

Clinical Focus

Philosophy for Adolescents: Using Fables to Support Critical Thinking and Advanced Language Skills

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: In this clinical focus article, we discuss the nature of critical thinking, its importance for adolescents, and its interaction with later language development. We also introduce a language arts program, *Philosophy for Adolescents*. The program aims to support critical thinking, narrative and expository discourse, and the use of complex syntax and literate vocabulary.

Method: In designing *Philosophy for Adolescents*, we examined research from education, psychology, philosophy, and speech-language pathology in the areas of critical thinking and narrative discourse. The resulting program encourages students to think independently, listen to others, offer reasons and evidence to support their views, and express themselves with accuracy, clarity, and efficiency. Implementation is illustrated with a case study of a 12-year-old girl.

Results: Although critical thinking improves during adolescence, many students struggle in this area, particularly in the ability to offer reasons and evidence to support their views. This suggests that these adolescents could benefit from instruction in critical thinking. Research also indicates that competence in critical thinking is associated with narrative and expository discourse, and with the use of complex syntax and literate words such as metacognitive verbs. Instruction using *Philosophy for Adolescents* may be carried out in small groups or individually by a speech-language pathologist working collaboratively with a teacher, teaching assistant, or other professional. Designed for flexible application, the program may be used with adolescents who have language disorders and those who have typical language development.

Conclusion: Research is necessary to evaluate the program with students from diverse backgrounds, having differing levels of language competence and academic achievement.

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The critical habit of thought, if usual in a society, will pervade all its mores, because it is a way of taking up the problems of life. People educated in it cannot be stumped by stump orators and are never deceived by dithyrambic oratory. They are slow to believe. They can hold things as possible or probable in all degrees, without certainty and without pain. They can wait for evidence and weigh evidence, uninfluenced by the emphasis and confidence with which assertions are made on one side or the other. They can resist appeals to their dearest prejudices and all kinds of cajolery. Education in the critical faculty

is the only education of which it can be truly said that it makes good citizens.

– William Graham Sumner (1906, p. 633),
Professor, Yale University

What Is Critical Thinking?

Critical thinking is *not* a quick and negative dismissal of a particular point of view (Gage, 2006). Rather, it is the willingness to actively analyze a body of spoken or written language that expresses a certain position on a topic or controversy, and to decide what to believe after engaging in a systematic truth-seeking mission, searching for solid reasons and clear evidence. Critical thinking is therefore a metacognitive activity that requires one to evaluate the evidence that supports or refutes an assertion,

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reflecting on the available information, to determine one's own beliefs, distinguishing them from the beliefs of others, and to manage one's own thoughts. This is a complex process that develops gradually during childhood, adolescence, and into adulthood (Kuhn, 1999), one that calls upon numerous cognitive and linguistic competencies.

According to philosopher Richard Paul (1937–2015), critical thinking requires the following intellectual traits: *humility* (rather than arrogance), which is an awareness of one's own limitations in knowledge, an openness to learning, and the absence of pretense, conceit, or boastfulness; *courage* (rather than cowardice), which is having the strength to question established "truths" widely held by others; *empathy* (rather than narrow mindedness), the effort to understand the thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and circumstances of others; *autonomy* (rather than conformity), deciding what to believe, based on a careful and independent analysis of the available information; *integrity* (rather than hypocrisy), the condition of remaining honest and forthright in the search for truth and holding one's self to high ethical standards; *perseverance* (rather than weakness), continuing to seek truth despite encountering strong opposition or setbacks; *confidence in reason and evidence* (rather than distrust), the conviction that others will eventually be persuaded by logic and facts rather than by strong opinions; and *fair mindedness* (rather than favoritism), the willingness to consider all points of view with equal respect and openness (Paul & Elder, 2009). Competence in speaking, listening, reading, and writing is essential (Paul, 1992), making critical thinking relevant to the work of school-based speech-language pathologists (SLPs). However, no published guidelines for SLPs were available on how to promote critical thinking in adolescents. Hence, the purpose of this clinical focus article was to address this gap in the literature. In doing so, we obtained relevant background references using a computerized search with the key words *critical thinking* combined with *adolescents*, *development*, *language development*, *complex syntax*, and *Common Core State Standards*.

Why Does Critical Thinking Matter?

Critical thinking allows people to manage their lives more effectively by using the available information to make better informed decisions (Kuhn, 1999). For adolescents, critical thinking is called upon in a variety of settings, including the classroom and beyond. Regarding education, in the United States, the expectation that adolescents will engage effectively in critical thinking pervades the Common Core State Standards (CCSS; <http://www.corestandards.org/>), widely endorsed educational benchmarks designed to enhance students' opportunities for success in college and career. Of note, as students move up

the grade levels, their ability to meet the standards requires increasing levels of proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Thus, upon reaching middle school, for example, students in Grades 6, 7, and 8 (ages 11–14 years) are expected to engage in discussions on academic topics with diverse classmates where they build on others' ideas and express their own ideas clearly (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1). They also must be able to "Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence" (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.3). Moreover, when reading their textbooks in history and social studies classes, young adolescents must be able to "Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts)" (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.6) and "Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment" (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.8). Similarly, in language arts, they are expected to write argumentative essays in which they "Introduce claims about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claims from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically" (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.1.a); they also must "Support claims with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrates an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources" (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.1.b).

Given these rigorous educational, career-related standards that require critical thinking and complex spoken and written language skills, all adolescents must have the opportunity to develop their competencies in these areas to the fullest extent possible. This includes students from low-income families and other disadvantaged groups (e.g., African Americans, English language learners, those with learning disabilities) who historically have received fewer resources devoted to their educational needs in general and to their critical-thinking skills in particular (Brown et al., 2014; Marin & Halpern, 2011; Willingham, 2020). It also includes adolescents with a history of developmental language disorder (DLD) who often do not receive the services of an SLP despite the persistence of significant deficits in spoken and written language (Joffe & Nippold, 2012; McGregor, 2020; Nippold, 2010, 2016a, 2017). Reasons for the lack of services are varied and complex. For example, the signs of DLD can be subtle and are often missed by the adults in a child's environment or are misinterpreted as a behavioral problem (McGregor, 2020). Hence, the child may not be referred to an SLP for a proper diagnosis. Yet even among SLPs, limited familiarity with later language development and the advanced levels of syntactic and lexical complexity that occur in typically developing youth—as discussed in this clinical focus article—also contributes to missed diagnoses and a lack of services.

Moving beyond the classroom, active and effective critical thinking is equally important when, for example, adolescents must evaluate enticing claims made by sales people, advertisers, politicians, and peers, or determine the scientific validity of health-related documents available on the Internet that appear to be evidence-based but actually are speculative and opinion-based. Moreover, the ability to detect logical fallacies—a common phenomenon in which people try to establish a point or win an argument by making statements that lack solid reasoning and clear evidence—is essential to an adolescent’s ability to make sound judgments and wise decisions. Examples of this phenomenon include the *fallacy of omission* in which the absence of evidence “proves” the case (e.g., “Phantoms must exist because no one can show me that they don’t”); the *false cause* in which it is assumed that when two events occur in sequence, the second one resulted from the first one (e.g., “After I drank Power Punch, my ear ache went away; therefore, Power Punch cured my ear ache”); *circular reasoning*, stating a claim in multiple ways without substantiating it (e.g., “If you want a great skateboard, buy a Zeb. Zeb makes the best skateboards in the world!”); the *red herring*, an attempt to divert another’s attention from the main point to an irrelevant one (e.g., “Tim should not be blamed for stealing the coach’s stopwatch; after all, other boys on the track team have done much worse things”); the *hasty generalization*, which assumes that what is true about one person is true about all others in a group (e.g., “Mary got pregnant and dropped out of high school; therefore, her two younger sisters will do the same”); the *appeal to ridicule* via sarcasm (e.g., “Motorcyclists should wear helmets. Right. They should also drink milk from baby bottles and sleep in cribs”); and the *anecdote* where personal experience or one instance is sufficient to prove a point (e.g., “Smoking is harmless; after all, my grandfather smoked cigars his whole life and he lived to be 100 years old”; <https://www.logicalfallacies.org/>; http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/fallacies_list.html). Logical fallacies are a common occurrence in everyday interactions (Thompson, 2021). For this reason, adolescents need to acquire competence in critically analyzing them, a process that requires detecting the occurrence of logical fallacies, asking the speaker or writer for solid reasons and clear evidence to support those claims, and posing counter arguments for others to consider.

Critical Thinking, Later Language Development, and Fables

Kuhn (1999) formulated a model of critical thinking, arguing that it depends upon the development of metacognition, a gradual process in which children, adolescents, and adults are able to think more purposefully about their own knowledge. Despite the importance of critical

thinking in a multitude of educational and real-life situations, little research had been published since Kuhn’s work on how critical thinking changes as young people mature or how it interacts with later developing spoken and written language skills. To learn about these topics in adolescents, Nippold et al. conducted a series of studies that employed fables (Nippold et al., 2014, 2015, 2020; Nippold, Frantz-Kaspar, & Vigeland, 2017; Nippold, Vigeland, & Frantz-Kaspar, 2017; Nippold, Vigeland, Frantz-Kaspar, & Ward-Lonergan, 2017).

Fables are short narratives, usually about animals or objects, that attempt to convey a lesson or moral message about life, with which the listener or reader is free to agree or disagree (Knopf, 1992). The moral message is often a proverb, a type of figurative expression that states an opinion by commenting on a situation, giving advice, warning of danger, or offering encouragement (Nippold, 2016b). Fables were employed in the Nippold et al. studies to engage adolescents in critical thinking. This occurred, for example, when they were asked if they agreed or disagreed with the moral message and to give reasons and evidence to support their views.

Fables are appropriate for working with adolescents for other reasons as well. For example, they are relatively free of cultural and linguistic bias. Many fables enjoyed today are attributed to the Greek storyteller Aesop who lived over 2,500 years ago (Grosset & Dunlap, 1947). They have since been translated into different languages, reinterpreted, modified by various writers, and are not tied to any particular location or period in history (Knopf, 1992; McKendry, 1964). Thus, these stories have longevity and are valued by people from different backgrounds, countries, and eras, speaking a variety of languages. Hence, they may appeal to diverse groups of adolescents. In addition, fables address complex aspects of human nature, such as pride, greed, humility, creativity, and deception—concepts that are difficult for children to understand but become increasingly accessible during the adolescent years (Nippold, 2016b). This is in part because adolescents are in a stage of cognitive, social, and emotional development, which allows them to think more abstractly than when they were younger (Santrock, 1996). Moreover, they are establishing their own beliefs about issues of morality, lifestyle, religion, and politics as opposed to passively accepting the views of their parents, teachers, and other authority figures (Lerner, 2002; Schickedanz et al., 2001).

In the first study (Nippold et al., 2014) in the series, young adolescents ($N = 40$; $M_{\text{age}} = 14$ years) with typical language development (TLD) were interviewed individually. The purpose of the study was to determine if fables, as narratives, would elicit greater syntactic complexity than general conversation. To begin, the examiner elicited a conversational language sample by prompting the

adolescent to talk about common, everyday topics, such as school, family, friends, sports, and pets. Then, to elicit a narrative language sample, the examiner presented two fables by Aesop, *The Mice in Council* (Lawrence, 1997) and *The Monkey and the Dolphin* (Grosset & Dunlap, 1947). The examiner read each fable aloud as the adolescent listened and followed along with a printed copy, illustrated by a colorful picture. Then, with the text removed but the picture still visible, the adolescent was asked to retell the fable in as much detail as possible. Both the conversational and narrative samples were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed for the use of complex syntax using the computer program *Systematic Analysis of Language Transcripts* (SALT; Miller et al., 2004).

Nippold et al. (2014) reported that the fable-retelling task elicited significantly greater syntactic complexity than the conversational task in these adolescents, as measured by two standard indices, mean length of communication unit (MLCU) and clausal density (CD). These findings were consistent with studies of preschool and younger school-age children, including those with DLD, which had demonstrated that other types of narrative speaking tasks (e.g., frog stories, videos) elicited significantly greater syntactic complexity than standard conversational tasks (Dollaghan et al., 1990; Leadholm & Miller, 1992; MacLachlan & Chapman, 1988; Southwood & Russell, 2004; Wagner et al., 2000).

Nippold et al. (2014) suggested that this pattern observed in adolescents resulted from the sophisticated nature of the fables employed, with their abstract themes of fear, goodwill, pretense, pride, trust, and wisdom, arguing that speakers are likely to tap into their own cognitive and linguistic resources more fully when they are prompted to discuss complex topics. In other words, *complex talk reflects complex thought* (Nippold, 2014a). Support for this perspective can be found in studies of expository discourse in which adolescents were asked to explain the rules and strategies needed to succeed at a specific game or sport (e.g., chess, basketball, football), known as the Favorite Game or Sport (FGS) task, or to explain the nature of an interpersonal conflict and how best to resolve it, known as the Peer Conflict Resolution (PCR) task. Studies using the FGS and PCR tasks have shown that adolescents with TLD and even those with DLD exhibit substantially greater syntactic complexity, measured by MLCU and CD, during expository discourse compared to conversational discourse, and that expository tasks are more likely to reveal language deficits than conversational tasks in adolescents with DLD (e.g., Nippold, 2009; Nippold, Hesketh, et al., 2005; Nippold et al., 2007, 2008, 2009). Collectively, those studies suggest that intervention for adolescents with DLD should involve stimulating tasks that prompt speakers to tap into their own cognitive and linguistic resources more fully. In other words, if a task

does not “stress the system,” it is unlikely to reveal a speaker’s strengths and weaknesses in language (Lahey, 1990). Thus, it is recommended that intervention for adolescents with DLD involve activities that motivate clients in authentic ways, such as encouraging them to talk about complex topics that matter to them, expressing themselves accurately, clearly, and efficiently.

The next study (Nippold et al., 2015) involved the same group of adolescents who had participated in the first study (Nippold et al., 2014). That is, immediately after each adolescent had retold a fable, the examiner presented a critical-thinking task, which consisted of a set of questions to determine if the adolescent agreed or disagreed with the moral message and to explain why. The critical-thinking task also was used to determine how well the adolescents understood the deeper meanings of the fables and their morals, and whether the set of questions would elicit greater syntactic complexity than the conversational task. As with the other two tasks, conversational and narrative, each adolescent’s performance on the critical-thinking task was audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using SALT (Miller et al., 2004).

Results indicated that the adolescents understood the critical-thinking questions quite well (mean accuracy = 80%), that most agreed with the moral messages of the fables, and that both indices of syntactic complexity, MLCU and CD, were significantly greater during the critical-thinking task compared to the conversational task. It was also found that MLCU was greater during the fable-retelling task (Nippold et al., 2014) than the critical-thinking task but that CD did not differ between those two tasks. The excerpt below (p. 335), from a 13-year-old boy who participated in the study, illustrates how questions concerning agreement or disagreement with the morals of the fables were especially effective in prompting high levels of syntactic complexity (E = examiner; A = adolescent; MC = main clause; ADV = adverbial clause; NOM = nominal clause):

E: Do you agree with the moral of the story, “Some things are easier said than done”?

A: Yes, I do [MC].

E: Why do you agree?

A: I agree [MC] with it because before you say [ADV] something to other people, you should probably think [ADV] about it and see [ADV] if it’s [NOM] possible or if it can be done [NOM] by yourself and no one else.

A: So just basically think [MC] about something before you say [ADV] it out loud.

The speaker’s second C-unit, his longest and most complex in this set, contains six clauses and 36 words, demonstrating his ability to express multiple ideas in a

clear and efficient manner, reflecting a high level of language competence. In contrast, if he were limited to the production of simple sentences and unable to embed clauses within clauses, he would need to express one idea at a time, in a sequential and monotonous manner, that would inevitably require more time, taxing the listener's patience and processing capacity, for example, "I agree. Here is my reason. You say something to other people. First, you think about it. You consider some things. Is it possible? Can you do it? Can anyone else do it?" This example illustrates how critical thinking and its expression both depend upon and prompt the use of later developing language skills.

Given the high level of performance of 14-year-old adolescents on the fable-retelling and critical-thinking tasks in those studies (Nippold et al., 2014, 2015), it was of interest to determine if growth in syntactic complexity would continue into adulthood. For this reason, Nippold, Frantz-Kaspar, and Vigeland (2017) administered the same tasks—conversational, fable-retelling, and critical-thinking—to young adults ($N = 40$; $M_{\text{age}} = 22$ years) with TLD, using the same fables and procedures.

Nippold, Frantz-Kaspar, and Vigeland (2017) reported that both the fable-retelling and critical-thinking tasks elicited significantly greater syntactic complexity in the adults than the conversational task on both measures, MLCU and CD, a pattern that was consistent with the performance of the adolescents in Nippold et al. (2015). It was also found that MLCU and CD were greater on the fable-retelling task than on the critical-thinking task. The investigators suggested that this may have reflected the interactive, question-and-answer format of the critical-thinking task, which naturally elicited some single-word answers, in contrast to the narrative fable-retelling task, which, as a monologue, placed more responsibility on the speaker to ensure clear communication.

In this study, Nippold, Frantz-Kaspar, and Vigeland (2017) also compared the performance of the adults to that of the adolescents from the two previous studies (Nippold et al., 2014, 2015). Results showed that syntactic complexity did not differ between the adults and the adolescents on the fable-retelling or critical-thinking tasks for MLCU or CD, but that the adults outperformed the adolescents on the conversational task on both measures of syntactic complexity.

In interpreting their findings, Nippold, Frantz-Kaspar, and Vigeland (2017) suggested that the complicated and abstract nature of the fables and the need to reflect on their deeper meanings and moral messages prompted the adolescents to perform at an adult level of language competence, in contrast with the less structured, more free-flowing conversational task that allowed the speaker more flexibility in deciding what to talk about and how to go about it. Regarding the adults' stronger

performance on the conversational task compared to that of the adolescents, the investigators suggested that the adults, who were, on average, 8 years older than the adolescents, had experienced a greater number of life events, and thus may have possessed a larger repertoire of topics they could discuss in a detailed manner, requiring the greater use of complex syntax.

The next study (Nippold, Vigeland, Frantz-Kaspar, & Ward-Lonergan, 2017) in the series was an effort to begin building a normative database of spoken language production in adolescents, using four additional fables, all from Grosset and Dunlap (1947). These were *The Oak and the Reed*, *The Fox and the Crow*, *The Dog and His Shadow*, and *The Stag at the Pool*, which we will refer to, respectively, as *Oak*, *Fox*, *Dog*, and *Stag*. In order, their moral messages were, "It is better to bend than to break," "Beware of flatterers," "If you grasp at the shadow you will lose the substance," and "What is truly most valuable is often underrated." The participants were 30 adolescents ($M_{\text{age}} = 14$ years) with TLD. A language sample was elicited from each adolescent during an individual interview. To present the task, the examiner read aloud each fable while the adolescent followed along with a printed copy, illustrated by a colorful picture. Next, the text was covered but the picture remained visible, and the adolescent was asked to retell the fable. Then, the examiner asked a series of questions concerning the moral message of the story: "Do you agree or disagree with the moral message of the fable? Why do you agree or disagree? Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral would apply? Can you tell me anything else about the moral or the situation?" The interview was audio-recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for total number of C-units (TCU), a measure of verbal productivity, and MLCU and CD, measures of syntactic complexity. Those measures were deemed important to examine because, as sensitive markers of later language development, they continue to increase during adolescence and into adulthood (Miller et al., 2016; Nippold, Hesketh, et al., 2005; Nippold et al., 2007; Ravid & Berman, 2006). Moreover, adolescents with DLD often show weaknesses in verbal productivity and complex syntax (Nippold et al., 2008, 2009; Scott & Windsor, 2000). Thus, we took the opportunity to begin establishing metrics from a group of typically developing adolescents, using our fables task, to determine the expected levels of performance.

Nippold, Vigeland, Frantz-Kaspar, and Ward-Lonergan (2017) found that *Stag* elicited a significantly greater number of C-units than *Dog*, *Fox*, or *Oak*, but that CD was significantly greater on *Fox* and *Oak* than on *Stag*. However, the four fables did not differ in terms of MLCU, with an overall mean of 11.66 words across the four fables. The investigators also found that boys and girls did not differ in their performance, that most participants agreed with the

moral messages of the fables, could explain why they agreed (or disagreed), and offered real-world examples of where the moral messages could apply, evidencing critical thinking. These patterns indicated that the fables used in this study were relevant to the lives of adolescents and were successful at prompting narrative and expository speaking, critical thinking, and the use of complex syntax in both boys and girls.

As in Nippold et al. (2015), Nippold, Vigeland, Frantz-Kaspar, and Ward-Lonergan (2017) also found that when adolescents were asked to explain why they agreed or disagreed with the moral, this question in particular prompted the use of long and complex sentences. This can be seen in the excerpt below from a 14-year-old boy who offered a unique and nuanced explanation of why he both agreed and disagreed with the moral of *Stag*, “What is truly most valuable is often underrated” (p. 914):

If you ask [ADV] parents this, (um they’re) they’re probably gon [MC] na say [INF] that their children are [NOM] their most valuable things. And they’re [MC] not underrated. So yes, this moral could be [MC] true with some things. But most of the times, it’s [MC] not really true, cuz often people, like parents, (who) have [ADV] stuff that they don’t think [REL] is [NOM] underrated.

His last sentence, at 24 words, is his most complex with one main clause and three subordinate clauses. A similar pattern occurred when adolescents were asked to think of a situation in real life where the moral of a fable might apply. This can be seen, for example, in the response below of a 14-year-old girl who agreed with the moral of *Oak* (“It is better to bend than to break”) and described a situation from her own experience where the moral could apply (p. 914):

When you’re working [ADV] in a group and someone wants [ADV] to lead [INF], but you want [ADV] to lead [INF] the group, you kind of have [MC] to go [INF] with the flow. And you don’t want [MC] to break [INF] your relationship. And you want [MC] to bend [INF] and go [INF] with the flow.

Her first C-unit, at 28 words, is especially complex in that five of its six subordinate clauses precede the main clause, creating a left-branching structure that is informationally dense.

The studies discussed so far examined critical thinking and aspects of later language development using tasks that involved listening and speaking. In contrast, a study by Nippold et al. (2020) employed a language sampling task that involved reading and writing. The task was

designed to examine not only critical thinking and complex syntax but also verbal productivity and metacognitive verb (MCV) use, all from a developmental perspective. MCVs are words such as *know*, *think*, and *believe* that refer to mental events or activities of the mind experienced by the self or others. When used to talk about other people’s mental events, MCVs reflect *theory of mind* (ToM), the awareness that others can have thoughts, feelings, and beliefs that differ from one’s own. Research had shown that adolescents frequently use MCVs during narrative discourse when writing about the motives and reactions of the characters (Sun & Nippold, 2012) or retelling fables and explaining their own views concerning the moral messages (Nippold, Vigeland, & Frantz-Kaspar, 2017). Thus, the use of MCVs is associated with adolescents’ performance on tasks of spoken and written narrative discourse and critical thinking. In the Nippold et al. (2020) study, it was of interest to determine if age-related differences would occur in the use of MCVs.

