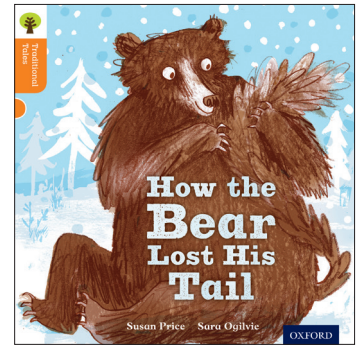


# How the Bear Lost His Tail

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Teaching notes written by Pam Dowson

Information about assessment and curriculum links can be found at the end of these Teaching Notes.



## Background to the story

- Traditional tales have been told for many years. They help to keep alive the richness of storytelling language and traditions from different cultures. These tales, many of which will be familiar to the children, are rich in patterned language and provide a springboard for their own storytelling and writing.
- This story is known in many cultures, including Norse and North American. It belongs to the tradition that explains why some things in the world are as they are. This story pits Bear against Fox, who is the trickster figure.

## Group/Guided reading

### Introducing the story

- Ask the children what they know about bears in the wild. Perhaps they have seen them on television wildlife programmes. How would they describe a bear?
- Tell the children that the two main characters in the story are a bear and a fox. Ask: *What would you expect them to be like? What might be different about them as characters? What other stories do you know with foxes in them?*
- Look at the cover of the book and read the title together. Ask: *Do you know any other stories that tell us how things came to be the way they are?* Perhaps they know some of Rudyard Kipling's 'Just So' stories, such as 'How the Camel got his Hump'.
- Ask: *How do you think the bear might lose his tail?*
- Look at the word *grumpy* (page 2). Ask the children what this means. Can they make a grumpy face? Ask: *What other words describe a grumpy character?* For example, bad-tempered, irritable or grouchy.
- All the words in this story are decodable. However, we've listed some of the more challenging words on the inside front cover of the book, to help build familiarity with these before children read the story for themselves.

### Reading the story

- Ask the children to read the story. Remember to give them lots of encouragement and praise as they read.
- Ask the children to find all the words on page 4 that describe something about bears, e.g. *big, hairy, sweet, kind, proud*. Are these words they would expect to describe bears?
- Look at the phrase *the fish will come and nibble your tail* on page 12. Talk about how the word *nibble* suggests small fish. Ask: *What word might we use if they were big fish?*
- Pause at page 15. Ask: *What do you think is going to happen next? What could happen to Bear's tail?*

### Returning to the story

- Look again at page 10 and ask: *Why did Fox decide to trick Bear?*
- Tell the children that there are several alternative spellings of /air/ in the story. Encourage them to identify **bears** (page 2), **hairy** (page 2), **their** (page 4), **Where** (page 9) and **share** (page 10).

- Re-read page 20. Ask: *How do you think Bear is feeling here? What might he be thinking about Fox and about himself?*
- Bear learned that he shouldn't believe everything he is told. Ask the children what they think Bear could have done differently. Ask: *What might Bear have done to be sure that Fox's advice was good?*

## Storytelling and Drama

- Using the story map available on [www.oxfordprimary.co.uk/tradtales](http://www.oxfordprimary.co.uk/tradtales) as a prompt, talk together about the questions you might ask Bear at the end of the story to find out what happened to him and how he felt as the story progressed.
- Ask the children to work in pairs taking turns to be Bear in the hot seat, answering the sort of questions you have talked about.
- Encourage the children to elaborate on their answers, using 'because' to extend their answers.

## Writing

- Having thought about Bear's feelings in the drama activity, now focus on Fox's character.
- Work together to list Fox's characteristics, e.g. he is quick and sly and clever (page 22).
- Talk about Fox's reasons for fooling Bear, how he did this and how he felt at the end of the story. Ask the children if they think Fox was happy with his trick? Did he find it funny? Do they think he knew what might happen to Bear's tail?
- Model writing Fox's version in the first person, e.g. 'I was hungry that icy day and there was no way I was going to share my fish with that long-tailed Bear.'
- The children should now work independently to write their own versions of the story told from Fox's point of view.

## Links to the wider curriculum

### Science/Mathematics

- Do experiments to find out how long it takes for water to freeze and melt. Make a graph of the results.

### Geography

- Use books or the internet to find out where bears live and the foods they eat.

### Art and design

- Using photographs from books or the internet for reference, create paintings, drawings or collages of different animals' tails. Display them with the caption 'Whose tails are these?' with flaps to lift for the answers.

### Music

- Compose music to suggest both Bear and Fox, using heavier, deliberate sounds for Bear and lighter, more playful sounds for Fox.

### PSHE and Citizenship

- Fox thought it was clever to fool Bear. Talk about how playing tricks on others makes them feel, and how being found out leads to a lack of trust in the trickster.

For more ideas on how to use this book in the classroom use the *Traditional Tales Handbook*.

