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# Ten Fables for Teaching English

**Stories and Activities for Children  
Acquiring English**

by  
Ellen M. Balla

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Welcome to *Ten Fables for Teaching English*, a fun way to introduce children to the world of literature. Children enjoy hearing, reading, and acting out fables. Fables tell about events and achievements that occur in everyday life, but transform those events by using animal characterization to entertain and instruct. The animal characters bridge all nationalities and cultures. That universal appeal also applies to the lessons or morals adapted from *Aesop's Fables* to demonstrate cause-and-effect relationships and matters of responsibility, perseverance, human frailty, and so on. Because of this, teachers can take the opportunity to engage students in higher-level cognitive activities as they check for comprehension of the story and understanding of the lesson the story is teaching. When children's interest is sparked by these fables, they develop a hunger for more stories and literature.

In *Ten Fables for Teaching English*, ten familiar stories based on *Aesop's Fables* are accompanied by activities. The stories have been selected for their high interest level, and are engagingly presented in rhyming couplets that preserve the natural flow of the story and language. Each story unit can be particularly useful as an exciting and challenging review of vocabulary and grammar taught in other contexts. In addition, units address all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. You may use any or all of the activities accompanying a story, depending on the interests and abilities of your students and the constraints of your schedule, classroom, and curriculum.

*Ten Fables for Teaching English* is designed to supplement any beginning or intermediate ELL/ESL/EFL curriculum. The language level, content, and activities are appropriate for children in grades 1–3 who are beginning or intermediate students of English as a second language. The stories and activities focus on vocabulary, grammar structures, language skills, communication skills, learning strategies, reading strategies, and thinking skills commonly taught in classrooms, guided reading lessons, and reading series at this level. The activities encompassing these skills are challenging, fun, and relevant. They achieve objectives through a hands-on approach that encourages children to speak as much English as possible. As children work together, permit them to speak English at their personal level of competence. As you monitor their work and language skills, invite children to repeat key words and target language as you model them. This will give children additional opportunities to practice listening and speaking skills. Since classes for English as a second language and English as a foreign language often have students of varying abilities, there are different ways to present the units to meet the needs of beginning, intermediate, and advanced language learners.

When presenting a story from *Ten Fables for Teaching English* to **beginning language learners**, offer as much visual support as possible. Use the picture cards provided for each story, and allow children to become familiar with the vocabulary before presenting the story. Offer as much visual support as possible. Use the flash cards provided for each story, and allow children to become familiar with the vocabulary before presenting the story. Next, use the “Getting Ready to Read” activities to involve students and prepare them for the reading lesson. Present the fable as a “read-aloud,” and use the flash cards and story illustrations as you read aloud to students. Point to illustrations that depict key story words. Pause as you are reading and ask knowledge-level questions about the story to check for understanding and to involve students in the activity. When you are sure that students understand what you have read so far, continue in the same manner. To assess students' understanding of the story, choose one of the activities suggested for the fable you have read. Choose an activity that meets their needs and level of understanding. As students work on activities that complement the stories, walk around and assist as necessary. As a closing activity, invite students to retell the story using their own words. Encourage them to use the final project they have made, the flash cards, the story illustrations, or a picture they have drawn about characters or plot events. Model the activity first, and assist students as they share with the class.

**Intermediate language learners** will still need visual support and should be given the opportunity to learn or review the story vocabulary before you present the fable. Use the flash cards provided for each fable and the story illustrations to draw on students' background knowledge as you review familiar words, and then present new vocabulary as you would to beginning students. Ask them what they know about the topic and the story. During this pre-reading activity, do not correct students' language skills; simply allow them to enjoy the experience of sharing their knowledge and the language skills they have acquired. Invite them to use a variety of methods they are comfortable with as they share what they know. They can act out, role-play, and/or use single words, simple phrases, or simple sentences. After students are introduced to the story, take the opportunity to present any new vocabulary and concepts so that children will be ready to read. You might provide a copy of the story for them to follow along, tracking the words by using their "reading finger." After reading the story together, assess students' understanding of the story. Choose one of the activities suggested for the fable you have read, an activity that meets their needs and level of understanding. As students work on activities that complement the story, walk around and assist as necessary. As a closing activity, invite students to retell the story using their own words. Encourage them to use the final project they have made, the flash cards, the story illustrations, or a picture they have drawn about characters or plot events. Model the activity first, and assist students as they share with the class.

**Advanced language learners** should be given a chance to tell what they know about the story and the topic. Use the flash cards and story illustrations to help prompt students, and model talking about the story if necessary. Begin a discussion about the story and the topic. If you feel your students are ready, give them a copy of the story, and demonstrate following along as you read aloud. Show them how to track the print using their "reading finger" as you read the story aloud. Pause while reading to students to check for understanding. Ask comprehension questions and ask them to predict what they think might happen next. This can be done even if students' language abilities are limited. Ask: *What can happen? What do you think is going to happen? What can (the lion) do? Who can help (the boy)?* When you are sure that students understand what you have read so far, continue in the same manner. To assess students' understanding of the story, choose one of the activities suggested for the fable you have read. Choose an activity that meets their needs and level of understanding. As students work on activities that complement the fables, walk around the room and assist as necessary. Take this opportunity to talk to students, and encourage them to use as much English as possible. Ask comprehension questions and repeat their responses using correct English, and invite them to repeat after you. As a closing activity, invite students to retell the story using their own words along with the final project they have made, the flash cards, the story illustrations, or a picture they have drawn about characters or plot events. Assist as needed.