The participants in the Nippold et al. (2020) study included two groups of adolescents with TLD, one younger ($n = 40$; $M_{\text{age}} = 13$ years) and one older ($n = 40$; $M_{\text{age}} = 16$ years). All participants were tested in group fashion in classrooms at their middle school (eight grade) or high school (11th grade). To begin, the examiner provided each participant with a test booklet that contained five illustrated fables. With the first one used for a practice activity, the fables (and their moral messages) were as follows: *The House Mouse and the Field Mouse* (“The grass is not always greener on the other side of the fence”; Gorman-Gard, 1992); *The Fox and the Grapes* (“It is easy to despise what you cannot get”; <http://www.taleswithmorals.com>); *The Crow and the Pitcher* (“Necessity is the mother of invention”; www.aesopfables.com/aesopsel.html); *The Ant and the Grasshopper* (“It is best to prepare for the days of necessity”; www.aesopfables.com/aesopsel.html); and *The Rooster and the Fox* (“Beware of the sudden offers of friendship”; <https://www.storyit.com/Classics/Stories/>). For the practice activity, the examiner read the fable and its moral aloud as the participants followed along in their booklets. After the fable and moral were presented, participants were instructed to indicate if they agreed or disagreed with the moral, or were unsure, by circling *yes*, *no*, or *unsure* in the booklet, and then to explain in writing why they had made that choice. Next, they were asked to read and complete the remaining four test fables in the same way, but working independently, and were encouraged to write as much as possible in their booklets.

Each participant’s hand-written explanations for the four test fables were typed by an investigator and entered into the computer program SALT (Miller et al., 2004) as one language sample, where it was analyzed for the following variables: MLCU and CD, measures of complex syntax; total number of C-units (TCU) and total number

of words (TWD), measures of verbal productivity; and total number of metacognitive verbs (MCV) and total number of different MCVs (MCVdiff), measures of the literate lexicon. To measure critical thinking, the investigators created a scoring system of 0–4 points where 0 = *no evidence of critical thinking*; 1 = *concrete thinking*; 2 = *emergent critical thinking*; 3 = *intermediate critical thinking*; and 4 = *advanced critical thinking*. This system was based on Kuhn's (1999) developmental model that critical thinking involves isolating an assertion (e.g., moral message) from the evidence that affirms or negates it before deciding what to believe. It was also based on a developmental study of persuasive writing in children, adolescents, and adults, which had shown that older and more convincing writers offered a greater number of different reasons to support their claims (Nippold, Ward-Lonergan, & Fanning, 2005). The scoring system therefore assigned more points to an explanation that offered a greater number of different reasons for agreeing or disagreeing with the moral or being unsure. Moreover, explanations that extended beyond the confines of the story and provided examples of application to real-life situations were especially valued because this demonstrated that the adolescent could offer stronger evidence to support an expressed belief. A maximum of 16 points could be earned on the critical-thinking task (4 points × 4 fables).

Regarding their results, Nippold et al. (2020) found that the 16-year-olds outperformed the 13-year-olds on TCU, TWD, MCV, and MCVdiff. Thus, the older adolescents wrote longer explanations that contained a greater number and variety of MCVs. Examples of MCVs frequently used by the 16-year-olds but not by the 13-year-olds were *blame*, *convince*, *decide*, *disagree*, and *trust*. Although the two groups did not differ on syntactic complexity, both showed a high level of performance in this area, with the 13- and 16-year-olds, respectively, earning mean raw scores of 13.65 and 15.08 for MLCU (words) and 2.94 and 3.05 for CD (clauses). These findings show that the written critical-thinking task was effective in eliciting a variety of MCVs and long and complex sentences, from both younger and older adolescents.

Nippold et al. (2020) also found that both groups of adolescents strongly agreed with the moral messages of the fables, and that the 16-year-olds outperformed the 13-year-olds on the critical-thinking task, with the groups earning mean raw scores of 10.28 (65%) and 6.35 (40%), respectively. They also found that, for both groups, critical thinking was associated with both measures of verbal productivity, TCU and TWD, and that for the 16-year-olds, critical thinking was also associated with both measures of metacognitive verb use (MCV, MCVdiff). Although neither group showed mastery (90%) of the critical-thinking task, the older group was more likely to earn scores of 3 and 4, whereas the younger group was

more likely to earn scores of 0, 1, and 2. To illustrate this pattern, an advanced level of critical thinking (score = 4) can be seen in the explanation below from a 16-year-old boy who agreed with the moral of *The Ant and the Grasshopper*, "It is best to prepare for the days of necessity," and offered several solid reasons for his perspective, along with a real-life historical example of where it could apply (p. 1226):

Oftentimes, we as people find ourselves in a good situation, both financially and socially. However, when a situation turns, such as economic collapse, it is important to have a backup plan so that all is not lost. For example, those who had secure occupations and an abundance of monetary savings during the great depression were much better off than those who had spent their money unsparingly.

However, despite the stronger performance of the older group, many adolescents in the study did not show a high level of critical thinking. Indeed, even some of the older adolescents demonstrated concrete thinking (score = 1). This can be seen in the response below of another 16-year-old boy who agreed with the moral of *The Rooster and the Fox*, "Beware of the sudden offers of friendship," but was unable to move beyond the story to offer his own reasons for agreeing and could not give an example of where the moral could apply in real life (p. 1226):

The fox was trying to lure the rooster. But the rooster saw through his deceitful words. Then the rooster used deceitful words by telling the fox there was "a pack of wild dogs." The fox fell for it and left. The fox let words deceive him.

On the other hand, some of the younger adolescents showed an advanced level of critical thinking (score = 4), offering multiple reasons and real-world examples to support their views. This can be seen, for example, in the explanation below of a 13-year-old girl who agreed with the moral of *The Crow and the Pitcher*, "Necessity is the mother of invention" (p. 1225):

Yes, I do agree because people sometimes invent things to help them in life. Things like a filter for water or a rainproof jacket, or a bulletproof vest. These are all things that could help people in their day-to-day life. Like people without a good water source would invent a filter to make their water clean. Another one is making a rainproof jacket to keep you from getting soaked in the rain. And lastly, a bulletproof vest comes in handy for police officers. So yes, necessity is the mother of invention.

Since the Nippold et al. (2014, 2015, 2020; Nippold, Frantz-Kaspar, & Vigeland, 2017; Nippold, Vigeland, & Frantz-Kaspar, 2017; Nippold, Vigeland, Frantz-Kaspar, & Ward-Lonergan, 2017) studies that employed fables were published, other investigators have examined critical thinking in relation to language development in adolescents. For example, Wallis et al. (2021) presented moral dilemmas to groups of adolescents, one younger ($n = 24$; $M_{\text{age}} = 13.11$ years) and one older ($n = 20$; $M_{\text{age}} = 17.19$ years). All participants spoke English as their native language, had typical language development, and showed at least average academic performance. Each participant was individually interviewed. To present the task, the examiner read two short stories aloud, shown on an iPad, as the participant followed along. Each story involved a situation in which characters made decisions that violated social norms (e.g., lying to a parent, overcharging a patient for a medical procedure, breaking into a store, and stealing a product) and, therefore, faced ethical conflicts. After presenting the stories, the examiner simply asked the participants to “share their thoughts on what each story made them think about” (p. 633), thereby eliciting a monologic language sample. Each sample was audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, segmented into C-units, and entered into SALT where it was analyzed for verbal productivity, syntactic development, and lexical development. Each sample was also analyzed for critical thinking using a system based on Bloom’s taxonomy (Plack et al., 2007) that assigned each participant’s responses to the stories to three different levels of thinking (p. 634): Level 1 (L1) = “demonstrates basic understanding through comments based directly on the story and making unsupported judgments”; Level 2 (L2) = “involves some initial analysis of the information”; and Level 3 (L3) = “looks beyond the ‘here and now’ to evaluate characters’ actions and decisions and reflect on the moral lessons of the situation.” Similar to Nippold et al. (2020), Wallis et al. rated responses that extended beyond the confines of the story most highly.

Wallis et al. (2021) reported that the two groups of adolescents did not differ on measures of verbal productivity (total number of utterances, total number of words), or syntactic complexity (mean utterance length) but that the older group produced a greater number of different words than the younger group, reflecting superior word knowledge. Regarding critical thinking, L3 responses occurred more often in the older group and L1 responses occurred more often in the younger group. Wallis et al., therefore, documented growth in lexical development and in critical thinking during the adolescent years, consistent with Nippold et al. (2020).

Summary

Collectively, the studies just reviewed found that critical thinking improves during adolescence. However, much variability exists within age groups of typically

developing students, with some performing quite well and others struggling to succeed, even at older ages (Nippold et al., 2020). The ability to offer reasons and evidence (e.g., real-world examples) to support one’s perspective was especially challenging. This suggests there is a need for instructional programs for adolescents, designed to promote their ability to critically analyze information and employ advanced language skills. On the positive side, studies also found that fables can elicit rich narrative discourse from adolescents and engage them in critical thinking by prompting reflection on the deeper meanings of the stories, activities that both require and reveal the presence of higher level language skills. These skills include knowledge of literate words (e.g., metacognitive verbs), verbal productivity, and the generation of complex sentences that contain multiple subordinate clauses, used to communicate efficiently. Regarding complex syntax, it was also found that adolescents performed as well as adults during fable-retelling and critical-thinking tasks, as opposed to conversational tasks. This supports the view that language instruction with adolescents should involve mentally stimulating tasks that “stress the system” (Lahey, 1990), prompting them to tap into their own cognitive and linguistic resources more fully, revealing the presence of both strengths and weaknesses in individual students.

Clinical Implications

As discussed in this clinical focus article, the ability to engage in critical thinking and to analyze complex and contradictory information requires competence in speaking, listening, reading, and writing (Paul, 1992). Given these linguistic demands, the expertise of SLPs is essential to implementing quality instruction with adolescents.

Regarding assessment, SLPs could refer to the studies just reviewed if they wish to evaluate critical thinking and later language development in adolescents. For example, SLPs could elicit spoken language samples using the conversational, fable-retelling, and critical-thinking tasks described in Nippold et al. (2014, 2015; Nippold, Frantz-Kaspar, & Vigeland, 2017), a series of studies that employed two fables, *The Mice in Council* and *The Monkey and the Dolphin*. After transcribing the samples, coding them for clauses, and entering them into SALT, the SLP could compare the student’s level of syntactic complexity (MLCU, CD) to the means reported in those studies, recognizing the preliminary nature of the data. The student’s ability to understand the deeper meanings of the fables and to answer the critical-thinking questions could then be examined using the procedures described in the studies. The results could then be interpreted informally. Similarly, a student’s level of verbal productivity, syntactic complexity, and critical thinking could be assessed using the four fables (*The Oak and the Reed*, *The Fox and the*

Crow, The Dog and His Shadow, and The Stag at the Pool) and procedures contained in Nippold, Vigeland, Frantz-Kaspar, and Ward-Lonergan (2017). Alternatively, written language samples could be elicited using the four fables (*The Fox and the Grapes, The Crow and the Pitcher, The Ant and the Grasshopper, and The Rooster and the Fox*) from Nippold et al. (2020). The samples could then be transcribed, coded, and entered into SALT for customized analyses. In particular, the 0- to 4-point scoring system from that study could be used to determine if a student shows concrete thinking versus emergent, intermediate, or advanced critical thinking. The student's level of syntactic complexity (MLCU, CD), verbal productivity (TCU, TWD), and use of literate vocabulary (MCV, MCVdiff) during the writing task could also be examined.

We recommend that SLPs elicit language samples, spoken or written, and use SALT to analyze the results. SALT saves valuable time by automatically generating key metrics that are sensitive to deficits in syntax, morphology, the lexicon, and verbal productivity (Nippold, 2021). The results can then be used to establish relevant goals for intervention (Miller et al., 2019). For example, the SLP could use the information gained from a student's performance on the spoken or written language tasks described in this clinical focus article to design instruction in those areas, as needed.

However, despite the importance of critical thinking to adolescents' success in academic and real-life endeavors, its inclusion in the CCSS (<http://www.corestandards.org/>), and its close relationship to later developing spoken and written language skills, no published guidelines on how to accomplish this were available specifically for school-based SLPs. Yet, in view of the substantial difficulties that students with DLD experience in spoken and written language (Joffe & Nippold, 2012; Joffe et al., 2019; McGregor, 2020; Nippold, 2016a, 2017, 2018; Tomblin & Nippold, 2014), critical thinking is likely to be challenging to them. It is unfortunate also that critical thinking does not receive the type of explicit, sustained instruction in regular education classes that is required to build competence in this area, and that coursework in critical thinking is not routinely included in most college or university teacher education programs (Marin & Halpern, 2011).

Hence, in an effort to address this dearth of instructional materials in critical thinking for SLPs, we designed a program, *Philosophy for Adolescents*, described below. In designing the program, we obtained relevant research articles by conducting a computerized search using the key words *critical thinking* combined with *adolescents, narrative discourse, and instruction*.

How Can Critical Thinking Be Taught?

Fortunately, there has been considerable interest in critical thinking from scholars around the world in

countries that include Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Serbia, Spain, and the United States, working in diverse fields such as business, computer science, economics, education, kinesiology, philosophy, and psychology (e.g., Abrami et al., 2008, 2015; Butler et al., 2012; Daniel & Fiema, 2017; Gelerstein et al., 2016; Heijltjes et al., 2014; Kuhn, 1999; Marin & Halpern, 2011; Murphy et al., 2014; Paul, 1992; Radulović & Stančić, 2017). Indeed, some scholars have conducted studies to determine how best to teach critical thinking. Collectively, those studies have shown that key ingredients to successful teaching include the combination of explicit instruction, mentoring from an experienced teacher, open dialogue between teacher and student, frequent practice sessions over time, and application to real-world situations (Abrami et al., 2008, 2015; Brown et al., 2014; Daniel & Fiema, 2017; Marin & Halpern, 2011; Scales & Tracy, 2017). Studies have also shown that when teachers are explicitly trained in how to teach critical thinking and supported in the classroom, students make greater progress (Abrami et al., 2008). Moreover, students are more likely to excel when they are flexible and open-minded, willing to consider multiple sides of an issue (including evidence *against* their own beliefs), able to tolerate ambiguity or uncertainty, and can defer judgment until more facts become available (Brown et al., 2014; Daniel & Fiema, 2017; Heijltjes et al., 2014; Metz et al., 2020).

Although critical thinking can be difficult to teach (Brown et al., 2014; Willingham, 2008), there is evidence that even low-achieving students can benefit from well-designed instruction (Marin & Halpern, 2011). However, there are forces in society that can work against the teaching of critical thinking. These include schools and curricula that emphasize memorization over discussion, conformity over questioning, or simple answers to complex problems; citizens with a limited understanding of the value of critical thinking or fear about its unknown consequences; and the discomfort that can arise when peoples' cherished beliefs are examined (Daniel & Fiema, 2017; Scales & Tracy, 2017). Given these forces, educators who attempt to introduce critical-thinking programs in schools may need to convince key stakeholders (e.g., administrators, teachers, parents) of its potential to improve the lives of students and ultimately the quality of the world we all inhabit. Thus, the overarching goal of instruction in critical thinking should be to build a stronger society by pursuing truth through open dialogue.

Philosophy for Adolescents

The language arts program *Philosophy for Adolescents* is available in Supplemental Material S1. Essential elements of the program are listed in Table 1. However, it is not a cookbook that, if followed, will guarantee a

Table 1. Essential elements of the program *Philosophy for Adolescents*.

- Employs the Socratic *elenchus*, an open dialogue between teacher and student(s)
- The teacher:
 - Asks thoughtful, relevant questions
 - Models genuine curiosity
 - Listens attentively and respectfully to students
 - Remains patient, kind, supportive, nonjudgmental
 - Encourages multiple points of view from different students
 - Encourages students to listen to others, respectfully
 - Encourages students to respond to others appropriately (on topic, calmly)
 - Encourages students to stay on task, participate actively, respond frequently
 - Encourages students to express opinions, give reasons, provide evidence
 - Discusses meanings of difficult words and expressions
 - Encourages use of word-learning strategies
 - Encourages use of complex sentences
- The students:
 - Listen to or read each fable aloud
 - Fill out graphic organizer for each fable
 - Retell each fable by including all story grammar elements
 - Discuss story grammar elements in depth, especially characters' thoughts
 - Answer and discuss critical thinking questions with teacher and peers
 - Apply moral message of each fable to real-life situations
 - Reflect on own assumptions and beliefs
 - Distinguish between fact and opinion
 - Provide reasons and evidence to support own views
 - Listen to others respectfully
 - Respond appropriately to others' points
 - Speak using complex sentences and difficult/new vocabulary

desired outcome with every student. Rather, it is a framework for supporting critical thinking and later developing spoken and written language skills, based on research from education, psychology, and speech-language pathology. It is also based on the work of philosopher Richard Paul (1992), who was influenced by the ancient Greeks, Socrates (470–399 BC), and his student, Plato (c 428–348 BC). In particular, *Philosophy for Adolescents* employs a modern form of the Socratic *elenchus*, or dialogue, a process where a teacher asks thoughtful questions in a sincere effort to learn what a student thinks about an issue, the student's reasons for holding those beliefs, and the evidence that led to those conclusions. It also encourages students to reflect on their own assumptions and to distinguish between what ones actually knows (fact) and what one thinks may be true (opinion). So rather than telling students what to believe, as in traditional didactic teaching, the Socratic method assists students to clarify their own views by modeling curiosity (e.g., “I wonder why some people take things that don't belong to them”),

asking relevant questions (e.g., “Why do you think Tim decided to return the missing stopwatch to the coach?”), and listening attentively and respectfully to their answers as they engage in this truth-seeking dialogue (Paul, 1992). It is important also for the teacher to remain patient, kind, and supportive, to acknowledge all students' efforts, to encourage multiple points of view, to avoid defensive or judgmental reactions, and to not overwhelm students with a barrage of quick, random, or unfocused questions. In essence, the teacher should serve as a model of excellence in critical thinking (Marin & Halpern, 2011).

Designed for students ages 12–17 years old, *Philosophy for Adolescents* consists of a set of 40 illustrated fables, arranged in order of increasing difficulty, from a third-grade to an eighth-grade reading level, based on the Flesch–Kincaid Readability metric (Microsoft Word, 2019). Supplemental Material S1 contains the program with guidelines and activities for instruction using the fables. It also contains a protocol for preinstruction assessment using one of the fables. As a point of reference, Table 2 provides normative data for syntactic complexity in adolescents during fable-retelling and critical-thinking tasks (Nippold, Frantz-Kaspar, & Vigeland, 2017).

When using *Philosophy for Adolescents*, students listen to or read a fable aloud, retell it, and answer a set of critical-thinking questions designed to encourage reflection on the theme of the fable and its moral message. Many of the themes are the intellectual traits that Paul identified as essential to strong critical thinking (Paul, 1992; Paul & Elder, 2009). These include, for example, humility, kindness, empathy, autonomy, honesty, and goodwill, and the contrasting traits of arrogance, pretense, conceit, boastfulness, conformity, and hypocrisy. Note that each of these terms is a later developing abstract noun, a type of word that often proves difficult for adolescents to understand, particularly those with weaker academic language skills

Table 2. Measures of syntactic complexity on the fable-retelling (narrative) and critical-thinking tasks for adolescents ($N = 40$; $M_{\text{age}} = 14;0$ [years;months]; age range: 12;10–14;11).

Variable	Fable-retelling	Critical-thinking
Mean length of C-unit (words)		
<i>M</i>	13.27	11.43
<i>SD</i>	2.86	2.55
Range	7.75–23.11	5.72–17.45
Clausal density (mean number of clauses per C-unit)		
<i>M</i>	2.46	2.24
<i>SD</i>	0.55	0.53
Range	1.35–4.00	1.21–3.48

Note. Data appeared in Nippold, Frantz-Kaspar, and Vigeland (2017), p. 1343. Used with permission of American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

(Nippold, 1999). The program, therefore, provides formal Aristotelian definitions of these terms, and the instructor may wish to spend additional time discussing them, depending on the students' needs.

Because fables are narratives, the program employs principles of narrative intervention that research has shown to be effective with students who have typical or disordered language development. Hence, according to a recent review of the literature conducted by Spencer and Petersen (2020), before narrative intervention can be effective, students must be familiar with all story grammar elements (e.g., setting, characters, problem). These can be taught using a graphic organizer that lists each element or represents it with a picture or icon. The graphic organizer is then made available to students when listening to or retelling a story. Once the basic story structure is in place, any difficulties with grammar and complex syntax can be addressed in the context of retelling stories, with the SLP modeling and prompting the use of grammatically correct complex sentences based on the story content (for details, see Nippold & Hayward, 2018). Similarly, vocabulary limitations can be addressed when students encounter unfamiliar words or expressions in the stories. For adolescents, these are likely to include abstract nouns, metacognitive verbs, morphologically complex words, metaphors, similes, idioms, and proverbs (Nippold, 2016b). On those occasions, the SLP can define the terms and assist students to figure out their meanings independently by attending to context clues. Students can also be taught to use the strategy of morphological analysis to determine the meanings of morphologically complex words (e.g., *discontented*) they encounter (for details, see Nippold, 2018). Thus, both macro- (story grammar) and microstructural (syntax, grammar, vocabulary) elements of stories should be addressed during narrative intervention. Spencer and Petersen also reported that it is essential for students to have many opportunities to practice retelling stories, that different stories be used to ensure generalization of newly acquired skills, that students actively participate in the sessions, and that they stay on task by answering questions and responding to other prompts.

Another recent review of the literature on narrative intervention, published by Pico et al. (2021), largely agreed with the conclusions of Spencer and Petersen (2020). In addition, Pico et al. stressed the importance of using visual and verbal prompts, authentic children's literature, and manualized or scripted curricula to assist the instructor, who may or may not be an SLP. They also emphasized that narrative intervention is appropriate for diverse learners, including students who are English language learners, and those with and without identified learning disabilities.

To assist the SLP or teacher in using *Philosophy for Adolescents*, Table 3 lists key principles that research has

Table 3. Key factors that facilitate growth in critical thinking and narrative speaking.

