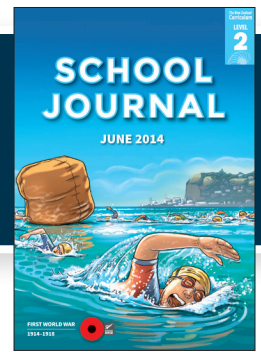


The Ants and the Grasshopper – The Sequel

by Dave Armstrong

School Journal
Level 2, June 2014
Year 4



Overview

In an amusing innovation on a familiar fable, a grasshopper learns the value of planning for the future, and in particular, of offering his services in exchange for goods that will help him to achieve his goals. The story uses engaging characters and an explicitly New Zealand setting, with huhu grubs and wētā.

The story provides an excellent introduction to financial literacy concepts, such as the need to plan for the future, to save for goals, and to offer services to achieve goals. Some students will relate easily to the characters and events, making connections with their own experiences of finding ways to meet their wants and needs.

Texts related by theme “Backyard Chooks” L2 Aug 2013 | “Living on a Shoestring” L3 June 2012 | “Missing the Bus” SJ 1.4.09

Text characteristics from the year 4 reading standard

a straightforward text structure, such as a structure that follows a recognisable and clear text form

some places where information and ideas are implicit and where students need to make inferences based on information that is easy to find because it is nearby in the text and there is little or no competing information

So, all that winter, the grasshopper worked for the ants. He was their waiter while they feasted on the food they had gathered in summer. He kept watch over the ants while they slept. And when the roof of the ant colony leaked, the grasshopper hopped up and fixed it. The grasshopper had never worked so hard in his life. But in return, he kept warm and received enough food to stay alive.



When summer finally came, the grasshopper was exhausted, but he was alive. As the ants started work, preparing for the next winter, the grasshopper lay down and rubbed his legs together to make music.

“Ah, the sound of summer!” cried the huhu grubs. “What great music. Why not come and play at our party next week? We’re celebrating the beginning of summer.” “I’d love to,” replied the grasshopper. The ants looked at each other with disapproval. Some creatures were beyond help – always relying on others and never bothering to help themselves.

some compound and complex sentences, which may consist of two or three clauses

But then the grasshopper said something unexpected. “So what will you pay me for making music at your party?” The huhu grubs looked up with surprise. “Pay you? But you love making music.” “True, but if I make music for free, I’ll have no food or shelter next winter.” The huhu grubs had a quick conference. “Perhaps we could trade some food that we’ve collected.” “That would be wonderful,” the grasshopper smiled. “But don’t give all the food to me,” he continued. “Give some of it to the ants.” The ants couldn’t believe what they were hearing. “But you did all that work,” they said, confused. “You’ve already paid for your food and shelter.” “I know,” said the grasshopper. “But you saved my life and taught me a very good lesson. You can have some of the food that the huhu grubs collect, too. Let’s just call it interest.”



some words or phrases that are ambiguous or unfamiliar to the students, the meaning of which is supported by the context or clarified by photographs, illustrations, diagrams, and/or written explanations

Reading standard: by the end of year 4

Possible curriculum contexts

SOCIAL SCIENCES (Social Studies)

Level 2: Understand how people make choices to meet their needs and wants.

ENGLISH (Reading)

Level 2 – Ideas: Show some understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.

ENGLISH (Writing)

Level 2 – Ideas: Select, form, and express ideas on a range of topics.

Possible reading purposes

- To enjoy reading an amusing version of a familiar fable and compare it with stories that have similar themes and structures
- To identify the author's purpose or message
- To discuss and understand the financial concepts that people use to help them achieve goals (such as planning, saving, economic services, and interest)
- To identify different sources of income and different ways of saving for the future
- To think critically about the consequences of actions (of the ants and the grasshopper).

See [Instructional focus – Reading](#) for illustrations of some of these reading purposes.

See [Instructional focus – Writing](#) for illustrations of some of these writing purposes.

Possible writing purposes

- To innovate on this or another familiar fable, for example, by changing the characters, events, or endings while keeping the main message
- Develop a plan for how to save money for a particular purpose (could be a school or class event).



