

“The Honorable Joha, Mulla Nasruddin Hodja, Affanti and the Donkey’s Tail”
An English Language Lesson Plan by Mary Brooks



Unit/Theme: humility and arrogance

Proficiency Level: D.R.A. 34-38; for students at a more remedial level teacher reads aloud

Timing: two to three hours with writing assignment (two- to three-day unit of study)

Content Objectives

For students to:

- be able to retell the story in proper sequence
- be able to derive the theme or “Big Message” in the story
- understand the characters and perhaps be able to make a connection to a character from another story or even real life

Language Objectives

For students to:

- understand and use new vocabulary
- determine the meaning of new words by using inference or context clues
- retell the story, first orally with a partner, then in writing
- develop the theme and be able to write down the “Big Message” (Extension: relate the story to a personal experience or prior story/read aloud)

Learning Strategies

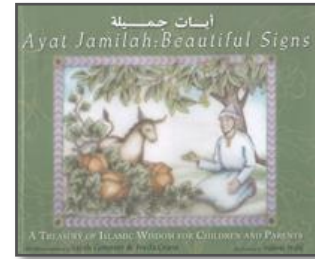
For students to:

- understand the story sequence by building a context
- use discussion to brainstorm about the lesson of the story as a pre-writing strategy

Key Vocabulary: province, kind and witty, unfortunate, cruel, arrogant, jealous, palace, surrounded, courtyard, wickedly, grabbed, furious, rump, how dare you, stunned, paled, fulfilled

Materials

- *Ayat Jamilah: Beautiful Signs: A Treasury of Islamic Wisdom for Children and Parents*, collected and adapted by Sarah Conover and Freda Crane. Boston: Skinner House (2010). Available at www.uuabookstore.org or 800-215-9076 and wherever books are sold.
- recorder or iPhone, student writing notebooks



Context Building

Ask the students:

- What is the difference between humility and arrogance?
- What kind of people do you enjoy, those who show off their strengths or those who wait to be praised?

Presentation (Teachers)

1. Now that the students have some background, read the entire story out loud without stopping.
2. Read the story again. Ask the students to listen carefully for:
 - the description of Affanti
 - the description of the emperor
3. Ask the students:
 - What do you think the moral of the story is? What is the “Big Message”? Turn and tell an elbow partner.

Part Two of Presentation (depending on the stamina of your students)

Help the students understand the meaning of the word “humility.” Conduct a group discussion about the difference between humility and arrogance/superiority (assist with the meaning of these words if needed).

- Pose the question, “Who would you rather be more like? Affanti or the emperor?”
- Discuss the differences in the way the two men treat others. (If desired use a T chart to compare and contrast.)

Practice/Application

Retell the story with the students using important details. Start a story chain. Use the new vocabulary in the retelling. Use sequence markers, for example:

in the beginning, then, next, after that, in the end, finally

Assessment

Ask the students to retell the story in writing using important details. Explain that they need to include the moral of the story in their own words. Encourage them to use descriptive adjectives and interesting verbs. Post some questions for them to ponder and write about:

1. Describe Affanti.
2. Describe the Emperor of China.
3. Who was the wiser man?
4. Do you think it is better to show how smart you are? Or let others find out?

They can write the answers individually and then share with a partner.

Extension

Reading into Writing

1. Ask the students:
 - What is real wisdom?
 - How do people show they are smart?
 - Think of somebody you know who is very smart. How does that person show that he/she is intelligent? Does he/she kind of hide it, or show it off?
2. Ask the students to describe their answers to their partners and record them.