Critical thinking

- Explicit instruction in principles of critical thinking
- Mentoring from teacher with strong critical-thinking skills
- Open dialogue between student and teacher
- Frequent practice, extended over time
- Application to real-world situations
- Open-mindedness, flexible thinking
- Comfort with ambiguity/tolerance for uncertainty
- Ability to defer judgment until more evidence is available (Abrami et al., 2008, 2015; Brown et al., 2014; Daniel & Fiema, 2017; Heijltjes et al., 2014; Marin & Halpern, 2011; Metz et al., 2020; Scales & Tracy, 2017)

Narrative speaking

- Focus on macro- and microstructural elements of stories
- Initial emphasis on story grammar elements to establish basic structure
- Instruction in grammar, complex syntax, and vocabulary, as needed
- Visual and verbal prompts provided
- Manualized or scripted curricula in narrative intervention
- Multiple opportunities to practice telling/retelling stories
- Variety of stories used for telling/retelling, including authentic literature
- High level of student engagement (stay on track, respond frequently, show enthusiasm; Pico et al., 2021; Spencer and Petersen, 2020)

shown are effective and necessary in the teaching of critical thinking (Abrami et al., 2008, 2015; Brown et al., 2014; Daniel & Fiema, 2017; Heijltjes et al., 2014; Marin & Halpern, 2011; Metz et al., 2020; Scales & Tracy, 2017) and narrative discourse (Pico et al., 2021; Spencer & Petersen, 2020). Although most school-based SLPs do not work directly with students *not* identified as having language disorders, as language experts, SLPs have the background knowledge necessary to consult with teachers of regular English or language arts classes, a role that is endorsed by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA, 2010). SLPs who work in middle schools or high schools may therefore wish to collaborate with classroom teachers to organize groups of adolescents who could benefit from structured activities in critical thinking and later developing spoken and written language skills, particularly students from disadvantaged backgrounds. *Philosophy for Adolescents* could then be carried out by a teacher or teaching assistant (TA) with guidance from the SLP. This approach is supported by the results of a recent randomized control trial (Joffe et al., 2019), which indicated that TAs can deliver narrative intervention effectively in regular classrooms to small groups of adolescents with DLD when the instructors are well trained, given a manualized program, monitored for treatment fidelity, and receive ongoing support from knowledgeable and experienced SLPs.

To begin an instructional session with *Philosophy for Adolescents*, each student holds a printed copy of an illustrated fable. For each of the 40 fables, potentially

difficult words or expressions are highlighted in bold to facilitate discussion with the SLP/teacher, depending on the needs of the students in the group. There is also an optional sentence repetition activity that may be used for students who need to improve their ability to produce complex sentences (for details, see Nippold & Hayward, 2018), or for those who simply would like to learn more about different types of subordinate clauses and how they function in sentences. Each fable also has its own set of eight critical-thinking questions that require story comprehension and inferencing. In answering the questions, especially when asked to explain why they agree or disagree with the moral and how it could apply in real life, they are prompted to engage in expository discourse.

Ideally, the intervention is carried out in small groups of three to four adolescents where each student has the opportunity to read the fable aloud (or part of it), retell it, and answer questions concerning its deeper meaning, theme, and moral message. The group setting also creates the opportunity for students to listen to the views of others, respond directly to them, and express their own ideas in a calm and supportive atmosphere. For students who are unable to read at a fable's specified grade level, the SLP/teacher can encourage them to listen and follow along with the printed copy while another student or the SLP/teacher reads the fable aloud. Once a fable has been read aloud several times, depending on the needs of the group, and the meanings of difficult words or expressions have been discussed, the students are ready to retell the story in their own words. To facilitate this process, students may use the story grammar outline, or graphic organizer (provided in Supplemental Material S1), on which they may write quick notes under each listed element. The graphic organizer thus may serve as a scaffold to assist students in retelling the fable. After students have demonstrated their comprehension of a fable by retelling it accurately and completely, hitting all the story grammar elements, they are ready to begin answering the critical-thinking questions. To promote thoughtful responses, especially to the questions concerning the theme and moral message, students could write their answers on the graphic organizer, using full sentences, which they then may read aloud and discuss with the group.

Case Application

Originally, we had planned to implement *Philosophy for Adolescents* in a local middle school with small groups of students ages 12–14 years, as a pilot study that had been approved by the University of Oregon Research Compliance Office. The purpose of the study was to determine if the program would be engaging to adolescents and how well it would encourage reflection on the deeper meanings of fables and generate rich student–teacher dialogue, requiring narrative and expository discourse, complex

syntax, and literate vocabulary. It was also an opportunity to address the CCSS (<http://www.corestandards.org/>) in critical thinking for middle school, as discussed earlier in this clinical focus article. However, in view of the COVID-19 pandemic with its school closures, we decided instead to implement the program with one participant, a 12-year-old girl who was being homeschooled because of the pandemic.

Norm referenced standardized language testing had indicated that “Molly” (not her real name) had typical language development in syntax and semantics. In addition, her parents had reported that she was an academically strong student who was reading above grade level. They also reported that English was Molly's second language, with Mandarin being her first language; however, she had not spoken Mandarin since her adoption from China at age 4 years. Thus, English was considered to be her only language. Given the limited instruction and practice in critical thinking that Molly had received at school, her parents were happy for her to participate in the study, and Molly was an enthusiastic and actively engaged student throughout the study.

Using *Philosophy for Adolescents*, the instruction in critical thinking was conducted by a graduate student clinician (“teacher”) in speech-language pathology, who received guidance from a licensed and ASHA-certified SLP. It began in the spring of Molly's sixth grade year and continued during the summer and fall of her seventh grade year. Thus, Molly and the teacher met over a period of 8 months, usually on a weekly basis (barring scheduling conflicts), for one-on-one sessions of 30–40 min each. During that time, Molly worked through 12 different fables. The instructional activities for each fable were as follows: (a) Teacher reads fable aloud; (b) student retells fable; (c) teacher and student discuss unfamiliar vocabulary; (d) teacher reads fable a second time; (e) student retells fable a second time, using the graphic organizer (filled out); (f) teacher and student discuss critical-thinking questions; and (g) student completes complex syntax activity. Each session covered approximately half of the activities listed above.

For example, one of the fables, *The Hare and the Tortoise*, described an overly confident hare who ridiculed a tortoise for being slow on his feet. Potentially unfamiliar words and idioms included *wager*, *amused*, *plodding*, and *woke up with a start*. The critical-thinking questions asked the student to imagine different perspectives of the two characters, emphasizing ToM, and to reflect on the theme of confidence and the moral message, “Slow and steady wins the race.” The complex syntax activity consisted of six pairs of simple sentences, with examples of how they could be combined using subordinate clauses. For students with DLD who struggle with syntax, this could serve as a sentence repetition task for learning to produce complex sentences. It could also serve as a sentence combining

task, requiring the student to form one complex sentence from two simple sentences. For *Hare and Tortoise*, one pair of simple sentences was, “The hare was confident about himself. The hare lost the race.” These could be combined as, “Although the hare was confident about himself, he lost the race,” using an adverbial clause. Alternatively, a relative clause could be inserted to produce, “The hare who lost the race had been overly confident about himself,” which also contains a past perfect verb form.

Molly was able to retell the fables accurately and completely on her first attempt. During the second retelling of a fable, the graphic organizer provided a framework for discussing various story grammar elements in greater depth, such as the characters’ emotions, thoughts, and motivations for behaving in certain ways. For complex syntax, the pairs of simple sentences were used in a metalinguistic activity where Molly and the teacher talked about main clauses and different types of subordinate clauses, their labels (relative, nominal, and adverbial), and how they function (e.g., “Relative clauses describe things”), with Molly combining the simple sentences in different ways, writing them out, and discussing how clauses change the meaning of a sentence.

During discussions of potentially confusing vocabulary, Molly admitted to not knowing or only partially knowing the meanings of some words and expressions in the fables. To address this issue, the teacher encouraged Molly to use two common word-learning strategies, contextual abstraction and morphological analysis, to figure out those meanings, and also provided some direct instruction by defining the terms, as needed (Nippold, 2014b). In the dialogue below, the teacher (T) helped Molly (M) use context clues and also explained how this strategy operates:

M: But I haven’t heard, well, okay, like, *wager*.

T: Okay, so if I read this sentence, you tell me if you can think of another word that you would fit in there. “I’ll run a race with you and I’ll wager that I will win.”

M: Bet. I would bet.

T: Yeah.

M: You see when you did read that, I did think of “bet.”

T: So, you were using the context clues, so the things within the sentence and the story, to help you understand what that word meant, even though you didn’t know what that word meant.

M: Yeah, so the tortoise did feel like he could win!

Later in that same session, the teacher helped Molly gain a more complete understanding of *amused* by providing the semantic feature she was missing (*entertained*), relating the word to several morphological variations

(*amusing*, *amuse*, and *amusement*), using each one in a sentence, and concluding with a formal definition of the morphologically related word, *amusement*:

M: So, it says, “Okay, replied the hare, who was greatly *amused* by the idea.” So, like, well, it’s like, pleased, or, like, not pleased, but more like. . . I can’t think. . .

T: That’s close. It’s hard to give an exact synonym sometimes. So, yeah, a combination of pleased and kind of *entertained* by the idea. And to think of something *amusing*, it’s kind of something that’s pleasing and kind of entertaining and. . . let’s see if we can think of another version of *amused*. “That toy seemed to really *amuse* that young child.”

M: Yeah, I don’t know.

T: Have you heard the term “*amusement* park”?

M: Oh my gosh! Yeah! I never thought of that one.

T: So, *amusement* is something that, like you said, is pleasing and entertaining.

Every 4–6 weeks, Molly’s initial retelling of a new fable and answering of its critical-thinking questions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, with all mazes enclosed in parentheses and excluded from analysis. Each sample (fable-retelling, critical-thinking) then was segmented into C-units, coded for main and subordinate clauses, and entered into SALT where it was analyzed for verbal productivity (TCU and TWD) and syntactic complexity (MLCU and CD). Each sample was checked by both investigators to ensure correct identification of all mazes, accurate C-unit segmentation, and appropriate clause coding. Initial agreement on each of those metrics exceeded 96%, and all disagreements were resolved through discussion.

These samples also provided a record of the interaction between Molly and the teacher, which could be analyzed for evidence of critical thinking. Table 4 reports the results for six different fables. Inspection of this table confirms Molly’s typical language development in that her overall mean raw scores for MLCU and CD (syntax) were within 1 *SD* of the means reported in Table 2. In addition, her overall mean raw scores indicate that Molly’s verbal productivity was higher during the critical-thinking task compared with the fable-retelling task, but that her syntactic complexity was higher during fable retelling than critical thinking. Higher verbal productivity during the critical-thinking task undoubtedly reflected the large number of questions and comments from the teacher as she and Molly spontaneously engaged in a rich dialogue about the deeper meanings of the fables, their themes, and the moral messages. In contrast, higher syntactic complexity during fable retelling, a narrative activity, reflected the monologic rather than dialogic nature of the task with its

Table 4. Measures of verbal productivity (TCU and TWD) and syntactic complexity (MLCU and CD) derived from Molly's language samples of fable retelling and critical thinking.

Retelling	TCU	TWD	MLCU	CD
1. Fox & Crow	23	239	10.39	2.09
2. Dog & Wolf	16	209	13.06	2.44
3. Hare & Tortoise	16	175	10.94	2.00
4. City & Country Mouse	19	212	11.16	2.00
5. Lion & Dolphin	18	180	10.00	1.56
6. Dog & Shadow	15	149	9.93	1.67
<i>M</i>	17.83	194.00	10.91	1.96
<i>SD</i>	2.93	32.11	1.16	0.31
Range	15–23	149–239	9.93–13.06	1.56–2.44
Critical thinking				
1. Fox & Crow	45	411	9.13	1.69
2. Dog & Wolf	112	1409	12.58	2.50
3. Hare & Tortoise	133	1493	11.23	2.22
4. City & Country Mouse	75	738	9.84	1.76
5. Lion & Dolphin	60	470	7.83	1.55
6. Dog & Shadow	152	1327	8.73	1.50
<i>M</i>	96.17	974.67	9.89	1.87
<i>SD</i>	42.66	491.91	1.74	0.40
Range	45–152	411–1493	7.83–12.58	1.50–2.50

Note. TCU = total communication units; TWD = total words; MLCU = mean length of communication unit; CD = clausal density.

absence of yes/no questions and other prompts that would elicit shorter responses. It is noteworthy that these same patterns had occurred in previous research with adolescents using similar tasks (e.g., Nippold, Vigeland, Frantz-Kaspar, & Ward-Lonergan, 2017).

A crucial part of the program was the teacher's role in discussing the critical-thinking questions. Following Molly's answers to the questions, there were many opportunities for the teacher to encourage Molly to elaborate on her responses, express her opinions, give reasons, reflect on the characters' different perspectives (ToM), and apply each fable's moral message to real-life scenarios. To demonstrate how this unfolded with *Philosophy for Adolescents*, we again consider *Hare and Tortoise* and its moral, "Slow and steady wins the race." One of the critical-thinking questions was, "What can happen when people overestimate their own ability or have too much confidence in themselves?" This question sparked an extended discussion between Molly and the teacher concerning the subtle differences between confidence and overconfidence, with Molly explaining how, much like the hare who assumed he would win the race, she had expected to win a chess game in a recent tournament but lost because her overconfidence caused a break in concentration, leading to mistakes. With the teacher's support, Molly then explained that on the other hand, confidence, or believing in oneself, was a good thing because it comes from having practiced the game, knowing strategies, and feeling ready to do one's best. Thus, the emphasis in this dialogue was not on "getting the right answer to the question" but rather on taking the time to reflect on the theme

of the story and apply it to personal experience. Similarly, when asked why she agreed with the moral of this fable, Molly explained that it is good to take things slowly when learning a new skill, drawing an analogy to slacklining, a sport she enjoys. Consider the dialogue below between Molly and the teacher:

M: If you go really fast, the slackline is going to be a lot bouncier. And then maybe your foot, it's gonna shake a lot more. So, then it's not really good to go fast, like if you practice slow. And you do it over and over. Then you can start speeding up. But in the beginning, you don't wanna go fast. You wanna go slower so you can get your pacing and have a feel for the slackline.

T: Yeah.

M: So maybe that's why, when you want to be slow and not fast.

T: Mm.

M: And like you want to be steady. And it's harder to be steadier when you're going fast on the slackline.

T: That's a good example of how going slowly helps you go more carefully. And if you think of your slackline examples as being kind of the mistakes that happen, if you go fast, then going slowly helps you be careful and more intentional and more decisive with each step.

M: Yeah.

T: Yeah. I think that when we think of slowness that there are a lot of situations like you can think

if you just slowed down, you can do it more carefully and not have to start over or redo, you know?

M: Yeah.

T: You can, um, get farther along where you want to go by being very deliberate.

M: And you can enjoy more things!

T: You can! That's true.

M: How I thought of that was like hikes. Cause you don't want to run the whole trail cause it's harder to take things in.

T: Yeah. That's true. You would miss out on a lot. I like that you mention, like, what you notice, what you see, that you can enjoy it. That's part of feeling like you've done, experienced something deeply is feeling like you really got to enjoy it and take it all in.

M: And like food!

T: Yeah!

M: Like, there's a lot of possibilities, like examples. (discussion continues)

Note how the teacher summarized and reinforced Molly's ideas and helped to extend the discussion to other examples. Moreover, during this dialogue, Molly's ability to go beyond the fable to apply its deeper meaning to real-world scenarios—under the patient and thoughtful guidance of her teacher—reflected an advanced level of critical thinking as defined in previous research (Nippold et al., 2020). In that study, a scoring system had been created to measure the degree of critical thinking in adolescents who were asked to explain why they agreed or disagreed with the moral message of each fable. Based on Kuhn's (1999) developmental model that critical thinking requires one to separate a statement (e.g., moral message) from the reasons and evidence that support or refute it (e.g., facts and examples), each explanation could earn up to 4 points: 0 = *no evidence of critical thinking*; 1 = *concrete thinking*; 2 = *emergent critical thinking*; 3 = *intermediate critical thinking*; 4 = *advanced critical thinking*. For example, consider *The Rooster and the Fox* and its moral, "Beware of the sudden offers of friendship." One participant who showed concrete thinking (1 point) agreed with the moral but simply retold the story without relating it to any real-world experiences. In contrast, another participant who showed advanced critical thinking (4 points) explained how true friendship takes time, citing experiences where people who sought immediate alliances with others had ulterior motives.

During discussions with her teacher, Molly's explanations of the fables' moral messages typically showed intermediate to advanced levels of critical thinking, which would have earned scores of 3 or 4 points if we had formally used the scoring system of Nippold et al. (2020). Although it is unknown how Molly would have performed without the teacher's strong and insightful scaffolding, it

suggests that *Philosophy for Adolescents* has the potential to assist other adolescents to reach high levels of critical thinking when supported by a well-informed mentor.

Conclusions

Large-scale research is necessary to implement and evaluate the program with students from diverse backgrounds, having differing levels of language competence and academic achievement. It would be especially useful to involve groups of students in those studies where they would have the opportunity to dialogue with their peers as well as their teachers, over extended periods of time, to determine how language and critical thinking may improve under this type of structured mentorship. It will also be important to measure the extent to which students' newly learned critical-thinking and language skills generalize to other situations or if additional instruction is necessary to assist them to apply their skills under novel conditions. We look forward to conducting future research in this area, and we invite other clinicians and researchers to download Supplemental Material S1 and implement *Philosophy for Adolescents* in schools.

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Philosophy for Adolescents: An Overview
Marilyn A. Nippold (2022)

Critical thinking occurs when an individual can analyze statements or arguments that represent diverse points of view and then decide independently what to believe or how to behave. Although critical thinking improves during the adolescent years (Nippold, LaFavre, & Shinham, 2020), many students struggle in this area, particularly in being able to offer reasons and evidence to support their own views. Students from low-income and other disadvantaged backgrounds and those who have language or learning difficulties are particularly at risk for poor critical thinking skills. This suggests they could benefit from instruction in critical thinking.

Although some schools offer this type of instruction, many do not, and although strong critical thinking requires competence in spoken and written language, it is not routinely addressed by speech-language pathologists (SLPs) who work with adolescents in middle schools or high schools. Hence, the language arts program *Philosophy for Adolescents* was designed by Marilyn Nippold for SLPs and other school-based professionals to use with students ages 12-17 years old. Based on empirical research in critical thinking, education, psychology, speech-language pathology, and later language development, *Philosophy for Adolescents* also builds on the foundational work of philosopher Richard Paul (Paul, 1992; Paul & Elder, 2009), an international authority on critical thinking who was influenced by Socrates and Plato.

The program consists of 40 fables attributed to the Greek storyteller Aesop (c. 620-564 BC). Many of the fables focus on the ethical themes that Paul argued were the essential intellectual traits of strong critical thinkers. Examples include *empathy*, *integrity*, and *humility*, along with their contrasting traits of *self-interest*, *deception*, and *arrogance*. Sessions using the program are carried out individually or in small groups of 3-4 students led by a mentor who facilitates an open discussion of the themes, moral messages, and possible consequences of behaving in certain ways that present ethical dilemmas. Students are encouraged to indicate if they agree or disagree with the moral messages, to give solid reasons and clear evidence to support their views, and to listen respectfully to the opinions of others. In this way, students learn openness to different points of view. They also learn to analyze information, to decide for themselves what to believe, to justify their beliefs, and to express themselves using advanced language skills. Thus, the emphasis is on teaching students *how* to think rather than *what* to think, and how to communicate with accuracy, clarity, and efficiency (ACE). Examples of the essential advanced language skills include the use and understanding of narrative and expository discourse, complex sentences, metacognitive and metalinguistic verbs, and abstract nouns.

Designed for flexible application, *Philosophy for Adolescents* may be employed by SLPs working independently or collaboratively with classroom teachers, teaching assistants, or other school professionals. Moreover, the informed mentor can adapt the program for students who

have language or learning difficulties as well as those who have typical language development but need a boost in their ability to listen to others, organize their thoughts, and speak confidently.

Fables Supplement with Illustrations

Philosophy for Adolescents

Marilyn A. Nippold (2022)

Procedures for pre-instruction assessment (for speech-language pathologists/SLPs)

Directions for the SLP to elicit fable retell and critical-thinking responses (adapted from Nippold, Frantz-Kaspar, Cramond, Kirk, Hayward-Mayhew, & MacKinnon, 2014; Nippold, Frantz-Kaspar, Cramond, Kirk, Hayward-Mayhew, & MacKinnon, 2015; and Nippold, Vigeland, Frantz-Kaspar, & Ward-Lonergan, 2017).

This pre-instruction assessment is recommended when SLPs plan to use the program with adolescents who have developmental language disorder (DLD).

Narrative Interview (Fables) Protocol

Choose any one of the 40 fables. To elicit a language sample, follow the directions below:

(Interviewer reads the following introduction SLOWLY AND CLEARLY...)

"This is a storytelling activity that involves fables. Fables are imaginary stories about animals, objects, and other creatures that act like people. I am going to read you a fable. Please listen carefully. Be ready to tell the story back to me, in your own words. Try to remember as much as you can so that you can tell the whole story back to me. After you finish, I will ask you some questions about the story. There are no penalties for incorrect answers. I just want to know what you think about the stories. Are you ready? (pause and allow student time to respond; answer any questions the student might have). OK, here we go!"

Show fable card to student (e.g., #8 *The Dog in the Manger*)

1. Choose a fable (e.g., #8 *The Dog in the Manger*). Print out a copy of the fable and picture for yourself and one for the student. Read the story slowly and clearly to the student, as he/she follows along with a printed copy; draw student's attention to the illustration.
2. Turn on audio-recorder (make sure it is recording the student).
3. Ask student to retell the story (show the picture but cover up the printed story).
4. After student has retold the fable, ask the critical-thinking questions #1-8. Go Slowly. Allow student time to think; do not rush the answers as they require thoughtfulness.
5. Be sure to audio-record the student's answers to the questions.

Analysis:

1. Transcribe interview (both examiner and student) verbatim (including mazes), in Word.
2. Create a separate SALT file for fable retelling and for the critical-thinking questions.
3. Copy and enter each file into SALT.
4. Segment into C-units.
5. Parenthesize all mazes.
6. Enter SI code after each utterance. Count the total number of verbs; each verb represents a clause. Then use the drop-down menu to enter the correct number. If you include all verbs, the SI composite will equate to Clausal Density (CD).

Key factors to analyze for *each* sample, fable retelling and answering critical-thinking questions:

1. Mean Length of C-unit (MLCU), a measure of syntactic development
2. Clausal Density (CD), a measure of syntactic development
3. Total number of C-units (TCU), a measure of verbal productivity
4. Total number of words (TWD), a measure of verbal productivity

Analysis of critical-thinking questions:

1. Questions 1-4 require story comprehension and inferential ability. Note the accuracy in which the student answers the questions, based on the story content. If the student does not understand the story well, he/she will have difficulty understanding the theme and moral.
2. Questions 5-8 pertain to the theme and moral message of the fable. Strong answers will involve stating multiple reasons for why they agree or disagree and offering one or more examples of where the moral would or would not apply in real life situations. Note how well the student can answer these questions, elaborate on the details, and show originality.

