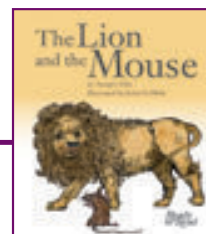


# The Lion and the Mouse



an Aesop's fable  
illustrated by John Griffiths

This text is levelled at Purple 2.

## Overview

In this traditional moral tale, a lion catches a mouse but lets him go after the mouse promises to help him one day. Soon afterwards, the lion gets trapped in a net and the mouse comes to his rescue.

Students are likely to enjoy the idea of a small creature being able to help a much bigger one and the challenge of identifying the moral of this tale.

There is an audio version of the text on the Ready to Read CD *Readalong 2010*.

## Related texts

- Other fables or moral tales: for example, *The Ant and the Grasshoppers* (RTR, Green), *Two Tiger Tales* (RTR, Purple), "Little Donkey" and "The Spider Who Wanted Spots" (JJ 25), and "Two Trees" (JJ 27).

## Text characteristics

Key text characteristics as described in the reading standards for after two and three years at school are shown in the boxes with a solid outline. Other boxes indicate additional characteristics.

The clear narrative structure

Ideas organised in paragraphs

The unfamiliar setting in the distant past and the fictional context (talking animals)

Indicators of time: "One hot day", "Suddenly", "at once", "some day", "A few days later", "Then", "Now", "At last"

The shift in time: between the two main incidents, with each main character being trapped and then freed

The contractions within the dialogue, for example, "It's", "Don't", "I'll", "you're", "you've", "That's", "he's", "mustn't"

The frequent use of dialogue, (including the mouse's thoughts expressed as speech on page 5), some of which is not attributed

The possessive apostrophes in "lion's" and "trapper's"

The inclusion of exclamations, questions, and repetition ("Let me go! Let me go!"; "Thank you! Thank you!") within the dialogue, for dramatic impact, and the "ROAR" within the illustration on page 5

The dramatic storyline

The characterisation of the lion and the mouse, through their actions and dialogue and the illustrations rather than direct description

The moral (or message) of the tale that kindness will be repaid, and the underlying theme that a small creature can help a bigger one

The use of commas to clarify the links between ideas within sentences, and the use of a dash instead of a comma for effect

Mostly familiar words, but some new topic words and descriptive language, including regular verbs (for example, "sleeping", "jumped", "clapped", "cried", "kill", "help", "laughed", "roaring", "gnaw"); irregular verbs or verb phrases (for example, "ran", "woke", "had hold of", "heard", "caught", "found"); adjectives (for example, "little", "frightened", "free", "clever"); and adverbs (for example, "suddenly", "very", "again", "loudly")

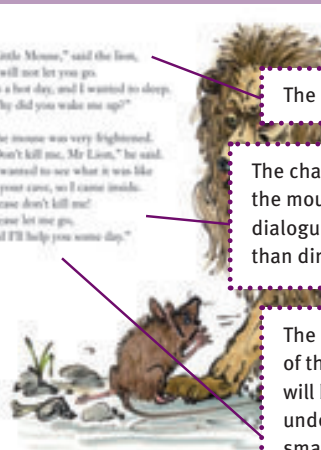
and jumped on his nose. The lion woke up at once. He clapped his paw down on the mouse.

"Let me go! Let me go!" cried the mouse, but the lion had hold of him.



"Little Mouse," said the lion, "I will not let you go. It's a hot day, and I wanted to sleep. Why did you wake me up?"

The mouse was very frightened. "Don't kill me, Mr Lion," he said. "I wanted to see what it was like in your case, so I came inside. Please don't kill me! Please let me go, and I'll help you some day."



A few days later, the mouse heard a roar. "That's a lion's roar," he said. Then he heard the roar again.

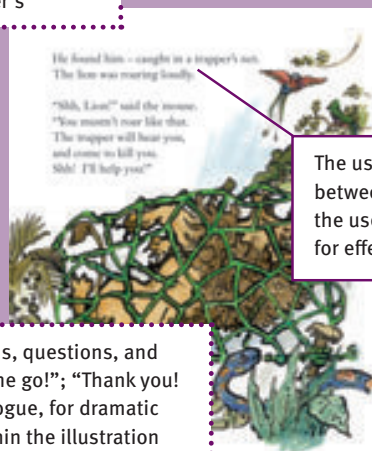
"That's the lion who caught me when I went into his case. Now he's calling me. He must be in trouble. I'll go and see if I can help him."

The mouse ran off to look for the lion.



He found him - caught in a trapper's net. The lion was roaring loudly.

"Oh, Lion!" said the mouse. "You mustn't roar like that. The trapper will hear you, and come to kill you. Oh! I'll help you!"



