

Reader Guide:

Surf Soup Cokie the Coconut & the Coconut Wireless

A Funny Kids' Story About Gossip, Rumors, and Truth

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Donna Kay Lau Studios-Art is On! In ProDUCKtions Ink

Author: Donna Kay Lau

Website: Surfsoup.tv



Cokie the Coconut & the Coconut Wireless

Teacher Reader Guide (Teachers Pay Teachers Edition)

Theme Focus: Gossip, rumors, truth, communication, empathy, and social-emotional learning (SEL)

Recommended Ages: PreK–Grade 3 (adaptable for older students)

Time Needed:

Read-aloud: 10–15 minutes

Discussion & activities: 20–45 minutes



Story Summary (For Teachers)

Cokie the Coconut & the Coconut Wireless is a playful, beachy story that explores how gossip spreads, how feelings get tangled, and how truth and kindness can calm the waves. When Cokie hears something through the Coconut Wireless, the message travels fast—but not accurately. As rumors swirl across the island, characters learn the importance of slowing down, checking facts, and speaking with care.

This story helps young learners understand how words travel, how rumors can hurt, and how honesty, empathy, and clear communication help communities stay connected and kind.



Learning Objectives

Students will:

Understand what gossip and rumors are

Learn how misinformation spreads
Practice empathy and perspective-taking
Identify healthy communication choices
Build SEL skills related to responsible decision-making and relationship skills

SEL Connections (CASEL-Aligned)

Self-Awareness: Recognizing feelings caused by rumors
Social Awareness: Understanding how words affect others
Relationship Skills: Communicating clearly and kindly
Responsible Decision-Making: Choosing when to speak and when to pause

Discussion Questions

Before Reading

Have you ever heard a story that changed as it was passed along?

What do you think gossip means?

How do words travel between people?

During Reading

How does Cokie feel when the Coconut Wireless starts buzzing?

Do the messages stay the same as they travel?

How do the other characters react to what they hear?

After Reading

What happened because the rumor spread?

How could the characters have handled the situation differently?

Why is it important to check if something is true?

What would you do if you heard a rumor at school?

Classroom Activities

1. The Coconut Wireless Game

Objective: Demonstrate how messages change.

Whisper a simple sentence from student to student.

Compare the final message to the original.

Discuss what changed and why.

2. Truth or Rumor Sort

Materials: Sentence cards

Read statements aloud.

Students decide: Truth, Rumor, or Not Sure.

Discuss how to check for truth.

3. Words Have Power Art Page

Students draw a coconut.

Inside: write kind, truthful words.

Outside: write words that can hurt.

Discuss how to choose what we say.

4. Pause Before You Pass It On

Teach a simple mantra:

“Is it true? Is it kind? Is it helpful?”

Practice with real-life scenarios.



Role-Play Scenarios

Have students act out short scenes:

Hearing a rumor on the playground

Choosing whether to repeat it

Asking an adult for help

Clearing up a misunderstanding kindly



Cross-Curricular Connections

Language Arts: Retelling the story, sequencing events

Health / SEL: Communication and emotions

Art: Create island characters or coconut emotions

Writing: Draw-and-write reflections or comic strips



Assessment Ideas

Student reflection drawing or sentence

Exit ticket: “One thing I learned about gossip”

Teacher observation during discussions and role-play



Family & Caregiver Extension

Send home a note encouraging families to:

Talk about how rumors spread

Practice asking, “Is this true?”

Read the story together and discuss feelings



Teacher Tip

Keep the tone curious—not judgmental. Many students repeat gossip without realizing the impact. This story opens the door for gentle, meaningful conversations about communication, kindness, and responsibility.



Big Idea: Words travel fast—but kindness, truth, and empathy help them land safely.

Created for classroom, homeschool, counseling, and SEL use



More Classroom Activities You Can Use

1. “Should I Share It?” Sorting Activity

Students read short scenarios and decide whether the information should be shared, kept private, or checked for truth first. Great for reinforcing judgment around gossip.

2. Gossip Detectives Poster Activity

Students analyze gossip scenarios in groups and create a classroom poster showing how to stop rumors and promote respectful communication. Ideal for upper elementary.

3. Rumor Handling Discussion & Role Play

Guide students through how rumors make people feel and practice strategies to respond positively when hearing a rumor — e.g., asking questions, checking facts, taking a deep breath before speaking.

4. “Telephone” (Gossip Game)

A classic — whisper a message around the circle and compare the final version to the original. This reveals how messages can change as they get passed on, making a perfect metaphor for gossip.



Tips for Your Parent Note

Explain the purpose of the lesson: “We’re exploring how words travel and how kindness and verification of facts makes our class community safer and more positive.”

Include conversation starters families can use at home:

“What might happen if someone hears a rumor and repeats it?”

“How can we check if something we hear is true?”

Invite parents to practice your classroom mantra (e.g., “Is it true? Is it kind? Is it helpful?”) at home too.



Quick Parent Note Template (Editable Text You Can Use)

Dear Families,

This week in class we read Cokie the Coconut & the Coconut Wireless and talked about how information travels – and sometimes changes – as it’s passed from person to person. We explored how rumors and gossip can hurt feelings and how to make thoughtful communication choices.

What Your Child Is Learning

How to recognize rumors and think before repeating information

Strategies for asking questions and checking facts

Ways to communicate with kindness and respect

At Home

You might ask your child: “What would you do if you heard something about a friend that didn’t seem true?” Discuss together the idea of stopping the spread of unverified information and being an upstander who promotes truth and empathy.

Thank you for your partnership in building strong communication skills and a positive community! 🧡

— Your Teacher