Cambridge University Press 978-1-107-68321-1 – Cambridge Primary English Stage 5 Sally Burt and Debbie Ridgard Excerpt More information



There's a lesson in that

Sometimes we can learn from stories as well as enjoy them. In this unit, you'll read fables – stories that were written to teach us a lesson. You'll practise writing in different styles and tell a fable of your own.

Vocabulary to learn and use: fable, moral, proverb, stereotype, idiom/idiomatic expression, figurative expression, human characteristics

1 Read a story by Aesop

The Ant and the Grasshopper is one of Aesop's most famous fables.

- 1 Skim the story silently to get the main idea.
- 2 Read the story aloud in your group, one paragraph each.
 - a Do you understand all the words in your paragraph?
 - **b** Use expression as you read, so you make the meaning clear.



Did you know?

The storyteller Aesop is said to have lived in Greece in the 6th century BCE. No-one is sure where he came from but the name 'Aesop' comes from the Greek word 'Aethiop' meaning Ethiopia.

Tip

When you don't know what a word means, try these ideas:

- Break the word into syllables and look for a common root word, prefix or suffix.
- Re-read the word in context for extra clues.
- Use a dictionary.

The Ant and the Grasshopper

One fine summer's day, deep in a meadow, a grasshopper was bouncing about, chirruping and singing without a care in the world. An ant bustled by, weighed down by the enormous ear of corn she was lugging to her nest. Time and time again, the grasshopper watched the ant scurry back and forth gathering food – insects, flies, grains of wheat – anything she could find, never once stopping to admire the glorious day or relax in the rays.

The grasshopper found this difficult to **fathom** and teased her as she busied by, saying, "Take it easy there, Ant! I don't understand why you're working so hard. The day is long! Food is plentiful. Come and rest awhile, and listen to my latest melody."

"As it happens, Grasshopper, I am storing up food for winter and you should be doing the same. Summer won't last forever, you know," snapped the ant as she continued on her industrious way, if anything toiling just a little harder. The grasshopper **guffawed** at the idea of working on such a day and hopped happily off into the sunset, singing and jigging all the way.

And summer *didn't* last. It never does. Winter came, bringing barren fare and frosty fields. Grasshopper's song stuck in his throat as he shivered without shelter or sustenance, gazing wistfully at the ants as they munched liberally from their stores of food, shaking their heads at him and offering him nothing.

"How foolish I have been!" he wailed, for only then did Grasshopper understand that he should have made provision for winter as Ant had said.

Sally Burt

 ${f guffaw}\ v.$ to laugh loudly, especially to mock something







B Discuss the story in a group.

- 1 Can you summarise the main idea of the story in one sentence?
- 2 Who are the main characters? How are they different from each other in what they say and do?
- 3 One character learned something important. What was it?
- 4 Which character do you think behaved the best? Use examples to explain your view.

Fables are found in many cultures and folklore storytelling traditions.

What have you learned about fables from the story?
Write a Fable fact file in your notebook.

Fable fact file:

- Fables are ...
- The characters are usually ...
- The main point ...
- We can ...

Use these key words to help you:

short moral human characteristics lesson story

2 Discuss other stories you think might be fables.

How did I do?

- Did I understand the key features of a fable?
- Did I recognise whether a story is a fable from my notes?
- Complete your reading log for *The Ant and the Grasshopper*.

 Do you think a story is a good way of teaching this lesson?

 Explain your opinion.

2 Check your understanding

- Discuss the questions with a talk partner and then write your answers neatly in your notebook. Use examples from the text.
 - 1 Why did Grasshopper tease Ant?
 - 2 Why did Ant say "summer won't last forever"?
 - **3** Give an example of Ant's **actions** to show she approves or disapproves of Grasshopper.
 - **4** What made Grasshopper finally understand that he should have acted differently?
 - 5 How do you think Ant felt when she saw Grasshopper at the end?
- B 📴 📭 Verbs can tell you about characters through how they act and move.
 - 1 What different kinds of walking do these words describe?
 Role play them with a partner.

stroll amble meander stride saunter promenade hike pace

- 2 Choose a verb from the story that shows Ant's mood when Grasshopper teases her.
- 3 Write down verbs from the story to describe how Ant moves. What do they show about her personality?
- 4 Fathom has more than one meaning in the dictionary. Use the context to decide which meaning is correct in the story.
- 5 What tense is the narrative part of the story? Give three examples.
- 6 What tense is the dialogue mainly in? Give three examples.

