

## Aesop's Fables

by Jerry Pinkney



### Introduce *Aesop's Fables*

Each fable in this classic collection, from the boy who cried wolf to the tortoise and the hare, ends with a moral that teaches a universal value. Pinkney's spectacular and amusing illustrations bring the witty, fast-paced tales to life.

Get kids curious about *Aesop's Fables*. Show them the art of the *Lion and Mouse*, a tale some children may be familiar with. Ask them, *What do you think is going on?*

### Discuss *Aesop's Fables*

After reading a few of the *Aesop's Fables* aloud, ask kids which ones they liked and why. Help them understand the moral at the end of each tale by asking:

1. What happens in the story? Who or what is the story about? What does the moral mean? Do you think you could live by the moral? In what situations in your life would it apply?
2. Before I finish reading the story, can you guess what the moral will be? Why do you think that?
3. What lessons do you think the morals teach? Why do you think Aesop wrote stories with morals at the end? Why do you think he used animals in many of his tales?
4. The animals in the story often have human characteristics. Look at the pictures. Why do you think the animals are dressed in human clothing? What other human characteristics do you see? Why do you think the author and illustrator did this?
5. Read aloud two stories more than once, then compare them. What is similar about them? What is different? Which story did you like best? Why?

*Optional:* To extend your fables discussion, choose a myth or folktale to read aloud (see More Suggested Books below). Compare them to fables. How are they the same? How are they different?

### Activities

Doing a hands-on activity that connects to the story makes the experience more personal and memorable for kids. Choose one (or more) of the activities below, or make up one of your own.

1. **Make up a fable.** Pass around a talking stick (any simple item, such as a ball or ruler, that makes it the turn of the person holding it to talk). When kids get the stick, they add a line (or two) to the fable that is being created. The last kid can tell the moral, or the group can create one together.
2. **Make a story cloth.** Give kids small pieces of cloth, paints, and markers. Have them create a story cloth with symbols and pictures to tell a story. (Kids' stories can be about their lives or a fable, myth, or folktale.)
3. **Create a "Porquoi" tale.** Have kids write a story about how something came to be. For instance, how the moon got in the sky, how freckles came to be, why dogs have tails.
4. **Explore myths, legends, and folktales.** Have groups of kids read myths, legends, and folktales from different cultures. (There are many wonderful collections of these tales. See More Suggested Books below or select your own favorites.) Have them tell their story to the group through a role play.

## Get Involved

Have kids interview an older family member, friend, or neighbor about their favorite stories to **create a library of oral stories**. (Kids can write or record the story.) They should include some background on the story: what culture it comes from, who told the story (name and/or relationship to the child), the storyteller's age, how they heard the story and when, and so on. Share the stories with the group and with children at a local school or childcare program. (If the kids are ambitious, they can make the story into a dramatic reading by adding simple costumes and different voices, or they may choose a story to make into a skit or play.) Then, create a book of the stories or add them to your listening library so others in the community can enjoy them.

*Optional:* Kids can create a kind of "time capsule" to go with their stories. Have them collect items to go with one or more stories. These items can be displayed with the book.

## Web Explorations

Visit one or more of these sites to further explore the themes and topics from the book.

[pbskids.org/africa/tale/](http://pbskids.org/africa/tale/)

Listen to a Swahili folktale and help Prince Sadaka pass the tests in **The Three Tests: A Swahili Tale of Choices**.

[pbs.org/wonders/Kids/kids.htm](http://pbs.org/wonders/Kids/kids.htm)

Learn about the legend of Anasi, an African spider whose story has been told for many centuries. Follow him on the **Quest for the Magic Calabash** and **Create Your Own Andinkra Cloth**, a piece of fabric decorated to tell a story.

[pbskidsgo.org/historydetectives/games/capsule\\_index.html](http://pbskidsgo.org/historydetectives/games/capsule_index.html)

Dig up a time capsule and explore its contents, then use your knowledge and some clues to **Guess the Year**.

## More Suggested Books

*Misoso: Once Upon a Time Tales from Africa* by Verna Aardema

*The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales* by Virginia Hamilton

*Uncle Remus: The Complete Tales* by Julius Lester

*The Illustrated Book of Myths: Tales, and Legends of the World*  
retold by Neil Philip

*American Tall Tales* by Mary Pope Osborne

*Can You Guess My Name? Traditional Tales Around the World* by Judy Sierra

*Silly & Sillier: Read-Aloud Tales from Around the World* by Judy Sierra