

**“True Inheritance: A Tale from Iraq”**  
*An English Language Lesson Plan by Mary Brooks*



**Unit/Theme:** hard work ethic

**Proficiency Level:** novice to intermediate low (ACTFL Guidelines)

**Timing:** two to three hours with writing assignment

### **Content Objectives**

For students to:

- understand the characters of the lazy, greedy sons, and relate their personalities to everyday people
- be able to describe the situation
- 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**

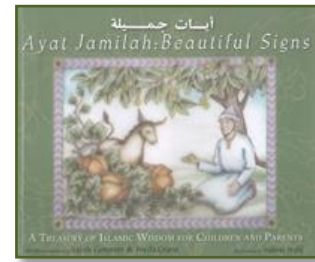
For students to:

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

**Key Vocabulary:** lazy and greedy, deathbed, inheritance, without delay, labor, accustomed to, shoots and blossoms, reaped an abundant harvest, lure of the gold, excavation, unearthed, myriad, hinting of coming fruitfulness, rich harvest, same routine, appreciate, rhythms of planting and harvest

## 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](http://www.uuabookstore.org) or 800-215-9076 and wherever books are sold.
- mp3 player/recorder



## Context Building

Ask the students:

- Have your parents ever tried to teach you a lesson about the rewards of hard work? What did they say? What did you do? What happened in the end?

## 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:
  - what the hard-working farmer told his sons on his deathbed
  - what the sons did the first year
  - what the sons did the second year
  - how they changed in the years to come
4. Read the moral out loud: “Gradually, the lure of the hidden inheritance grew distant in their hearts. They became honest, hard-working farmers, and soon came to realize that their father, in fact, had left them the greatest treasure of all.”

## 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 of all, 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. What happened to the kind, hard-working farmer?
2. Describe his sons.
3. What did the sons decide to do during the first year?
4. How did they feel about their plowing and planting?
5. What happened in the second year?
6. Did the sons change their attitude?
7. When did the sons finally change and why?
8. Have you ever been like the lazy sons?
9. What helped you to change?

### **Extension**

Reading into Writing

1. Ask the students:
  - When has a parent or teacher tried to help you become more hard-working? What happened? What strategy did they use to help you change? Did you change your attitude? If you changed, why? If you did not change, why?
2. Tell the students:

- Think about your own story and brainstorm with a partner about significant events of change.
- Select an event and tell your partner what happened.
- Record this story.

3. Tell the students:

Use this practice storytelling and your recording to write your story. Divide the story in this way:

- Describe what led up to the event.
- Describe the event.
- What happened later? Did you change or not?

Use sequence markers, descriptive adjectives, and interesting verbs when you write the story.

4. Follow standard writing process to guide the students into editing and redrafting their stories.