Procedures for instruction using fables (*Philosophy for Adolescents*):

Directions for instructor to support critical-thinking and complex language skills using fables:

Setting

Students work with instructor in small groups of 3-4 students. All sit around a table holding a copy of the fable (with its illustration) to be retold and discussed. Each student also has a pencil and a story grammar graphic organizer to jot down quick notes and to write answers to some of the critical-thinking questions, especially those concerning the theme and moral message (Questions 5-8).

Steps

1. Instructor reads fable aloud, while students listen.

2. Students underline any difficult words and expressions (including those in bold).
3. Students and instructor discuss meanings of difficult words and expressions and learn to use common word-learning strategies which include morphological analysis, contextual abstraction, and consulting a dictionary or knowledgeable person for a definition.
4. Instructor or student reads story again.
5. Students fill out graphic organizer, writing quick notes under each story grammar element.
6. Students and instructor discuss each story grammar element, especially the thoughts, feelings, motivations, and goals of the characters.
7. Students take turns retelling the fable aloud; they are encouraged to listen to each other.
8. If a student retells a story incorrectly, another student may politely offer their own view of what happened.
9. Once students understand the fable and can retell it accurately and completely in their own words (not verbatim), they are ready to answer the critical-thinking questions.
10. As students answer the questions, instructor should encourage multiple points of view.
11. Students can be encouraged to write their answers to the questions on the graphic organizer, especially questions 5-8 concerning the theme and moral message.
12. For students who struggle with complex syntax, the sentence combining activities can be used (as explained below).

Goals for Adolescents

Complex language skills:

1. To increase the use of complex syntax, measured in terms of mean length of communication unit (MLCU) and clausal density (CD).
2. To increase verbal productivity, measured in terms of the total number of communication units (TCU) produced and total number of words produced (TWD).
3. To increase the use and understanding of advanced vocabulary such as abstract nouns, derived nominals, derived adjectives, metacognitive verbs, metalinguistic verbs, and figurative expressions (metaphors, similes, idioms, proverbs).
4. To increase the accuracy, organization, and clarity of spoken language through the use of a story grammar graphic organizer and repeated practice retelling fables.
5. To increase the student's ability to use complex sentences that contain a variety of subordinate clause types (relative, adverbial, nominal) through sentence repetition, sentence completion, and sentence combining activities (as explained below).
6. To build students' confidence and self-esteem as they retell fables and answer critical-thinking questions. As their understanding of the stories increases, their retelling ability should also improve, leading to greater confidence and self-esteem as a communicator.
7. To encourage students to listen to their peers respectfully (to build social pragmatics).
8. To encourage students to make good eye contact with others as speakers and listeners.

9. To increase students' motivation to become good speakers. To accomplish this, we can remind students that in ancient Greece, the ability to tell a good fable was a mark of distinction. Good storytellers were respected leaders in their community.

Critical thinking:

1. To increase students' ability to analyze information and to decide for themselves what to believe, based on having knowledge of the facts and being clear, logical, and accurate.
2. To increase students' ability to consider other points of view by listening (not interrupting), showing respect, and allowing others to finish what they are saying.
3. To encourage students to *reflect* on complex information, not to dismiss it quickly. Reflection can be encouraged by having students **write** their answers to some of the critical-thinking questions following the fables, especially those questions (#5-8) that ask about the theme and moral message of each fable. After they have written out their answers, students can read them aloud to the group. Discussion among the group members and instructor can be encouraged by having them ask and answer questions of each other. Multiple points of view should be encouraged and discussed calmly and courteously.
4. Instructor should regularly reinforce student behavior that is patient, kind, and respectful. If not, we can say, for example, "What is another way we could talk to John that is kinder?" "How could we ask that question in a different, kinder way?"
5. To express one's own ideas with confidence (to "stand up and speak your mind!") and to support those ideas with solid reasons and clear evidence (examples from real life).

Tips for the Instructor

As mentioned above, these activities are meant to be carried out in small groups of 3-4 students. It is important that students have repeated practice retelling the stories, discussing the meanings of difficult words and expressions, producing a variety of simple and complex sentences, and reflecting on the critical-thinking questions.

1. Multiple sessions will be needed to cover each fable. It is better to go slowly than to try to cover too much ground in one session. Students need time to digest the information.
2. In order to answer the critical-thinking questions, students must understand the stories well (e.g., be able to retell the story accurately, using the graphic organizer; understand the vocabulary, etc.). This requires time and patience on our part and a willingness to listen as students try to express themselves, however effortful it may be for them.
3. The critical-thinking questions are difficult and students need time to think about them. Each question should be addressed patiently and calmly, taking as much time as necessary for students to come up with their own thoughtful answers. The instructor can ask additional questions to prompt dialogue among the group members. The Socratic dialogue is a way to encourage students to come up with their own solid answers.

4. The instructor can prompt students to ask themselves if something is a fact or an opinion, and how we can tell the difference. How can statements be verified? What is evidence?
5. We expect students to struggle, especially if they have DLD. However, if we provide consistent encouragement and support, they will improve over time. On the other hand, if they receive criticism or if we are impatient or unhappy with their sincere efforts, they may shut down, stop trying, and feel bad about themselves.
6. Students also need encouragement to listen closely to their peers as they try to express themselves. We can model this behavior in our own interactions with students by waiting until a speaker finishes and pausing briefly before we start to respond to them.
7. When students struggle to answer questions or to express themselves, focus on their strengths and offer support. For example, if an answer is unclear, say, "Do you mean X?" If an answer is off-topic, say, "That's an interesting idea," or "You might be right." "But what do you think about X? I'd like to know what you think about X."
8. If students cannot immediately answer a question, give them more time. In some cases, it is best to come back to it later. Say, for example, "That's a hard question. Let's think about that. We can come back to it later."
9. Students should be encouraged to admit when they don't know something or if something is unclear. They could be taught to say, "I don't know," "I'm not sure," or "That's confusing. Could you please explain it again?" This will help build personal insight.
10. If students cannot think of the appropriate word, try to provide it for them. Then allow them to restate the entire sentence or question, using the appropriate word themselves.
11. Stay within the intervention guidelines in this document, but feel free to adapt the fable activities to accommodate different students. For example, many students will need to repeat one or more aspects of the activities several times or will need to hear the stories/sentences multiple times. Some students will be unable to read them aloud, independently. In that case, they can be encouraged to listen to the stories while someone else (student, instructor) reads them aloud as they follow along with a printed copy. The stories also may be pre-recorded by a professional-sounding speaker and replayed later.
12. When reading the fables, students who are good readers could be asked to read them aloud; but for those who struggle to read, they could be asked to answer simple questions, perhaps by completing a sentence, e.g., "The fox was frustrated because (He couldn't reach the grapes). The point is that all students should participate as much as they are able and no individual should feel embarrassed about being unable to do something.

General Procedures

1. The 40 fables are arranged in sequence from easier to more difficult, based on their Flesch-Kincaid readability level (Microsoft Word, 2019), Grades 3 through 8. This is shown at the top of the first page of each fable. However, keep in mind that some "easier" fables from a readability standpoint may actually be more difficult than others because they contain more challenging concepts.

2. Present each fable to the students in the following manner:
 - A. Give each student a printed copy of the fable (with illustration); encourage them to follow along as you read it aloud – slowly, clearly, and with interest.
 - B. Then say: "This is a storytelling activity that involves fables. Fables are imaginary stories about animals, objects, and other creatures that act like people. I am going to read you a fable. Please listen carefully, and be ready to tell it back to me, in your own words. Try to remember as much as you can so that you can tell the whole story back to me. After you finish, I will ask you some questions about the story. There are no penalties for incorrect answers. I just want to know what you think. Are you ready? (Pause and allow students time to answer...). Here's the first one."
3. Present the fable (read story carefully to students, as they follow along with a printed copy of the fable; draw students' attention to the illustration).
4. Make sure students understand all words (e.g., *temper*, *provoke*, *fortunate*) and figurative expressions such as idioms (e.g., *take for granted*, *nose around*, *tooth and claw*, *take to his heels*, *sent him packing*, *bring you down*) and proverbs (the moral messages).
5. Review the vocabulary highlighted in bold and any other words or expressions that students indicate they do not understand or only partially understand.
6. To accomplish this, model the common word-learning strategy of **morphological analysis**, where possible. Then, encourage students to perform a morphological analysis of some of the difficult words or expressions themselves, for example:

Key word = "discontented." (from #21 *The Peacock and Juno*)

 - A. Can you find the root word? (*content*) Underline it with your pencil or pen.
 - B. Do you know what it means? (*to be content means to be happy*)
 - C. Can you find a prefix? (e.g., *dis*). Circle it with your pencil or pen.
 - D. Do you know what it means? (it means "not")
 - E. So, what do you think "discontent" might mean? (not happy)
 - F. Can you find a suffix? (e.g., *ed*) Circle it with your pencil or pen.
 - G. Do you know what that suffix does? (it describes a state – to be discontented; to be unhappy)
7. Also, model the common word-learning strategy of **contextual abstraction** where possible. This is when context clues are used to figure out the meanings of words and expressions. Ask students if they can infer the meanings of key words and phrases from information in the story, for example:

Key word = "upbraided" (from #15 *The Lion and the Dolphin*)

 - A. It says that the lion *upbraided* the dolphin when he said to the dolphin, "I could have been killed. And yet you never turned a fin to help me."
 - B. When the lion was fighting the bull, how did the lion feel about the dolphin's inaction?
 - C. What tells you this?
 - D. So, what do you think *upbraided* means?

Key expression = "take to his heels" (from #34 *The Bear and the Bees*)

- A. It says that when the whole swarm of bees went after him, the bear *took to his heels*.
 - B. What did the bear do when the bees went after him?
 - C. How did the bear feel? What helped him escape from the bees?
 - D. So, what does it mean to "take to your heels"?
8. As needed, directly tell students the meanings of difficult words and expressions, or encourage them to use a dictionary, if it is not possible to use other strategies.
 9. Read story again, as students follow along with the printed copy. Have students fill out the story grammar graphic organizer by writing quick notes below each element.
 10. Ask one student in the group to retell the fable, using the graphic organizer as a guide.
 11. Encourage all students to use the graphic organizer during fable retelling, referring to their own notes to assist them in retelling it (but not reading the notes aloud).
 12. More than one student can retell the same fable, using their own notes.
 13. Students can discuss the details of the story, politely mentioning anything that another student omitted or stated incorrectly. This is an opportunity to work on **pragmatics** (e.g., being courteous, tactful, making eye contact, raising one's hand for a speaking turn, using a positive tone of voice) as well as using appropriate syntax and vocabulary.
 14. Encourage use of complex syntax, including the following types of subordinate clauses:
 - A. Adverbial, e. g., When the dog looked at his reflection in the water, he grabbed at the meat," "If I plan this right, I will have cheese for supper," etc.
 - B. Relative, e.g., "A flatterer is a person who falsely praises another." Encourage students to use relative clauses to define abstract nouns in this formal, literate manner ("Aristotelian" defining style).
 - C. Nominal, e.g., "The crow *thought that the fox really liked her*." Encourage students to use a variety of metacognitive verbs (*know, think, feel, believe, assume*) to describe the inner states of the characters, thereby producing nominal clauses, e.g., "The fox *thought that he could trick the crow*," "The proud oak tree did not *know that he had some weaknesses*," "The reeds *understood that flexibility was important*."
 15. Use metalinguistic strategies to enhance production of complex syntax, following this hierarchy that is increasingly difficult:
 - A. Model complex sentences with each type of clause; students listen or read along.
 - B. Imitation of complex sentences— ask students to repeat after you.
 - C. Completion of complex sentences— provide the first half; ask student to complete it, e.g., "The stag admired his antlers as he ... (drank from the pool of cool water)."
 - D. Combining of simple sentences – have student combine two or three short, simple sentences, into one complex sentence, e.g., "The stag admired his antlers. The stag drank the cool water. The stag admired his antlers as he drank the cool water."
 - E. Practice sentence completion and sentence combining activities by typing the students' sentences into a laptop computer. Then have the students critique and edit their own sentences. Save these examples over time to monitor their progress.

- F. In this way, the SLP can track progress of each group of students over time. Save and date the final written product from each lesson; then pick up from there to expand the sentences, add details, etc. Over time, you should see progress (e.g., increases in MLCU, CD, TCU, TWD, critical thinking, offering examples from the real world).
- G. Over time, students should also become more confident, assertive, and talkative. This is progress!

Story Grammar Graphic Organizer for Retelling Fables

(Adapted from Sun & Nippold, 2012)

The outline below will help you organize your thoughts as you retell a fable. Feel free to make a few quick notes on this page, under each point. Then, refer to the outline as you retell the fable.

1. Tell where the events took place (the **setting**).
2. Tell who the main actors are, e.g., animals, objects, creatures (the **characters**).
3. Tell everything that happened in the story (the **plot**).
4. Tell about the problems that came up (**problems**).
5. Explain what the characters tried to do and what they said (**attempts**).
6. Explain how things turned out (**outcome**).
7. Tell how everyone felt during the events (their **thoughts**).

Definitions and examples of Communication units (C-units) and different types of clauses

From Nippold et al (2017, p. 920).

Communication Unit:

An utterance that contains one main clause and any subordinate clauses that are attached to it.

For example:

A storm came up suddenly.

There was once an oak tree that was very tall.

An utterance that contains two main clauses but has a single subject is also counted as a C-unit.

For example, the following sentence contains two coordinated main clauses:

He thought it was another dog and grabbed at the piece of meat.

A C-unit can also include answers to questions that lack a main clause. For example:

Yes.

OK.

Not really.

Comments that add meaning to the discourse (and are not mazes) but lack a main clause are also included as C-units because they reflect natural communication. For example:

And things like that.

And now for the moral.

To exclude these types of utterances from analysis would not reflect natural language use.

Clause Types:

Main clause: Contains a subject and a predicate and can stand alone. For example:

The dog ran after the cat.

The cat hid under the bush.

Subordinate clauses: Usually attached to a main clause to express meaning; includes adverbial, relative, nominal, infinitive, participial, and gerundive clauses.

Adverbial: Provides information about condition, manner, reason, or time. For example:

Once you get to school, you'll find your locker.

The deer got trapped in the woods as his antlers twisted into the bushes.

We ate snacks because we were hungry.

Before the movie began, we bought popcorn.

Relative: Modifies the noun that precedes it, much like an adjective. For example:

There was a tall tree that grew by a riverbank.

Nominal: Completes a thought introduced by the main clause. For example:

The fox believed he could trick the crow.

Infinitive: Contains a verb in the infinitive (unmarked) form (to X). For example:

She was trying to run home.

Participial: Describes an object or event. For example:

Smiling at the teacher, the boy hoped for a good grade.

Gerundive: Acts like an object or other entity. For example:

Treading water saved us from drowning in the ocean.

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Fables

#1 *The Dog and the Wolf*

Adapted from "Fables with Morals," <http://www.aesopfables.com/email.html>

Flesch-Kincaid: 3.4

A skinny old wolf was almost dead with hunger when he happened to meet a housedog who was passing by. "Ah, Cousin Wolf," said the housedog. "I know how you must be struggling. Your **irregular** life will soon be **the ruin of you**. Why don't you work steadily as I do, and get your food and lodging **regularly** given to you?"

"I would have no **objection**," said the wolf, "if only I could get a place."

"I will easily arrange that for you," said the housedog. "Come with me to meet my owner and you shall share my work."

So, the wolf and the dog went towards the town together. On the way there, the wolf noticed that the hair on a certain part of the dog's neck was worn away. So, he asked him how that had come about.

"Oh, it is nothing," said the dog. "That is only the place where the collar is put on at night to keep me chained up. It **chafes** a bit, but one soon gets used to it."

"Is that all?" said the wolf. "Then good bye to you, Mister Dog."

The moral of the story is, "Better starve free than be a plump **captive**."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. Why did the dog suggest to the wolf that he try to get a job?
2. What did the wolf think when he saw the state of the dog's neck?
3. How did the *dog* feel about working for his owner?
4. How did the *wolf* feel about working for the owner?
5. This story is about **freedom**, the state of being able to do whatever you want. Do you think it is *good* to have **freedom**? Why/why not? Is freedom ever a *bad* thing? Explain.
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "Better starve free than be a plump **captive**"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. The wolf met a housedog. The housedog was passing by.
The wolf met a housedog who was passing [REL] by.
2. The wolf was hungry and tired. The wolf did not have any food or lodging.
The wolf was hungry and tired because he did not have [ADV] any food or lodging.
3. The housedog tried to help the wolf. He offered to share his work with him.
The housedog tried to help the wolf when he offered [ADV] to share his work with him.
4. The wolf noticed something on the housedog's neck. The fur on his neck was worn away.
The wolf noticed that the fur on the dog's neck was worn [NOM] away.
5. The dog wore a collar. The collar kept him chained up all night.
The dog wore a collar that kept [REL] him chained up all night.
6. The wolf was afraid of the collar. The collar would take away his freedom.
The wolf was afraid that the collar would take [NOM] away his freedom.

#2 *The Cat and the Fox*

Adapted from Grosset & Dunlap (1947), p. 111-112.

Flesch-Kincaid: 3.5

One day, a fox was **boasting** to a cat about how **clever** he was. "Why, I have a whole **bag of tricks**," he **bragged**. "For instance, I know of at least a hundred different ways of escaping my enemies, the dogs."

"How remarkable," said the cat. "As for me, I have only one trick, but I usually make it work. I wish you could teach me some of your tricks."

"Well, sometime when I have nothing else to do," said the fox. "I might teach you one or two of my easier tricks."

Just at that moment, they heard the **yelping** of a pack of hounds. The hounds were coming straight toward the spot where the cat and the fox stood. **Like a flash**, the cat scampered up a tree and disappeared into the **foliage**. "This is the trick I told you about," she called down to the fox. "It's my only one. Which trick are you going to use?"

The fox sat there trying to decide which of his many tricks he was going to **employ**. Nearer and nearer came the hounds. When it was too late, the fox decided to run for it. However, even before he started running, the dogs were upon him. That was the end of the fox, bagful of tricks and all.

The moral of the story is, "One good plan that works is better than a hundred **doubtful** ones."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. Why did the fox think he was smarter than the cat?
2. What was the cat thinking when she heard the dogs yelping?
3. How about the fox. What was he thinking when he heard the dogs yelping?
4. Why couldn't the fox decide what trick to use to get away from the dogs?
5. This story is about **boastfulness**, a condition where people say great things about themselves. Why do people boast about themselves to others? Is it good to be boastful or is it always a problem? Explain your answer.
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "One good plan that works is better than a hundred doubtful ones"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. The fox was boasting to the cat. The fox knew one hundred different tricks.
The fox boasted that he knew [NOM] one hundred different tricks.
2. The cat had only one trick. The cat's trick usually worked.
The cat had only one trick that usually worked [REL].
3. The cat asked for the fox's help. The fox could teach the cat some tricks.
The cat asked the fox if he could teach [NOM] her some tricks.
4. The hounds were running quickly towards the cat and the fox. The cat ran up the tree.
Because the hounds were running [ADV] quickly towards the cat and fox, the cat ran up the tree.
5. The fox just sat there. He could not decide about his best trick.
The fox just sat there because he could not decide [ADV] about his best trick.
6. The hounds were running quickly. The hounds caught the fox.
The hounds that were running [REL] quickly caught the fox.

#3 *The Oak and the Reed*

Adapted from Grosset & Dunlap (1947, p. 179)

Flesch-Kincaid: 3.6

A **proud** oak tree grew upon the bank of a stream. For a full hundred years, it had **withstood** the **buffeting** of the winds. However, one day, there came a **violent** storm. The great oak tree fell with a mighty crash into the **swollen** river and was carried down toward the sea.

Later, the oak tree came to rest on the shore where some **reeds** were growing. The tree was **amazed** to see the reeds standing upright.

"How ever did you manage to weather that terrible storm?" he asked. "I have stood up against many a storm. But this one was too strong for me."

"That's just it," replied one of the reeds. "All these years you have **stubbornly pitted** your great strength against the wind. You were too **proud** to **yield** a little. I, on the other hand, knowing my weaknesses, just bend and let the wind blow over me without trying to **resist** it. The harder the wind blows, the more I **humble** myself. So here I am!"

The moral of the story is, "It is better to bend than to break."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. How did the oak tree feel when he crashed into the river?
2. Why was the oak tree surprised to see the reeds standing upright?
3. What did the reed mean when he said, "You were too proud to yield a little?"
4. Why did the reed say that he bends and lets the wind blow over him?
5. This story is about **stubbornness**, the state of being unwilling to change one's views or behavior. Is stubbornness always a *bad* thing, or can it sometimes be a *good* thing? Please explain.
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "It is better to bend than to break?"
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. The oak tree was proud. He had grown next to a stream for one hundred years.
The oak tree was proud because he had grown [ADV] next to a stream for one hundred years.
2. One day, a violent windstorm came along. The storm knocked the oak tree into the river.
The windstorm was so strong that it knocked [NOM] the oak tree into the river.
3. The oak tree saw some reeds by the river. The reeds were still standing upright.
The oak tree saw some reeds by the river that were still standing [REL] upright.
4. The oak tree was proud and not humble. The reeds were humble and not proud.
Although the oak tree was [ADV] proud, the reeds were humble.
5. The oak tree was very stubborn. He could not yield to anyone else.
The oak tree was so stubborn that he could not yield [NOM] to anyone else.
6. The reeds let the wind blow over them. The reeds did not get destroyed.
The reeds that let the wind blow [REL] over them did not get destroyed.

#4 *The Hare and the Tortoise*

Adapted from *Aesop's Fables* (2013, p. 102), Canterbury Classics: San Diego, CA: Printer's Row Publishing Group
Flesch-Kincaid: 3.6

One day, a hare was making fun of a tortoise for being so slow on his feet. Tired of being teased by the hare, the tortoise said, "Wait a minute! I'll run a race with you and I'll **wager** that I will win."

"Okay, replied the hare, who was greatly **amused** by the idea. "Let's try it and see what happens." Soon they agreed to run a race. They also agreed that the fox would set a course for them and be the judge.

When the time came, the hare and the tortoise started the race together. However, before long, the hare was so far ahead that he thought he could take a rest, and he lay down and fell fast asleep. Meanwhile, the tortoise kept **plodding** on, and in time, he reached the goal.

At last, the hare woke up **with a start**. He began running as fast as he could. However, it was too late to make up for lost time, because the tortoise had already won the race.