The New Zealand Curriculum

Text and language challenges

VOCABULARY:

- Possible unfamiliar words and phrases, including “southerly gale”, “Antarctica”, “colony”, “insulated”, “huhu grubs”, “bedraggled”, “pounded”, “advised”, “pleasant”, “pleaded”, “typical”, “services”, “labour”, “munching”, “obediently”, “exhausted”, “disapproval”, “beyond help”, “relying”, “conference”, “interest”
- The use of colloquial language, such as “Lighten up”, “Chill out”, “Check out”, “Out of the question”, “take it easy”
- The Māori names of common insects.

Possible supporting strategies

Identify any words or phrases that may be unfamiliar. Discuss and explain them briefly as they arise, prompting students to draw on strategies such as context, prior knowledge, or word families where possible.

For students who need help to understand colloquial language or other vocabulary, provide opportunities to encounter and practise words that will come up in this story and/or that they need to learn. You could create a list of colloquial expressions in the story, provide examples of their use, and then support students to work in small groups to discuss their meanings and explore how they are used. For example, students could identify and discuss the literal and colloquial meaning of “Chill out” then practise using it in some different contexts. ESOL Online and *The English Language Learning Progressions: Introduction*, pages 39–46, have useful information about learning vocabulary.

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED:

- Familiarity with fables or similar stories that contain a message or moral
- The use of anthropomorphism – animals that talk and have human-like characteristics in traditional stories
- Experience of planning for future needs or wants and of exchanging goods or services for mutual benefit
- Knowledge or experience of saving money and the concept of gaining interest.

Possible supporting strategies

If the base fable is unfamiliar to students, discuss the kinds of stories they grew up with, in particular, those that have a moral. It would be useful to refer to the Ready to Read play here – *The Ant and the Grasshopper*, Dawn McMillan, 2004. Even though it's for much younger students, teachers could use it to familiarise students with the genre and the characters, and then lead them into a more sophisticated version of the story. Students could have a quick read through in groups to examine the characters and the fable genre. After enjoying the play:

- have students compile a list of features of the fable genre
- have students compile brief descriptions of the characters
- where appropriate, use the discussion to identify and feed in key vocabulary
- have the students make predictions about the story.

Discuss the way people make choices and plan for their needs and wants, using school examples if possible – for example, raising money to build a hall.

TEXT FEATURES AND STRUCTURE:

- Traditional fable structure that has wise and foolish characters and a problem or situation through which the character learns a lesson
- Words that indicate the time through changes in the seasons
- Many words and phrases (including verb forms) that signal time and sequence, for example, “had been ... during the summer”, “While the ants ...”, “as they feasted”, “Now, only a few months later”
- A winter setting, with a flashback to summer before returning to the winter scenario
- The use of dialogue, mostly attributed
- Past tense, third person narration
- Use of humour, some of which is ironic and relies on an understanding of the way people talk about each other.

Possible supporting strategies

If students are familiar with this or similar stories, review the way they usually start or finish. Compare stories from various cultures.

Review the kinds of characters and events, and discuss the way authors can play with and change these for different purposes.

Some students may need the support of a story map to help them understand how the flashback is used.

Read pages two and three with the students. Identify and record on a story map or timeline:

- the time of year for each page
- the characters
- what the characters are doing
- the words and phrases that signal the time and sequence.



Sounds and Words

Instructional focus – Reading

Social Sciences (Social studies, level 2: Understand how people make choices to meet their needs and wants.)

English (Level 2 – Ideas: Show some understanding of ideas within, across, and beyond texts.)

Text excerpts from “The Ants and the Grasshopper”

Students (what they might do)

Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)

“Check out all the amazing flowers and plants,” said the wasps as they buzzed from place to place.

“Out of the question,” replied the ants. “We know which plants we need to check out – the ones that can be stored for us to eat in the winter.”

