



About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Fable Page Count: 16 Word Count: 769

Book Summary

Aesop's Fables offers readers a collection of simple yet valuable life lessons. Each of seven separate tales uses animal characters to tell a story that contains a clear moral. Classic illustrations enrich the text.

About the Lesson

Targeted Reading Strategy

- Visualize


Objectives

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

Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Aesop's Fables* (copy for each student)
- Dictionaries
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- [Analyze characters, quotation marks, antonyms worksheets](#)
- [Discussion cards](#)

 Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting the book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

Vocabulary

*Bold vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on [VocabularyA-Z.com](#).

- Content words:

Story critical: ***admitted*** (v.), ***flatter*** (v.), ***greedy*** (adj.), ***humble*** (adj.), ***jealous*** (adj.), ***luxury*** (n.)

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 close their eyes and visualize, or picture in their mind, a peacock with its tail opened wide. Ask them to share what they see.

Preview the Book

Introduce the Book

- Give students their copy of the book. 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, fiction or nonfiction, 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).
- Invite students to preview the rest of the book by looking at the illustrations. Discuss what the illustrations tell about the book. Ask students what they think *Aesop's Fables* is about, based on what they see in the illustrations. Point out the table of contents and talk about how it helps the reader know more about the book.

Introduce the Reading Strategy: Visualize

- Explain to students that good readers often visualize, or create pictures in their mind, while reading. Visualizing is based on the words used in the text and what a person already knows about a topic.
- Read page 4 aloud to students. Model how to visualize.
Think-aloud: Whenever I read a story, I always pause after several pages to create a picture in my mind of what the author is describing. Doing this helps me keep track of everything, and it also helps me make sure I understand what is happening. For example, on page 4, the author describes the stork trying to eat soup from a flat dish. I pictured the stork with its long beak, awkwardly trying to drink some soup and getting frustrated. I know that good readers always try to create pictures in their mind when they read, so I am going to try to visualize as I read this story.
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

Introduce the Vocabulary

- As students preview the book, ask them to talk about what they see in the pictures. Reinforce the vocabulary words they will encounter in the text.
- Write the following content vocabulary words on the board: *admitted*, *humble*, and *jealous*.
- Explain to students that most of the time, good readers use context clues to help figure out the meaning of an unfamiliar word in the text. However, sometimes they will not find enough context clues to clearly define the unfamiliar word. Model how students can use a dictionary to locate a word's meaning. Have a volunteer read the definition for *jealous* in the dictionary. Have students follow along on page 10 as you read the sentence in which the word *jealous* is found to confirm the meaning of the word.
- Point to the word *admitted* on the board. Repeat the process, reading the definition of *admitted* in the dictionary and reading the sentence in which *admitted* is found on page 4. Ask a volunteer to explain why it is necessary to look up the root word *admit* in the dictionary, without the suffix *-ed*.
- Point to the word *humble* on the board. Have students read the definition of *humble* in the dictionary and locate the sentence in which *humble* is found on page 12. Remind students to check whether a word makes sense by rereading the sentence in which it occurs.

Set the Purpose

- Have students read the book to identify the moral that each story teaches. Remind them to stop and visualize as they read to help them remember and understand what they're reading.

During Reading

Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read to the end of page 8. Ask if they stopped to visualize, or create a mental picture of, any of the images the author described in the book so far.
- Model visualizing while reading the text.
Think-aloud: When I read about the fox tricking the crow on page 6, I paused to picture in my mind how that would look. I envisioned the fox with a sly look on his face as he flattered the crow. I imagined the crow puffing up with pride as the fox complimented her.

- **Check for understanding:** Have students share pictures that they visualized in their mind while reading.
- Have students read the remainder of the book. Encourage them to continue to visualize as they read the rest of the stories.



Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

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.

Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Ask volunteers to share examples of the things they visualized as they read the book. Ask how using the strategy of visualizing helped them understand and remember what they read.
- **Think-aloud:** *When I read about the crow and the pitcher, I paused for a moment to visualize. I pictured in my mind the half-full pitcher and the thirsty crow trying to fit his beak into the narrow neck of the bottle. This helped me to understand what I had read and remember that part of the story.*


Teach the Comprehension Skill: Analyze characters


- **Introduce and model:** Explain that there are many ways to learn about a character in a story. One way is to look at a character's words. Another way is to look for things the character does. Explain to students that the author uses a character's words, thoughts, and actions to help the reader get to know the character and form an opinion about him or her.
- **Discussion:** Direct students to page 6. Ask them to identify the characters in the story (fox, crow) and share what they can tell about them from the illustration on page 7 (how they look). Ask students how they get to know the characters (through the author's words). Ask how they think the story might sound if the fox himself were telling the story.
- Read page 6 aloud while students follow along silently. Ask students what the fox's words tell about him. Remind students that the fox tells the crow, *You are the prettiest bird I have ever seen*, and when the crow looks down at the fox, the fox continues, *You fly so fast and gracefully*. (The fox is cunning, resourceful, calculating, and so on).
- Read page 6 again. Ask students what the author's words tell about the crow (she likes to be flattered, she is a good singer, she is vain, and so on).
- **Check for understanding:** Read page 16. Ask students what the author's words tell about the dog (he is hungry, greedy, observant, and so on).
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [analyze characters worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.
- **Enduring understanding:** In this book, you read seven stories written by an author named Aesop. They all have animals as characters, and they all have a moral, which is designed to teach the reader a lesson. If Aesop wrote his stories for people, why would he choose animals as the main characters? How do these stories "teach" you a lesson?

