

Focus Question:

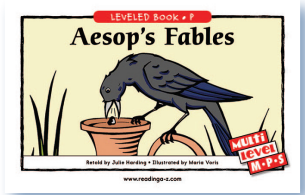
What can people learn from Aesop's fables?

Book Summary

Text Type: Fiction/Folktale

Aesop's Fables offers readers a collection of simple yet valuable life lessons. Each of the seven separate tales uses animal characters to tell a story that contains a clear moral. Classic illustrations enrich the text. The book can also be used to teach students how to visualize as well as to analyze characters in a story.

The books and lesson are also available for levels M and S.



Lesson Essentials

Instructional Focus

- ☐ Visualize to understand text
- ☐ Analyze characters in a story
- ☐ Understand and use a glossary
- ☐ Identify the *r*-controlled vowels *ir*, *ur*, and *er*
- ☐ Understand the use of quotation marks
- ☐ Recognize and use antonyms

Materials

- ☐ Book: *Aesop's Fables* (copy for each student)
- ☐ Analyze characters, quotation marks, antonyms worksheets
- ☐ Discussion cards
- ☐ Book quiz
- ☐ Retelling rubric

Vocabulary

Boldface vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on VocabularyA-Z.com.

• Words to Know

Story critical: *compliments* (n.), *flatter* (v.), *greedy* (adj.), *humble* (adj.), *pasture* (n.), *strengths* (n.)

Enrichment: *luxury* (n.), *pantry* (n.), *slurped* (v.)

- **Academic vocabulary:** *already* (adv.), *another* (adj.), *different* (adj.), *plan* (n.), *rather* (adv.), *return* (v.)

Guiding the Reading

Before Reading

Build Background

- Ask students what they know about fables (simple stories that teach a lesson and contain a moral). Discuss other fables they may have read or heard about. Ask a volunteer to tell what a moral is (a message about right and wrong).
- Ask students to think of a moral they have learned about (for example, *think before you act*). Have students draw a picture depicting the moral. Invite volunteers to share their pictures with the class.

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of *Aesop's Fables*. Guide them to the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers. Encourage them to offer ideas as to what type of book it is (genre, text type, and so on) and what it might be about.
- Show students the title page. Discuss the information on the page (title of book, author's name, illustrator's name).

Introduce the Reading Strategy: Visualize

Explain to students that engaged readers visualize, or create pictures in their mind, as they read. Explain that readers make visual images using information from the text and what they already know about the subject. Point out that the illustrations in a story can also provide information to add to visualizations. Have students close their eyes as you tell a simple story about celebrating your birthday. Ask students to draw a representation of what they visualized. Invite volunteers to share their visualization with the rest of the class, and discuss how their pictures compare to their classmates' pictures.

Introduce the Comprehension Skill:

Analyze character

- Explain to students that when reading a story, it is important to learn about and understand the characters. Write the word *Analyze* on the board and read it aloud to students. Point out that when readers analyze a character, they are considering

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

the character's words, actions, thoughts, and effect on others.

- Create four columns on the board with the headings *Words, Actions, Thoughts, and Effect on Others*. Explain to students that as they read the story, they should consider each character's words, thoughts, actions, and effect on others, and then determine what these traits tell about the character.

Vocabulary

Have students turn to the "Words to Know" box on the copyright page. Discuss each word with students. Then, have students turn to the glossary on page 16. Explain that the glossary provides definitions for the vocabulary words in the book. Point out the use of each content word and academic vocabulary word in the book, and then use each word in a different model sentence. Have students work in groups to create posters for these words. Have them include on each poster the word and its part of speech, the definition, the word in an example sentence, and a picture illustrating the meaning of the word.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read to find out more about Aesop's fables. Write the Focus Question on the board. Invite students to look for evidence in the book to support their answer to the question.
- Have students make a small question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. These can be addressed in a future discussion.

During Reading

Text-Dependent Questions

As students read the book, monitor their understanding with the following questions. Encourage students to support their answers by citing evidence from the book.

- *What moral did the fox learn in "The Fox and the Stork"?* (level 1) page 4
- *Who are the characters in "The Fox and the Crow"?* (level 1) page 6
- *In which stories did flattery play a role? How?* (level 2) multiple pages
- *Which moral is the most important? Why?* (level 3) multiple pages
- *How are the stories in this book alike? How are they different?* (level 2) multiple pages
- *Why did Aesop write these fables?* (level 3) multiple pages

Text Features: Glossary

Review with students that the glossary provides definitions for the vocabulary words in the book. Explain that if students come across an unknown word while reading, they can turn to the glossary to look up the definition of the word and clarify the meaning of the text. Read page 4 aloud with students. Stop after reading the sentence *The fox laughed and slurped up all the soup, while the poor stork was left with nothing to eat*. Model for students how to look up the meaning of the word *slurped* in the glossary. Then continue reading the remainder of the page. Have students turn to a partner to explain why using a glossary is helpful during reading. Encourage students to continue using the glossary to look up unknown words as they are reading.

