Aesop's Fables
Literature Discussion Unit
Animals and Their Stories

By Jennifer Kimbrell
Font by Kevin and Amanda
Overview of the Unit - This unit is for teachers to use with students in the second grade (or third) classroom to lead students through an inquiry-based study of fables. The teacher acts as the facilitator, by providing one-to-one conferencing with students, pulling small groups when needed, and leading literature discussion groups. Students will learn that a fable is a story passed down from generation to generation and is told to teach a lesson. Fables are about animals that can talk and act like people. Students will use the Literary Common Core State Standards (RL.2.1, RL.2.2, RL.2.3, RL.2.4, & RL.2.5) to better understand fables from diverse cultures. Students will learn to understand the central message, lesson, or moral of the story through asking and answering questions, describing how characters respond to major events, understanding the words and phrases that develop a better understanding of the lesson or theme, and understand how story structure plays a role in better understanding the text.

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<tr>
<th>Enduring Understanding(s):</th>
<th>Essential Question(s):</th>
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<td>Effective readers read closely to analyze texts as a whole and as parts. They will consolidate texts and their thinking about texts to identify central ideas and themes, as well as cite specific evidence to defend their thinking.</td>
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<td>What is a fable?</td>
<td>How are traditional stories the same/different across diverse cultures?</td>
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<td>How do a storyteller keep an audience engaged?</td>
<td>What can I learn from these stories?</td>
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<td>What am I noticing about characters?</td>
<td>How do morals apply to us today?</td>
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<td>How do fables give us information from the past?</td>
<td>What is a conflict?</td>
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<td>How do rewards and incentives influence our choices?</td>
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elements within and across texts to determine the validity, relevance, and craft of works.

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<th>Focus Reading Standard(s):</th>
<th>Students will...</th>
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<td>RL.2.1 - Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text. RL.2.2 - Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral. RL.2.3 - Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges. RL.2.5 - Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.</td>
<td>• Be required to read 3-5 literary texts  • Search for evidence in the literary texts to assist in discussions.  • Respond to reading through writing.</td>
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<th>Assessment Evidence &amp; Artifacts of Learning</th>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
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<td>Formative Assessments</td>
<td>fable, message, theme, moral, characters</td>
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<td>Retelling of fables</td>
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<td>Anecdotal Notes</td>
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<td>Rubrics</td>
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| Learning Plan (Activities/Experiences): | |
|----------------------------------------| |
| The following literature discussion prompts can be used with the iBook *Animals and Their Stories*, which is free in the iTunes store or use the enclosed fables in this document. Provide students with the prompts to help in setting a purpose for reading. You will also want to choose one of the prompts to use as writing prompt. Monitor students through their reading, writing and scaffold the students to assist them in being prepared for the literature discussion group about the fable. | |
The Fox and the Crow

A Fox once saw a Crow fly off with a piece of cheese in its beak and settle on a branch of a tree.

"That's for me, as I am a Fox," said Master Reynard, and he walked up to the foot of the tree.

"Good day, Mistress Crow," he cried. "How well you are looking today: how glossy your feathers; how bright your eye. I feel sure your voice must surpass that of other birds, just as your figure does; let me hear but one song from you that I may greet you as the Queen of Birds."

The Crow lifted up her head and began to caw her best, but the moment she opened her mouth the piece of cheese fell to the ground, only to be snapped up by Master Fox.

"That will do," said he. "That was all I wanted. In exchange for your cheese I will give you a piece of advice for the future:

Morale

"Do not trust flatterers."
Literature Discussion Group

Directions: Use the following prompts to help guide your discussion about The Fox and the Crow and The Fox and the Goat. Compare stories and recognize common characteristics.

Talk about what you are noticing about the way the two stories are organized.

Talk about what you are noticing about the characters in the story.

Talk about whether or not the dialogue plays an important role in the story. Why or why not?

Talk about the lessons learned from the two stories and if it can help you in your own life.

