

LESSON PLAN FOR

The Wishing Foxes

Margaret Read MacDonald • with Jen & Nat Whitman

Illustrated by Kitty Harvill

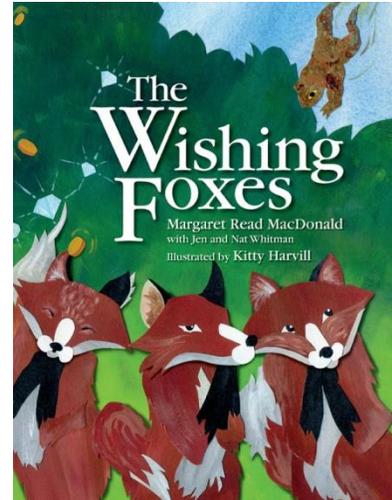
ISBN 978-1-945268-01-4

Published by Plum Street Publishers, Inc.

Interest Level: Grades PreK–3 (ages 3–8)

Reading Level: Grades 1–3 (ages 6–8)

BISAC Codes: JUV012030; JUV012020



SYNOPSIS

In this Appalachian version of “The Kind and the Unkind Girls,” two sisters—Tess and Bess—are sent by their mother to draw water from the Well-at-the-End-of-the-World. Along the way they meet a bear, a mountain lion, a wild boar, and three little foxes. When Bess greets them with courtesy and respect, the foxes reward her kindness. Tess, greedy for her own bounty, can’t be bothered with manners; she bonks the animals with her bucket, kicks them with her boots, and slings the little foxes to the ground. In the end, both sisters get their just deserts.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATOR

Margaret Read MacDonald, a folklorist and former children’s librarian, loves this Appalachian folktale. Her previous picture books have earned numerous awards, including *Parenting* magazine’s Reading Magic Award, the American Folklore Society’s Aesop Accolade, Anne Izard Storyteller’s Choice Award, and Parents’ Choice Award.

Jen and Nat Whitman tell stories in tandem as The Whitman Tellers. The Whitmans, who teach in elementary schools around the globe, are passionate about bringing the joy of storytelling into classrooms everywhere.

Kitty Harvill has illustrated several children’s picture books, including *Sitting Down to Eat* by Bill Harley, which was named an American Bookseller Pick of the List, a Notable Social Studies Trade Book by the National Council of Social Studies, and included in *Newsweek’s* Best Kids’ Books of the Year. Her collaboration with Darcy Pattison, *Abayomi*, was named an Outstanding Science Trade Book by the National Science Teachers’ Association.

TEACHING TIP

You may integrate this book into a unit on Folktales or Heritage; as part of National Folklore Month celebration (January); or in observance of The Great Kindness Challenge (January)

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Suggested time frame for reading: 1–2 class periods
Suggested time frame for culminating activity: 1–2 class periods

BEFORE READING

Learning Objectives

- Students will identify and discuss the lesson to be learned from the folktale, *The Wishing Foxes*.
- Students will compare and contrast the main characters, Bess and Tess, using evidence from the text.

Build Background and Prior Knowledge

- Discuss the characteristics of folktales with students using the anchor chart. You may give examples of well-known folktales, such as Three Billy Goats Gruff, Little Red Riding Hood, Jack and the Beanstalk, etc., highlighting the lesson to be learned from each tale.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary should be defined throughout the reading of the story.

- Holler
 - “They always *holler* at me ...” (p. 7)
 - *Holler* means to give a loud shout or yell. (Example: Mom **hollered** at her kids to come inside, as it was getting dark.)
- Boar
 - “There was a mean old wild *boar* trying to scare her off.” (p. 10)
 - A *boar* is a wild male pig. (Example: My dog chased away a **boar** as we were walking through the woods.)
- Whacked
 - “Tess *whacked* at it with her bucket.” (p. 20)
 - *Whacked* means to hit something really hard. (Example: He **whacked** the baseball over the fence.)
- Snatched
 - “She *snatched* up that first little fox.” (p. 24)
 - *Snatched* means to grab and pull away. (Example: Sally **snatched** the doll from her sister.)
- Slashed
 - “She *slashed* water into its face.” (p. 24)
 - *Slashed* means to splash water (or other liquids). (Example: The baby **slashed** water out of the bathtub.)
- Slung
 - “She *slung* it back onto the ground.” (p. 24)
 - *Slung* is the past tense of sling. Sling means to throw or fling. (Example: She **slung** her backpack onto her bed after school.)

