not?
- In what ways are Po and the ant similar?

Activities

- **Writing** – Write a letter to the author telling him why you like his story.

- **Static Image** – Design a poster that illustrates an important theme raised in the story. You could choose the idea that you get back what you put out or that if you can't succeed working alone then work as a team.
- **Character** – Imagine that you are Po. Write about your experience with the ants in the park and then present it to the class in role.
- **Plot** – Choose 5 important events that occur in the story and draw a storyboard depicting them. Under each illustration write a brief summary about what is happening.
- **Static Image** – Design an alternative front cover for Seesaw Po. The front cover needs the book's title, and the name of the author(s) and illustrator. Include an exciting illustration about the book. Write the name of the book long ways on the spine. The back cover needs a summary of the story to encourage the reader.
- **Advice for a character** – Po has a problem which is eventually solved by the ants. Write a letter to Po suggesting some other possible solutions for his problem.
- **Poster** – Design a poster advertising the book Seesaw Po. Include a brief summary about the book and illustrations that show the settings and events in the story.
- **Character** – Explain how you are similar or different to Po.

Notes written by Vicki Ladd