Talk about why you think the author wrote these two fables.

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The Rat and the Elephant

A RAT, traveling on the highway, met a huge elephant, bearing his royal master and his suite, and also his favorite cat and dog, and parrot and monkey. The great beast and his attendants were followed by an admiring crowd, taking up the road.

What fools you are, said the rat to the people: to make such a hubbub over an elephant. Is it his great bulk that you so much admire? It can only frighten little boys and girls, and I can do that as well. I am a beast as well as he, and have as many legs and ears and eyes. He has no right to take up the highway, which belongs as much to me as to him.

At this moment, the cat spied the rat, and, jumping to the ground, soon convinced him that he was not an elephant.

Moral

Because we are like the great in one respect, we must not think we are like them in all.
Literature Discussion Group Prompts

Directions: Use the prompts to assist you in discussing the story The Rat and the Elephant.

Talk about the characters in the story? How are they alike? How are they different?

Talk about the problem in the story? Did there have to be a problem? Why or why not?

Talk about how the problem was solved?

Would you want to be friends with the Rat? Why or why not?

Discuss what you can learn from the two stories.
A Crow and the Pitcher

A Crow, half-dead with thirst, came upon a Pitcher which had once been full of water; but when the Crow put its beak into the mouth of the Pitcher he found that only very little water was left in it, and that he could not reach far enough down to get at it. He tried, and he tried, but at last had to give up in despair. Then a thought came to him, and he took a pebble and dropped it into the Pitcher. Then he took another pebble and dropped it into the Pitcher. Then he took another pebble and dropped that into the Pitcher. Then he took another pebble and dropped that into the Pitcher. Then he took another pebble and dropped that into the Pitcher. Then he took another pebble and dropped that into the Pitcher. At last, at last, he saw the water mount up near him, and after casting in a few more pebbles he was able to quench his thirst and save his life.

Morale

Little by little does the trick.
Directions: Use the prompts to assist you in discussing the story The Crow and the Pitcher.

Discuss what you are noticing about the character.

Did the dialogue of the character or the character's actions help you understand how the character responded to the events in the story? Explain.

Discuss what you think the character is feeling or thinking in the story?

What is the link between the character and the events?

Discuss what you can learn from the character in the story? Would you want to be friends with the crow? Why or why not?
The Tortoise and the Hare
An Aesop Fable

One day a hare was bragging about how fast he could run. He bragged and bragged and even laughed at the tortoise, who was so slow. The tortoise stretched out his long neck and challenged the hare to a race, which, of course, made the hare laugh.

"My, my, what a joke!" thought the hare.
"A race, indeed, a race. Oh! What fun! My, my! A race, of course, Mr. Tortoise, we shall race!" said the hare.

The forest animals met and mapped out the course. The race begun, and the hare, being such a swift runner, soon left the tortoise far behind. About halfway through the course, it occurred to the hare that he had plenty of time to beat the slow trodden tortoise.

"Oh, my!" thought the hare, "I have plenty of time to play in the meadow here."
And so he did.

After the hare finished playing, he decided that he had time to take a little nap.
"I have plenty of time to beat that tortoise," he thought. And he cuddle up against a tree and dozed.

The tortoise, in the meantime, continued to plod on, albeit, it ever so slowly. He never stopped, but took one good step after another.

The hare finally woke from his nap. "Time to get going," he thought. And off he went faster than he had ever run before! He dashed as quickly as anyone ever could up to the finish line, where he met the tortoise, who was patiently awaiting his arrival.
Literature Discussion Group Prompts

Directions: Use the prompts to assist you in discussing the story The Tortoise and the Hare.

Discuss what you are noticing about the character.

Did the dialogue of the character or the character's actions help you understand how the character responded to the events in the story? Explain.

Discuss what you think the character is feeling or thinking in the story?

What is the link between the character and the events?

Discuss what you can learn from the character in the story?

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