

Teacher's Guide: Learning with the “I Hope They Are Friendly” Series (Grades 2-3)

This guide will help you explore the different ways we can learn from the "Friendly Creatures" books by Kevin Denley. These books, with their imaginative stories and pictures, can help us practice important skills like **observing carefully, counting, understanding where things are, and using our imaginations.**

Central Idea: The “I Hope They Are Friendly” series is not just fun to read, but it also helps us develop important learning skills by showing us how the narrator interacts with the fantastical creatures in their home.

Exploring Educational Elements and Activities:

Use the following elements and activities to engage students with the educational aspects of the "Friendly Creatures" books:

- **Observation and Detail:**

- **What the Source Says:** The books encourage **observation** by prompting readers to notice the creatures in various locations. The descriptions of their whereabouts, such as "beneath the chair," "near the stairs," and "on top of the bookcase," promote a focus on detail and spatial relationships. The illustrations also reinforce this by showing the creatures in different places.
- **Classroom Activities:**
 - **Creature Spotting:** After reading parts of "I Hope That They Are Friendly" or "I Hope They Are Friendly Too", ask students to recall all the different places the creatures were found. Create a class list on the board.
 - **"I Spy" with Illustrations:** Use the illustrations in the books. Play an "I Spy" game, focusing on the creatures' locations and their interactions with household objects. For example, "I spy a creature on top of something tall and wooden (bookcase)".
 - **Detailed Drawing:** Ask students to draw one of the scenes from the book, paying close attention to where the creatures are located and what they are doing. Encourage them to include details from the text, like "Two climbing up the trash can, One trying on my hat".

- **Counting and Quantity:**

- **What the Source Says:** The texts facilitate the development of **counting skills** through explicit mentions of numbers. The speaker in "I Hope That They Are Friendly Too" mentions counting ("As I have already counted twenty-four") and the presence of specific numbers of creatures in different locations (e.g., "Thirty on my bed," "Nine in the kitchen"). The narrator in "I Hope That They Are Friendly" also refers to "thirty" creatures that have now gone.
- **Classroom Activities:**
 - **Creature Count:** As you read the books, pause when numbers are mentioned. Ask students to count the creatures described in that location.
 - **"How Many?" Game:** Show a picture from the book and ask students to count how many creatures they can find in a specific area of the illustration.
 - **Number Stories:** Create simple math problems based on the number of creatures in different locations (e.g., "If there are 9 creatures in the kitchen and 3 more come in, how many are there in total?").
 - **Visual Counting:** Use the illustrations, including the white silhouettes, as opportunities for counting exercises.

- **Spatial Awareness:**

- **What the Source Says:** The descriptions of the creatures' locations using **prepositions** (e.g., "beneath," "near," "on top of," "beside," "underneath," "inside") enhance **spatial awareness**. The visual element of the images also helps to illustrate the positioning of the creatures in relation to objects.
- **Classroom Activities:**
 - **Preposition Practice:** Focus on the prepositions used in the books to describe where the creatures are. Have students act out these prepositions in the classroom (e.g., "Stand beneath the table," "Walk near the door").
 - **"Where is the Creature?" Game:** Describe a creature's location using prepositions, and have students point to where they think it is in the illustration or draw it in that position.
 - **Creating Location Sentences:** Ask students to create their own sentences describing the location of objects or themselves using prepositions inspired by the book (e.g., "My pencil is beside my notebook").
- **Concept of Change and Transformation:**
 - **What the Source Says:** The books introduce the concept of change by illustrating how the creatures have left the page. The line **"The white spaces that are empty / Are where they used to be"** highlights this transformation and introduces the idea of a before and after state. The image with the white outlines further emphasizes this concept. The narrator in "I Hope That They Are Friendly" notes, "In this book, Where there were thirty, Now they all have gone". Similarly, in "I Hope They Are Friendly Too," it is mentioned, "In this book are just a tiny few, Where once there were one hundred and two!".
 - **Classroom Activities:**
 - **"Before and After" Discussion:** Discuss with students what the pages looked like before the creatures came to life (full of drawings) and what they look like now (with white spaces).
 - **Drawing Transformation:** Have students draw a picture of a creature and then draw the "white space" it might leave behind if it came to life.
 - **Sequencing Activity:** Discuss the sequence of events in the story – the drawing, the creature coming to life, and the empty space.
- **Imagination and Creativity:**
 - **What the Source Says:** The series fosters **imagination and creativity** by presenting a whimsical and engaging scenario where drawings come to life. The texts and images together present a creative scenario where drawings are not static, but can move, interact, and inhabit the real world.
 - **Classroom Activities:**
 - **"If My Drawing Came Alive" Writing/Drawing:** Ask students to imagine what would happen if one of their drawings came to life. Have them write a short story or draw a picture about it.
 - **Inventing Friendly Creatures:** Encourage students to design their own "friendly creatures" and describe what they would do if these creatures appeared in their homes.
 - **Role-Playing:** Have students role-play interactions between the narrator and one of the friendly creatures.
- **Emotional Awareness:**
 - **What the Source Says:** The narrators' expressions of hope and worry touch upon **emotional awareness**. The repeated line **"I hope that they are friendly"** introduces the idea of emotional

awareness, as well as expressing concern and apprehension. Phrases like "An invasion of my privacy! Oh no, this is very wrong" and the feeling of their home being a "crazy zoo!" also indicate growing anxiety.

- **Classroom Activities:**

- **"How Does the Narrator Feel?" Discussion:** Talk about how the narrator might be feeling at different points in the story. Ask students to identify words or phrases that show the narrator's emotions (e.g., hope, fear, surprise).
- **"Our Feelings About New Things":** Connect the narrator's feelings about the unknown creatures to their own experiences when encountering something new or different. Discuss how it's okay to have different feelings and how we can manage them.

By engaging with the "Friendly Creatures" books through these activities, second and third graders can develop important skills in observation, counting, spatial reasoning, understanding change, and using their imagination, while also exploring emotional responses to the unexpected. Remember to emphasize the fun and engaging nature of the books while highlighting these valuable learning opportunities.