

Lesson 2

Fables

What do you know?

What are fables, and what do you know about them? Can you give an example?

Important Features of a Fable:

- It is usually a very short story.
- Animals, plants, and non-living objects act as humans do; they can talk and feel emotions.
- There is a *moral*, or lesson, at the end. It is a short sentence that is easy to remember.
- The moral gives us advice about what to do or what not to do.
- The story shows us how silly people can sometimes be.

Historical Background:

Many fables that we know today were written in ancient Greece.

Tradition says that they were first created by a Greek slave, named Aesop, in the sixth century, BCE. Historians are not sure if Aesop was a real person. The stories were passed down orally and not written down until 300 BCE.

Famous fables were also written in India for the children of the kings. They were called the *Panchatantra*. Fables are found in the literature of every country, from ancient times to the present. Some modern stories and movies are fables.

What did you learn?

1. Who are the characters in a fable?

2. What is found at the end of every fable? Why is it important?

3. Who do we think may have created the first fables?

4. When were fables first written down?

Story Reading: The Old Lion and the Fox

Vocabulary: These words will help you understand the lesson.



Word/Term	Definition
cave (noun)	an opening inside a rock or mountain; it is big enough for bears and people to go into and use for shelter
moan (noun)	a sound you make when you are in pain
creature (noun)	an animal; not a person
cunning, clever (adjective)	smart, able to trick people or figure out problems
pitiful, mournful , distressed (adjective)	very sad

Word/Term	Definition
approach (verb)	come up to; come toward; get near
snatch (verb)	grab
hesitate (verb)	stop or delay for a minute and think before doing something
observe (verb)	look at
prey (noun)	an animal hunted or caught for food

Use the vocabulary words in these sentences.

1. Never _____ a growling dog.
2. The _____ is cool and dark inside.
3. The student tried to be _____ and cheat on the test. He wrote the answers on the inside of his shirt.
4. The doctor heard the _____ of the accident victim from under the car.
5. The little monkey tried to _____ the piece of candy out of my hand.
6. It is _____ to see homeless people living on the street.
7. At nighttime, many _____ come out and hunt.
8. In science class, you have to _____ an experiment and write down what you see.
9. You should always _____ before you agree to do something. You need time to think it over, first.

Notes on the story:

In this story, and the one in the next lesson, animals show us how we should and should not act towards each other. Sometimes, following another's example is not a good idea. Treating people as we would like to be treated is a good idea.

The Old Lion and the Fox

An old lion knew that he was too weak to hunt and catch animals. He had been a powerful hunter. No prey had ever escaped his clever traps and fierce jaws. But now, he couldn't run as fast as a deer, or climb a tree as quickly as a monkey. So he decided to make a cunning plan.

At first, the lion wandered through the forest until he found a cool, but comfortable cave in a large rock. The soft dirt on the floor of the cave made a welcome bed for him. There, he lay down, closed one eye, and waited for a small animal to come by. To encourage animals to feel safe enough to approach him, he pretended he was sick. He even moaned and groaned whenever he saw a small creature that he could eat.

Soon after, the first animal to wander by was a gentle rabbit. She was well-loved in the forest for her helpful medicines of herbs and leaves. She heard the lion's pitiful moans. Believing that she would be able to cure his sickness, she hopped into the lion's cave. Her back legs made long footprints in the soft dirt in front of the cave. As soon as she was close enough to the lion to examine him, he snatched her and ate her for his breakfast.

Not long after, a playful dog wandered by. He was always looking for a new playmate, and liked to explore new places. He also heard the lion's cries. Thinking that the lion was lonely and needed a friend, he quickly ran into the cave. The dog was about to give the lion a friendly lick on the nose, but the lion snatched him up and ate him for lunch.

Sometime later, a clever fox was exploring this part of the forest. He was an intelligent and curious creature, and always looked for answers to his many questions about the world. As he trotted towards the lion’s cave, he, too, heard the mournful moans of the old lion. He stopped to listen more carefully, wondering to himself why such a powerful creature would sound so distressed. He was a little worried about the lion’s health, so he called to him.

“My dear friend, how are you feeling this fine day?”

“Oh, kind fox,” answered the lion. “I am feeling very sick today. I have aches and pains all over my old body. I fear I will die soon, if I don’t get help from another caring animal.”

