THE RAINFOREST
WHAT IS SOMETHING THAT YOU ENJOY DOING ALONE?

What is something that is harder or less fun to do alone? When you play or work together with other people, what are some things you do to make sure that you are working as a team?

When you work together as a team, it is important that everyone participates, and respects and cooperates with one another.

In this story, a group of friends have to figure out how to work as a team to make a school project.

As you listen to the story, listen for times the characters are not cooperating, and what they have to do differently in order to work as a team.
Mia and Jeremy peered over Kenny's shoulders as he drew a slip of paper from the teacher's jar and quickly unfolded it. All week long, their class had been learning about the different biomes of the earth, and now they were going to work in teams to build their own model biomes.

“We got the tropical rainforest,” Kenny announced happily.
“My dad is a biology teacher,” Jeremy told his friends, as they walked back to their desks. “So he has a lot of books about plants and animals. I’ll ask him if we can borrow some.”

The kids decided to meet at the tree house the next afternoon to get started.
When Kenny arrived at the tree house, Mia was already waiting with a backpack that was bursting at the seams.

“This is my bug collection,” Mia explained. “I thought we might want to put some insects in our rainforest.”

“Are they real?” Kenny asked, eyeing her backpack with interest.

Mia nodded and pulled out a clear plastic block with a bright green beetle in the center. “Some of them are real, like this one that I got at the science museum,” she explained. “But I also have a lot of rubber bugs and plastic bugs. I’ve been collecting them for a long time.”
“Hey—can you help me carry this stuff up?” called a voice from below.

Mia and Kenny looked out the window and saw Jeremy with a wagon full of books, boxes, and paper.

“Wow, you sure brought a lot of stuff,” said Kenny, as they made several trips up and down the ladder with Jeremy’s things.

“Well, my dad and I went through his books last night, and then I drew a picture of what our rainforest should look like,” said Jeremy. “I think I brought everything we will need.”
“Here’s what to do,” said Jeremy, spreading his drawing on the table. “First, we’ll have to cut a bunch of plants and animals from construction paper—I think we should make a lot of trees because it’s a rainforest. Then we’ll glue them all in one of the boxes I brought, and then make a river like I have in my drawing. Do you want to look at some of my books first to see what you should make?”

Kenny and Mia looked at each other and did not know what to say.
“Maybe we could make some of the rainforest out of the clay or pipe cleaners that I brought,” suggested Kenny.

Jeremy shook his head. “I don’t think all that stuff will fit into any of my boxes.”

“I brought a big flat box,” said Kenny. “Maybe we can use that instead?”


Kenny and Mia looked at each other and did not know what to do.
Finally, Mia spoke up. “Jeremy, you have some really good ideas for our rainforest, but so do we.”

“Yeah,” added Kenny. “Did you know that Mia brought her bug collection? She’s got a lot of really cool insects that we could use.”

Jeremy glanced at his drawing and then at his friends. “Oh,” he said quietly. “I guess I got a little excited and carried away. I’m sorry I didn’t ask about your ideas.”

Kenny and Mia looked at each other, and then smiled at Jeremy.
“It’s okay,” said Kenny. “Let’s just start over and work like a team this time.”

So the kids looked through Jeremy’s books and found pictures of spider monkeys, toucans, tree sloths, and many other animals.

“I had no idea that so many creatures lived in the rainforest,” said Kenny. “Great idea to bring these books, Jeremy.”
Mia dumped her backpack onto the table. “Did you know that there are over 30 million different kinds of insects in the Amazon Rainforest?” She held up a shiny black plastic beetle with a big horn on top of its head. “This is a rhino beetle—there are tons of them in the rainforest.”

“Ew!” said Jeremy. “You sure know a lot about bugs, so maybe you should be in charge of those.”

Mia grinned. “Okay, but let’s look through my collection together and pick out some good ones.”
The kids worked together on their rainforest all week long. The tall trees they made weren't going to fit into any of Jeremy's boxes, so they took the top off Kenny's big, flat box and used that instead.

“Wow,” said Jeremy. “I never thought about making it in an open box. Now you’ll be able to see it from any side. Good thinking, Kenny!”
Mia had an idea to make the trees out of Kenny’s clay. Her friends didn’t think it would work, but they agreed to give it a try. It didn’t work. The clay cracked when it dried, so all the tall trees broke in half.

“Oh well,” said Kenny with a smile. “At least now we know not to make anything too big with the clay.”
Kenny and Jeremy decided to use the clay to make some iguanas and howler monkeys, instead. After a few minutes, Kenny squished his lump of clay, sighing, “I just can’t do this.”

“Why don’t you try to make one out of something else?” Jeremy encouraged him. “It doesn’t have to be perfect—just try your best.”

Kenny tried again and figured out that pipe cleaners actually made nice monkeys with very curly tails. By the time he was finished, there were fuzzy monkeys hanging from every tree in the rainforest.
After several days, the kids were finally finished with their tropical rainforest. It had tall trees, colorful plants, lots of different animals, and creepy, crawly bugs.

“This is awesome,” said Jeremy. “We did it!”
During their class presentation the next day, the kids took turns talking about the different animals, plants, and insects in their rainforest. Their classmates thought it was really neat, and had a lot of questions. At the end, their teacher asked what it was like to work on the project together, instead of alone.

“Well,” said Mia. “We had a lot more good ideas to use.”

“We also helped each other do our best,” said Kenny.

Then, the kids gave each other a high five, as Jeremy added, “And being a team was a lot more fun.”