Fables from Africa

Author: Timothy Knapman
Teaching Notes author: Gillian Howell
Information about assessment and curriculum links can be found at the end of these Teaching Notes.

Synopsis

These five stories from Africa all have a moral. In many of them, animals play tricks on one another.

- **The Tortoise and the Baboon**: Baboon invites Tortoise to dinner, but it is just a trick. Tortoise gets revenge when Baboon has to cross over blackened earth to wash his hands before eating, so never gets his hands clean.

- **The Upside Down Lion**: When Lion is rescued from a trap by a family of warthogs, he plans to eat Baby Warthog. Mrs Warthog tricks Lion back into the trap where he learns his lesson.

- **The Hungry Hyena**: Jackal takes the hungry Hyena to a pen where he can eat his fill of sheep, but it is a trick to divert attention away from the jackal himself.

- **The Bag of Salt**: When Lizard jumps on Tortoise’s bag of salt and claims it as his own, the village elders rule that it should be cut in two and shared. Tortoise gets revenge by jumping on Lizard and claiming him as his own and the village elders make the same ruling.

- **Stronger than the Lion**: Hare takes the boastful Lion to a hut to show him something even stronger than Lion and locks him in, so the starving Lion discovers that Hunger is something stronger than he.

Background information

Animal trickster stories are found in many cultures. These stories have been handed down over a long period and there are many different versions.

- **The Tortoise and the Baboon** is a retelling of a Snapdragons picture book for younger children, with more complex text and less reliance on illustrations.

- **The Upside Down Lion** is often entitled The Lion and the Mouse.

- In African myth jackals are usually used to portray characters who outsmart stronger animals by using their wit.

Group or guided reading

Introducing the book

- **(Questioning, Clarifying)** Look at the front cover and read the title. Ask the children what they know about fables. If necessary, explain that fables usually end with a moral or lesson. Invite them to read the letter from the author on page 2.

- **(Predicting)** Ask the children to read the contents page. Ask them if they are familiar with any of the stories and to speculate on what they could be about.

- **(Predicting, Imagining)** Invite the children to describe any fables they have read in the past. Do they think there will be any similarities with these fables?

- **(Clarifying, Questioning)** Invite the children to look briefly through the book, focusing on the illustrations. Discuss how important they think the illustrations are in setting the context of the stories.

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Myths and Legends

Strategy check

- Remind the children to use the sounds of letters to work out new and unfamiliar words. Point to the words ‘scampered’ on page 4 and ‘knobbly’ on page 5. Ask volunteers to read the words and to suggest strategies for working them out if children are unsure.

- If the children meet words where the meaning is unclear, remind them to read the whole sentence and work out the meaning from the context.

During reading

- (Clarifying) Invite the children to read the two stories that feature a tortoise: The Tortoise and the Baboon and The Bag of Salt. Explain that you want them to find out what tricks are played on the tortoise and how he gets his own back in each story.

- As the children read independently, listen to them in turn and prompt as necessary. Note the strategies used to decode words.

Independent reading

Objective: Identify and make notes of the main points of sections of text.

(Clarifying, Summarising)

- Ask the children, while they read, to make notes on the tricks that are played in each story and on their similarities and differences.

- When the children have read both stories, ask them to summarise the stories in their own words.

- Invite them to share the notes they made during reading. Ask them to say how Tortoise gets his revenge in both stories. Which one did they prefer and why?

- Invite them to read the remaining three stories.

Assessment:

- Do the children make sensible, legible notes that they can use to explain their opinion?

Returning and responding to the text

Objective: Share and compare reasons for reading preferences, extending the range of books read.

(Deducing, Clarifying, Imagining, Summarising)

- Turn to page 18. Ask the children what they think Lion is thinking. Ask them to find words or phrases in the text that support their opinions.

- Turn to page 23. Ask the children to find the word ‘extraordinary’ and describe the strategies used to read it.

- Ask the children to explain why Jackal took Hyena to the pen full of sheep and goats. Ask them if they think Hyena will still be friends with Jackal.

- Invite the children to summarise the story, Stronger than the Lion. Do they think Lion will be different after his experience, and if so, how?

- Invite the children to choose the story from the collection they prefer most and to say why.

Assessment: Check that the children:

- can find evidence in the text to support their ideas about each story.

- can deduce reasons why the animals played tricks.

