



# Read-Aloud A New Class Pet

2



Mr. Roy made an announcement. “Today we’re going to decide on a new pet.”

Immediately, the class became excited. Students jumped from their seats, shouting ideas: *Turtle! Rooster! Three-toed sloth!* Everyone had something they wanted to say . . . everyone, except for Benita.

3



Benita was always very quiet. She was filled with thoughts and ideas. But whenever she tried to share them, the words would get stuck between her throat and her mouth.

So, instead of speaking up, she listened.

**Ask:** *What do you notice? What do you wonder?*

4



Chelsea said the best pet was a guinea pig. “They’re fluffy and cute!” But Theo thought a goldfish would be a better pet. “Fish are colorful and graceful when they swim.”

The class started talking. Some students agreed with Chelsea. Others sided with Theo. Soon one side of the room was shouting *Guinea pig! Guinea pig!* The other side chanted *Goldfish! Goldfish!*

5



The fairest way to choose was by voting. Everyone wrote their choice on a slip of paper. Then Mr. Roy mixed them up in a box.

One by one, a volunteer read the slips, as Mr. Roy counted the votes. There were 7 votes for guinea pig, and 7 for goldfish.

Only one slip remained. A puzzled look crossed the volunteer's face. "Millipede," she read.

**Ask:** What do you notice? What do you wonder?

6



There was a gasp. "Is that a joke?" someone cried. "Who put that down?"

Benita shrank into her seat. She inched her hand into the air. "I did," she whispered. "I can change it if you want..."

But Mr. Roy smiled. "Maybe Benita would like to explain why she chose such an interesting animal."

7



"I just like them I guess. I think they're cute..."

"Cute?" Chelsea exclaimed. "They're creepy. Aren't they poisonous?"

They weren't, Benita knew. They had no fangs or stingers. She'd even held one once at the petting zoo. She loved the way its tiny legs rippled on her arm.

"They're not poisonous and they don't bite," she said in a quiet voice. "If you're careful, you can even hold them."

8



Theo raised his hand. “Aren’t they kind of boring? With fish, there are so many colors and sizes to choose from.”

The class murmured in agreement. But Benita put up her hand again.

“That’s true with millipedes too. Some are really colorful—yellow, red, pink or even purple. And some can even grow to over thirteen inches long!”

9



The more Benita spoke, the braver she felt. She explained how millipedes are really easy to care for, and that they live in almost every part of the world, and that they aren’t insects, but are closely related.

Not everyone was convinced, but some kids were considering what she said.

10



Soon the class voted again. Once again, the students wrote down their choices and Mr. Roy collected them into a box. And once again, a volunteer read them out loud as Mr. Roy tallied the votes.

When Mr. Roy set down his marker, the room was silent.

Benita looked up.

Goldfish had three votes.

Guinea pig had five votes.

But millipede had eight votes. Three more votes.

 **Ask:** *What do you notice? What do you wonder?*

11



The following week, Mr. Roy brought a large tank to the classroom. Inside was a beautiful millipede with a long yellow body, and bright red legs.

The class ooh-ed and aah-ed. “That’s so cool,” Theo said. “Can I hold it first?” Chelsea asked. Benita watched her classmates gather around. She was glad she had spoken up.