The moral of this story is, "Slow and steady wins the race."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. Why did the hare enjoy making fun of the tortoise?
2. How did the tortoise feel about the hare's negative comments?
3. Why did the hare accept the offer to run a race?
4. How did the tortoise feel when he crossed the finish line ahead of the hare?
5. This story is about **confidence**, a condition where people feel good about their skills and believe in themselves. What can happen when people *overestimate* their skills or have too much **confidence** in themselves?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "Slow and steady wins the race"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral would apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. The hare teased the tortoise. The tortoise was slow on his feet.
The hare teased the tortoise who was [REL] slow on his feet.
2. The hare could run quickly. The hare could win the race.
The hare believed that he could win [NOM] the race.
3. The tortoise ran slowly. The hare ran quickly.
Although the tortoise ran [ADV] slowly, the hare ran quickly.
4. The hare believed in himself. He could win the race.
The hare believed that he could win [NOM] the race.
5. The tortoise was slow and persistent. The tortoise won the race.
The tortoise who was [REL] slow and persistent won the race.
6. The hare was confident about himself. The hare lost the race.
Even though the hare was [ADV] confident about himself, he lost the race.

#5 The Ant and the Dove

Adapted from Grosset & Dunlap (1947, p. 36)

Flesch-Kincaid: 4.1

One day, a thirsty ant went to a spring for a drink of water. While climbing down a blade of grass to reach the spring, the ant fell into the water. He was about to drown. However, a dove in a nearby tree could see what was happening. Quickly, the dove picked off a leaf from the tree. Then, she let it drop into the water, near the struggling ant. The ant climbed onto the leaf, and floated safely to shore.

That same day, a hunter was spreading his net, hoping to catch the dove. However, the **gratified** ant **perceived** the hunter's plan. So, the ant bit the hunter in the ankle. **Startled**, the hunter dropped his net and the dove flew away to safety.

The moral of this story is, "One good turn deserves another."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. Why do you think the ant fell into the water?
2. What did the ant think when he was struggling in the water?
3. How did the ant feel when he saw the dove with the leaf?
4. How did the ant know that the hunter was planning to capture the dove?
5. This story is about **gratitude**, the state of being thankful for the assistance of others. Why did the ant bite the hunter on the ankle? Was that a *good* thing to do? Please explain.
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "One good turn deserves another"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. The ant was thirsty. He fell into the water.
The ant who was thirsty [REL] fell into the water.
2. The dove saw the ant's danger. She plucked a leaf from a tree.
When the dove saw the ant's danger [ADV], she plucked a leaf from a tree.
3. The dove thought of something. The ant might drown in the water.
The dove thought that the ant might drown [NOM] in the water.
4. A hunter was spreading his net. He planned to capture the dove.
A hunter who was spreading [REL] his net planned to capture the dove.
5. However, the ant saw the hunter. The ant bit the hunter on the ankle.
However, because the ant saw [ADV] the hunter, he bit him on the ankle.
6. The hunter felt a sharp pain in his ankle. He was surprised.
The hunter was surprised that he felt [NOM] a sharp pain in his ankle.

#6 *The Fox and the Crow*

Adapted from Grosset & Dunlap (1947, p. 5-6)

Flesch-Kincaid: 4.1

A crow who had stolen a piece of cheese was flying toward the top of a tall tree where she hoped to enjoy her prize. Suddenly, a fox spied her. "If I plan this right," said the fox to himself, "I shall have cheese for supper."

Therefore, as he sat under the tree, he began to speak in his politest tones. "Good day, Miss Crow! How well you are looking today! Your wings are so **glossy**! Your eyes twinkle like stars! And your claws – I beg your pardon – your *talons* are as **strong as steel**! I have not heard your voice, but I am certain that it must **surpass** that of any other bird, just as your beauty does."

The **vain** crow was pleased by all this **flattery**. She believed every word of it, and wiggled her tail and flapped her wings to show her pleasure. She especially liked what Friend Fox had said about her voice, for she had sometimes been told that her **caw** was a bit **rusty**.

So, chuckling to think how she was going to surprise the fox with her most beautiful song, she opened wide her mouth. Down dropped the piece of cheese!

The **wily** fox snatched it before it touched the ground. And as he walked away, licking his chops, he offered these words of **advice** to the silly crow. "The next time someone praises your beauty, be sure to **hold your tongue**."

The moral of the story is, "Beware of **flatterers**."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. Why did the crow take her stolen cheese to the branch of a tall tree?
2. Why did the fox tell the crow that she was beautiful?
3. How did the crow feel when the fox paid her so many compliments?
4. How did the crow feel when she dropped her piece of cheese?
5. This story is about **deception**, a condition where people try to fool each other by lying. Is **deception** ever a good thing? Why/why not?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "Beware of flatterers"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. The crow stole some cheese. She was flying to the top of a tree.
The crow who stole some cheese [REL] was flying to the top of a tree.
2. The fox saw the crow in the tree with cheese in her beak. He made a plan.
When the fox saw [ADV] the crow in the tree with cheese in her beak, he made a plan.
3. The fox wanted the crow's cheese for himself. He talked nicely to the crow.
The fox talked nicely to the crow because he wanted [ADV] the cheese for himself.
4. The fox believed in himself. He could trick the crow through flattery.
The fox believed that he could trick [NOM] the crow through flattery.
5. The crow was flattered by the fox. She dropped her cheese.
The crow who was flattered [REL] by the fox dropped her cheese.
6. The crow believed the fox's words. The fox praised the quality of her voice.
The crow believed that the fox enjoyed [NOM] the quality of her voice.

#7 *The Peacock and the Crane*

Adapted from *The Aesop for Children* (1993, p. 64), New York, NY: Barnes & Noble Books
Flesch-Kincaid: 4.3

A peacock, **puffed up** with **vanity**, met a crane one day. To **impress** the crane, the peacock spread his **gorgeous** tail feathers in the sun.

"Look," said the peacock. "What do you have to compare with this? I am dressed in all the **glory of the rainbow**, while your feathers are **as gray as dust!**"

The crane spread his broad wings and flew up toward the sun. "Follow me if you can," he said. However, the peacock could not fly very high. Therefore, he had to stay among the birds of the barnyard – the hens and roosters – while the crane **soared in freedom** far up into the blue sky.

The moral of this story is, "the **useful** is much more important than the **ornamental.**"



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. Why did the peacock think he was superior to the crane?
2. Why did the crane ask the peacock to follow him up toward the sun?
3. How did the peacock feel when he could not follow the crane?
4. How did the crane feel as he flew to freedom, far up into the blue sky?
5. This story is about **conceit**, the state of being *too* proud of one's self. In what way did the peacock's **conceit** limit his friendship with the crane?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "the **useful** is much more important than the **ornamental**"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. The peacock was vain. One day, he met a crane.
One day, the peacock who was vain [REL] met a crane.
2. The peacock spread his gorgeous tail feathers in the sun.
The peacock wanted to impress the crane.
The peacock spread his gorgeous tail feathers in the sun because he wanted [ADV] to impress the crane.
3. The peacock **bragged** to the crane.
The peacock's feathers were **as colorful as a rainbow**.
The peacock bragged to the crane that his feathers were [NOM] as colorful as a rainbow.
4. The peacock told the crane something.
The crane's feathers were as gray as dust.
The peacock told the crane that his feathers were [NOM] as gray as dust.
5. However, the peacock's wings were weak.
The peacock's wings were narrow.
The peacock had wings that were [REL] weak and narrow.
6. On the other hand, the crane's wings were strong and broad.
The crane flew up into the blue sky.
Because the crane's wings were [ADV] strong and broad, he flew up into the blue sky.

#8 *The Dog in the Manger*

Adapted from Aesop's Fables; <http://whisperingbooks.com/>

Retrieved 9/7/21

Flesch-Kincaid: 4.5

A dog was sleeping in a manger on a comfortable bed of hay. Earlier that day, the farmer had put out the hay for the cattle to eat. Suddenly, the dog was awakened by the cattle, who had just come into the barn. They were tired and hungry from working in the field all day and wanted to eat the hay for their dinner. However, the dog would not let them get near the manger. He snarled and snapped at them, as if it were filled with the best of meat and bones, all for himself.

The cattle looked at the dog in **disgust**. "How **selfish** he is!" said one of them. "He cannot eat the hay himself, and yet he will not let us eat it who are so hungry for it!"

Then the farmer came in. When he saw how rude and selfish the dog was acting, he yelled at him and chased him out of the barn with a broom.

The moral of this story is, "Do not **begrudge** others what you cannot enjoy yourself."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. What was the dog thinking when he saw the cattle come into the barn?
2. Why did the dog get so angry at the cattle?
3. What did the cattle think when the dog snapped and snarled at them?
4. What was the farmer thinking when he saw the dog's reaction? How do you know?
5. This story is about **selfishness**, a condition of thinking only about one's own welfare and forgetting about everyone else. Why do you think some people are selfish? Is selfishness ever a *good* thing or is it always a *bad* thing?
6. Do you agree with the moral of this story, "Do not **begrudge** others what you cannot enjoy yourself"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. The dog slept in the manger. The manger was full of hay.
The manger that the dog slept [REL] in was full of hay.
2. The dog got angry. The cattle came into the barn.
When the cattle came [ADV] into the barn, the dog got angry.
3. The cattle thought something about the dog. The dog was rude and selfish.
The cattle thought that the dog was [NOM] rude and selfish.
4. The farmer saw the dog. The dog snarled and snapped at the cattle.
The farmer saw how the dog snarled [NOM] and snapped [NOM] at the cattle.
5. The farmer chased the dog out of the barn. The dog was scaring the cattle.
Because the dog was scaring [ADV] the cattle, the farmer chased him out of the barn.
6. The cattle in the barn were hungry. They wanted the hay for their dinner.
The cattle that were [REL] hungry wanted the hay for their dinner.

#9 *The City Mouse and the Country Mouse*
Adapted from Gorman-Gard (1992, p. 145)
Flesch-Kincaid: 4.6

A city mouse and a country mouse were friends. Each was **curious** about how the other lived.

One day, the city mouse went to visit the country mouse. The country mouse offered the city mouse some acorns and roots he had stored. However, the city mouse did not like the food or the place where the country mouse lived.

A week later, the country mouse went to visit the city mouse where they ate cheese and bread. However, as they were eating, some **rambunctious** dogs interrupted them. They also had to hide from the cat and the people who lived in the house. The country mouse did not like the noise or the dangers in the home of the city mouse.

Therefore, the country mouse went home to eat and live in peace. When he got there, he said, "There's no place like home!"

The moral of the story is, "The grass is not always greener on the other side of the fence."



Illustrations by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. How did the *city* mouse feel when he was at the home of the *country* mouse?
2. How did the *country* mouse feel when he was at the home of the *city* mouse?
3. Why was the *country* mouse frightened when he was in the home of the *city* mouse?
4. What did the country mouse mean when he said, "There's no place like home"?
5. This story is about **appreciation**, the state of being grateful for the good things we have. Do you think people should **appreciate** the things they have? Why/why not?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "The grass is not always greener on the other side of the fence"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. The city mouse was curious. He wondered about the country mouse.
The city mouse was curious about how the country mouse lived [NOM].
2. The country mouse offered acorns and roots to the city mouse. He had stored the food.
The country mouse offered acorns and roots that he had stored [REL] to the city mouse.
3. The country mouse visited the city mouse. They ate cheese and bread.
When the country mouse visited [ADV] the city mouse, they ate cheese and bread.
4. Some dogs lived at the home of the city mouse. The dogs were rambunctious.
The dogs that lived [REL] at the home of the city mouse were rambunctious.
5. The cat at the house liked to chase mice. This scared the mice.
When the cat chased the mice [ADV], they were scared.
6. The country mouse went home. He felt more comfortable and relaxed at home.
The country mouse went home where he felt [NOM] more comfortable and relaxed.

#10 *The Young Crab and His Mother*

Adapted from *The Aesop for Children* (1993, p. 13), New York, NY: Barnes & Noble Books.
Flesch-Kincaid: 4.7

"Why in the world do you walk **sideways** like that?" said Mother Crab to her son, Young Crab. "You should always walk straight **forward** and with your toes turned out," she explained.

"Show me how to walk properly, Mother dear," answered Young Crab **obediently**. "I want to learn."

Therefore, Mother Crab *tried* and *tried* to walk straight forward. However, she could only walk sideways, like her son. In addition, when she wanted to turn her toes out, she tripped and fell on her nose.

The moral of this story is, "Do not tell others how to act unless you can set a good example."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. Why did Mother Crab try to tell her son how to walk properly?
2. Do you think Young Crab wanted to please his mother?
3. How did Mother Crab feel when she could not walk straight forward?
4. Why do you think Mother Crab was unable to turn her toes out?
5. This story is about **competence**, the ability to do something well. Why is competence important when you are trying to teach others how to do something?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "Do not tell others how to act unless you can set a good example"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. Young Crab always walked sideways. Mother Crab wondered why.
Mother Crab wondered why Young Crab always walked [NOM] sideways.
2. Mother Crab gave lessons on walking. Young Crab listened carefully.
When Mother Crab gave [ADV] lessons on walking, Young Crab listened carefully.
3. However, Mother Crab could not walk properly herself. She tried hard.
Even though Mother Crab tried [ADV] hard, she could not walk properly herself.
4. Mother Crab had feet like her son. Their feet went sideways, not straight ahead.
Mother Crab and Young Crab both had feet that went [REL] sideways.
5. Mother Crab could not teach her son to walk properly. She felt embarrassed.
Mother Crab felt embarrassed that she could not teach [NOM] her son to walk properly.
6. Mother Crab was proud of her son. Young Crab listened carefully to his mother.
Mother Crab was proud of her son who listened [REL] carefully to her.

#11 *The Two Goats*

Adapted from *The Aesop for Children* (1993, p. 36), New York, NY: Barnes & Noble Books.
Flesch-Kincaid: 4.8

Two goats were **frolicking gaily** on the rocky steep slopes of a mountain valley. Just by chance, they met, one on each side of a deep **chasm** through which poured a mighty mountain **torrent**.

The trunk of a fallen tree formed the only means of crossing the **chasm**. Along this narrow path, not even two squirrels could have passed each other safely. Indeed, the path would have made even the bravest animal tremble. But not our goats! Their **pride** would not permit either of them to stand aside for the other.

So, one goat set her foot on the log and started across slowly. Then, the other one did likewise. In the middle, they met horn to horn and neither would give way. So, they both fell and were swept away by the **roaring torrent** below.

The moral of this story is, "It is better to yield than to come to **misfortune** through **stubbornness**."

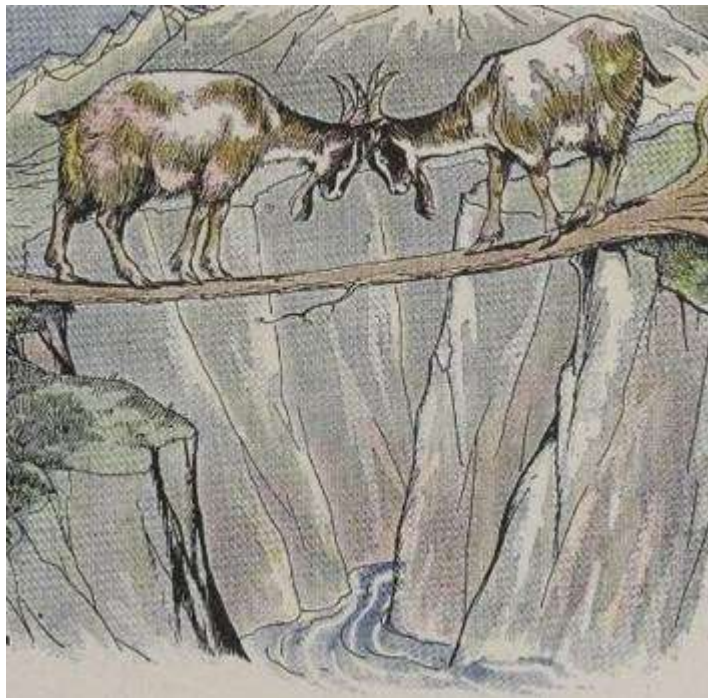


Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. Why did the two goats want to cross the **chasm**?
2. Why was it unsafe to cross the chasm?
3. Do you think the two goats realized how dangerous it was to cross the chasm?
4. If it was dangerous, why did the goats try to cross the chasm anyway?
5. This story is about **haughtiness**, a condition where people act like they are more important or better than everyone else. What problems can arise when people are **haughty**? Is haughtiness ever a *good* thing? Please explain.
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "It is better to yield than to come to misfortune through stubbornness"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. Two goats were frolicking gaily. They were on the steep slopes of a mountain valley.
Two goats who were frolicking [REL] gaily were on the steep slopes of a mountain valley.
2. Each goat saw the tree trunk. The tree trunk had fallen across the chasm.
Each goat saw the tree trunk that had fallen [REL] across the chasm.
3. The two goats looked down. There was a mighty, roaring river.
When the goats looked [ADV] down, they saw a mighty, roaring river.
4. The two goats believed something. They could cross the chasm.
The two goats believed that they could cross [NOM] the chasm.
5. Each goat thought something. Each goat could walk across the tree trunk.
Each goat thought that she could walk [NOM] across the tree trunk.
6. A goat could slip on the tree trunk. Then, the goat would fall into the roaring river below.
If a goat [ADV] slipped on the tree trunk, she would fall into the roaring river below.

#12 The Fox and the Grapes

Adapted from Aesop's Fables, <http://www.taleswithmorals.com/>
Flesch-Kincaid: 4.9

One hot summer's day, a fox was strolling through an apple orchard when he came upon a bunch of juicy red grapes. The grapes were ripening on a vine, which had been trained over a high branch of an apple tree. "Just the thing to **quench** my thirst," said the fox.

Drawing back a few paces, he took a run and a jump, and just missed the bunch of grapes. Turning around again with a one, two, and three, he jumped up, but with no greater success. Again and again, he tried to reach the tempting fruit.

At last, however, he had to give it up. As he slowly walked away with his nose in the air, he said, "Well, I never really wanted those grapes anyway. I am sure they are sour and full of worms that would make me sick if I ate them."

The moral of the story is, "It is easy to **despise** what you cannot get."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. What did the fox think when he saw the juicy grapes, ripening on the vine?
2. Why did the fox eventually give up on trying to reach the grapes?
3. How did the fox feel when he could not reach the grapes, after trying very hard?
4. Why did the fox tell himself that he really did not want the grapes after all?
5. This story is about **disappointment**, the feeling of sadness about not getting something that we really want to have. What are some good ways to help us cope when we are feeling disappointed about something?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "It is easy to despise what you cannot get"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. A fox was strolling through an orchard. He saw a bunch of juicy red grapes.
When a fox was strolling [ADV] through an orchard, he saw a bunch of juicy red grapes.
2. The grapes were ripening on a vine. The vine had been trained over the branch of an apple tree.
The grapes were ripening on a vine that had been trained [REL] over the branch of an apple tree.
3. The thirsty fox saw the juicy grapes. The grapes would quench his thirst.
The thirsty fox saw the juicy grapes that would quench [REL] his thirst.
4. The fox ran quickly and jumped high. He could not reach the tempting grapes.
Although the fox ran [ADV] quickly and jumped [ADV] high, he could not reach the tempting grapes.
5. The fox felt disappointed. He could not reach the juicy red grapes.
The fox felt disappointed that he could not reach [NOM] the juicy red grapes.
6. The fox said something about the grapes. The grapes were probably sour and wormy.
The fox said that the grapes were [NOM] probably sour and wormy.

#13 *The Two Pots*

Adapted from <https://fablesOfAesop.com/the-two-pots.html>; retrieved 9/4/19
Flesch-Kincaid: 5.0

Two Pots, one made of **brass** and the other of **clay**, stood together on the **hearthstone**. One day the Brass Pot **proposed** to the Clay Pot that they go out into the world together. However, the Clay Pot **excused himself**, saying that it would be **wiser** for him to stay in the corner by the fire.

"It would take so little to break me," said the Clay Pot. "You know how **fragile** I am. The least shock is sure to shatter me!"

"Do not let that keep you at home," urged the Brass Pot. "I shall take very good care of you. If we should happen to meet anything hard, I will step between you and it, and save you."

At last, the Clay Pot **consented**, and the two pots set out side-by-side, **jolting** along on three stubby legs, first to this side, then to that, and bumping into each other at every step.

The Clay Pot could not survive that sort of **companionship** very long. They had not gone ten paces before the Clay Pot cracked, and at the next jolt, he flew into a thousand pieces.

The moral of this story is, "Equals make the best friends."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. Why did the Clay Pot think it would be wiser for him to stay at home?
2. How did the Brass Pot convince the Clay Pot to go out into the world with him?
3. How did the two pots differ in the degree of power they had?
4. What was the Clay Pot thinking when the Brass Pot began to bump into him?
5. This story is about **autonomy**, the ability to decide for **one's self** what to do rather than letting others decide. The Clay Pot knew his own limitations very well. Besides giving in to the Brass Pot's demands, what else could he have done to show his **autonomy**?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "Equals make the best friends"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. One pot was made of brass. He wanted to go out into the world with the Clay Pot.
The pot that was made of brass [REL] wanted to go out into the world with the Clay Pot.
2. However, the Clay Pot told the Brass Pot something. He did not like the idea.
However, the Clay Pot told the Brass Pot that he did not like [NOM] the idea.
3. The Brass Pot said something to the Clay Pot. He would protect the Clay Pot.
The Brass Pot said that he would protect [NOM] the Clay Pot.
4. Still, they took the journey anyway. It was too rough for the Clay Pot.
The journey that they took [REL] was too rough for the Clay Pot.
5. The two pots started out on the road together. They bumped into each other.
When the two pots started [ADV] out on the road together, they bumped into each other.
6. After a short distance, the Clay Pot cracked. He fell into a thousand pieces.
When the Clay Pot cracked [ADV] after a short distance, he fell into a thousand pieces.

#14 The Dog and His Shadow

Adapted from Grosset & Dunlap (1947, p. 176)

Flesch-Kincaid: 5.1

One day, a dog stole a piece of meat from a butcher shop. As he traveled to a safe place where he could eat it without **interruption**, he had to cross a footbridge over a clear stream. Looking down, he saw his own **reflection** in the water.

The dog thought that the reflection was another dog with a bigger piece of meat. Because he was a **greedy** dog, he made up his mind to have that also. Therefore, he snarled and tried to grab the other dog's meat.

As his **greedy** mouth opened, out dropped the piece of meat, which fell into the stream and was lost.

The moral of the story is, "If you grasp at the **shadow**, you will lose the **substance**."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. Why did the dog think that another dog was holding a bigger piece of meat?
2. Why did the dog want the other dog's meat (besides his own)?
3. How did the dog feel when his own piece of meat fell into the stream?
4. This story is about **greed**, the state of wanting more than one needs. Why do some people try to take more than they need? What can happen when people are too **greedy**?
5. What does it mean to say, "If you grasp at the shadow, you will lose the substance"?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "If you grasp at the shadow, you will lose the substance?"
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. A piece of meat was in a butcher shop. A dog stole the piece of meat.
The piece of meat that the dog stole [REL] was in a butcher shop.
2. The dog crossed a footbridge over a clear stream. He looked down at the water.
When the dog crossed [ADV] the footbridge over a clear stream, he looked down at the water.
3. The dog thought something. He saw another dog with a bigger piece of meat.
The dog thought that he saw [NOM] another dog with a bigger piece of meat.
4. The dog was greedy. He wanted the other dog's meat for himself.
Because the dog was [ADV] greedy, he wanted the other dog's meat for himself.
5. The greedy dog thought something. He could scare the other dog.
The greedy dog thought that he could scare [NOM] the other dog.
6. The dog snarled at his own reflection. He dropped the piece of meat.
The dog who snarled [REL] at his own reflection dropped the piece of meat.