Punctuation is necessary in any story.

- 1 Where are exclamation marks used and why?
- **2** Find an example of punctuation that shows where there is dialogue in the story.
- **3** Explain the reason for the apostrophe in each example:
 - a One fine summer's day ...
 - **b** Summer won't last forever ...
 - c And summer didn't last ...
 - **d** The grasshopper's song stuck in his throat ...

fathom

n. a unit of
measurement (equal to
six feet) for water depth
v. to measure the
depth of water with a
sounding line
v. to understand
something by thinking
about it hard

3 Story features

Animal characters in fables often have particular human characteristics that we associate with each animal. These are known as stereotypes.

1 Discuss with a talk partner the characteristics often associated with these animals in stories.

Did you know?

Anthropomorphism means giving human characteristics to animals in stories or pictures. Anthropos means 'man' or 'human' in Ancient Greek and morph means shape or form. Can you see how this word came about?

elephant	fox	snake	lion
hyena	donkey	wolf	rabbit

- 2 How does Ant act like a person? Make a list.
- 3 How does Grasshopper act like a person? Make a list.
- 4 Write two short paragraphs describing the personalities of Ant and Grasshopper, using examples from the text of how they speak and act.
- 5 Read these fact files about real ants and grasshoppers.
 - **a** Which is which?
 - **b** Do the facts support Ant's and Grasshopper's personalities?

I love having fun swimming and flapping about but I always remember that I need to find my own food!

A	B own food
Live almost anywhere except	Live almost anywhere
extremely cold places	Live in colonies
Live by themselves	Will eat most things
Mostly eat grasses, leaves	especially insects, meat, fats
and cereal crops (herbivore)	and sugary foods (omnivore)
Don't usually survive the	Can live a few months to a
winter	few years

- By Stories usually contain an issue or a complication. In fables, the issue is the lesson learned by one of the characters.
 - 1 Discuss the issue in this story.
 - 2 What did either of the main characters do to resolve the problem?
 - **3** How does the story teach us the lesson?

Ant and Grasshopper approach life differently.

- 1 Make notes about how each character approaches life.
- 2 Summarise your ideas to your talk partner and discuss whether you agree.
- 3 Sort these adjectives into two lists to describe Ant and Grasshopper.
 - practical thoughtless hard-working optimistic dull happy-go-lucky fun-loving chirpy sensible prudent irresponsible cheerful bossy cheery serious worthy unkind down-to-earth feckless
- 4 Role play a conversation in which Grasshopper asks Ant for help at the end of the story.
 - a What will Grasshopper say?
 - **b** How will Ant react?
 - What could Grasshopper offer Ant in exchange for food?
- Write a short paragraph explaining what you would say and do if Grasshopper asked you for help. Give reasons.

4 What about my point-of-view?

- The narrator of a story can either be a character (first person) or someone looking in from outside (third person).
 - 1 Who tells the story of The Ant and the Grasshopper?
 - 2 What evidence tells you this the narrative or the dialogue? Why?
 - 3 Which words show whether these sentences are in first or third person?
 - **a** Grasshopper said he hoped winter would not come.
 - **b** I am worried that Grasshopper will have no food.
 - **c** She works so hard and never has time for play.
 - **d** We share all the food we collected to see us through winter.
 - e The ants know they need to store food to survive.

Language focus

Third person narrative: an outsider tells the story but is not part of it.



Imran went to school early so that **he** could hand in **his** newspapers for recycling.

Common pronouns: he, she, it, they, him, her, them, his, hers, theirs.

First person narrative: a character tells the story as well as being in it.



