

“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: novice to intermediate low (ACTFL Guidelines)

Timing: two to three hours with writing assignment

Content Objectives

For students to:

- understand the characters and relate personalities to everyday people
- be able to describe the setting
- be able to retell the story

Language Objectives

For students to:

- use new vocabulary
- use discourse markers for the sequence of the story
- find meaningful metaphors
- determine the meaning of new words using context clues
- integrate listening, reading, speaking, and writing
- retell the story
- relate the story to a personal experience, first orally, and then in writing

Learning Strategies

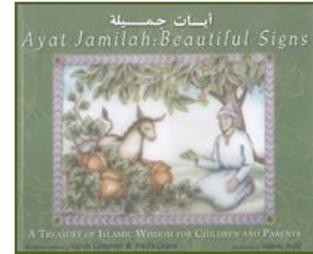
For students to:

- understand the story sequence by building a context
- use discussion skills to consider the lesson of the story as a pre-reading strategy
- use the context of the story to determine the meaning of new vocabulary
- describe the characters when the reading is divided into segments, and then retell the story using discourse markers
- use the reading as a context for writing

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.
- mp3 player/recorder



Context Building

Ask the students:

- What is the difference between humility and arrogance?
- Do you think it's better to downplay your strengths or talk about them openly?
- What kind of people do you like better, those who show off their strengths or those who wait to be praised?

Presentation (Teachers)

1. Now that the students have some background for the moral of the story, play the whole story for an overview, without stopping.
2. Play the recorded story again.
3. Play the recorded story a third time and pause at the following parts in order to emphasize their importance:
 - the description of Affanti
 - the description of the emperor
 - the first question, the emperor's response, and Affanti's response
 - Affanti's response after he grinned
 - the emperor's decision
 - Affanti's travels
4. Ask the students:
 - What is the moral of the story in your own words?

Practice/Application

1. Retell the story with the students. Start a story chain. Use the new vocabulary in the retelling.

Use sequence markers, for example:

first, second, third
in the first place, for one thing, then, next
before, now, after, while
into, until, last, during
since, always, later, earlier, in the end, finally

2. Help the students use descriptive adjectives and interesting verbs.
3. Make sure the lesson of the story is clear.

Assessment

Use a dictation to give the students assessment questions. The dictation sequence is: listen, listen and repeat, listen and write, listen and check.

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

1. Describe Affanti.
2. Describe the Emperor of China.
3. What was the question that the emperor asked?
4. Why did Affanti refer to the donkey's tail?
5. Was the number of hairs in a donkey's tail a good answer?
6. Why was the emperor stunned?
7. Who was the wiser man?
8. Do you think it is better to show how smart you are, or let others find out?

Extension

Reading into Writing

1. Ask the students:
 - What is real wisdom?
 - How do people show they are smart?
 - Think of a friend of yours who is really smart. How does he/she show cleverness? Does he/she sort of hide it, or show off?

Talk about these ideas in large group.

2. Ask the students to brainstorm their answers with a partner and record them.

3. Tell the students:

Use this practice storytelling and your recording to begin writing your paragraph/essay. Divide the writing in this way:

- What is real wisdom for most people?
 - Describe a friend who is very smart.
 - Describe how this friend shows how smart he/she is.
 - How do others react to this friend?
4. Follow standard writing process to guide the students into editing and redrafting their descriptions.