#15 *The Lion and the Dolphin*

Adapted from Grosset & Dunlap (1947, pp. 39-40)

Flesch-Kincaid: 5.1

The King of Beasts was **pacing majestically** along the shore of the sea one day. Suddenly, he spied a dolphin **basking** on the surface of the water.

"Hello, there, Friend Dolphin!" roared the lion. "This is a **fortunate** meeting indeed. For a long time, I have wanted to suggest that you and I form an **alliance**. I am the King of Beasts and you are the King of Fishes. Therefore, I suggest that we be strong friends and powerful **allies**."

"There is much in what you say," replied the dolphin.

A few weeks later, the lion came again to the seashore where he was **challenged** by a wild bull. The fight was not going well for the lion. So, the King of Beasts called upon the King of Fishes for his promised support. The dolphin, although ready and willing to help his ally, found himself unable to come out of the sea to join the battle. After the wild bull got tired of fighting and ran off, the lion **upbraided** the dolphin.

"You are a fine ally," said the lion. "I could have been killed. And yet you never **turned a fin** to help me."

"Do not blame me," said the dolphin in reply, "but instead, blame nature, which made me powerful in the sea but altogether helpless on land."

The moral of this story is, "The **spirit** may be willing, but the body may be unable."



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<https://unsplash.com/license>

Photo by Genova Megye on Unsplash, <https://unsplash.com/s/photos/dolphin>,
<https://unsplash.com/license>

Questions:

1. Why did the lion want to form an alliance with the dolphin?
2. How did the lion convince the dolphin to form an alliance?
3. When the lion got into a fight with a wild bull, what thoughts went through his mind?
4. When the dolphin saw the lion and the bull fighting, how did the dolphin feel?
5. This story is about recognizing our own **limitations**, the things that prevent us from doing everything that we want to do. Did the lion recognize the dolphin's **limitations**? Why did the lion get angry at the dolphin? How did his anger make the dolphin feel?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "The spirit may be willing, but the body may be unable"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. One day, a lion was pacing majestically along the seashore. He spied a dolphin.
One day, a lion who was pacing [REL] majestically along the seashore, spied a dolphin.
2. The lion was the King of Beasts. The dolphin was the King of Fishes.
Although the lion was [ADV] the King of Beasts, the dolphin was the King of Fishes.
3. The lion thought something about the dolphin. They could form an alliance.
The lion thought that he and the dolphin could form [NOM] an alliance.
4. The dolphin agreed with the lion. The alliance was a good idea.
The dolphin agreed with the lion that the alliance was [NOM] a good idea.
5. The lion got into a fight with a wild bull. The wild bull was winning.
When the lion and wild bull got [ADV] into a fight, the wild bull was winning.
6. The dolphin wanted to support the lion. The dolphin could not go onto the shore.
The dolphin, who wanted [REL] to support the lion, could not go onto the shore.
Although the dolphin wanted [ADV] to support the lion, he could not go onto the shore.

#16 *The Lark and Her Young Ones*

Adapted from <https://fablesfaesop.com/the-lark-and-her-young-ones.html>;
retrieved 9/4/19; Flesch-Kincaid: 5.2

A lark made her nest in a field of young wheat. As the days passed, the wheat stalks grew tall and the young birds grew stronger. Then one day, when the **ripe golden grain** waved in the breeze, the farmer and his son came into the field.

"This wheat is now ready for **harvesting**," said the farmer. "We must call in our neighbors and friends to help us cut it all down." The young larks in their nest close by were very frightened, for they knew they would be in great danger if they did not leave the nest before the harvesters came. When Mother Lark returned with food for them, they told her what they had heard.

"Do not be frightened, children," said Mother Lark. "If the farmer said he would call in his neighbors and friends to help him do his work, this wheat will not be harvested for a while yet."

A few days later, the wheat was so ripe, that when the wind shook the stalks, a **hail of wheat grains** came **rustling** down on the young larks' heads. "If this wheat is not harvested at once," said the farmer, "we shall lose half the **crop**. We cannot wait any longer for help from our neighbors and friends. Tomorrow we must set to work, ourselves."

When the young larks told Mother Lark what they had heard that day, she said, "Then we must be off at once. When a man decides to do his own work and not **depend** on anyone else, then you may be sure there will be no more delays." There was much fluttering and trying out of wings that afternoon, and at sunrise the next day, when the farmer and his son cut down the grain, they found an empty nest.

The moral of this story is, "Self-help is the best help."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. Why were the young larks afraid when the farmer first came into the field?
2. However, why did Mother Lark think the young larks were still safe?
3. Why did the farmer decide that he could not wait any longer to harvest the wheat?
4. Why did Mother Lark finally decide to pack up her family and leave the nest?
5. This story is about **responsibility**, the act of taking care of our own duties. How did Mother Lark take **responsibility** for her children? How did the farmer take **responsibility** for his crops? What can happen if people *don't* take responsibility for their own things?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "Self-help is the best help"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. The golden grain waved in the breeze. The farmer and his son came into the field.
When the golden grain waved [ADV] in the breeze, the farmer and his son came into the field.
2. The farmer said something to his son. It was time to cut down all of the wheat.
The farmer told his son that it was [NOM] time to cut down all of the wheat.
3. The wheat was ready for harvesting. The farmer and his son would cut it down.
The farmer and his son would cut down the wheat that was [REL] ready for harvesting.
4. Mother Lark said something to her children. "Do not be afraid of the farmer."
Mother Lark told her children, "Do not be [NOM] afraid of the farmer."
5. The wheat grains became extra ripe. They came rustling down on the young larks' heads.
When the wheat grains became [ADV] extra ripe, they came rustling down on the young larks' heads.
6. Mother Lark and her young ones lived in a nest. One day, the nest was empty.
One day, the nest that Mother Lark and her young ones had lived [REL] in, was empty.

#17 The Mice in Council

Adapted from Lawrence (1997, p. 19)

Flesch-Kincaid: 5.3

The mice lived in **constant terror** of the cat, whose greatest pleasure was **toying** with them and eating them up. The mice called a meeting to try to solve their problems. Many plans were discussed but none seemed right. What to do about the great cat?

At last, a small mouse leaped up. He drew himself up to his full height. "I **propose**," he said, "that a bell be hung around the cat's neck so that whenever he approaches, we will hear the bell tinkle and we shall be able to escape." All the mice applauded, and the young mouse took a few bows and then sat down.

After the **motion** was seconded and passed, a wise old mouse slowly rose to his feet. "My friends, fellow mice, our young friend has **proposed** a **brilliant solution** to end our **constant** fear and **jeopardy** from the cat. Only a mouse of great **genius** could have **conceived** such a simple solution, for indeed with the bell around his neck, we shall all most certainly hear Mr. Cat's no longer **stealthy approach**. But one question occurs to this old head. Who, may I ask, will put the bell around the cat's neck?"

The moral of this story is, "Some things are easier said than done."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. Why was it so difficult for the mice to think of a solution to their problem?
2. When the young mouse proposed a solution, how did he feel about himself?
3. Why did the old mouse say that the young mouse's solution was brilliant?
4. However, what did the old mouse *really* think about the proposed solution?
5. This story is about **wisdom**, the ability to use one's knowledge to make **good** decisions. How did the **old** mouse show that he had **wisdom**, that he was **wise**? Is wisdom always a *good* thing? Is it ever a *bad* thing? Please explain.
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, that "Some things are easier said than done?"
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. The mice were afraid of the cat. The cat liked to toy with the mice.
The mice were afraid of the cat that liked [REL] to toy with them.
2. The mice were constantly terrified. They needed a plan to survive.
Because the mice were constantly terrified [ADV], they needed a plan to survive.
3. A small mouse made a proposal. Someone should hang a bell around the cat's neck.
A small mouse proposed that someone should hang [NOM] a bell around the cat's neck.
4. The cat will approach the mice. The mice will hear the cat's bell tinkle.
When the cat approaches the mice [ADV], they will hear the cat's bell tinkle.
5. An old mouse was wise, kind, and helpful. He praised the young mouse for his plan.
An old mouse who was [REL] wise, kind, and helpful, praised the young mouse for his plan.
6. The old mouse asked a question. "Who will put the bell around the cat's neck?"
The old mouse asked, "Who will put [NOM] the bell around the cat's neck?"

#18 The Rooster and the Fox

Adapted from Aesop's Fables, <http://www.storyit.com/Classics/Stories/>
Flesch-Kincaid: 5.4

A rooster was **perched** on the branch of a very high tree, crowing loudly. His powerful **exclamations** were heard throughout the forest and caught the attention of a hungry fox who was out and about, looking for prey. The fox saw how high the bird was positioned in the tree and thought of a **sly** way to bring the rooster down for his meal.

"Excuse me, my dear proud Rooster," he gently spoke. "Have you not heard of the **universal treaty** and **proclamation of harmony** that is now set before all beasts and birds and every creature in our forest? We are no longer to hunt or prey nor ravish one another, but we are to live together in **peace, harmony, and love**. Do come down, Rooster, and we shall speak more on this matter of such great importance."

Now, the rooster, who knew that the fox was known for his **sly wit**, said nothing but looked out in the distance, as if he were seeing something.

"At what are you looking so **intently**?" asked the fox.

"I see a pack of wild dogs," said the rooster, "and I do believe they're coming our way, Mr. Fox."

"Oh, I must go," said the fox.

"Please do not go yet, Mr. Fox," said the rooster. "I was just on my way down. We will wait on the dogs and discuss this new **time of peace** with all."

"No, no," said the fox, "I must go. The dogs have not heard of this **treaty of peace** yet."

The moral of this story is, "**Beware** of the sudden offers of friendship."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. What was the fox thinking when he saw the rooster perched high in the tree?
2. When the fox discussed a peace treaty, what was the rooster thinking?
3. How did the rooster outwit the fox?
4. Why did the fox suddenly decide to leave the area?
5. This story is about **hypocrisy**, the act of pretending to be *good* when one is not, such as being a *false friend*. Why do people sometimes pretend to like others, to be their friend? What bad things can happen when a person is **hypocritical** towards others?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "Beware of the sudden offers of friendship"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. A rooster was perched on the branch of a very high tree. He was crowing loudly.
A rooster who was [REL] perched on the branch of a very high tree was crowing loudly.
2. A fox was hungry. He was out and about, looking for prey.
A fox who was [REL] hungry was out and about, looking for prey.
3. The fox saw the rooster high up in the tree. He thought of a plan to bring him down.
When the fox saw [ADV] the rooster high up in the tree, he thought of a plan to bring him down.
4. The fox asked a question of the rooster. Did the rooster know about the universal treaty and proclamation of harmony?
The fox asked the rooster if he knew [NOM] about the universal treaty and proclamation of harmony.
5. The rooster looked out in the distance. He pretended to see a pack of wild dogs.
When the rooster looked [ADV] out in the distance, he pretended to see a pack of wild dogs.
6. The rooster said something to the fox. The wild dogs were coming their way.
The rooster told the fox that the wild dogs were coming [NOM] their way.

#19 The Ant and the Grasshopper

Adapted from Aesop's Fables, <http://www.aesopfables.com/aesopsel.html>

Flesch-Kincaid: 5.6

In a field one summer's day, a grasshopper was hopping about, chirping, singing, and dancing to **his heart's content**. An ant passed by, dragging kernels of corn to the nest.

"Why not come and sing and dance with me," said the grasshopper. "Why are you **toiling** so hard and struggling with those kernels of corn in that way?"

"I am helping to lay up food for the winter," said the ant, "and I recommend that you do the same!"

"Why bother about winter now?" said the grasshopper. "We have plenty of food at the present." However, the ant went on its way and continued its **toiling** and struggling.

When the winter came, the grasshopper had no food and he found himself sad, cold, and hungry. Meanwhile, the ants were **distributing** kernels of corn from the stores they had collected in the summer. Suddenly the grasshopper realized what he should have done.

The moral of this story is, "It is best to prepare for the days of **necessity**."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. Why did the grasshopper like to spend time hopping, chirping, singing, and dancing during the summer?
2. Why did the ant suggest to the grasshopper that he store up food for the winter?
3. How did the grasshopper react to that suggestion?
4. What do you think the grasshopper should have done?
5. This story is about **persistence**, the ability to continue working hard even when you are tired or discouraged. The ants were **persistent** in storing up food for the winter. As they were *working* hard, what did they think about the grasshopper who was *playing* hard? But why are *both* working hard and playing hard important things to do?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "It is best to prepare for the days of necessity"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. An ant passed by the grasshopper. The ant was carrying a large kernel of corn.
An ant who was carrying [REL] a large kernel of corn passed by the grasshopper.
2. The grasshopper was enjoying himself. The ant was working hard.
Although the grasshopper was enjoying [ADV] himself, the ant was working hard.
3. The grasshopper asked the ant something. The grasshopper wanted a playmate.
The grasshopper asked the ant, "Why don't you play [NOM] with me?"
4. Eventually, the winter came. The grasshopper was cold, sad, and hungry.
Eventually, when the winter came [ADV], the grasshopper was cold, sad, and hungry.
5. The ants had worked hard all summer. The ants had plenty of food in the winter.
The ants, who had worked [REL] hard all summer, had plenty of food in the winter.
6. Suddenly, the grasshopper realized something. He needed to store up food for the winter.
The grasshopper suddenly realized that he needed [NOM] to store up food for the winter.

#20 *The North Wind and the Sun*

Adapted from <https://fablesdfaesop.com/the-north-wind-and-the-sun.html>

Retrieved 8/30/19

Flesch-Kincaid: 5.7

The North Wind and the Sun had a **quarrel** about which of them was the stronger. While they were **disputing** with much **heat** and **bluster**, a traveler passed along the road wrapped in a **cloak**.

"Let us agree," said the Sun, "that he is the stronger who can strip that traveler of his cloak."

"Very well," growled the North Wind, and at once sent a cold, howling blast against the traveler. With the first gust of wind, the ends of the cloak whipped about the traveler's body. However, he immediately wrapped it closely around him, and the harder the Wind blew, the tighter he held it to him. The North Wind tore **angrily** at the cloak, but all his efforts were **in vain**.

Then the Sun began to shine. At first, his beams were gentle, and in the pleasant warmth after the bitter cold of the North Wind, the traveler **unfastened** his cloak and let it hang loosely from his shoulders. The Sun's rays grew warmer and warmer. The man took off his cap and mopped his brow. At last, he became too hot and pulled off his cloak. Then, to escape the blazing sunshine, he threw himself down in the welcome shade of a tree by the roadside.

The moral of this story is, "**Gentle persuasion** is often better than **brutal force**."



Illustrations by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. Why did the North Wind think he could force the traveler to remove his cloak?
2. How did the traveler feel when he encountered the strong blast of cold air?
3. Why did the North Wind get so **angry** when the traveler held his cloak tightly?
4. Why did the Sun take his time and gradually warm the traveler?
5. This story is about **persuasion**, the act of getting people to agree with you or do what you want them to do. What is a *good* way to persuade others? What is a *bad* way to persuade?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "Gentle persuasion is better than brutal force?"
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. The North Wind and the Sun quarreled. Each wanted to be the stronger.
The North Wind and the Sun quarreled because each wanted [ADV] to be the stronger.
2. A traveler passed them on the road. The traveler wore a heavy cloak.
A traveler who wore [REL] a heavy cloak passed them on the road.
3. The North Wind and the Sun made an agreement. They would challenge each other.
The North Wind and the Sun agreed that they would challenge [NOM] each other.
4. The North Wind thought something. He could blow the cloak off the traveler.
The North Wind thought that he could blow [NOM] the cloak off the traveler.
5. The Sun began to shine. The sun gradually warmed the traveler.
When the Sun began [ADV] to shine, he gradually warmed the traveler.
6. The traveler felt too warm. Eventually, he took off his cloak.
Eventually, the traveler, who felt [REL] too warm, took off his cloak.

#21 *The Peacock and Juno*

Adapted from *Aesop's Fables* (2013, p. 85), Canterbury Classics,
San Diego, CA: Printers Row Publishing
Flesch-Kincaid: 5.8

The peacock was greatly **discontented** because he did not have a beautiful voice like the **nightingale**. So, he **complained** about it to Juno, the Roman goddess. "The nightingale's song," he said, "is the **envy** of all the birds. But whenever I utter a sound, I become a **laughingstock**."

The goddess tried to **console** the peacock, saying, "You have not, it is true, the power of song. But then you far excel all the rest in beauty. Your neck flashes like the **emerald** and your splendid tail is a **marvel** of gorgeous color."

However, the peacock was not **appeased**. "What is the use," he asked, "of being beautiful if I have a voice like mine?"

Then Juno replied, with a shade of **sternness** in her tone, "**Fate** has **allotted** to all their **destined** gifts: to yourself beauty, to the eagle strength, to the nightingale song, and so on to all the rest of them. However, you alone are **dissatisfied** with your portion. Make, then, no more **complaints**. For, if your present wish were granted, you would quickly find cause for fresh **discontent**."

The moral of this story is, "Be **content** with your **lot**; do not **quarrel** with nature."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org
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<https://unsplash.com/license>

Questions:

1. Why was the peacock jealous of the nightingale?
2. Why did the peacock not appreciate his own unique gifts?
3. How did Juno, the goddess, try to help the peacock feel better about himself?
4. Why did Juno tell the peacock to stop complaining?
5. This story is about **contentment**, the state of being happy with what we have or who we are. Is contentment a *good* thing, or can it sometimes be a *bad* thing? Please explain.
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "Be content with your lot; do not quarrel with nature"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. The peacock was unhappy with himself. The peacock did not have a beautiful voice.
The peacock, who did not have [REL] a beautiful voice, was unhappy with himself.
2. The peacock complained to Juno, the Roman goddess. The nightingale had a nicer voice.
The peacock complained to Juno that the nightingale had [NOM] a nicer voice.
3. Juno tried to help the peacock. Juno praised the beauty of peacock's feathers.
Juno tried to help when she praised [ADV] the beauty of the peacock's feathers.
4. The peacock remained **discontented**. He wanted a beautiful voice like the nightingale.
The peacock, who remained [REL] discontented, wanted a beautiful voice like the nightingale.
5. Juno replied sternly. Nature had allotted a special gift to each creature.
Juno replied sternly that nature had allotted [NOM] a special gift to each creature.
6. The peacock was still ungrateful for his beauty. Juno scolded him.
Juno scolded the peacock because he was [ADV] still ungrateful for his beauty.

#22 *The Porcupine and the Snakes*
Adapted from Grosset & Dunlap (1947, p. 89)
Flesch-Kincaid: 6.1

A porcupine had selected a comfortable cave for his winter home. However, he soon learned that a family of snakes already **occupied** the cave.

“Would it be **agreeable** if I used one corner of your cave to spend the winter?” he asked politely. The snakes very **generously** offered to share their home with the porcupine. Soon the porcupine moved in, curled up in a ball, stuck out all his **prickly quills**, and settled down for the winter.

It was not long, though, before the snakes realized that they had made a big mistake. Every time one of them moved, he would **prick** himself on one of the visitor’s **quills**.

After bearing this **discomfort** for a time, the snakes got up their **courage** to complain to the porcupine.

“That’s just too bad,” said their guest. “I am most comfortable here. But if you snakes aren’t **satisfied**, why don’t you move out?” Then he curled up once more and **resumed** his nap.

The moral of this story is, “It is safer to know one’s guests before offering them **hospitality**.”



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<https://unsplash.com/license>; Photo by Alfonso Castro on Unsplash,
<https://unsplash.com/s/photos/snake>, <https://unsplash.com/license>

Questions:

1. Why did the snakes allow the porcupine to move into their home?
2. After a while, how did the snakes feel about the porcupine being in their home?
3. How did the porcupine feel about the snakes when they complained about his behavior?
4. Why did the porcupine not want to help the snakes with their problem?
5. This story is about **courage**, the ability to do something that is frightening. The snakes were afraid to ask the porcupine to leave their home. But at least they finally spoke up and showed some **courage**. What *else* could they have done that required **courage**?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "It is safer to know one's guests before offering them hospitality"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. The porcupine had selected a comfortable cave for his winter home. The cave was already occupied.
Although the porcupine had selected [ADV] a comfortable cave for his winter home, it was already occupied.
2. The porcupine asked the snakes something. He wanted to use a corner of their cave.
The porcupine asked the snakes if he could use [NOM] a corner of their cave.
3. The snakes trusted the porcupine. The snakes agreed to his request.
The snakes, who trusted [REL] the porcupine, agreed to his request.
4. The porcupine moved into the cave. Then, he stuck out all of his prickly quills.
After the porcupine moved [ADV] into the cave, he stuck out all of his prickly quills.
5. The snakes were afraid of something. The porcupine would not move out.
The snakes were afraid that the porcupine would not move [NOM] out.
6. The porcupine was comfortable in the cave. He refused to move out.
The porcupine, who was [REL] comfortable in cave, refused to move out.

#23 The Walnut Tree

Adapted from Aesop's Fables (2013, p. 73), Canterbury Classics,
San Diego, CA: Printers Row Publishing Group
Flesch-Kincaid: 6.1

A **walnut** tree, which grew by the roadside, bore every year a **plentiful** crop of **delicious** nuts. However, everyone who passed by the tree **pelted** her branches with sticks and stones, in order to bring down the fruit. For this, the walnut tree **suffered severely**.

"It is hard," the tree cried, "that the very persons who enjoy my fruit should thus **reward** me with insults and blows. Why do they hurt the very thing that gives them what they love?"

The moral of this story is, "Never **take anything for granted**."



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<https://unsplash.com/license>

Questions:

1. What were the people thinking when they pelted the branches of the walnut tree?
2. How did the walnut tree feel when the people hit her with sticks and stones?
3. Did the people understand how the walnut tree felt about their actions?
4. What does it mean, to *take something for granted*? Please explain.
5. This story is about **empathy**, the ability to imagine how someone else is feeling. Do you think the people who pelted the walnut tree had empathy for her? Why/why not? How could empathy be taught to people? Please explain.
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "Never take anything for granted"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. The walnut tree bore nuts every year. The nuts were delicious.
Every year, the walnut tree bore nuts that were [REL] delicious.
2. Passersby pelted her branches. They wanted to bring down her fruit.
Passersby, who wanted [REL] to bring down her fruit, pelted her branches.
3. The walnut tree became upset. The passersby threw rocks at the walnut tree.
When the passersby threw [ADV] rocks at the walnut tree, she became upset.
4. The walnut tree felt pain. The passersby hit her branches with sticks.
When the passersby hit [ADV] her branches with sticks, the walnut tree felt pain.
5. The passersby did not know something. The walnut tree felt pain.
The passersby did not know that the walnut tree felt [NOM] pain.
6. The walnut tree thought something. Perhaps the passersby were ungrateful.
The walnut tree thought that perhaps the passersby were [NOM] ungrateful.