“Oh, my,” replied the fox. “Is there anything that I can do for you?”

“Yes, please come to my cave and bring me some food to eat.”

The fox hesitated and thought for a moment. He observed the footprints in the dirt in front of the cave, and made a decision. **Finally**, he trotted away from the entrance to the cave, continuing his journey through the forest. He called back to the lion.

“I’d like to come and visit you on this sunny day, but I don’t think you need my help to get food. I see many animals’ footprints going up to your cave, but I don’t see any footprints going away. You are a clever lion, but I am more clever than you!”

Moral: Look for signs of danger, even when things look safe.

Questions

1. What is the lion’s problem?

2. How does he solve it?

3. What danger signs does the fox see?

Culture Clues

Where do you think this fable takes place? Explain your answer: write words from the story that tell you.

Reader Response

1) Danger Signs

Here are some common danger signs that you might see on the road or in other places. Match the letter of the symbol with the danger it shows.



A



B



C



D



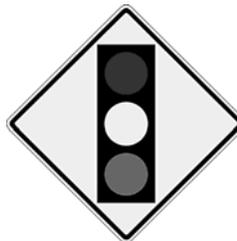
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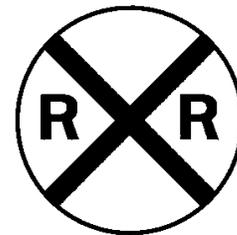
F



G



H



I

- _____ 1. Watch out for people walking.
- _____ 2. Railroad crossing ahead. Be prepared to stop.
- _____ 3. The road is slippery.
- _____ 4. Be careful and look around. There is construction in the area.

_____ 5. Danger. Poison. It can kill you or make you sick.

_____ 6. Don't go in. Danger ahead.

_____ 7. Traffic light ahead. Slow down and be prepared to stop.

_____ 8. The road ends. Water ahead.

_____ 9. Watch out for deer crossing the road.

2) Re-telling the story:

Write the events that happened in the story. Use the words to the right of each group of lines to help you think of ideas and sentences. You can use some of the words, all of the words, or add your own to tell the story.

At first, _____

lion	wandered
cave	sick
waited	

Soon after, _____

rabbit	helpful
cave	cure
footprints	ate

Not long after, _____

dog	lonely
friendly	snatched
footprints	ate

Sometime later, _____

fox	clever
called	hesitated

Finally, _____

fox	trotted
continue	clever
observed	footprints

Grammar Skills

Indefinite Pronouns

Rule

Use an **indefinite pronoun** when you aren't talking about a certain person or thing.

Examples:

These indefinite pronouns are **singular** (one person). The verb used with them must agree. For example, use *is*, *was*, *has*, or a verb that ends in “--s” or “--es” in the present tense.

Example

Somebody ate all the grapes.

Rule		Example
another	anybody	Nobody is home.
anyone	anything	Everyone likes pizza.
each	either	
everybody	everyone	
everything	neither	
nobody	no one	
nothing	somebody	
someone	something	

These indefinite pronouns are **plural** (more than one person). The verb used with them must agree. For example, use *are, were, have*, or no ending on the verb in the present tense.

Several of my friends **come** from Puerto Rico.
A few of them didn't know how to speak English when they arrived.

both	few
many	several

These indefinite pronouns can be singular or plural.

all	any	Most of the people are citizens.
most	none	Most of the population lives in cities.
some		

Exercises

Write an indefinite pronoun in each sentence. Refer to the list above. There may be more than one correct answer. Look at the verb to tell whether you should use a singular or plural pronoun.

Example: Each fable has a moral.

1. _____ knows at least one fable.
2. Almost _____ can tell a good story.
3. _____ stories are very funny.
4. _____ people know who wrote the fables.
5. _____ the lion and the fox are animals that act like people.
6. _____ one or the other will win.
7. _____ the fox nor the stork was kind to the other.
8. _____ of the fables are famous.
9. _____ other countries have fables.
10. There is always _____ to learn from a fable.

Use the following indefinite pronouns in a sentence.

1. (everybody) _____
2. (nobody) _____
3. (everything) _____
4. (something) _____
5. (anyone) _____



End of Lesson 2