



“The Price of a Secret: A Tale from Azerbaijan”
An English Language Lesson Plan by Mary Brooks



Unit/Theme: pride and betrayal

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 describe the situation
- 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
- recognize the pride of Alexander the Great

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:

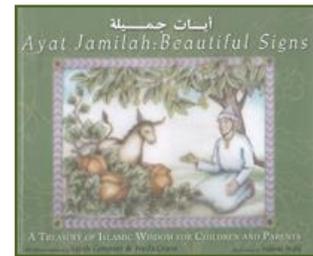
- understand the story sequence by building a context

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

Key Vocabulary: odd, entrusted, trustworthy, disclose, recommend, clattered, astonished, dare, tongue ripped out, eyeballs plucked, mustering all his courage, haunted, inadvertently, burden, get off his chest, shepherd, flock, plucked a blade of grass sprouting, absurd, confess, calligrapher, confidant, betray

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 feared being laughed at?
- Have you ever been ashamed or embarrassed about something and didn't want others to know?
- Have you ever told somebody a secret that you didn't want anyone else to know about? What happened in the end?

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 Alexander the Great
 - what the difficulty/secret was
 - Vahid's dilemma
 - what the king's final decision was

3. Read aloud to the students: “Remember always that you are your own best confidant.”
Ask them:

- What do you think this means? 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 “pride.” Conduct a group discussion about what the word “betrayal” means.

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 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. What was Alexander’s secret?
2. Why did Vahid have to get the secret off his chest?
3. Do you think that secrets are a burden?
4. Why do you think that Alexander decided not to punish the men?
5. What does “You are your own best confidant” mean?

Extension

Reading into Writing

1. Ask the students:
 - Have you ever had a secret that you only told to somebody you trusted? Did the person keep the secret and the promise? What happened?

2. Ask the students to think about their stories, tell them to their partners, and record them.