#24 *The Crow and the Pitcher*

Adapted from Aesop's Fables, <http://www.aesopfables.com/aesopse1.html>
Flesch-Kincaid: 6.2

A crow who was **perishing** with thirst saw a pitcher on a porch. Hoping to find water, he flew to it with **delight**. However, when he reached the pitcher, he discovered, to his great **dismay**, that it was only half-full of water and he was unable to reach it with his beak.

The crow tried everything he could think of to reach the water. He even collected some sticks to use as straws to draw up the water. However, this did not work, and all of his other efforts were also **in vain**. At last, he decided to collect as many stones as he could find. He carefully dropped them one by one into the pitcher, until he brought the level of water up to his reach. In this way, he was able to drink the water to save his own life.

The moral of the story is, "**Necessity** is the mother of **invention**."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. How did the crow feel when he first saw the pitcher of water on the porch?
2. How did his feelings change when he could not reach the water in the pitcher?
3. How did the crow manage to think of a solution to his problem?
4. This story is about **creativity**, the ability to think of new ideas. How can creativity save a person from harm? Do you think it is possible to *teach* people to be creative? Explain.
5. What does it mean to say, "Necessity is the mother of invention"?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "Necessity is the mother of invention"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. A crow was perishing from thirst. The crow saw a pitcher of water on a porch.
A crow who was perishing [REL] from thirst saw a pitcher of water on a porch.
2. The crow saw something disturbing. The pitcher was only half full of water.
Unfortunately, the crow saw that the pitcher was [NOM] only half full of water.
3. The crow could not reach the water in the bottom of the pitcher. His beak was too short.
Because the crow's beak was [ADV] too short, he could not reach the water in the bottom of the pitcher.
4. The crow decided something. He would collect many stones.
The crow decided that he would collect [NOM] many stones.
5. The crow dropped all of the stones into the pitcher. The water came up to the top.
After the crow dropped [ADV] the stones into the pitcher, the water came up to the top.
6. The crow had been very thirsty. He solved his problem through his creativity.
The crow, who had been [REL] very thirsty, solved his problem through his creativity.

#25 *The Donkey in the Lion's Skin*

Adapted from *Aesop's Fables* (2013, p. 58), Canterbury Classics, San Diego, CA: Printers Row Publishing; and <https://fablesdfaesop.com/the-ass-in-the-lions-skin.html>

Flesch-Kincaid: 6.2

A donkey found a lion's skin, left in the forest by a hunter. He dressed himself up in it and went about chasing and frightening all the forest animals he met, for they all took him to be a lion. Therefore, whenever they saw him coming, they turned away and ran as quickly as they could.

Elated by the success of his trick, the donkey **brayed** loudly in **triumph**. Suddenly, the fox heard him and instantly recognized him as the donkey. The fox then said to him, "If you had kept your mouth shut, you might have frightened me, too. But you gave yourself away with that silly **bray**."

The moral of this story is, "Clothes may **disguise** a fool, but his words will give him away."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. Why did the donkey want to scare all the other animals in the forest?
2. What was the donkey thinking when he brayed so loudly?
3. How did the fox know that the donkey was a **fraud**?
4. How did the donkey feel when the fox discovered he was not a lion?
5. This story is about **trickery**, the act of trying to fool other people through **dishonesty** or **deception**. Is **trickery** ever a good thing to do? Why/why not?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "Clothes may **disguise** a fool, but his words will give him away"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. A hunter left a lion's skin in the forest. The donkey found it.
The donkey found a lion's skin that had been left [REL] in the forest by a hunter.
2. The donkey dressed himself up in the lion's skin. Then he went out to scare the forest animals.
After the donkey dressed [ADV] himself up in the lion's skin, he went out to scare the forest animals.
3. The donkey thought something. He could fool everyone in the forest.
The donkey thought that he could fool [NOM] everyone in the forest.
4. The donkey fooled some animals. He went chasing after them.
The donkey fooled some animals when he went chasing [ADV] after them.
5. However, the fox was not fooled at all. He recognized the donkey's voice.
However, the fox, who recognized [REL] the donkey's voice, was not fooled at all.
6. The fox knew something. The donkey was not a lion because of his bray.
The fox knew because that the donkey was [NOM] not a lion of his bray.

#26 *The Mischievous Dog*

Adapted from *Aesop's Fables* (2013, p. 3), Canterbury Classics: San Diego, CA: Printer's Row Publishing Group
Flesch-Kincaid: 6.5

Once there was a dog who used to snap at people and bite them without any **provocation**. He was a great **nuisance** to everyone who came to his owner's house.

For this reason, his owner fastened a bell around the dog's neck to warn people of his presence. However, the dog was very **proud** of the bell, and he **strutted** about, tinkling it with **immense satisfaction**.

One day, an older and wiser dog came up to him and said, "The fewer **airs** you give yourself the better, my friend. Do you think your bell was given to you as a **mark of merit**? On the **contrary**, it is a **badge of disgrace!**"

The moral of this story is, "**Notoriety** is often mistaken for **honor**."



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<https://unsplash.com/license>

Questions:

1. Why was the dog proud of the bell he wore around his neck?
2. Did the dog understand why his owner had fastened the bell around his neck?
3. What did the older dog think about the younger dog with the bell?
4. Why did the older dog ask the younger dog if he knew what the bell really meant?
5. This story is about **arrogance**, the state of believing you are smarter, better, and more important than others. How did the dog with the bell show that he was **arrogant**? How could he be taught to be **humble**?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "Notoriety is often mistaken for honor?"
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. Once there was a mischievous dog. He often snapped at visitors to his owner's house.
Once there was a mischievous dog who often snapped [REL] at visitors to his owner's house.
2. Visitors to the owner's house did not provoke the dog. He bit them anyway.
The mischievous dog bit the visitors even though they did not provoke [ADV] him.
3. The dog's owner thought of something. He could solve the problem.
The dog's owner thought that he could solve [NOM] the problem.
4. The owner tied a bell around the dog's neck. The bell would warn the visitors of the dog's presence.
The owner tied a bell around the dog's neck so that it would warn [ADV] the visitors of the dog's presence.
5. However, the mischievous dog was very proud of his bell. He tinkled the bell with great pleasure.
The mischievous dog, who was [REL] very proud of his bell, tinkled it with great pleasure.
6. An older, wiser dog said something to the mischievous dog. Your bell is a badge of disgrace.
An older, wiser dog told the mischievous dog that his bell was [NOM] a badge of disgrace.

#27 *The Olive Tree and the Fig Tree*

Adapted from <https://fablesdfaesop.com/the-olive-tree-and-the-fig-tree.html>, retrieved 10/13/19
Flesch-Kincaid: 6.4

The olive tree stayed green all year long and **bragged** about her beautiful **foliage**. **Frequently**, she **ridiculed** the fig tree because she changed her leaves with the **seasons** and even lost them during the winter.

One day, a heavy snowstorm fell upon the two trees. Finding the olive full of **foliage**, the snow landed on her branches and stayed there. Unable to bear the snow's weight, the olive tree's branches broke, which **spoiled** her beauty.

The fig tree, however, had lost all of her leaves, and so the snow fell through her branches to the ground and did not **injure** her at all.

The moral of this story is, "If you **brag** too much, nature may **bring you down**."



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Photo by Fabrice Villard on Unsplash, [https://unsplash.com/s/photos/fig tree in winter](https://unsplash.com/s/photos/fig%20tree%20in%20winter),
<https://unsplash.com/license>

Questions:

1. Why do you think the *olive tree* bragged so much about her beautiful foliage?
2. Do you think the olive tree's bragging **annoyed** other trees in the area? Why/why not?
3. How do you think the *fig tree* felt when the olive tree *ridiculed* her?
4. What could the *fig tree* have said to make the olive tree stop ridiculing her?
5. This story is about **ridicule**, the act of saying mean things about others to make them feel like they aren't smart. Is **ridicule** ever a good thing to do? Why/why not?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "If you **brag** too much, nature may **bring you down**"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. An olive tree stayed green all year. She bragged to the fig tree about her beautiful foliage.
An olive tree who stayed [REL] green all year bragged to the fig tree about her beautiful foliage.
2. The olive tree often ridiculed the fig tree. The fig tree lost all her leaves in the winter.
When the fig tree lost [ADV] all her leaves in the winter, the olive tree ridiculed her.
3. The olive tree believed something. She was superior to the fig tree.
The olive tree believed that she was [NOM] superior to the fig tree.
4. The heavy snow stayed on the olive tree's branches. The snow's weight broke the branches off the tree.
The heavy snow, which stayed [REL] on the olive tree's branches, broke them off the tree.
5. The fig tree had lost all her leaves. The heavy snow could not collect on her branches.
Because the fig tree had lost [ADV] all her leaves, the heavy snow could not collect on her branches.
6. The fig tree was grateful. The heavy snow had fallen right through her branches.
The fig tree was grateful that the heavy snow had fallen [NOM] right through her branches.

#28 *The Fir Tree and the Bramble Bush*
Adapted from Grosset & Dunlap (1947, p. 189)
Flesch-Kincaid: 6.5

A fir tree had grown so tall that he **towered** over all the other trees and bushes in the forest. One day, he was **boasting** to a **humble** bramble bush beneath him, saying how important he was. The tree's **haughtiness** and **boasting** made the bramble bush **annoyed**. This caused the bramble bush to say, "If I were as tall and important as you, I would not need to put on such **airs**."

The fir tree **haughtily** replied, "How can a **wretched** bramble bush such as you understand the feelings of a tree whose top **brushes the clouds**?"

"Just wait," said the bramble bush. "I hope I am here the day the woodcutters come with their sharp axes and saws, looking for a tall fir tree to cut down and make into logs. Then, I **wager**, you will wish you were nothing but a **humble** bramble bush."

The moral of the story is, "The humble are **secure** from many dangers to which the **proud** are **subject**."

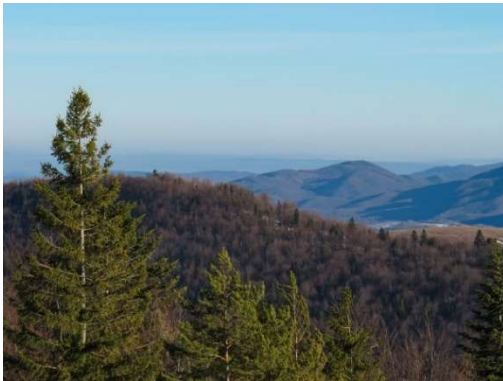


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Questions:

1. Why did the fir tree boast to the bramble bush beneath him?
2. How did the bramble bush feel when the fir tree acted so haughtily towards him?
3. Why did the bramble bush say, "One day, you will wish you were nothing but a humble bramble bush"?
4. Was the fir tree actually as special as he thought he was?
5. This story is about **humility**, the willingness to recognize our own limitations. This helps us learn from others and be open to new ideas. Do you believe **humility** is a good thing? Why/why not?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "The humble are secure from many dangers to which the proud are subject"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. A fir tree had grown extremely tall. He towered over all the other trees in the forest.
A fir tree had grown so tall that he towered [NOM] over all the other trees in the forest.
2. The fir tree believed something. He was more important than all the other trees in the forest.
The fir tree believed that he was [NOM] more important than all the other trees in the forest.
3. The bramble bush was humble and kind. The bramble bush did not boast about himself.
The bramble bush who did not boast [REL] about himself was humble and kind.
4. The fir tree spoke to the bramble bush in a haughty way. This annoyed the bramble bush.
When the fir tree spoke [ADV] to the bramble bush in a haughty way, this annoyed the bramble bush.
5. One day, the woodcutters came with their saws. The tall fir tree was worried.
One day, when the woodcutters came [ADV] with their saws, the tall fir tree was worried.
6. The bramble bush was not frightened by the woodcutters with their saws.
The bramble bush felt **secure**.
The bramble bush, who felt [REL] secure, was not frightened by the woodcutters with their saws.

#29 *The Fox and the Woodcutter*

Adapted from <https://fablesfaesop.com/the-fox-and-the-woodcutter.html>

Retrieved 8/28/19

Flesch-Kincaid: 6.5

A fox was running away from a hunter and his hounds. Suddenly, the fox came across a woodcutter who was chopping down an oak tree. The fox begged the woodcutter to show him a safe hiding place. The woodcutter **advised** the fox to **take shelter** in his own hut. For this reason, the grateful fox crept into the hut and hid himself in a corner.

The hunter soon came up with his hounds and asked the woodcutter if he had seen the fox. The woodcutter **declared** that he had not seen him. However, the woodcutter pointed, all the time he was speaking, to the hut where the fox was hiding. The fox saw all of this through a small opening in the wall of the hut. Fortunately, the hunter took no notice of the signs, and believing the woodcutter's words, he **hastened forward** in the chase.

As soon as they were well away, the fox **departed** without taking any notice of the woodcutter. The woodcutter then called to the fox and **reproached** him, saying, "You **ungrateful** fellow, you owe your life to me, and yet you leave me without a word of thanks."

The fox replied, "Indeed, I should have thanked you **fervently** if your **deeds** had been as good as your words, and if your hands had not been **traitors** to your speech."

The moral of the story is, "Actions speak louder than words."



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Questions:

1. At first, why did the fox believe that the woodcutter was helping him?
2. How did the fox *feel* when he saw the woodcutter pointing to the hut as he spoke to the hunter?
3. Why did the fox leave without saying "thank you" to the woodcutter?
4. How do you think the woodcutter felt when the fox pointed out his deception?
5. This story is about **kindness**, the state of being generous and caring towards others. Why is it important to be kind to visitors? What happens when people *aren't* kind to others?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "Actions speak louder than words"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. A fox was running away from a hunter and his hounds. The fox came across a woodcutter.
A fox who was running [REL] away from a hunter and his hounds came across a woodcutter.
2. The fox needed a safe hiding place. He begged the woodcutter to show him one.
Because the fox needed [ADV] a safe hiding place, he begged the woodcutter to show him one.
3. The woodcutter lived in a hut nearby. He offered it to the fox as a safe hiding place.
The woodcutter, who lived [REL] in a hut nearby, offered it to the fox as a safe hiding place.
4. The hunter asked the woodcutter something. Had the woodcutter seen the fox?
The hunter asked the woodcutter if he had seen [NOM] the fox.
5. The woodcutter said "No." However, the woodcutter pointed to the hut. The fox was hiding in the hut.
Although the woodcutter said [ADV] "No," he pointed to the hut where the fox was hiding [REL].
6. The fox saw all of this through a small hole in the wall of the hut. The woodcutter had betrayed him.
Through a small hole in the wall of the hut, the fox saw that the woodcutter had betrayed [NOM] him.

#30 *The Stag and His Reflection*

Adapted from Grosset & Dunlap (1947, p. 125-126)

Flesch-Kincaid: 6.7

A stag, one summer day, came to a pool of clear, still water to **quench** his thirst. As he drank, he noticed his **reflection** in the pool, and he could not help **admiring** the image he saw there.

"I really am very handsome," he said to himself. "I should be proud of those beautiful, stately antlers. However, those spindly legs and tiny feet are another matter. I wish that nature might have been kinder to me and had given me legs worthy enough to bear such a **noble crown**."

Just at that moment, the stag's sensitive nostrils smelled the approach of a hunter. And even as he **lingered**, an arrow whizzed past him. With a bound, he was away, and the legs and feet of which he had just been so **critical** carried him speedily to a place of safety.

But once out of harm's way, the stag again fell to **musings** over his appearance. And before he knew it, he had wandered into a **thicket**. The noble antlers, which he had so greatly **admired**, now held him fast, and the more he struggled, the more firmly **entangled** he became. Then the hunters came, and as the arrow found its mark, he gasped, "Now that it is too late, I realize that my own **vanity** has led to my downfall."

The moral of the story is, "What is truly most valuable is often **underrated**."

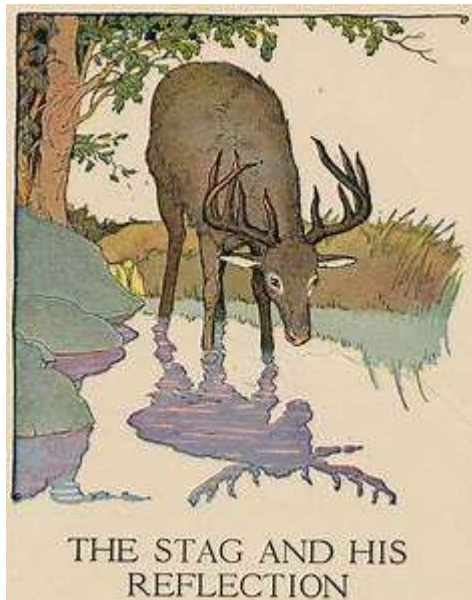


Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. Why did the stag think his antlers were his most important feature?
2. Why did the stag think that nature had been unkind to him?
3. How did the stag's sensitive nostrils help him to survive?
4. How did the stag's antlers lead to his downfall?
5. This story is about **thankfulness**, an attitude of valuing the things that we have. Why do people sometimes forget to be **thankful** for their own special gifts and talents? What can happen to people when they forget to be thankful?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "What is truly most valuable is often underrated?"
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. A stag came to a pool of cool, clear water. He wanted to quench his thirst.
A stag, who came [REL] to a pool of cool, clear water, wanted to quench his thirst.
2. The stag noticed his reflection in the pool. He admired his own image.
As the stag noticed [ADV] his reflection in the pool, he admired his own image.
3. The stag thought something to himself. I really am quite handsome.
The stag thought to himself that he really was [NOM] quite handsome.
4. The ungrateful stag wished for something from nature. He wanted prettier legs and feet.
The ungrateful stag wished that nature had given [NOM] him prettier legs and feet.
5. The stag thought about his appearance. He wandered into a thicket of trees.
As the stag thought [ADV] about his appearance, he wandered into a thicket of trees.
6. The antlers now held him tightly in the thicket. He had greatly admired those antlers.
The antlers, which he had greatly admired [REL], now held him tightly in the thicket.

#31 The Fox and the Goat

Adapted from "Fables with Morals," <http://www.aesopfables.com/email.html>
Flesch-Kincaid: 6.7

A fox one day fell into a deep well and could find no means of escape. A goat, **overcome** with thirst, came to the same well, and seeing the fox, inquired if the water was good.

Concealing his sad **plight** under a merry **guise**, the fox **indulged** in a **lavish praise** of the water, saying it was excellent **beyond measure**, and encouraging the goat to **descend**. The goat, **mindful** only of his thirst, thoughtlessly jumped down. However, just as he drank, the fox informed him of the difficulty they were both in and suggested a **scheme** for their common escape.

"If," said the fox, "you will place your forefeet upon the wall and bend your head, I will run up your back and escape. Then I will help you out afterwards." The goat readily **assented** and the fox leaped upon his back. Steadying himself with the goat's horns, he safely reached the mouth of the well and made off as fast as he could.

When the goat **upbraided** him for **breaking his promise**, the fox turned around and cried out, "You foolish old fellow! If you had any common sense, you would never have gone down before you had **inspected** the way up. And you would not have **exposed** yourself to dangers from which you had no means of escape."

The moral of this story is, "Look before you leap."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. Why did the fox tell the goat that the water in the well was delicious?
2. What was the goat thinking when he jumped down into the well?
3. How did the fox trick the goat into helping him escape from the well?
4. How did the goat feel when he realized the fox had tricked him?
5. This story is about **honesty**, the state of being truthful and trustworthy. Why is it important for people to be **honest**? What can happen when people are **dishonest**? Is it good to **trust** people that you don't know? Why/why not?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "Look before you leap"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. Once day, a fox fell into a deep well. He could not find a way of escape.
One day, a fox who fell [REL] into a deep well could not find a way of escape.
2. A goat asked the fox something. Was the water in the well good?
A goat asked the fox if the water in the well was [NOM] good.
3. The sad fox pretended something. The water in the well was outstanding.
The sad fox pretended that the water in the well was [NOM] outstanding.
4. The goat quickly jumped into the well. But soon he could not get out.
Although the goat quickly jumped [ADV] into the well, soon he could not get out.
5. The fox was very clever. He devised a solution to his problem.
The fox, who was [REL] very clever, devised a solution to his problem.
6. The fox could get out of the well. The fox could leap onto the goat's back.
If the fox could leap [ADV] onto the goat's back, he could get out of the well.

#32 *The Monkey and the Dolphin*
Adapted from Grosset & Dunlap (1947, pp. 198-199)
Flesch-Kincaid: 7.0

It was an old **custom** among sailors to take with them on their voyages monkeys and other pets to **amuse** them while they were at sea. Therefore, it happened that on a certain voyage a sailor took with him a monkey as a **companion** on board ship.

Off the coast of Sunium, the famous **promontory** of Attica, the ship was caught in a violent storm and was wrecked. All on board were thrown into the water and had to swim for land as best they could. And among them was the monkey.

A dolphin saw him struggling in the waves, and taking him for a man, went to his **assistance**. As they were nearing the shore just opposite Piraeus, the harbor of Athens, the dolphin spoke. "Are you an Athenian?" he asked.

"Yes, indeed," replied the monkey, as he spat out a mouthful of seawater. "I belong to one of the first families of the city."

"Then, of course, you know Piraeus," said the dolphin.

"Oh yes," said the monkey, who thought Piraeus must be the name of some **distinguished citizen**, "he is one of my very dearest friends."

Disgusted by so **obvious** a **falsehood**, the dolphin dived to the bottom of the sea and left the monkey to his **fate**.

The moral of this story is, "Those who pretend to be what they are not, sooner or later, find themselves in **deep water**."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. Why did the dolphin ask the monkey if he was an Athenian?
2. Why did the monkey tell the dolphin that Piraeus was a close friend?
3. How did the dolphin know that the monkey was lying about Piraeus?
4. When they got close to shore, why did the dolphin abandon the monkey?
5. This story is about **goodwill**, the state of being friendly and helpful. At the beginning of the story, how did the dolphin show **goodwill** towards the monkey?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, that "Those who pretend to be what they are not, sooner or later, find themselves in deep water"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. Sailors had an old custom. They took monkeys and other pets on their voyages.
Sailors had an old custom in which they took [REL] monkeys and other pets on their voyages.
2. The ship got caught in a violent storm. The ship was wrecked.
When the ship got caught [ADV] in a violent storm, it was wrecked.
3. A dolphin saw the monkey. The monkey was struggling in the sea.
A dolphin saw the monkey who was struggling [REL] in the sea.
4. The dolphin asked the monkey a question. Are you an Athenian citizen?
The dolphin asked the monkey if he was [NOM] an Athenian citizen.
5. The monkey explained something to the dolphin. I belong to one of the first families of Athens.
The monkey explained to the dolphin that he belonged [NOM] to one of the first families of Athens.
6. The dolphin did not believe the monkey. The dolphin left the monkey alone in the sea.
Because the dolphin did not believe [ADV] the monkey, he left him alone in the sea.

