

Fables



Levels 2, 4

Introduction

This is a fun and interesting project for young students. Because they *are* young, don't expect masterpieces of wisdom or insight. Simply let the students have fun doing what youngsters do best: coming up with fresh and interesting associations of ideas!

Fables are morality tales that seek to teach the reader a lesson. They usually involve sentient (conscious) animals who talk and act as morally responsible human creatures. The most famous fables are those by Aesop, an early Greek writer. If you are doing Year 1, your literature has recently included these. If you are not, you can easily find Aesop's fables on the Internet. (See links on our *Tapestry of Grace* website's "Writing" web page for your specific year-plan.)

Teaching About Fables

Your child will have the chance to write several fables. If you haven't been reading them lately, start by explaining what a fable is and how it's structured. Fables...

- * Involve animals that talk and think like human beings.
- * Start by introducing the characters and setting in the barest terms.
- * Relate a problem that the characters are having.
- * Have a plot that unfolds.
- * Solve the problem, teaching the reader a principle of life as a result.
- * Sometimes, at the end, the moral is simply stated; but in more sophisticated fables, the moral is woven into the story, which stands on its own. (Your student can do either of these. Stating the moral is probably easier for children of this age.)

Show your student some examples of fables (either Aesop's fables or student samples in *Writing Aids*). Note the features above.

Prewriting

The student should start by thinking of his characters and story line. Level 4 students should use our supplements (Characterization Grid and Story Map). With Level 2 students, you can simply help them to verbalize their ideas and then write notes for them as the story emerges.

Drafting

The student can use either a computer or pencil and paper to draft. Help him to push through the normal story obstacles by encouraging him to get his ideas down and then rearrange or embellish them during the editing phase. (This idea is expanded in the "Story Writing" section of *Writing Aids*.) Some young students need help to tell the whole story (not leaving anything out) and some will need help telling only the essential details (editing out extraneous information).

Editing

Help your student to edit his work after the draft is complete. You will probably need to do this with him. Even though fables are short, they can be pithy and interesting.

- * Help him with filling in a few details here and there that will make characters more interesting or deep. (Another way to do this is to make sure students follow the "show, don't tell" writing maxim. See "Descriptive Writing" for good teaching suggestions for this.)
- * Help the student with plot flow: do you, the reader, lose the thread anywhere, or is the story well told and clear? Do any plot elements contradict one another?
- * Of course, you'll need to edit for grammar, punctuation, and usage issues.

Writing Aids includes helpful companion sections to this one: "Descriptive Writing," "Story Writing" and WA Disc supplements Characterization Grid and Story Map.



Polishing and Presenting

As always, help your child to apply your corrections and print a clean copy of his work that can be stored in your school records. Then, find a wider audience for his work. Fables are stories, and who doesn't love a good story? Have him read it aloud to the family at dinner at the very least. He might also be able to publish it in a children's magazine (Christian or secular) or in your local newspaper. There are always our Gallery pages online, too!