

Ant and Grasshopper

The Fox and the Crow

The Lion and the Statue

Greek Fables by Aesop

DIRECTED READING

BEFORE READING

Build Background

Historical Context Fables are an ancient form of folk tale that spread from India and Greece into western Europe around the fourth century **BC**. In the first or second century **AD**, fables attributed to Aesop were recorded in verse by the Greek poet Babrius and also by the Roman poet Phaedrus. In the following centuries, the fable became a popular genre in world literature. In the seventeenth century, the French writer Jean de La Fontaine used the fable genre to write satires. Later writers of fables in English include Ambrose Bierce, George Orwell, and James Thurber.

Reader's Context How can old tales that feature animals as characters teach lessons that are useful in today's world?

Set Purpose

Think about what you know about the fable genre to help you determine what to expect from the selections and how to read them.

Analyze Literature

Fable A brief story, written in prose or verse, that conveys a moral or lesson is called a **fable**. The characters in a fable are usually animals that are given human characteristics. As you read these three selections, think about the message, or moral, that each one conveys.

Use Reading Skills

Identify Author's Purpose

Purpose An author's purpose is his or her reason for writing. After reading each fable, consider what you think the author was attempting to accomplish. Use a two-column chart, like the one below, to help determine the author's purpose for each fable.

Details	Author's Purpose
The ant gathers grain all summer, "grain by grain."	



Meet the Author

Aesop (620?-560? **BC**) may or may not have actually existed. There are several different stories about the background of this man, whose name is always linked with animal fables from the Greek oral tradition. Some say that Aesop was a freed slave; others say that he was an adviser to King Croesus of Lydia or a riddle-solver for King Lycurgus of Babylon. It is also possible that ancient storytellers simply attributed these animal fables to an imaginary author.



The Ant and the Grasshopper, c. 20th century. Edward Bawden. Chelmsford Museums, Essex, United Kingdom.

Ant and Grasshopper

Aesop's Fable retold by James Reeves

All summer the ant had been working hard, gathering a store of corn for the winter. Grain by grain she had taken it from the fields and stowed it away in a hole in the bank, under a hawthorn bush.

One bright, frosty day in winter Grasshopper saw her. She was dragging out a grain of corn to dry it in the sun. The wind was keen, and poor Grasshopper was cold.

"Good morning, Ant," said he. "What a terrible winter it is! I'm half dead with hunger. Please give me just one of your corn grains to eat. I can find nothing, although I've hopped all over the farmyard. There isn't a seed to be found. Spare me a grain, I beg."

"Why haven't you saved anything up?" asked Ant. "I worked hard all through the summer, storing food for the winter. Very

glad I am too, for as you say, it's bitterly cold."

"I wasn't idle last summer, either," said Grasshopper.

"And what did you do, pray?"

"Why, I spent the time singing," answered Grasshopper. "Every day from dawn till sunset I jumped about or sat in the sun, chirruping to my heart's content."

"Oh you did, did you?" replied Ant. "Well, since you've sung all summer to keep yourself cheerful, you may dance all winter to keep yourself warm. Not a grain will I give you!"

And she scuttled off into her hole in the bank, while Grasshopper was left cold and hungry. ♣



Fox and Crow. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

The Fox and the Crow

Aesop's Fable retold by Joseph Jacobs

A Fox once saw a Crow fly off with a piece of cheese in its beak and settle on a branch of a tree. "That's for me, as I am a Fox," said Master Reynard, and he walked up to the foot of the tree.

"Good day, Mistress Crow," he cried. "How well you are looking today: how glossy your feathers; how bright your eye. I feel sure your voice must surpass that of other birds, just as your figure does; let me hear but one

song from you that I may greet you as the Queen of Birds."

The Crow lifted up her head and began to caw her best, but the moment she opened her mouth the piece of cheese fell to the ground, only to be snapped up by Master Fox. "That will do," said he. "That was all I wanted. In exchange for your cheese I will give you a piece of advice for the future—