Teachers who are attempting to "totally immerse" their children in English will particularly enjoy this book. By incorporating so many aspects of English language and literature, *Ten Fables for Teaching English* can help English Language Learners reach their goals in the target language sooner.

*Common Core Standards* are provided and as much content area as possible is included to help keep English language learners current in the mainstream content areas and to support mainstream classroom efforts.

The *Common Core Standards* associated with Language Arts for grades 1–3 and the stories in *Ten Fables for Teaching English* are listed on the following page, where the specific objectives for each story lesson are presented.

**Common Core Standards for Language Arts for Ten Fables for Teaching English:**

*Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.*

*Describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details, expressing ideas and feelings clearly.*

*Use singular and plural nouns with matching verbs in basic sentences.*

*Form and use the simple (e.g., I walked; I walk; I will walk) verb tenses.*

*Use verbs to convey a sense of past, present, and future (e.g., Yesterday I walked home; Today I walk home; Tomorrow I will walk home).*

*Use modal auxiliaries (e.g., can, may, must) to convey various conditions.*

*Confirm understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.*

*Use context (e.g., cause/effect relationships and comparisons in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.*

*Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.*

*Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe foods that are spicy or juicy).*

*Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts, including using adjectives and adverbs to describe.*

*Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.*

Each

unit includes a set of **teacher preparation pages** to help direct the learning around the story. These pages provide

- a synopsis of the story
- a list of the literature, grammar, communication, and content-area objectives for the unit
- a warm-up activity to help students focus on the upcoming story
- a list of important vocabulary and grammatical structures from the story
- suggestions for teaching and reviewing the unit vocabulary and grammar, including model conversations for students to practice
- directions for using the student pages
- additional activities

The **student pages** in each unit begin with the story (divided into two parts with comprehension questions) and include practice, application, and evaluation pages. The story and activity pages are to be photocopied and distributed to students.

Other features of the book include

- **Scope and Sequence of Skills:** This essential reference section lists the specific objectives for each unit.
- **Presenting the Story Units:** This section contains general guidelines and suggestions for planning and presenting a story unit.
- **Flash Cards:** These reproducible pages provide illustrations of key vocabulary and concepts from the stories. A flash card is included for each starred word in the unit vocabulary lists. Suggestions for using the flash cards are included in the teacher preparation pages for each unit and in Presenting the Story units. In addition, pages 158–159 contain instructions for seven games that students can play with the flash cards.
- **Suggestions for Additional Reading:** This bibliography offers a list of additional reading material and sources for other versions of the fables in this book.

## The Ant and the Grasshopper

<b>Grammar Objectives</b>	Simple present tense of regular verbs and the verb <i>to be</i> ; predicate adjectives and predicate nominatives; questions and answers for <i>who/what/how/why</i> ; <i>have to</i> and <i>like to</i> plus the base form of verbs; singular and plural nouns
<b>Communication Objectives</b>	Tell what one likes and doesn't like to do; talk about weather and seasons; talk about the relationship between the weather and what clothing one wears
<b>Learning Strategies and Cognitive Skills</b>	Understand sequence; use illustrations as picture clues; follow directions; use rhyme; cooperate with peers; use prior knowledge; make text-to-self connections; cause-and-effect relationships; self-assess
<b>Mainstream Classroom Content Connections</b>	Language arts; literature; science (seasons and weather)

## The Wind and the Sun

<b>Grammar Objectives</b>	Simple present tense of regular verbs and the verb <i>to be</i> ; predicate adjectives; questions and answers for <i>who/what/how/why</i> ; comparative form of adjective <i>stronger</i> ; present progressive tense of <i>to wear</i>
<b>Communication Objectives</b>	Tell what one does; tell what one wears and is wearing; talk about the weather; count from 1–5 forward and backward; say and act out a finger-play
<b>Learning Strategies and Cognitive Skills</b>	Understand sequence; use illustrations as picture clues; follow directions; use rhyme; cooperate with peers; use prior knowledge; text-to-self relationships; make predictions; compare and contrast; cause-and-effect relationships; self-assess
<b>Mainstream Classroom Content Connections</b>	Language arts; literature; science (weather)

## The Lion and the Mouse

<b>Grammar Objectives</b>	Simple present tense of regular verbs and the verb <i>to be</i> ; predicate adjectives; questions and answers for <i>who/what/how/why</i> ; ordinal numbers
<b>Communication Objectives</b>	Tell what one does; talk about friendships and friends; use <i>please</i> , <i>thank you</i> , and <i>you are welcome</i> to ask for help and show gratitude; talk about order using ordinal numbers; say and act out a finger-play
<b>Learning Strategies and Cognitive Skills</b>	Understand sequence; use illustrations as picture clues; use rhyme; cooperate with peers; use prior knowledge; text-to-self connections; sequence using ordinal numbers; make predictions; cause-and-effect relationships; listen for details; self-assess
<b>Mainstream Classroom Content Connections</b>	Language arts; literature; social studies (friendships); math (ordinal numbers and sequencing)