Skill Review

- Model for students how you create visual images as you read, and direct them to stop at several points during reading to draw a representation of what they visualize. Invite volunteers to share their pictures with the rest of the class. Discuss with students how their pictures compare with the pictures in the book.
- Model analyzing character.
Think-aloud: *As I read the story, I pause often to identify the characters and consider each character's words, actions, thoughts, and effect on others. For example, I know the fox and the crow are the characters on page 6. The fox is hungry and decides to trick the crow into dropping her piece of cheese. He says, "I bet you sing as beautifully as you fly." Saying these words tricked the crow into opening her mouth to sing, and she dropped her food into the fox's mouth. By looking at the fox's words, actions, and thoughts, I can tell he is crafty and sneaky. I also know that he caused the crow to lose her piece of cheese. Stopping to analyze the fox will help me better understand the moral of the story.*
- Fill in the four-column chart on the board with the fox's words, thoughts, actions, and effect on others. Have students work with a partner to discuss what these traits tell about the fox.
- Model how to complete the [analyze character worksheet](#). Remind students to use specific examples and details from the text.

After Reading

Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

Guiding the Reading (cont.)

Skill Review

Graphic Organizer: **Analyze character**

Review the analyze character worksheet that students completed. Invite volunteers to share their findings with the class. Remind students that analyzing characters is one way to better understand and learn more about the characters in a story.

Comprehension Extension

Discussion cards covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided for extension activities.

Response to Focus Question

Have students cite specific evidence from the book to answer the Focus Question. (Answers will vary but should include the different morals taught by Aesop's fables. Samples: *Aesop's fables teach lessons that people should follow in their lives. For example, one moral taught is that if you do mean things to others, people might do mean things to you.*)

Comprehension Checks

- **Book quiz**
- **Retelling rubric**

Book Extension Activities

Build Skills

Phonics: **R-controlled vowels *ir, ur, and er***

- Write the word *bird* on the board and read it aloud to students, emphasizing the /ur/ sound. Have students say the word aloud and then say the /ur/ sound. Have students practice saying the /ur/ sound to a partner.
- Explain that the letters *i* and *r* together stand for the vowel sound they hear in the word *bird*. Explain that the *ir* letter combination is one of the letter combinations that stand for a group of sounds called *r-controlled vowels* with the /ur/ sound.
- Write the words *feathers* and *treasure* on the board, emphasizing the /ur/ sound. Explain that the other *r-controlled /ur/ sound* letter combinations are *ur* and *er*. Circle the *r-controlled /ur/ sound* letter combinations in each word.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work in small groups to find words with the *r-controlled /ur/ sound* throughout the book. Have volunteers share the words they found with the class. Write each example on the board and ask volunteers to circle the *r-controlled vowel spelling* in each word.

Grammar and Mechanics: **Quotation marks**

- Explain to students that *quotation marks* are the punctuation marks around dialogue in text and they inform the reader of what is being spoken by the characters in the text.

- Have students turn to page 6 in the book and locate the quotation marks. Read the dialogue aloud (*Oh, Madam Crow, you truly are the prettiest bird I have ever seen*) and discuss who is saying these words (*the fox*).
- Discuss the different words authors use to depict dialogue (*replied, asked, said, exclaimed, shouted, and so on*). Remind students that these words come directly before or after the quotation marks to show that the character is speaking.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work with a partner and look through the book to circle all of the quotation marks. Ask partners to identify who is speaking and what is being said. Invite volunteers to share their answers with the class.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **quotation marks worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Word Work: **Antonyms**

- Explain to students that a word that means the opposite of another word is called an *antonym*.
- Have students reread the sentence on page 6: *"You fly so fast and so gracefully," the fox continued.* Ask them to think of an antonym for the word *fast* (*slow*). Ask students to reread the sentence using the new word and think about whether the new sentence would flatter the crow like the original sentence.
- **Check for understanding:** Have students work with a partner to find and circle the antonym pairs on page 12 (*poor/rich, country/city*). Ask students to share their answers. Have students discuss why these words are antonyms.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **antonyms worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their answers.

Connections

- See the back of the book for cross-curricular extension ideas.