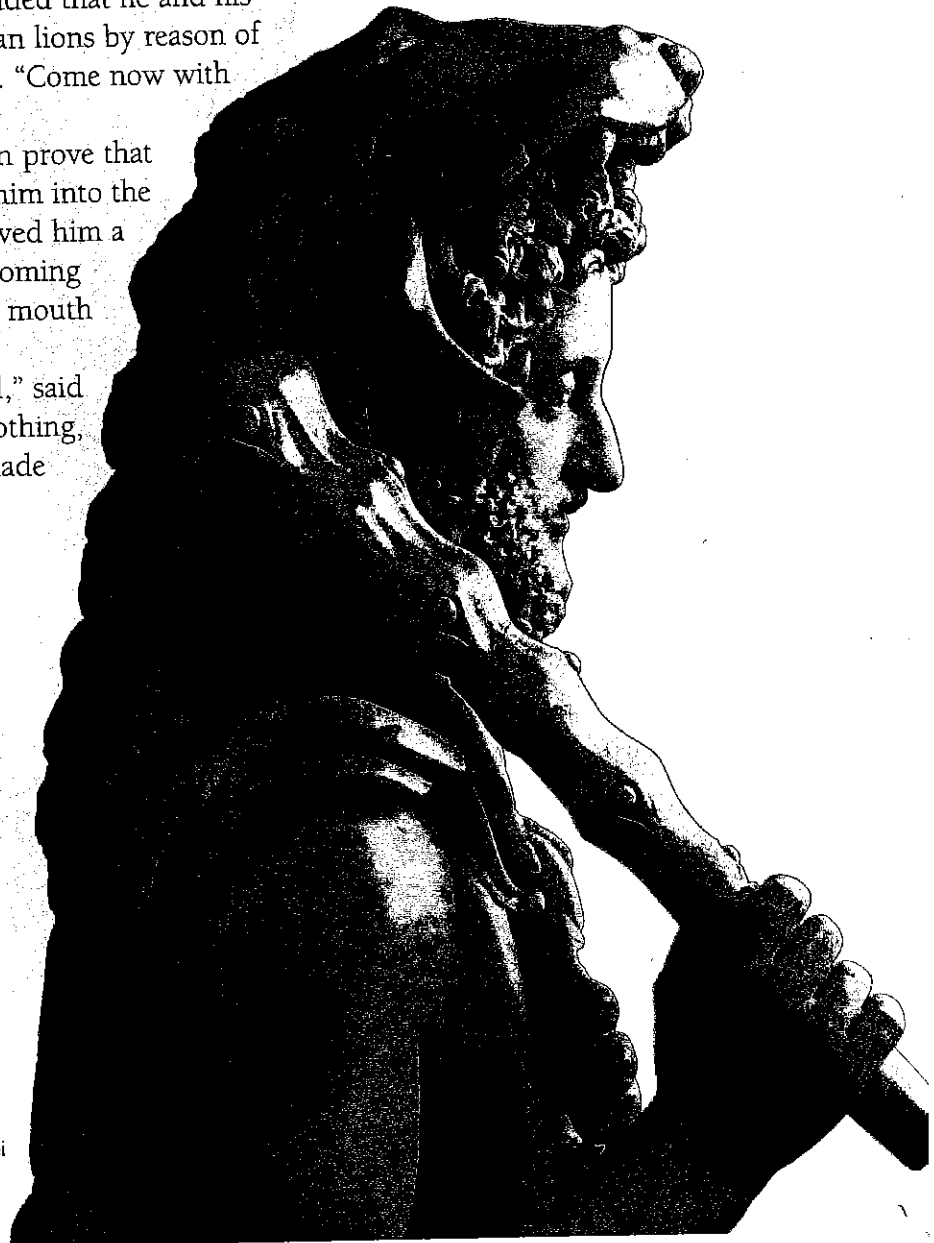
Do not trust flatterers." ❖

The Lion and the Statue

Aesop's Fable retold by Joseph Jacobs

A Man and a Lion were discussing the relative strength of men and lions in general. The Man contended that he and his fellows were stronger than lions by reason of their greater intelligence. "Come now with me," he cried, "and I will soon prove that I am right." So he took him into the public gardens and showed him a statue of Hercules overcoming the Lion and tearing his mouth in two.

"That is all very well," said the Lion, "but proves nothing, for it was a man who made the statue." ♣



Emperor Commodus as Hercules,
AD 191-192. Unknown artist. Musei
Capitolini, Rome.

**MIRRORS
WINDOWS**

How have you applied a moral lesson from one of these fables? Which fable offers the most useful advice for people today? Why is it important advice?

Name: _____

Date: _____

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Use Reading Skills: Analyze Cause and Effect

A cause-and-effect chart can help you identify the causes that led to an event or outcome. Fill in either the cause or the effect for the fables in the left-hand column.