## Suggested reading purpose

- To find out what happens to the lion and the mouse and to think about the message in this text

## Setting a learning goal

(What opportunities does this text provide for students to learn more about how to “read, respond to, and think critically about” texts?)

To meet the reading purpose, students need to draw on a range of comprehension and processing strategies, often simultaneously. The strategies, knowledge, and skills below link to *The Literacy Learning Progressions*. Select and adapt from them to set your specific learning goal. Be guided by your students’ particular needs and experiences: who they are, where they come from, and what they bring (*Reading and Writing Standards for Years 1–8*, Knowledge of the learner, page 6).

This text provides opportunities for students to;

- infer what the characters are like and form hypotheses about what’s going to happen
- infer the underlying message (or moral)
- visualise (what it means to “clap” a paw down)
- use word-solving strategies to decode and/or work out the meanings of unfamiliar words.

## Introducing the text

- Tell the students you have a fable for them to read. Review what a fable is (a short story that has a message or moral, that is often set in the distant past, and that is usually about animals). Refer to a familiar fable, for example, *The Ant and the Grasshoppers*, and discuss its message about how people should behave. You could also discuss who Aesop was.
- Tell the students the title of the book and ask the students to share any knowledge of this particular fable. Discuss the front cover illustration. *Does the mouse look like he’s in danger?* Ask the students to form hypotheses about what the relationship might be between the mouse and the lion in this illustration and what part of the story this illustration might be from.
- Share the reading purpose and the learning goal. Remind the students that a fable has a message as well as telling a story and that you want them to be thinking about the message at the same time as they are reading.

## Reading the text

Below are some behaviours you could expect to see as the students read and discuss this text.

Each example is accompanied by instructional strategies to scaffold their learning. Select and adapt from the suggestions according to your students’ needs and experiences.

- These two behaviours are closely linked and will support each other.

**The students make connections to their knowledge of narrative structure and use text and illustrative clues to infer what the characters are like and form hypotheses about what will happen.**

**The students identify the main idea (or message) in the text.**

- Have the students read pages 2 and 3 and summarise what has happened. To support English language learners with summarising, create a chart like the one below to show the main actions.

The Lion	The Mouse
page 2 – sleeping in his cave	woke up the lion
page 3 – the lion said he wouldn’t let the mouse go	the mouse promised to help the lion

Continue to add to the chart as the students read through the text.

- The students could act out “clapping their paws down” to help them visualise the lion’s action on page 2.
- *What clues are you noticing about what the characters are like?* Prompt the students to consider the illustrations as well as the text. They should notice a big contrast between these and the cover illustration.
- Encourage the students to form a hypothesis about what will happen. *The lion looks pretty angry to me. I wonder what he’ll do ...*
- Have the students read page 4 and test their hypotheses. *Why is the lion laughing? Will the mouse keep his word?*
- Have the students read the rest of the text, stopping every so often (for example, after pages 5 and 7) to test and refine their hypotheses and discuss their inferences about the characters.
- On page 8, the students should notice that this is the same illustration as on the cover. Revisit their earlier hypotheses. *How has the relationship between the lion and the mouse changed? Why does the lion say the mouse is clever?*

- Ask the students to share their opinions of the characters and their thoughts about the message of the text.

**The students use word-solving strategies to decode and/or work out the meanings of unfamiliar words.**

- See the notes above for a suggestion about how to support the students with the unfamiliar use of the word “clapped” (page 2).
- Prompt the students to notice the “er” suffix in “trapper’s” (page 6) and to reread the second paragraph to infer that a trapper is a person who traps and kills animals. Clarify that the apostrophe in “trapper’s” shows that the net belongs to the trapper.
- If necessary, tell the students that the “g” in “gnaw” is silent. Prompt the students to use the illustration on page 7 (and the repetition of “gnawed” on page 8) to confirm the meaning.

**After reading**

- The students can reread the text while listening to the audio version on the CD *Ready to Read Readalong 2010*.
- Explore how the author made the story so exciting, for example, by including exclamations, questions, and repetition (“Let me go! Let me go!”; “Thank you! Thank you!”) within the dialogue, and using vivid descriptive language, including the adverb “Suddenly”. Have the students think, pair, and share about a part of the text they found most dramatic or effective and why. The audio version could be used with this activity by stopping at specific points, discussing how something is said, and then looking at how it is shown in the text. This activity will support English language learners before they read the text aloud in Readers’ Theatre.
- Have the students work in groups of three to read the text aloud as Readers’ Theatre, with one student taking on the role of storyteller. Listen in as the students read, noting their use of expression and their ability to use the punctuation (especially the speech marks and commas) to support phrasing and keep track of their roles.
- Have the students share with a partner any words or phrases they found difficult and the strategies they used to work them out. Listen to the discussions. Do you need to follow up on any decoding strategies, particular words, or features of words?