#33 *The Peasant and the Apple Tree*

Adapted from: <http://www.aesopfables.com/cgi/aesop1.cgi?3&ThePeasantandtheAppleTree>

Retrieved 8/14/17

Flesch-Kincaid: 7.1

A peasant had in his garden an apple tree, which bore no fruit but only served as a **harbor** for the sparrows and grasshoppers. He **resolved** to cut it down, and taking his axe in his hand, made a **bold** stroke at its roots.

The grasshoppers and sparrows **entreated** him not to cut down the tree that **sheltered** them, but to **spare** it, and they would sing to him and **lighten his labors**. He paid no attention to their request, but gave the tree a second and a third blow with his axe.

When he reached the **hollow** of the tree, he found a hive full of honey. Having tasted the honeycomb, he threw down his axe, and looking on the tree as **sacred**, took great care of it.

The moral of this story is, "**Self-interest** alone **moves** some people."



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Questions:

1. Why did the peasant decide to cut down the apple tree?
2. Why were the grasshoppers and sparrows upset about that?
3. How did the grasshoppers and sparrows try to change the peasant's mind?
4. What did the peasant think when he found the hive full of honey?
5. This story is about **selfishness**, the state of caring only about one's *own* needs. How can selfishness prevent a person from having genuine friendships with others?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "Self-interest alone moves some people"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. An apple tree bore no fruit. It served as a harbor for the sparrows and grasshoppers.
An apple tree that bore [REL] no fruit served as a harbor for the sparrows and grasshoppers.
2. Nevertheless, the peasant decided something. He would cut down the apple tree.
Nevertheless, the peasant decided that he would cut [NOM] down the apple tree.
3. The sparrows and grasshoppers could sing to the peasant. Then he might spare the tree.
If the sparrows and grasshoppers sing [ADV] to the peasant, he might spare the tree.
4. The peasant **disregarded** the sparrows and grasshoppers. They wanted him to save their harbor.
The peasant **disregarded** the sparrows and grasshoppers who wanted [REL] him to save their harbor.
5. The peasant cut down the tree. The sparrows and grasshoppers were sad.
When the peasant cut [ADV] down the tree, the sparrows and grasshoppers were sad.
6. The peasant did not know something. The hollow of the tree contained a hive full of honey.
The peasant did not know that the hollow of the tree contained [NOM] a hive full of honey.

#34 *The Bear and the Bees*

Adapted from *The Aesop for Children* (1993, p. 56), New York, NY: Barnes & Noble Books
Flesch-Kincaid: 7.3

A bear roaming the woods in search of berries happened on a fallen tree in which a **swarm of bees** had stored their honey. The bear began to **nose around** the log very carefully to find out if the bees were at home.

Just then, a little bee came home, carrying a load of sweets from a clover field. Guessing what the bear was after, the bee flew at him, stung him sharply, and disappeared into the hollow log.

The bear lost his **temper** in an instant and sprang upon the log, **tooth and claw**, to destroy the nest. However, this only brought out the whole **swarm of bees**. The poor bear had to **take to his heels**, and he was able to save himself only by diving into a pool of water.

The moral of this story is, "It is wiser to suffer a single injury in silence than to **provoke** a thousand by flying into a **rage**."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. Why did the bear want to know if the bees were at home?
2. What was the little bee thinking when she came home and saw the bear?
3. Why did the bear suddenly get so angry and want to destroy the bees' nest?
4. How did the bees feel when they realized what the bear was doing to their nest?
5. This story is about **theft**, the act of **stealing** from others. How can **theft** cause trouble for people, including the person who is the thief?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "It is wiser to suffer a single injury in silence than to provoke a thousand by flying into a rage"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. A bear was roaming the woods. He happened upon a fallen tree.
A bear who was roaming [REL] the woods happened upon a fallen tree.
2. The bees had stored their honey in the hollow of the log. A bear could smell the honey.
A bear could smell the honey that the bees had stored [REL] in the hollow of the log.
3. One little bee knew something. The bear wanted their honey.
One little bee knew that the bear wanted [NOM] their honey.
4. The little bee stung the bear on his nose. The bear got very angry.
When the little bee stung [ADV] the bear on his nose, he got very angry.
5. The bear flew into a rage. He attacked the bees' nest, tooth and claw.
When the bear flew [ADV] into a rage, he attacked the bees' nest, tooth and claw.
6. The bear learned something the hard way. We should not provoke war with others.
The bear learned the hard way that we should not provoke [NOM] war with others.

#35 *The Ant and the Chrysalis*

Adapted from <https://fablesfaesop.com/ant-chrysalis.html>

Retrieved 8/29/19

Flesch-Kincaid: 7.3

An ant **nimbly** running about in the sunshine in search of food came across a **chrysalis** (cocoon) that was very near its time of change. The chrysalis moved its tail, and thus attracted the attention of the ant, who then saw for the first time that it was alive.

“Poor, **pitiabile** animal!” cried the ant **disdainfully**. “What a sad **fate** is yours! While I can run hither and thither, at my pleasure, and, if I wish, **ascend** the tallest tree, you lie **imprisoned** here in your shell, with power only to move a joint or two of your scaly tail.”

The chrysalis heard all this, but did not try to make any reply. A few days later, when the ant passed that way again, nothing but the shell remained. Wondering what had become of its contents, the ant felt himself suddenly shaded and fanned by the gorgeous wings of a beautiful butterfly.

“Behold in me,” said the butterfly, “your much-pitied friend! **Boast** now of your powers to run and climb as long as you can get me to listen.”

So saying, the butterfly rose in the air, and, borne along and aloft on the summer breeze, was soon lost to the sight of the ant forever.

The moral of the story is, “**Appearances** can be **deceptive**.”

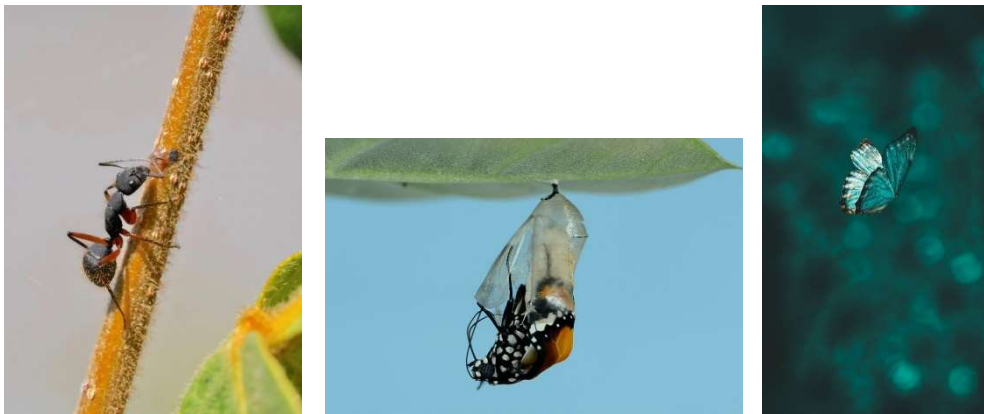


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Questions:

1. Why did the ant feel that he was superior to the chrysalis?
2. How did the chrysalis feel when the ant talked to her, scornfully?
3. How did the ant feel when he realized that the chrysalis had become a butterfly?
4. How did the butterfly feel when she flew away from the ant?
5. This story is about **scornfulness**, the act of looking down on others and not respecting them. What can happen when people look down on others, based on their appearance?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "Appearances can be deceptive?"
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. An ant was running around in the sunshine. He came across a chrysalis.
An ant who was running [REL] around in the sunshine came across a chrysalis.
2. The chrysalis moved her tail. This caught the attention of the ant.
When the chrysalis moved [ADV] her tail, this caught the attention of the ant.
3. The ant believed something. The chrysalis had a pitiful existence.
The ant believed that the chrysalis had [NOM] a pitiful existence.
4. The ant could run around freely. The chrysalis had to stay in one place.
Although the ant could run [ADV] around freely, the chrysalis had to stay in one place.
5. The ant did not know something. The chrysalis had turned into a beautiful butterfly.
The ant did not know that the chrysalis had turned [NOM] into a beautiful butterfly.
6. The butterfly had acquired gorgeous wings. Suddenly, she flew up into the sky.
Suddenly, the butterfly who had acquired [REL] gorgeous wings, flew up into the sky.

#36 *The Vain Crow*

Adapted from Grosset & Dunlap (1947, p. 190-191)

Flesch-Kincaid: 7.4

One day, a **vain** crow found some feathers, which a peacock had shed. Sticking them among his own rusty black ones, he began to strut about, **ignoring** and **despising** his old **friends** and **companions**.

Dressed in his borrowed **plumage**, he **cockily** sought out a flock of peacocks. He tried to join them as they were walking with **stately** steps on the park lawn. Instantly **detecting** the true nature of the intruder, the peacocks stripped the crow of his finery. Then they attacked him with their sharp beaks and **sent him packing**.

The **bedraggled** crow, sadder but wiser, went back to his former companions, and would have been **satisfied** to **associate** with them again. However, the crows, remembering how **obnoxious** he had been with his **airs** and his **vanity**, **drummed** him out of their **society**.

One of those whom he had **shunned** offered him the following advice: "Be **content** with how nature made you. You will then avoid the **contempt** of your peers and the punishment of your betters."

The moral of this story is, "Never pretend to be what you are not."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. Why did the crow want to look like a peacock?
2. Why did the peacocks attack the crow and send him away?
3. Why did the crow's old friends and companions not take him back?
4. How did the crow feel when his old friends and companions rejected him?
5. This story is about **pretense**, the act of claiming to be something other than what we really are. Why do people sometimes engage in **pretense**? What can happen when people are too **pretentious** around others? Please explain.
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "Never pretend to be what you are not"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. One day, a crow found some feathers. The crow was vain.
One day, a crow who was vain [REL] found some feathers.
2. The feathers had belonged to a peacock. The crow stuck them on himself.
Although the feathers had belonged [ADV] to a peacock, the crow stuck them on himself.
3. The crow pretended something. With his new feathers, he was suddenly a peacock.
The crow pretended that, with his new feathers, he was [NOM] suddenly a peacock.
4. The crow acted like a peacock. He scorned his old friends, the crows.
When the crow acted [ADV] like a peacock, he scorned his old friends, the crows.
5. The peacocks knew the truth about the vain crow. He was not one of them.
The peacocks knew the truth about the vain crow, that he was [NOM] not one of them.
6. His old friends shunned the vain crow. They remembered his obnoxious behavior.
His old friends, who remembered [REL] his obnoxious behavior, shunned the vain crow.

#37 *The Lion and the Mouse*

Adapted from Grosset & Dunlap (1947, p. 137-138)

Flesch-Kincaid: 7.5

A lion was asleep in his den one day, when a **mischievous** little mouse for no reason at all ran across the outstretched paw and up the royal nose of the king of beasts, awakening him from his nap. The mighty beast clapped his paw upon the frightened little creature and held him tightly.

"Please," squealed the little mouse, "Don't kill me. Forgive me this time, O King, and I shall never forget it. A day may come, who knows, when I may do you a good turn to repay your **kindness**." The lion, smiling at his little prisoner's fright and **amused** by the thought that so small a creature ever could be of **assistance** to the king of beasts, let him go.

Not long afterward, the lion, while ranging the forest for his prey, was caught in a net, which the hunters had set to catch him. He let out a roar that **echoed** throughout the forest. Even the little mouse heard it, and recognizing the voice of his former **preserver** and friend, ran to the spot where he lay tangled in the net of ropes.

"Well, your majesty," said the little mouse, "I know you did not believe me once when I said I would return a **kindness**, but here is my chance." And without further ado, the mouse set to work, nibbling with his sharp little teeth at the ropes that bound the mighty lion. Soon the lion was able to crawl out of the hunter's snare and be free.

The moral of the story is, "No act of **kindness**, no matter how small, is ever wasted."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. What was the little mouse thinking when the lion held him with his giant paw?
2. How did the little mouse convince the lion to let him go?
3. How did the lion feel when he was trapped in the net of ropes?
4. What was the lion thinking when the little mouse offered to help him?
5. This story is about **compassion** – the act of treating other people with kindness. How did the lion learn about compassion? Why is compassion so important in today's world?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. One day, a lion was sleeping peacefully in his den. A mischievous little mouse ran across his outstretched paw.
One day, when a lion was sleeping [ADV] peacefully in his den, a mischievous little mouse ran across his outstretched paw.
2. The lion captured the little mouse. The mouse was very frightened.
The lion captured the little mouse who was [REL] very frightened.
3. The little mouse asked the lion a question. Please, O King, let me run free!
The little mouse asked the lion if he would let [NOM] him run free.
4. The little mouse was grateful to the lion. The lion let the little mouse run free.
The little mouse was grateful that the lion let [NOM] him run free.
5. The little mouse will repay the lion's kindness. The lion might need help someday.
Someday, when the lion needs [ADV] help, the little mouse will replay his kindness.
6. The little mouse chewed through the ropes. The ropes were tied around the mighty lion.
The little mouse chewed through the ropes that were tied [REL] around the mighty lion.

#38 *The Mouse and the Weasel*

Adapted from Grosset & Dunlap Publishers (1947, p. 202)

Flesch-Kincaid: 8.0

A little mouse, who had gone without food for days and was therefore starving, had the good **fortune** to come upon a basket of corn. Weak as he was, he was able to make his way into the basket, where he stuffed and **gorged** himself to his **heart's content**.

His hunger **appeased**, the mouse **decided** to go home, only to find to his **dismay** that his **enlarged** belly would not go through the hole in the basket.

So, there he sat **bewailing** his **fate**, until a weasel, brought to the spot by the mouse's squeaks, said to him, "Stop your weeping and wailing, friend mouse. The thing for you to do is to **fast** where you are until you are thin again. When you reduce yourself to the same condition you were in when you entered, then you can get out the same way."

The moral of this story is, "Do not **covet** more than you can carry."



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Photo by Magalie St-Hialire Poulin on Unsplash, <https://unsplash.com/s/photos/weasel>,
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Questions:

1. What was the mouse thinking when he first got inside the basket of corn?
2. How did the mouse feel when he could not get out of the basket?
3. What was the weasel thinking when he heard the mouse crying?
4. How did the weasel try to help the mouse?
5. This story is about **self-indulgence** or **greed**, a state of taking more than one actually needs. Why do you think the mouse engaged in self-indulgence when he was inside the basket? Is self-indulgence ever a *good* thing or is it always a *bad* thing? Please explain.
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "Do not **covet** more than you can carry"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. A little mouse had gone without food for several days. Therefore, he was starving.
A little mouse who had gone [REL] without food for several days was therefore starving.
2. Fortunately, the little mouse found a basket of corn. He got into the basket.
Fortunately, when the little mouse found [ADV] a basket of corn, he got into it.
3. The mouse decided to go home. However, he could not get out of the basket.
When the mouse decided [ADV] to go home, he could not get out of the basket.
4. The mouse had eaten too much corn. The mouse had become too big.
The mouse who had eaten [REL] too much corn had become too big.
5. A weasel said something to the mouse. Stop your weeping and wailing.
A weasel told the mouse that he should stop [NOM] his weeping and wailing.
6. The weasel thought something about the mouse. The mouse had taken too much food.
The weasel thought that the mouse had taken [NOM] too much food.

#39 *The Travelers and the Chameleon*

Adapted from *Aesop's Illustrated Fables* (2014), pp. 326-327. New York, NY: Barnes & Noble
Flesch-Kincaid: 8.3

As you may know, a **chameleon** is a type of lizard that changes its colors, depending on the color of the **background** or the **circumstances** surrounding it. For example, if a chameleon is resting on a pink flower, it will turn pink, and if it is cold, it will turn a dark color to absorb light and more heat.

One day, two travelers were on a journey. They were engaged in a warm **dispute** about the color of the chameleon. One traveler argued it was *blue*, and that he had seen it with his own eyes, resting on the branch of a tree, before a bright blue sky. The other traveler argued that it was *green*, and that he had viewed it very closely as it was sitting on the broad green leaf of a fig tree. Both were absolutely positive that they were correct, and the dispute was rising to a **quarrel**.

Then a third person came along, and the two travelers agreed to allow him to settle the dispute. "Gentlemen," said the **arbitrator**, with a smile of great **self-satisfaction**, "You could not have been luckier in asking my **opinion**. It turns out that I caught a chameleon last night after the sun had set and the sky was dark, and you both are mistaken, for the creature is totally *black*."

"Black? That is impossible," cried the two travelers. "No," replied the arbitrator, with great **assurance**. "The matter may be soon decided, for I put my chameleon in a little paper box, and here it is." So saying, the arbitrator drew the box out of his satchel, opened it, and the chameleon was *as white as snow*. All three observers looked totally surprised and completely **confounded**.

Then, the **sagacious** reptile, assuming the air of a philosopher, **admonished** all of them, saying "You all need to learn **diffidence** and **moderation** in your opinions. It's true, each of you is correct. But you have only considered the chameleon under different **circumstances**. So, in the future, allow others to have eyesight as well as yourselves. What would happen if all people preferred the testimony of their own senses to those of anyone else?"

The moral of this story is, "Have **respect** for the opinions of others."



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<https://unsplash.com/license>

Questions:

1. The two travelers each had a different opinion about the color of the chameleon, and each man was *sure* he was correct. Why did they each have a different opinion on this?
2. The arbitrator also had his own opinion about the color of the chameleon. Why did he believe that only *he* was correct?
3. What was the chameleon in the box thinking when he heard the different views?
4. What advice did the chameleon give to the three observers? Why did he say that?
5. This story is about **respect, the willingness to consider the opinions of others**. What problems can arise when people have strong **opinions** and *don't* listen to others?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "Have respect for the opinions of others"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. A chameleon is a type of lizard. It can change the color of its skin. This depends on the background. The chameleon can rest on different colored backgrounds.
A chameleon is a type of lizard that can change [REL] the color of its skin, depending on the color of the background that it rests [REL] on.
2. One time, a chameleon was resting on the green leaf of a fig tree. He looked green. The chameleon looked green when he was resting [ADV] on the leaf of a fig tree.
3. Some people have strong opinions. They believe something. They must always be correct.
When some people have [ADV] strong opinions, they believe they must always be [NOM] correct.
4. The chameleon listened to the different opinions about his skin color. He thought something. Each man was correct. But each man was wrong.
As the chameleon listened [ADV] to the different opinions about his color, he thought that each man was [NOM] correct but also wrong.
5. The chameleon was a wise reptile. He gave advice to others.
The chameleon, who was [REL] a wise reptile, gave advice to others.
6. Something might happen. People might not listen to others. People might not learn anything new or important.
If people don't listen [ADV] to others, they might not learn anything new or important.

#40 Mercury and the Woodcutter

Adapted from <https://fairytales.com/mercury-and-the-woodman/>

Retrieved 9/9/21

Flesch-Kincaid: 8.8

One day, an honest Woodcutter was chopping down a tree on the bank of a river. Suddenly, his axe slipped, flew out of his hands, and sank to the bottom of the river. As he stood by the water's edge **lamenting** his loss, Mercury, the Greek God, appeared and asked him the reason for his **grief**. The Woodcutter explained that he had lost his axe and could no longer make a living chopping down trees to be sold for lumber.

On learning what had happened and feeling sorry for his distress, Mercury dove into the river, brought up a *golden* axe, and asked the Woodcutter if that was the one that he had lost. The Woodcutter replied that it was *not*. Then, Mercury dove into the river a second time, brought up a *silver* axe, and asked if that was his. "No, that is not mine either," said the Woodcutter sadly. Finally, Mercury dove into the river again, and this time, he brought up the *missing* axe.

The Woodcutter was overjoyed at recovering his property and thanked his **benefactor** warmly. Mercury was so pleased with the Woodcutter's **honesty** that he made him a present of the other two axes, the golden and silver ones. When the Woodcutter told the story to his neighbors, one man was filled with envy of his good fortune and was determined to try his luck for himself.

So, that man went to the edge of the river, began chopping down a tree, and **intentionally** let his axe drop into the water. As before, Mercury suddenly appeared, and upon learning that the man's axe had fallen into the river, he dove down and brought up a golden axe, just as he had done on the previous occasion. Without waiting to be asked whether it was his or not, the man cried greedily, "That's mine, that's mine," and stretched out his hand, eager to claim the prize. However, Mercury was so **disgusted** at the man's **dishonesty** that he declined to give him the golden axe. He also refused to recover the real axe and let it remain at the bottom of the river.

The moral of the story is, "Honesty is the best policy."



Illustration by Milo Winter (1919), www.gutenberg.org

Questions:

1. Why did Mercury decide to help the honest Woodcutter recover his axe?
2. What was Mercury thinking when the Woodcutter said that the golden axe was *not* his?
3. Why did the Woodcutter's jealous neighbor try to obtain a golden axe for himself?
4. Why did Mercury decide *not* to help the jealous neighbor recover his axe?
5. This story is about **integrity**, the quality of always wanting to do the right thing. Why is it important for people to have **integrity**? Do you think it is possible to *teach* integrity? If so, how can it be taught?
6. Do you agree or disagree with the moral of this story, "Honesty is the best policy"?
7. Why do you agree (or disagree)?
8. Can you think of a situation in real life where the moral might apply?

Sentence Repetition Activity:

Student repeats each **simple** sentence. Then, student repeats the combined, **complex** sentence.

1. Mercury saw the Woodcutter. The man was distressed. He had lost his axe.
Mercury saw the Woodcutter who was [REL] distressed because he had lost [ADV] his axe.
2. Mercury dove into the water. He brought up a golden axe. The axe did not belong to the Woodcutter.
Mercury, who dove [REL] into the water, brought up a golden axe that did not belong [REL] to the Woodcutter.
3. The Woodcutter was honest. He did not tell lies. He had integrity.
Because the Woodcutter was [ADV] honest and did not tell [ADV] lies, he had integrity.
4. The Woodcutter's neighbor lacked integrity. He pretended something. The golden axe was his.
The Woodcutter's neighbor who pretended [REL] the golden axe was [NOM] his lacked integrity.
5. Mercury knew something. The neighbor had thrown his own axe into the river. He was lying about the golden axe.
Mercury knew that the neighbor had thrown [NOM] his own axe into the river and that he was lying [NOM] about the golden axe.
6. The neighbor grabbed at the golden axe quickly. Mercury knew something. The man lacked integrity. The man was greedy.
When the neighbor grabbed [ADV] at the golden axe quickly, Mercury knew that the man lacked [NOM] integrity and was [NOM] greedy.

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