- can identify features that the stories have in common.
Speaking and listening activities

**Objective:** Use the language of possibility to investigate and reflect on feelings, behaviour or relationships.

- Arrange the children into five small groups. Provide each group with a different moral taken from the stories. Ask them to read the moral and to put it into their own words. Ask them to discuss the moral, say whether they agree with it and to describe some possible consequences if the moral were to be ignored.
- Invite each group to summarise their discussion for the other groups.

**Assessment:**
- Can the children make contributions, share their ideas and respond to others’ suggestions?

Writing activities

**Objective:** Use beginning, middle and end to write narratives in which events are sequenced logically and conflicts resolved.

- Ask the children to work in pairs and choose one of the stories.
- Ask the children to work together to retell the story orally. Encourage them to sequence the events of their retelling by using a variety of time-based connectives, such as ‘when’, ‘later’ and ‘suddenly’.
- Invite them to collaborate to write their retellings and then re-read them aloud to each other.

**Assessment:**
- Can the children sequence their retellings logically and signal time and place?

Cross-curricular links

**PSHE**
- Find other fables and discuss how the moral teaches a lesson about how to behave towards others.

**Science**
- Research the animals from the stories and other animals that live in Africa.
Fables from Africa (Oxford Level 12) curriculum coverage chart

**Links to Oxford Reading Criterion Scale:**

**Reading**
- Can read independently using a range of strategies to decode unfamiliar words and to establish meaning (e.g. self-correcting, widening knowledge of vocabulary). (READ) [ORCS Standard 4, 1]
- Is able to quote directly from the text to answer questions. (R) [ORCS Standard 4, 12]
- Is beginning to use text marking to support retrieval of information or ideas from text, e.g. highlighting, notes in the margin. (R) [ORCS Standard 4, 15]
- Can identify reasons for actions and events based on evidence in the text. (D) [ORCS Standard 4, 16]

**Comprehension strategies**
- Comprehension strategies are taught throughout the Teaching Notes to enable pupils to understand what they are reading in books that they can read independently. In these Teaching Notes the following strategies are taught: Predicting, Questioning, Clarifying, Summarising, Imagining, Deducing

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**ENGLAND** The National Curriculum in England: Years 3–4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spoken language</th>
<th>Pupils should be taught to use spoken language to develop understanding through speculating, hypothesising, imagining and exploring ideas (SpokLang.7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading: Comprehension</td>
<td>Pupils should be taught to develop positive attitudes to reading and understanding what they read by listening to and discussing a wide range of fiction, poetry, plays, non-fiction and reference books or textbooks (Y3/4 ReadComp.1i) Pupils should be taught to understand what they read, in books they can read independently, by identifying main ideas drawn from more than one paragraph and summarising these (Y3/4 ReadComp.2v)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing: Composition</td>
<td>Pupils should be taught to draft and write by, in narratives, creating settings, characters and plot (Y3/4 WritComp.2iii)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SCOTLAND** Curriculum for Excellence: Literacy and English experiences and outcomes – First level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Listening and talking</th>
<th>As I listen or watch, I can identify and discuss the purpose, key words and main ideas of the text, and use this information for a specific purpose (LIT 1-04a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>I regularly select and read, listen to or watch texts which I enjoy and find interesting, and I can explain why I prefer certain texts and authors (LIT 1-11a / LIT 2-11a) Using what I know about the features of different types of texts, I can find, select, sort and use information for a specific purpose (LIT 1-14a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>By considering the type of text I am creating, I can select ideas and relevant information [...] organise these in a logical sequence and use words which will be interesting and/or useful for others (LIT 1-26a)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WALES** Programme of Study for English: Year 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oracy</th>
<th>Learners are able to keep in role and support others in role play (Y3_OracSpea.7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Learners are able to accurately identify the topic and main ideas of a text, e.g. by highlighting, using key words of the text (Y3_ReadComp.1) Learners are able to take an interest in information beyond their personal experience (Y3_ReadComp.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Learners are able to organise writing into logical sequences or sections by beginning to use paragraphs (Y4_WritStru.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NORTHERN IRELAND** Levels of Progression in Communication across the curriculum: Primary Level 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Talking and listening</th>
<th>Pupils can follow discussions, make contributions and observe conventions of conversation (L2_com_talk.2i)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
<td>Pupils can understand, recount and sequence events and information (L2_com_read.1) Pupils can express opinions and make predictions (L2_com_read.5ii)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Pupils can show a sense of structure and organisation (L2_com_writ.2ii)</td>
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