What is a Fable?

In this lesson, students will use Internet sources, graphic organizers and group activities to analyze and discuss the characteristics and story lines of two different fables, "The Owl and The Grasshopper" and "The Town Mouse and The Country Mouse." After students read and brainstorm story elements of the folktales, they will then write a fable of their own.

Grade Level: 3 - 5th  
Subject: English/Language Arts  
Length of Time: About 45 Minutes

Common Core Alignment

CCSS: ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.9 - Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes and topics (e.g., opposition of good and evil) and patterns of events (e.g., the quest) in stories, myths, and traditional literature from different cultures.

Objectives & Outcomes

Students will be able to analyze fables, find the moral of the story, and identify the message or theme of the fable.

Materials Needed

- The Town Mouse and The Country Mouse and The Owl and The Grasshopper (or you can use any two other fables)
- white board
- dry erase markers

Procedure

Opening to Lesson

To begin this lesson, explain to the students that they are going to be learning about fables. Fables originated long ago and were a form of oral storytelling.

To help students understand what oral storytelling is all about, play the Telephone Game. (Students sit in a circle. The teacher whispers one line into the ear of the student to her right. Each student will turn and repeat the line to the next person by whispering it in their ear. Once the last student hears the line, they say it out loud.) (CFU: Discuss: How did the story change? Why did the story change?)
Body of Lesson

Direct Teaching

Explain why it was so important for oral storytellers to write their tales down. “There was a man by the name of Aesop, and he wrote many of the fables that we know today. We are going to be reading two of his fables, but before we do that, let us look at what characteristics are common to most fables.” Create an anchor chart on the board to review the characteristics of fables with the class. The students will then get their own copy for future guidance.

Guided Practice 1

Give each student a copy of the fable "The Town Mouse and The Country Mouse." I will read this fable aloud to the class. (CFU: Once the teacher has finished reading the story, the teacher will call on individual students and have them identify the elements of a fable found in this story, referring to the anchor chart and handout.)

Guided Practice 2

I will give each student a copy of the second fable, "The Owl and The Grasshopper." Students will read alone or in groups.

Independent Practice

Once students have finished reading, the students will share with their shoulder partner, the elements of a fable found in this story. (CFU: can monitor the student discussions at this time by walking around the room.)

Closing

Have students take turns going to the board and filing out the Venn Diagram to compare the elements of the two fables.

Assessment & Evaluation

Through guided questions, close monitoring and informal observation; the teacher will be able to assess student’s ability and understanding of the subject being introduced. Through individually assessing during independent practice and reviewing during guided practice the teacher will be able to evaluate students.

Modification & Differentiation

To modify these exercises, students can read the passages with a peer, or listen to audio versions of the two fables to ensure better comprehension. While students must work together to understand the meanings of unfamiliar words, vocabulary words and meanings have been pre-recorded on flashcards, which will be given to each group at the start of each lesson. Students can tape their final fables before actually publishing them to help them organize their story ideas. Students can have a scribe for their final fable. Students can work in groups of three instead of two during the Guided Practice when they are sharing answers and discussion.
Related Lesson Plans

**Short Stories**

This lesson is designed to help students ask questions and support answers by connecting prior knowledge with literal information found in, and inferred from, the text.

**Writing Main Idea**

This lesson is designed to help student’s organization and focus their grade appropriate writing.

**Explain Those Idioms**

Students will recognize idioms for their actual as well as realized meaning.

**Tearing Into Vocabulary**

This is a quick activity to allow students to work cooperatively while increasing awareness of vocabulary for a given lesson.