*The students identify the familiar ant and grasshopper characters and notice that this version includes other insects. They **ask questions** to determine why the ending (or second chapter) of the usual story came first and make predictions about the way the story might unfold.*

*They use their knowledge of colloquial English to **infer** the tone and intent of the ants’ reply.*

*The students compare the choices of the wasps and the ants, **making connections** with their own experiences of people who choose to play while others work. They **infer** that the wasps think only of the present, while the ants are focused on a longer-term purpose. They **make further connections** between the ants’ behaviour and their experiences of saving to understand the concept of planning and saving for the future.*

“I’ll do anything you want,” pleaded the grasshopper. “Just let me in.”

The ants sighed. It was so typical of grasshoppers to behave this way.

“But what can you offer us?” asked the ants. “Are there any services you can provide?”

*The students **make connections** between the text and their own experiences of asking for something to identify the trade-off the ants expect. They deepen their understanding by making comparisons with services they are familiar with, such as helping out at home or doing chores for money to obtain things they want or need.*

*The students **make connections** between the text and their knowledge of human behaviour to understand the humour. They **infer** that like the grasshopper, some people make choices that don’t help them to meet future needs; they expect that others will help them out.*

“But you saved my life and taught me a very good lesson. You can have some of the food that the huhu grubs collect, too. Let’s just call it interest.”

*The students **make connections** between the text and what they know about earning interest to **infer** that the grasshopper believes the ants should be paid an extra amount for the use of their food and shelter.*

*They **ask questions** about why this is and how interest helps make transactions work well.*

*The students consider the author’s message and **evaluate** the effectiveness of the ant and grasshopper story in relation to their purpose for reading.*

ASK QUESTIONS to identify the familiar aspects of the story.

- Why did the author start in winter then go back to summer?
- Why were most insects freezing in the winter? What information did you use to make that inference?

MODEL the way you interpret colloquial English.

- I’ve noticed that the author has given the ants very short responses to the other insects, and this shows me that they are too busy working to chat. A person might say “out of the question” to mean that they are not prepared to even consider something. It’s what I said when some of you wanted to go out to play in the rainstorm last week.

DIRECT the students to discuss the behaviour of the different insects and compare their behaviour with humans.

- In pairs, identify the human qualities the different insects display.
- What can you infer about the effects of these behaviours?

ASK QUESTIONS to support the students to make connections with the concepts of planning and economic services.

- When have you had to offer something (other than money) to get what you wanted? Share your ideas with a partner.
- Is it fair to be expected to do this? Why do you think that?
- What kinds of services could a grasshopper offer?
- What kinds of services can you offer at school to gain something you want, such as a special outing or new art materials?
- When have you or someone you know missed out on something because you didn’t plan ahead and make good choices? (For example, spending all your pocket money on lollies and then not being able to buy a comic you really wanted.)

ASK QUESTIONS about the word “typical” and what it might mean.

- Why might the ants think the grasshopper’s behaviour is “typical”?
- When have you heard the word used to describe people?
- Why do you think the ants sighed?

MODEL

- This reminds me of the time I borrowed my friend’s car. I filled it with petrol when I returned it and also baked her a cake. She had been without a car for the weekend, so I wanted to “repay” her for that. My friend might be more likely to lend me something in the future because she knows I show my appreciation. Interest is a bit like that – you repay what you borrowed and you add a little extra because the lender allowed you to use something of theirs.
- What connections can you make to the concept of interest?
- If you lend someone your skateboard, what (if anything) might you expect in return?
- How does interest make lending fair to the lender and the borrower?

ASK QUESTIONS to support students as they evaluate the text.

- Was retelling this fable an effective way for the author to explain the financial concepts of planning, saving, and economic services? Why do you think that? Share an example of a place in the text that helped you to understand an important concept.

GIVE FEEDBACK

- The connections you made with other fables helped you identify the characteristics of the insects and how the author developed the message.

METACOGNITION



- What surprised you about the text? How did the changes to the old story help you focus on the message the author wanted to convey?
- How did thinking about the author’s purpose help you to “get the message”?
- What connections helped you understand the author’s message?

Instructional focus – Writing

Social Sciences (Social Studies, level 2: Understand how people make choices to meet their needs and wants.)

English (Level 2 – Ideas: Select, form, and express ideas on a range of topics.)

