



“What If? A Tale from Iran”

An English Language Lesson Plan by Mary Brooks



Unit/Theme: a simple life

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 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

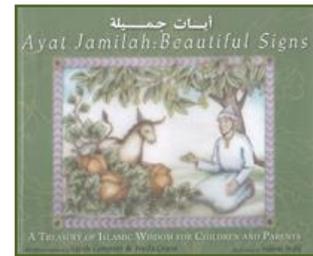
For students to:

- 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: dervish, offend, retreat, seldom, rude, wrinkled his brow, fretting, tugged the tip of his beard, disgrace, pace back and forth, wringing, insult, graze, twin, dizzy, gaze, imaginary, flock, furnish, interrupted, fantasy, stirring up a cloud of dust, same vein, scholars, howling, scolded, misbehave, discipline, unruly behavior, fond, stammered, sputtering, shattering, crack, wrecked, wry smile, cleansing shake of the head, renewed his pledge

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 daydreamed about being rich or having a different life? What was your fantasy?
- Do you often daydream? Do you think it's normal and okay to have daydreams?

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 the dervish
 - the description of the wealthy businessman
 - what the dervish's dilemma was
 - what his daydream was like
 - what he did in the end
 - what his resolve was
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.

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

Discuss with the students what a dervish is/does. Lead a discussion about what they think “living a simple life” 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. Describe the dervish.
2. What was his daydream and how did it develop?
3. What changed his mind?
4. What is a simple life?

Extension

Reading into Writing

1. Ask the students:
 - Do you think the moral of the story is true to real life? Have you ever wished for more than you already have? What did you wish for and why?
2. Ask the students to describe their answers to their partners and record them.