

# A Tree Falls Down Helpful or Harmful?



This book explores the ways in which animals depend on each other to survive. The play shows animals working together to solve a problem, and the non-fiction text describes various relationships between different creatures and how they are helpful or harmful.

## Big Ideas

Using these two titles, your students can explore and make links between the following big ideas:

- All environments support a variety of life forms.
- Animals and plants depend on each other for food.
- Organisms use each other in unusual ways to survive.

## Fiction

### A Tree Falls Down

by John Parker

#### Summary

In this play, five animals who live in the forest are worrying about the effects of a fallen tree that is blocking their stream. They all work together to help solve the problem.

#### Features of the Text

- Plot, characters, setting
- Sequence of events
- Play script conventions, such as italics for stage directions
- Problem solving

#### Purpose

*A Tree Falls Down* can be used for the following purposes:

- introducing the ideas and vocabulary in the associated non-fiction title;
- exploring the conventions and language of drama;
- practising reading aloud with pace and expression;
- exploring character development.

#### Guided Reading Summary

##### Introducing the text

Discuss the students' experiences of plays and what they know about reading and following a script. Look at the first two pages of the text and discuss the layout, including the list of characters, the use of different kinds of text, and the description of each scene.

##### Reading and discussing the text

Look at the illustration on page 3 and discuss what is happening. Ask the students to read to the end of page 4.

- *Where is the play set?*
- *Why does the mouse look so worried on pages 3 and 5?*
- *What else in the text helps you to understand how each character is feeling?*

The students can now read to the end of page 9.

- *What problem do the characters share?*

Discuss which characters are helping each other and which characters are getting no help.

- *What might happen if the animals don't solve their problem?*

Ask the students to read the rest of the play.

- *How did the animals solve their different problems?*

#### Following Up

The students can:

- use the blackline master on page 19 to show the positive and negative aspects of the different animals' relationships
- perform the play to the class.