Command & Cuddles

TEACHER CORNER • FREE CLASSROOM RESOURCE

Book 1 Read-Aloud Discussion Guide

for **Command & Cuddles: The Adventures of Sarge & Arwen** by R. L. Sarwen

Ages 7-10 · Grades 2-4



The story: When the backyard gate swings open, best friends Sarge and Arwen set off on a neighborhood adventure with one rule: stay together. Along the way they race new friends, chase a runaway ball, cross a wiggly bridge, and help each other out of a tight spot. They make it home just in time, two very good dogs.

At a glance

Time: About 20-25 minutes

Materials: The book, pencils, this guide

Goal: I can describe a character's choices and explain how they help others.

Key words: brave, plan, explore, teamwork, patient, include

Today's Choice: Choose kindness. Be a good friend.

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☆ **Today's Choice:** Choose kindness. Be a good friend.

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TEACHER NOTES

Before & During Reading

Read the book aloud in about 10 minutes. Stop 3 or 4 times to talk. Keep each stop short: one or two answers, then keep reading.

Before reading: meet the pups



Sarge

The brave little leader

Big, silly, and always hungry. **Leader strength:** being brave and cheering on the team. **Still learning:** slowing down to make a plan.



Arwen

The thoughtful little heart

Small, smart, and notices everything. **Leader strength:** noticing how friends feel and making a plan. **Still learning:** being brave enough to share ideas out loud.

- **Predict from the cover.** "What kind of adventure might these two friends have? What makes you think so?"
- **Quick-write (2 min).** "What makes a good friend? What makes a good leader?" Keep the answers to compare later.
- **Key words. brave** (doing something even when it feels hard) · **plan** (deciding steps before you start) · **explore** (go and discover new places) · **teamwork** (working together toward one goal) · **patient** (waiting calmly) · **include** (making sure everyone is part of it)

During reading: 4 stopping points

1. **Pause when Arwen sets a rule before the adventure starts.** "Why might a leader set a rule before an adventure? Would you add a rule?"
2. **Pause at a moment when Sarge heads the wrong way in the race.** "What choice did Sarge make? What else could he have chosen? How does Arwen respond?"
3. **Pause when the ball gets stuck and the friends work it out.** "What clues show Arwen is thoughtful? How does each friend's strength help the team?"
4. **Pause when Sarge gets stuck in the play tunnel.** "How do his friends help without teasing? What does that tell you about trust?"

Read-aloud tips

- Ask students to listen for one choice each pup makes. Jot them on the board as you read.
- Invite students to back up answers with clues: "What in the words or pictures tells you that?"
- Each page has a short read-aloud line, so the whole story takes about 10 minutes.



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TEACHER NOTES

After Reading & Take It Home

Talk it over

- **Compare the pups.** Fill in the T-chart (p. 4) as a class or in pairs: strengths and still learning, with an example from the story for each.
- **Which pup are you most like?** Partners share and give one reason. Remind them: everyone has strengths, and everyone is still learning. You are good enough just as you are.
- **Choice Detective** (p. 5). Students pick story moments, name the choice, and think of a different choice and what might have happened.
- **Revisit the quick-write.** "Did the story change what you think makes a good friend or leader?"

Follow-up page

Write About a Choice (p. 6). Students choose A) write about a time they chose kindness, or B) rewrite one scene where a character makes a different choice.

Make it fit your class

- **Extra support:** offer sentence starters ("Sarge is ___ because ___") and let students draw before writing.
- **Stretch:** ask students to find two choices that led to one result, or to explain how a choice showed trust or respect.

Take it home

Families can keep the fun going with the free **Fun Zone word searches for ages 7-10** (look for "Choices Matter") at **commandandcuddles.com/fun-zone**. No sign-up needed.

End the lesson by saying it together: **"Everything is a choice we choose to make."**



Keep it going this week

- Make a class chart titled **"Choices That Helped."** Students add sticky notes with kind choices they notice this week (no names needed).
- **Reading skills this supports:** describing characters and their choices, and taking part in respectful group conversations. See the Classroom Alignment Sheet.

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Sarge & Arwen: Strengths T-Chart

Name _____ Ages 7-10 · Grades 2-4

Fill in the chart. Give an example from the story for each box.



Sarge

Strengths: what is this pup good at?

Still learning: what is this pup working on?



Arwen

Strengths: what is this pup good at?

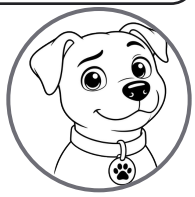
Still learning: what is this pup working on?

Which pup are you most like? Why?

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Choice Detective



Name _____ Ages 7-10 · Grades 2-4

Pick three moments from the story. Name the choice, think of another choice, and decide what might have happened.

Story moment	The choice they made	Another choice they could make	What might happen then?

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Write About a Choice



Name _____ Ages 7-10 · Grades 2-4

Choose A or B. Check the box. Then write 4 or more sentences.

☐ **A.** Write about a time you chose kindness. What happened? How did it help?

☐ **B.** Rewrite one scene from the story where a character makes a different choice.

Check your work: ☐ I named the choice. ☐ I told how it helped or what changed.

☐ I used a key word: brave, plan, explore, teamwork, patient, or include.

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