DURING READING

Focus Questions

- What lesson can we learn from the folktale *The Wishing Foxes*?
- How are Bess and Tess different from each other in the folktale? How are they the same?

Classwork

- Whole group: Venn Diagram
- Independently or small group: Read a folktale and identify the lesson or moral. Record the title of the folktale and the lesson on a sticky note and display it in the classroom.

Literal Comprehension Questions

- I can already see that Bess and Tess are different. Bess speaks kindly; how does Tess speak? **Record answers on Venn Diagram* Tess speaks harshly. (p. 3)*
- Bess treats folks real nice; how does Tess treat them? **Record answers on Venn Diagram* Tess treats them badly (p. 3).*
- “Pretty soon she heard a noise ... GRRRR.” Make a prediction: What made the noise? How do you know? *An animal made the noise. It didn’t use words, but it made a growling sound (p. 4).*
- Tess is about to travel to the same well. Do you think she will meet the same animals? Will she treat them the same? *Predictions vary (p. 18).*
- We made a prediction about how Tess would treat the animals. Did she treat them the same as Bess? *No. Tess treated the animals poorly. She whacked the bear, the lion, and the boar with her bucket. She was rough with and mean to the foxes (p. 27).*
- Predict: Will Tess receive the same gifts as Bess? *Predictions vary (p. 27).*
- What is the lesson that we can learn from *The Wishing Foxes*? *“Fact is, if you are kind ... kindness just comes right back to you” (p. 32).*

Higher Level Thinking Questions

- Bess used good manners. What are some examples of good manners that Bess used throughout the story? *Bess said “good morning” and “please” to the animals. She did what the foxes asked her to do. She did what her mother asked her to do (go to the Well-at-the-End-of-the-World and fetch some water).*
- Why do you think Bess and Tess’s mother wanted Tess to go get gifts from the foxes? *Their mother is greedy. She wants more presents from the foxes.*
- Suffixes are added to the end of words to change their meanings. For example, *-ly* can be added to the end of a noun to turn the word into an adverb. *Kindly* means “kind like.” The suffix *-ness* means “the state of being.” *Kindness* means “the state of being kind.” There are six words in the story with the suffixes *-ly* and *-ness*. List the words and use a dictionary to write their definitions: *kindly, harshly, badly, lovely, kindness, meanness.*

AFTER READING

Culminating Activity

Classroom Display: Have students use sticky notes to record the title of a folktale they read and the lesson they learned from the folktale. Place the sticky notes on a large piece of chart paper or bulletin board to create a classroom display. Also, place the Venn Diagram from *The Wishing Foxes* on or near the classroom display to provide a visual connection.

Writing Prompt

- Which character from the story would you choose to be? Use three *examples from the text to explain why you would choose to be this character.*
 - Answers may vary; however, examples should be taken from the text.

Suggested Modifications

- Partner read; extended time
- Reduce amount of classwork required
- For younger grades, students may write one sentence and illustrate the writing prompt.

SUPPLEMENTS

Supplemental Material List

- Folktale anchor chart
- Venn diagram

Reference Websites

Appalachian Mountain Culture & Ghost Stories <http://themoonlitroad.com/appalachian-mountain-culture-ghost-stories/>