I go to school early so that I can hand in **my** newspapers for recycling.

Common pronouns: I, we, me, us, mine, ours.

Tip

Pronouns stand in for people or objects to avoid repetition.

Example: The duck said that the duck gave the duck's mum a present. The duck said that **she** gave **her** mum a present.

🕒 📝 🔼 Use possessive pronouns and adjectives.

Language focus

Possessive pronouns and possessive adjectives do different jobs.

Possessive adjectives appear with the noun they modify.

Possessive pronouns take the place of a noun.

Example:

That's my eqq, not your eqq. \rightarrow That eqq is mine, not yours.

possessive adjective

possessive pronoun

Personal	Possessive	Possessive
pronoun	adjectives	pronouns
I	my	mine
you	your	yours
he	his	his
she	her	hers
it	its	-
we	our	ours
they	their	theirs

- 1 Choose the correct word for these sentences.
 - **a** The ant carried (her/hers) load on (her/hers) back.
 - **b** The ants said, "This corn is (our/ours)."
 - c Please share (your/yours) food with me.
 - **d** People should not steal what is not (their/theirs).
 - e Why don't you come and warm up at (my/mine) house?
- 2 Replace the personal pronoun (*I, you, he/she/it, we, they*) with the correct possessive adjective or pronoun.
 - **a** Winter made (it) presence felt.
 - **b** We are collecting food for (we) stores.
 - **c** All the food I have collected should be (1).
 - d They gave me (they) word.
 - e All that I have is (you).

Not everyone sees things the same way. How might the story change if Ant or Grasshopper was telling it?



One fine summer's day, deep in a meadow, I noticed a grasshopper bouncing about, chirruping and singing without a care in the world ...



One fine summer's day, deep in a meadow, I was bouncing about, chirruping and singing without a care in the world ...

- 1 Decide with a talk partner who will tell the story from Ant's and Grasshopper's points-of-view.
- 2 Re-read the story and decide what to change to make your character the narrator. You can also change some story details.
 - What does Ant really think about Grasshopper?
 - What does Grasshopper really think about Ant?
- 3 Make notes of your changes.
- 4 Tell each other the story from your character's point-of-view.

5 Proverbs tell a tale

Stories can help us to learn tricky lessons about life; we remember the story, so we remember the lesson.

A proverb is a memorable saying that gives advice or a life lesson — for example:

Never judge a duck by his feathers!

- 1 In a small group, read the proverbs below and explain to each other what they mean.
 - Never put off until tomorrow what you can do today.
 - A friend in need is a friend indeed.
 - Do as you would be done by.
- 2 Make hay while the sun shines is a **figurative** expression. Use the pictures on page 15 to help you discuss what it means **literally** and then work out the lesson that it teaches.

Tip

A dictionary gives you the **literal** meaning of a word. **Figurative** descriptions use images to express meaning. We **infer** the meaning from the images.

3 Which of the proverbs in question 1 has the same meaning as Make hay while the sun shines?

I'm no dab hand at farming but I know it's easier catching fish in good weather ... never put off until tomorrow ...

infer v. to work out using prior knowledge



B Design a cartoon strip to illustrate a proverb.

- 1 Choose one of the proverbs and tell each other an idea for a scenario that could teach the lesson in the proverb.
- 2 Plan a cartoon strip of your scenario. Sketch the scene and write dialogue in the speech bubbles.
- **3** Add any necessary narrative text. Keep it brief.
- 4 Complete the cartoon strip and share it with the class.

Any volunteers? Who'd like to share their cartoon?



Explore a modern version of the fable.

- 1 Look at the story on the next page. This version of the fable is titled Auntie Anthea and Gentle Geoffrey. Which is the Ant and which is the Grasshopper? How could you tell?
- 2 Predict how this modern retelling (from the title and the pictures) might be similar to or different from the traditional version.

B 🔲 🗭 The story can be read in groups of three.

- 1 Skim the story to identify the narrator: is it Geoffrey, Anthea or a third person narrator?
- 2 Read the story together. List similarities and differences between this and the previous version.