



“The Honorable Joha, Mulla Nasruddin Hodja Feeds His Coat”
An English Language Lesson Plan by Mary Brooks



Unit/Theme: true values

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 personalities of those who can only see what is on the outside of a person and not what is on the inside
- be able to describe the situation

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 and perhaps even find meaningful metaphors)

Learning Strategies

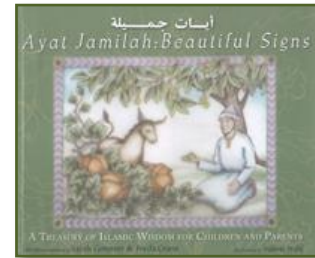
For students to:

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

Key Vocabulary: fasting month, debated, finest, invisible, sidled away, similar incident, turban, host, stuffed, snatching, tucked, what on earth, quite obvious, ignored

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 felt dismissed or ignored because of how you were dressed or how you looked? Do you ever feel competitive in the way you dress or style your hair? Do you like to look like other students?

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:
 - what Nasruddin was thinking as he came back from the field
 - what happened at the dinner party
 - what happened when Nasruddin returned to the dinner party
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.
4. Read the moral out loud: “What on earth are you doing?” asked his host. “It is quite obvious to me,” replied Nasruddin Hodja, “that since everyone ignored me until I put on this fancy coat, it is my clothes who have been invited, not me.”

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

Help students understand the meaning of the word “image” or “perception.” Conduct a group discussion about the differences between how Nasruddin was treated when he was in his farming clothes vs. how he was treated when he returned in his finest clothes. (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 Nasruddin.
2. Why do you think people were ignoring him?
3. Have you ever felt out of place? Or strange because of your clothes?
4. Do you ever mind looking different than your friends?

Extension

Reading into Writing

1. Ask the students:

- Do you ever judge people by how they look or by what they are wearing? What is the result? How do you feel? How might the other person feel?

2. Ask the students to describe their answers to their partners and record them.