Fable	Cause	Effect
Ant and Grasshopper	The ant works hard.	
		The grasshopper will go hungry and be cold.
	The ant does not share its food.	
The Fox and the Crow		The crow drops the cheese.
	The fox flatters the crow.	
The Lion and the Statue	The lion and the statue discuss who is stronger	



Name: _____ Date: _____

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Find Meaning: Recall

- Recall the details of Aesop's fables. Place a check mark in the column of the correct answer.

Detail	Ant and Grasshopper	The Fox and the Crow	The Lion and the Statue
Written by Aesop			
Poses carefree and lazy against industrious and determined			
A singer is tricked			
Shows vanity and loses			
Deals with the desire for food			
Advises to never trust flatterers			
Teaches that hard work pays off			
Teaches the value of considering the source of claims of superiority			

AFTER READING



Name: _____

Date: _____

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Selection Quiz

True or False

Write *T* if the statement is true or *F* if the statement is false.

- _____ 1. Aesop was know for his fables and his poetry.
- _____ 2. The grasshopper was lazy.
- _____ 3. The ant shared food with the grasshopper.
- _____ 4. The ant danced and played all summer.
- _____ 5. The fox deceived the crow into singing.
- _____ 6. The crow gave the fox the cheese because he felt sorry for him.
- _____ 7. The statue that was viewed in "The Lion and the Statue" was of Zeus.
- _____ 8. The lion said that he doesn't agree with the sculptors perspective of man and beast.

Matching

Write the letter of the correct moral on the line next to the matching story.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| _____ 9. Ant and Grasshopper | A. Beware of flatterers. |
| _____ 10. The Fox and the Crow | B. The fruits of labor only go to those who work hard for them. |
| _____ 11. The Lion and the Statue | C. Always consider the source of claims of superiority. |

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Lesson Test

Multiple Choice

Identify the choice that best completes the statement or answers the question.

for Ant and Grasshopper / The Fox and the Crow / The Lion and the Statue

- _____ 1. It is possible that Aesop
- A. is still alive.
 - B. was an American.
 - C. never actually existed.
 - D. freed all the Greek slaves.
 - E. developed the French language.
- _____ 2. Which of the following is *not* a characteristic of fables?
- A. They can be written in prose or verse.
 - B. They convey a moral or lesson.
 - C. They are usually quite long.
 - D. They often feature animals with human characteristics.
 - E. They originated in India and Greece.
- _____ 3. Which definition of the word *spare* best matches its use in the sentence "Spare me a grain, I beg"?
- A. to withhold
 - B. to use with restraint
 - C. to give from one's resources
 - D. to refrain from harming or destroying
 - E. to save or relieve someone from an action
- _____ 4. The last line of "The Fox and the Crow" shows that the fox
- A. regrets tricking the crow.
 - B. considers the crow his enemy.
 - C. did not mean the nice things he said.
 - D. is usually much nicer and more trustworthy.
 - E. does not really understand what he has done.

- _____ 5. The story of "The Lion and the Statue" shows that it is important to
- A. be tolerant.
 - B. work hard.
 - C. think critically.
 - D. train your memory.
 - E. strive for excellence.
- _____ 6. These fables are designed to help people
- A. succeed in life.
 - B. enjoy themselves.
 - C. build friendships.
 - D. forget their troubles.
 - E. examine their priorities.
- _____ 7. Ant believes Grasshopper
- A. can never change.
 - B. deserves a reward.
 - C. is getting what he deserves.
 - D. is doing the best he can.
 - E. sets a good example for others.
- _____ 8. In "Ant and Grasshopper," singing is portrayed as
- A. a waste of time.
 - B. a necessary part of life.
 - C. a reward for hard work.
 - D. an important form of entertainment.
 - E. something that makes everyone happy.
- _____ 9. Not all of these fables
- A. make sense.
 - B. take place on Earth.
 - C. have happy endings
 - D. contain valuable advice.
 - E. show animals as intelligent creatures.
- _____ 10. The *theme*, or central message, of "The Lion and the Statue" is best stated by which of the following?
- A. No pain, no gain.
 - B. Enough is enough.
 - C. Patience is a virtue.
 - D. Easy come, easy go.
 - E. Consider the source.

Matching

for *Ant and Grasshopper* / *The Fox and the Crow* / *The Lion and the Statue*

Match each character with the correct description.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| A. Lion | _____ 11. argued about strength |
| B. Fox | _____ 12. worked all summer |
| C. Ant | _____ 13. used flattery |
| D. Crow | _____ 14. dropped the cheese |
| E. Man | _____ 15. loved to sing |
| F. Grasshopper | _____ 16. said that a man made the statue |