Text excerpts from “The Ants and the Grasshopper”	Students (what they might do)	Teacher (possible deliberate acts of teaching)
<p>“Hey, ants. Lighten up and come and eat with us,” said the huhu grubs as they feasted on dead wood.</p> <p>“Sorry, can’t stop now,” replied the ants.</p> <p>“Chill out and enjoy the sun,” said the wētā as he lazed on a log. “You won’t get the chance in winter.”</p> <p>“No time,” said the ants.</p> <p>“There’s work to do.”</p>	<p>DIALOGUE</p> <p><i>Dialogue enables a writer to show characters and their thoughts quickly. It can contrast characters by showing how they speak as well as what they say.</i></p>	<p>ASK QUESTIONS to help the students think about their characters as they plan their writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What kinds of characters will help you express your ideas?• As you work out who your characters will be and what their roles are in the story, think about how they will act and speak. Written dialogue is a good way of showing, for example, that one character has a relaxed, laid back way of talking, or that another speaks in short, precise statements.• Think about the expressions your characters might use and whether the dialogue shows your readers what they are like.• As an example, compare the way the wētā speaks with the way the ants speak. <p>MODEL how a writer can help readers follow a sequence by identifying the clues in this text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When I read this, I noticed that the section that starts at the top of page 3 goes back in time from page 2. That alerted me to look for words and phrases that show the sequence of events. The words, “Now, only a few months later” show that the action has gone forward to the winter of the first paragraph.• Why do you think the writer did this? What was the impact of starting with winter?• Think about how you will order the events or ideas in your writing. What impact do you want to have on your readers? <p>For students who need support with using language for signalling time and sequence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• revisit examples in the text and identify the language used (for example “while”)• illustrate the structure of the sentences, using several more examples• provide opportunities for scaffolded practice, for example, filling in the gaps in sentences (clozes), putting words into the correct order to make sentences, completing sentences from beginnings or endings• support the students to select and use the appropriate language in their writing• give the students feedback. <p>EXPLAIN how to develop an idea by adding details. Using a volunteer’s writing, choose a place where an idea is stated without any details.</p> <p>MODEL the kinds of details that would help readers understand the idea, such as adding examples, descriptions, and comparisons. Encourage students to share their writing with a partner to review their use of details. If necessary, model ways students can give each other feedback and suggestions.</p> <p>GIVE FEEDBACK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your original plan was to recount a simple sequence of events, then you changed it and worked backwards from the most dramatic event. This really grabbed my attention and made me want to read on. You used signal words like (“Yesterday” and “Before she went to bed”) to help your readers understand the sequence.• Your writing plan described the characters well, and the dialogue you’ve written has made their different personalities very clear. This helped me to understand why they were arguing.• When you gave Jemma feedback, you suggested that she could add descriptive details to show what she meant by ... Feedback that includes specific information is very helpful when writing.
<p>It was a cold winter’s night ...</p> <p>It had been different during the summer.</p> <p>Now, only a few months later, ...</p>	<p>TIME SEQUENCE</p> <p><i>The sequence of events in a story may be linear, following a chronological order, or the order may be changed for impact. Writers often let their readers know the time sequence by using words and phrases that show the order.</i></p>	
<p>So, all that winter, the grasshopper worked for the ants. He was their waiter while they feasted on the food they had gathered in summer. He kept watch over the ants while they slept. And when the roof of the ant colony leaked, the grasshopper hopped up and fixed it.</p>	<p>SUPPORTING DETAILS</p> <p><i>Details give readers a better understanding of what is meant by an idea. Details can be examples that support the idea, or they may describe an idea. Details may also refer to other parts of the text, showing how an idea is developed.</i></p>	
<p>METACOGNITION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tell me (or your partner) about how your planning helped you determine the best way to express your ideas.• When did you realise that you needed to add time sequence words to help your readers? What were you thinking as you did this?• Tell your partner why you chose to innovate on a fable to carry your message. Explain what was hard and what was easy about doing that?• When you are sharing your writing with a partner, what kind of feedback is most helpful? What is least helpful? Why?		

 **Writing standard: by the end of year 4**
 **The Literacy Learning Progressions**