

# Reading for Meaning

**Welcome to the Reading for  
Meaning programme.**

**We hope that you will have fun  
reading stories and doing activities  
with learners.**

**Remember, nurturing and  
supporting a child is important  
for their physical, emotional and  
academic development.**



**Part of the Zero Dropout campaign working towards  
halving the rate of school dropout by 2030.**

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for Meaning

# The four friends

STORY GUIDE

STORY

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## **EACH READER NEEDS...**

The story

Pens or pencils

Paper

# The Story



## INTRODUCE THE STORY

Poor Ndlebende has had enough of being treated badly by his master so he decides to run away from home. As he starts walking, he comes across three other characters who are running away from their cruel masters. As they are all walking it starts getting dark, things become scary. The four friends need to make a plan to find a home before they get into trouble...



## READ THE STORY...

Read the story aloud, with expression. Change your voice when different characters speak. Pause briefly for commas, full stops etc. and between paragraphs.

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# The four friends

Ndlebende was a very old donkey. For many years he had worked hard for his master. Now he was worn-out and too old to work. But Ndlebende did not have a kind master. His master didn't want to keep the old donkey anymore.

"I will have to kill that lazy old donkey," said his master. "I cannot feed a donkey that does not work."

Poor Ndlebende heard what the master said. He knew he would die if he stayed with his master. So Ndlebende decided to run away. He wanted to go and join the wild animals that lived in the fields.

Ndlebende started to walk before the sun rose. He walked all morning. On his way, he met a dog. The dog greeted him and wagged his tail, just like dogs do when they greet a friend.

"Woof-woof! Hello, I've run away from my master," said the dog. "I served him faithfully for years, but one day he said to me, 'I don't

need you anymore. You're too old to chase burglars now. Get out of my house and go and sleep outside.' So I'm running away. I don't trust humans anymore."

"Well, I'm in the same boat," said Ndlebende. "Let's walk together."

So the dog and Ndlebende walked along together. Soon they became friends.

As they were walking along, they met a friendly cat.

"Me-ow! Hello, I've run away from my master," said the cat. "My master did not want me anymore. He said I was too old to catch mice. I don't trust humans anymore."

"Well, we are in the same boat. Do you want to join us?" said Ndlebende and the dog. So the cat joined the dog and Ndlebende on their journey. Soon the three became friends.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!" said a friendly voice. But

there was no one standing on the road! Was this a ghost?

“Cock-a-doodle-doo! Hello!” they heard again. “Look up!”

And there, sitting in a tall tree above the three friends, was a rooster.

“Why are you so high up in the tree?” asked Ndlebende.

“My master wanted to eat me for supper,” said the rooster. “I flew away as fast as I could. I’m getting away. I want nothing to do with humans. I don’t trust them anymore.”

“Well, we are in the same boat! Do you want to join us?” said the three friends. “These humans are cruel; we should have nothing to do with them. We can look after each other.”

So then they were four friends.

The four friends travelled together to look for

a new home. Before long, they found an empty hut.

“Look! Let’s live here,” said the dog. They all went inside. No one was inside, but there was something lying all over the floor.

“What’s this?” asked the cat. The friends looked and saw many animal bones lying on the floor.

“Oh no!” said the rooster. “If we stay here, the man who lives in this hut will eat us too!”

The rooster had hardly finished his sentence when, oh no!, the friends heard heavy footsteps.

“The human is coming!” whispered Ndlebende.

“We can’t go outside; he will see us!” cried the dog.

“We will be eaten!” said the rooster.

“Wait!” said Ndlebende, “I have a good idea!” He was a very clever donkey.

“Dog, stand on my back,” said Ndlebende. So the dog jumped up and stood on the donkey’s back.

“Cat, stand on Dog’s back!” said Ndlebende. So the cat jumped up and stood on the dog’s back.

“Rooster, climb onto Cat’s back!” said Ndlebende. So the rooster flew up and onto the cat’s back.

They looked like a tower, one on top of the other. The rooster was the lightest. He stood on top of the cat. Then came the cat on top of the dog. Then came the dog on top of Ndlebende the donkey.

Then Ndlebende said: “When he comes in, each of you shout as loudly as you can! And do not stop until we chase him away!”

The four friends stood very quietly and waited, silent, inside the dark hut.

Suddenly a foot kicked the door open. The man who lived in the hut came in.

“Now!” shouted Ndlebende.

“Hee-Haw! Hee-haw! Woof woof! Meow! Meow!  
Cock-a doodle doo!”

The four friends shouted at the tops of their voices.

And what did the man see?

A tall dark shape that looked like a monster, making a terrible noise. Three of them waved their tails! One flapped his wings! And they all made as much noise as they could.

The man yelled “Eeee!” and ran out of the hut and down the road as fast as he could, shouting at the top of his voice: “Get away from me! Get away from me! Help! Big monster! Help!” He ran and ran and he never came back again!

When the four friends saw him running away, their scary shouting turned into laughter: “Ha ha ha ha”.

After that, do you know what the four friends did? They made that hut into their own safe home. And they lived there happily for many more years. And every now and again they would tell the story of what happened that night, and they would laugh and laugh.

And that is the end of the story.



## WORD FOCUS

Ask the Readers to choose words that they find difficult and write them on a sheet of paper.

Ask them to use a dictionary or ask someone else at home what those words mean in their home language. Help them out if necessary.



## SECOND READING...

Once you've worked out the meaning of the words, read the story again out loud.

# Activities

## SCRAMBLED SENTENCES

1

After reading the story, ask the Readers to write down the following words, each on a separate piece of paper:

All	all	lived	good
children	master	cruel	became
want	rooster	A	The
to	The	friends	four
be	wanted	home	tired
respected	the	four	old
animals	eat	away	donkey
to	to	ran	The
want	man	animals	was
respected	hut	friends	very

**2** From these words, ask the Readers to make four sentences that are in the story (without going back to the story).

**3** Tell them to put the words and sentences in the right order.

**4** Now ask them to go back to the story and see if their sentences match with the ones in the story.

**5** Once they have finished unscrambling the words, they can try and make up their own scrambled sentences.

# Ending

Praise the Readers for their participation.

Ask if they enjoyed the story, and what they liked best. Tell them you enjoyed it too.

Say goodbye, and say how much you look forward to seeing them next time.

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DROP/OUT**

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