

**“The Honorable Joha, Mulla Nasruddin Hodja and the Famous Donkey Story”**  
*An English Language Lesson Plan by Mary Brooks*



**Unit/Theme:** making decisions

**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**

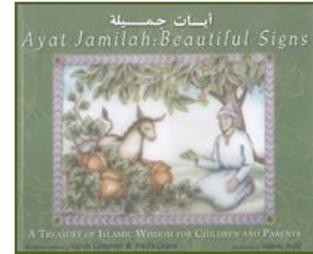
For students to:

- 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:** remarks, for shame, criticized, selfish, saddle, maneuver, brought forth, overload, donkey, managed, heave, shamefaced, wise nod

## 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 you ever listened to other people's advice? What happened? Did you go back to what you thought was best or did you follow the other person's advice?

Ask the students to explain what a donkey is, what purpose it serves, where and when.

## 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 first piece of advice or criticism—pause at “to the market”
  - the second piece of advice or criticism—pause at “and got on himself”
  - the third piece of advice or criticism—pause at “saddle directly in front”
  - the fourth piece of advice or criticism—pause at “instead of riding it”
4. Read the moral out loud: “Some minutes later . . .”

## 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. Who is Joha?
2. Describe Joha's personality.
3. What was the first piece of advice or criticism?
4. Who was in the first group to criticize?
5. Who was in the second group to criticize?
6. What did this group say?
7. What was the third piece of advice or criticism?
8. What was the fourth piece of criticism?
9. What was the final piece of criticism?
10. What did Joha finally do and why?
11. Do you think it's always wise to follow advice?
12. When is it important to listen to yourself?

### **Extension**

Reading into Writing

1. Ask the students:
  - When have you listened to advice from others? What happened? In the end, did you take the other person's advice or decide that you knew the best way to act?

2. Tell the students:

- Think about the story and brainstorm with your partner about a time you listened to someone else's advice. Describe what happened.
- Record this story.

3. Tell the students:

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

- Describe what led up to asking for advice.
- What was the advice, and did you take it?
- What happened later?

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

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