Build Skills

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


- Have students look at the cover of the book. Ask them to name the animal they see in the picture (bird). Write the word *bird* on the board and point to the *ir*. 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. Have students turn to page 10. Point out the words *feather* and *treasure*. Have students repeat the words and listen for the /ur/ sound. Explain that the other *r-controlled /ur/* sound letter combinations are *ur* and *er*. Write the words *feather* and *treasure* on the board and circle the *r-controlled /ur/* sound letter combinations.
- Write the words *over* and *oven* on the board and say them aloud. Ask students which word contains the same vowel sound as in *bird*. Make sure students can differentiate between the two vowel sounds.

 **Check for understanding:** Have students work with a partner to look on pages 6 and 8 and underline more examples of the *r-controlled /ur/* sound (*stranger, flatter, pitcher, thirsty, under*). Ask students to share examples. Write each example on the board and invite volunteers to circle the *r-controlled vowel spelling* in each word. Run your finger under the letters in each word as you have students practice the pronunciation and blend the sounds of the whole word.

 **Independent practice:** Have students look for words with the *r-controlled /ur/* sound on their own. Have them look on pages 12 and 14 and circle or highlight words with the *r-controlled /ur/* sound (*rather, luxury, pasture, shepherd*). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Grammar and Mechanics: **Quotation marks**

- Write the following on the board: *"I bet you can sing, too," he said.* Ask students if they can tell what words are being spoken. Explain that *quotation marks* are the punctuation marks (" ") around dialogue in text. Discuss the difference between what is being said aloud by the characters (*I bet you can sing, too*) and what is not (*he said*).
- Direct students to page 10. Ask them to identify the words being spoken (*You are jealous of the nightingale, but you should not be . . . You are special just as you are.*) and which words are not being spoken (*Peacock's strange voice made people laugh, The goddess replied, and so on*).
- Ask students to tell what the peacock asked for (a new voice) and how it is different from what the goddess said (the peacock's words are not in quotation marks because he is not speaking directly to another character).
- Discuss the different words authors use to depict dialogue (*replied, asked, said, and so on*). Remind students that these words come directly before or after the quotation marks to show that the character is speaking. Brainstorm and create a list on the board of words authors may use instead of the word *said* (*asked, yelled, replied, thought, and so on*).

 **Check for understanding:** Have students find and circle the other places in the book where someone is speaking (page 6). Ask students to tell who is speaking (the fox) and which of the words tells how he is speaking (*said*).

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [quotation marks worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Word Work: **Antonyms**

- Have students turn to page 4. Ask a volunteer to explain why the stork could not eat soup from the flat dish but could eat soup from the jar (The stork had a long beak). Write the word *long* on the board. Ask students to suggest a word that means the opposite of long (*short*). Review or explain that a word that means the opposite of another word is called an *antonym*. Discuss with students how the story would be different if the stork had a short beak.

- Have students reread the moral on page 4: *If you do mean things to others, they might do mean things to you in return.* Ask them to think of an antonym for the word *mean* (*nice, kind*). Ask students to reread the moral using the opposite of *mean* and think about whether the new sentence could be a moral.



Have students work with a partner to find and circle words on page 12 that are antonyms (*poor/rich, country/city*). Ask students to share their answers. Write their answers on the board. Discuss how *live simply* and *live in luxury* are also opposites or antonyms.

- **Check for understanding:** Write the following words on the board: *light, bottom, ugly, weak, slow, small*. Have students look on pages 8 and 10 to find antonyms for the words on the board (*heavy, top, beautiful, strong, fast, big*). Have them write their answers on a separate piece of paper.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [antonyms worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

Build Fluency

Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, partners can take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends. Have them practice visualizing the story with someone at home and then compare the pictures they created in their minds.

Extend the Reading

Folktale Writing Connection

Remind students that fables are simple stories that teach us a lesson through a moral. Brainstorm with students some morals related to school (always do your homework, come to class prepared, take turns, make friends, and so on). Have students write their own fable that includes a school-related moral.

Social Studies Connection

Provide print and Internet resources to have students research Aesop, a person who lived in ancient Greece. Have them find and collect the stories he wrote over many years and spanning many cultures. Have students read books about his life and the time period during which he lived. Ask why they think his stories have lasted so long and why the morals have remained true for all these years.

Skill Review

[Discussion cards](#) covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

Assessment

Monitor students to determine if they can:

- consistently use the reading strategy of visualizing to better comprehend text
- accurately analyze the words and actions of characters during discussion and on a worksheet
- identify the *r*-controlled /ur/ sound and the spellings that stand for it in text and in discussion
- correctly understand the use of quotation marks in text and on a worksheet
- correctly identify and locate antonyms in text and during discussion

Comprehension Checks

- [Book Quiz](#)
- [Retelling Rubric](#)