Digital Venn Diagram Creator

http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/venn_diagrams/

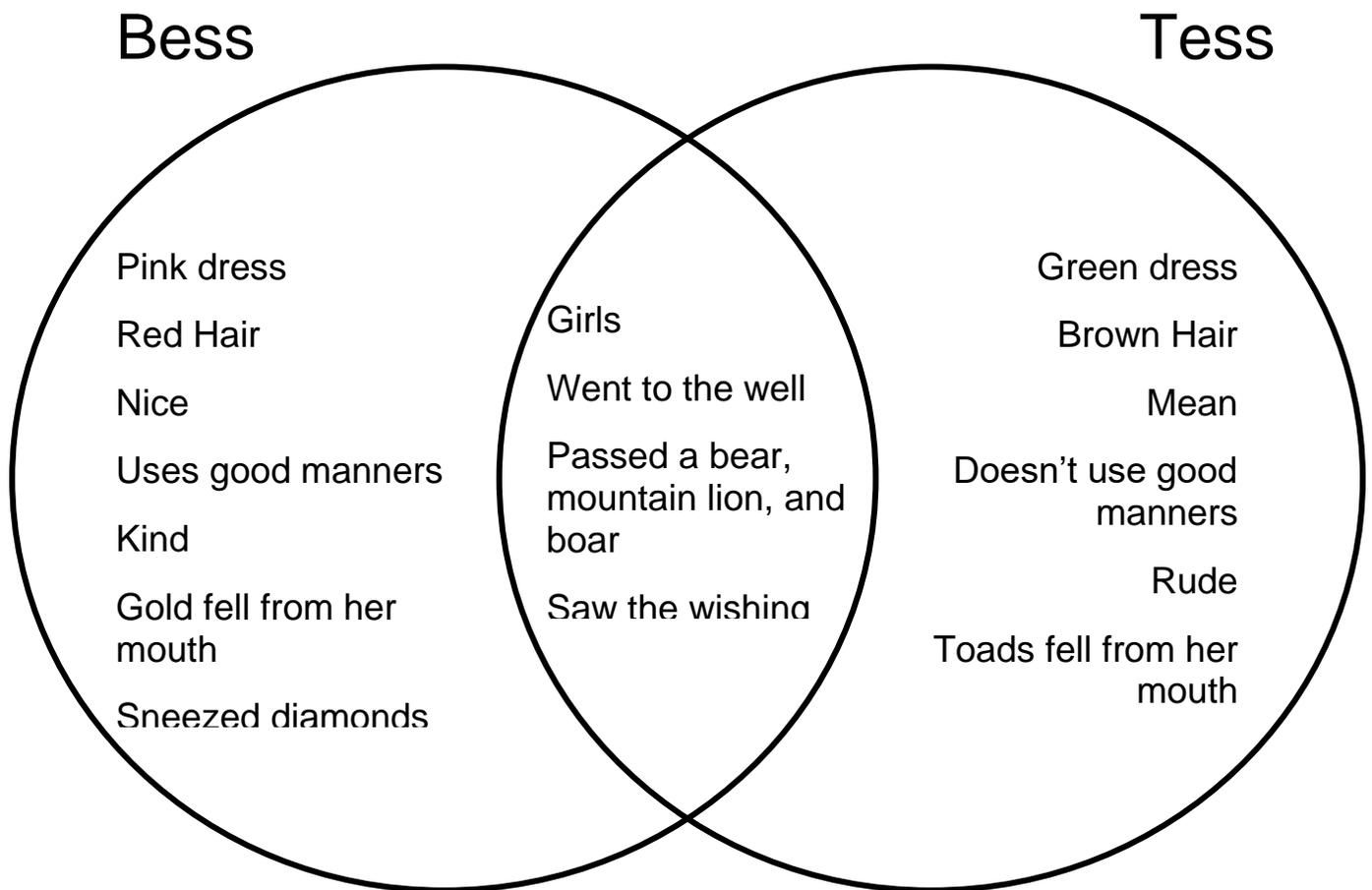
Education World website list

http://www.educationworld.com/a_tech/sites/sites062.shtml

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- Counseling: The Great Kindness Challenge (www.thegreatkindnesschallenge.com), Manners
- Social Studies: Folktales, Appalachia, geography
- English/Language Arts: Prefixes and suffixes
- Art/Drama: Classroom display may be arranged artistically by students; students act out part of the folktale as read aloud

The Wishing Foxes
Venn Diagram (Key)



STANDARDS ADDRESSED

Arkansas English Language Arts Curriculum Frameworks

Key Ideas and Details

1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text

Craft and Structure

4 Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings; analyze how specific word choices shape meaning and/or tone.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

9 Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches of the author(s).

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10 Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Common Core Anchor Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.9

Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.10

Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.4

Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as appropriate.

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