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# How the Bear Lost His Tail (Oxford Level 6) curriculum coverage chart

## Links to Oxford Reading Criterion Scale:

- Reads familiar words with growing automaticity. This includes the YR and some of the Y1/2 high frequency words which are easily decodable and some common exception words. (READ) [ORCS Standard 2, 2]
- Can use growing knowledge of vocabulary to establish meaning when reading aloud. (D) [ORCS Standard 2, 7]
- Can make plausible predictions about the plot of an unknown story, using the text and other book features. (D) [ORCS Standard 2, 9]
- Can make plausible predictions about characters, using knowledge of the story, own experiences, etc. (D) [ORCS Standard 2, 10]
- With support, can answer simple questions/find information in response to a direct question. (R) [ORCS Standard 2, 12]
- Can express opinions about main events and characters in stories. (E) [ORCS Standard 2, 14]

## ENGLAND The National Curriculum in England: Year 1

<b>Spoken language</b>	Pupils should be taught to participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates (SpokLang.9)
<b>Reading:</b> Word reading	Pupils should be taught to respond speedily with the correct sound to graphemes (letters or groups of letters) for all 40+ phonemes, including, where applicable, alternative sounds for graphemes (Y1 ReadWord.2) Pupils should be taught to read aloud accurately books that are consistent with their developing phonic knowledge and that do not require them to use other strategies to work out words (Y1 ReadWord.8)
<b>Reading:</b> Comprehension	Pupils should be taught to develop pleasure in reading, motivation to read, vocabulary and understanding by becoming very familiar with key stories, fairy stories and traditional tales, retelling them and considering their particular characteristics (Y1 ReadComp.1iii) Pupils should be taught to understand both the books they can already read accurately and fluently and those they listen to by drawing on what they already know or on background information and vocabulary provided by the teacher (Y1 ReadComp.2i)
<b>Writing:</b> Composition	Pupils should be taught to write sentences by saying out loud what they are going to write about (Y1 WritComp.1i) Pupils should be taught to write sentences by sequencing sentences to form short narratives (Y1 WritComp.1iii)

## SCOTLAND Curriculum for Excellence: Literacy and English experiences and outcomes – First Level

<b>Listening and talking</b>	When I engage with others, I know when and how to listen, when to talk, how much to say, when to ask questions and how to respond with respect (LIT 1-02a)
<b>Reading</b>	I can use my knowledge of sight vocabulary, phonics, context clues, punctuation and grammar to read with understanding and expression (ENG 1-12a) 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) I am learning to select and use strategies and resources before I read, and as I read, to help make the meaning of texts clear (LIT 1-13a) 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)
<b>Writing</b>	I enjoy creating texts of my choice and I regularly select subject, purpose, format and resources to suit the needs of my audience (LIT 1-20a) I can write independently, use appropriate punctuation and order and link my sentences in a way that makes sense (LIT 1-22a)

## WALES Foundation Phase Framework: Year 1

<b>Oracy</b>	Learners are able to contribute to conversations and respond to others, taking turns when prompted (Y1_OracColl.1) Learners are able to adopt a role using appropriate language (Y1_OracSpea.7)
<b>Reading</b>	Learners are able to retell events from a narrative in the right order (Y1_ReadComp.1) Learners are able to identify information related to the subject of a text (Y1_ReadComp.2) Learners are able to make links between texts read and other information about the topic (Y1_ReadResp.3) Learners are able to apply the following reading strategies with increasing independence: phonic strategies to decode words; context clues (Y1_ReadStrat.5i/5iii) Learners are able to read suitable texts with accuracy and fluency (Y1_ReadStrat.8) Learners are able to read aloud with attention to full stops and question marks (Y1_ReadStrat.9)

<b>Writing</b>	<p>Learners are able to talk about what they are going to write (Y1_WritMean.4)</p> <p>Learners are able to sequence content correctly (Y1_WritStru.1)</p> <p>Learners are able to understand different types of writing (Y1_WritStru.5)</p>
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**NORTHERN IRELAND Levels of Progression in Communication across the curriculum: Primary Levels 1 and 2**

<b>Talking and listening</b>	<p>Pupils can ask and answer questions for specific information (L1_com_talk.2)</p> <p>Pupils can follow discussions, make contributions and observe conventions of conversation (L2_com_talk.2i)</p> <p>Pupils can ask and answer questions to develop understanding (L2_com_talk.2ii)</p>
<b>Reading</b>	<p>Pupils can show understanding of the meaning carried by print, pictures and images (L1_com_read.1)</p> <p>Pupils can understand that words are made up of sounds and syllables and that sounds are represented by letters (L1_com_read.2i)</p> <p>Pupils can read and understand familiar words, signs and symbols in the environment (L1_com_read.3i)</p> <p>Pupils can understand, recount and sequence events and information (L2_com_read.1)</p> <p>Pupils can use a range of reading strategies (L2_com_read.2)</p>
<b>Writing</b>	<p>Pupils can talk about what they are going to write (L1_com_writ.1)</p> <p>Pupils can express thoughts, feelings and ideas, from within their experience, using symbols, pictures, words, phrases and simple sentences (L1_com_writ.2)</p> <p>Pupils can talk about what they are going to write and how they will present their writing (L2_com_writ.1)</p> <p>Pupils can show a sense of structure and organisation (L2_com_writ.2ii)</p> <p>Pupils can write using a given form (L2_com_writ.3)</p>