



“The Honorable Joha, Mulla Nasruddin Hodja and the Famous Donkey Story”
An English Language Lesson Plan by Mary Brooks



Unit/Theme: making decisions

Proficiency Level: D.R.A. level 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 describe the setting
- be able to derive the theme or “Big Message” in the story
- understand the characters and perhaps be able to make a connection using schema 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:

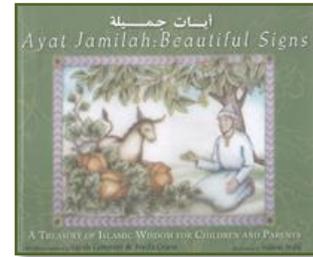
- understand the story sequence by building a context

- use discussion to brainstorm about the lesson of the story as a pre-writing strategy

Key Vocabulary: remarks, for shame, criticized, selfish, saddle, maneuver, brought forth, overload, donkey, managed, heave, shamefaced, wise nod

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:

- Have you ever listened to other people's advice? What happened? Did you go back to what you thought was best or did you follow the other person's advice?

Ask the students to brainstorm what a donkey is, what purpose it serves, where and when.

Presentation (Teachers)

1. Now that the students have some background for the moral of the story, read the whole story out loud for an overview, without stopping.
2. Read the story again.
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.

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. Who is Joha?
2. Describe Joha's personality.
3. What was some advice that Joha was given?
4. What were some criticisms that Joha received?
5. What did Joha finally do and why?
6. Do you think it's always wise to follow advice?
7. When do you think it's important to listen to yourself?

Extension

Reading into Writing

1. Ask the students:
 - When have you listened to advice from others? What happened?
2. Tell the students:
 - Think about the story and brainstorm with your partner about a time you listened to someone else's advice. Describe what happened.
 - Record this story.