

A CREATIVE APPROACH TO THE CLASSICAL PROGYMNASMATA

Writing Rhetoric

NARRATIVE II

TEACHER'S EDITION

PAUL KORTEPETER



Writing & Rhetoric, Book III: Narrative II, Teacher's Edition

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Narrative II

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A Typical Teaching Week

Veteran teachers know that rarely is there anything typical about a teaching week. These guidelines are intended to help bring some predictability to lesson planning. Although the parts of speech and other elements of grammar are important aspects of this course, its primary focus is writing and rhetoric—as the name implies. It is recommended that teachers alternate between a course in grammar one week and *Writing & Rhetoric: Narrative II* the next week. The schedule includes four days so that you can have flexibility to spend more time on some sections or to catch up.

All teachers have time constraints. Please note that you may not want to tackle summary, amplification, and other writing exercises all in one lesson. These options are provided so that you have ample choice to decide what your class should practice. There will be other opportunities to summarize, amplify, and write creatively in lessons to come. Each of these skills is important in developing a solid foundation for rhetoric.

Day One

1. The teacher models fluency by reading the text aloud while students follow along silently.
2. Students break off into pairs and reread the text to each other. In the case of longer stories, students can read in sections. Encouragement should be given to students to read with drama and flair where appropriate.
3. “Tell It Back” (Narration) and “Talk About It” should immediately follow the reading of the text while the story is still fresh in the students’ minds. “Talk About It” is designed to help students analyze the meaning of texts and to see analogous situations, both in the world and in their own lives. Narration, the process of “telling back,” can be done in pairs or by selecting individuals to narrate to the entire class. Playacting the story from memory is another possible form of narration. (Note: Solo students can tell back the story into a recording device or to an instructor.) The process of narration is intended to improve comprehension and long-term memory.
4. “Go Deeper” comprehension exercises follow each text. They can help students better understand the selection as they work with vocabulary, main ideas, and character traits.

Day Two

1. Optional: The teacher can appoint a student or the entire class to read the text again.
2. Students then work with the text through the “Writing Time” exercises. In ancient times, at this level, the primary exercise was to summarize or amplify the narrative. Other exercises include emulating a particular sentence, changing part of a story, or writing an entirely new story. Student work need not be completely original, but it should show some effort of thought. You may want more than one day for this step.

Day Three or Four*

1. A time of sharing work can wrap up each lesson. In order to build confidence and ability in public speaking, students should be encouraged to read their work aloud—either in pairs or to the entire class (or cohort).
2. The “Speak It” section creates opportunities for students to recite, to playact, and to share their work aloud. Please consider using a recording device whenever it would suit the situation. In this case, have the student listen back to her recording to get an idea of what sounded right and what could be improved. Have students read the elocution instructions at the end of the book to help them work on skill in presentation.
3. At this level, teachers should be giving feedback to students and requesting rewrites whenever feasible. The art of writing is rewriting. Most students do not self-edit well at this age or provide useful feedback to each other. As the child gets older, self-editing checklists will be provided within the Writing & Rhetoric course.

*The number of days per week assigned to the lessons is four so that you have some flexibility according to the pace and level of depth that you can take advantage of with your students.

Introduction to Students

Hello and How Do You Do?

Pleased to meet you, I'm sure. Or perhaps we have already met in the first two books of this series: *Fable* and *Narrative I*. If so, I'm very glad that you are back in action! This time around you will stuff some new and wonderful stories into your cranium (that is, your skull!), and these stories are more interesting than ever before. You will get even better at understanding how stories are made by listening to them, narrating them, playing with word choice, outlining, highlighting, summarizing, and amplifying. Phew! And if that's not enough, you'll also learn the difference between fact and opinion, fiction and nonfiction. No extra charge! You will also be developing your skills as a writer.

Two things will never fail to help you with your writing: First, you should read a lot. Turn off the TV, drop the video game controller, and read! Reading is the painless way to learn to write. You will absorb good writing the way a sponge absorbs water. I don't know any really decent writer who doesn't dedicate a fair bit of time to reading. So get cozy with books and read, read, read! Second, you should practice writing stories by imitating the excellent stories you are hopefully reading. Practice makes perfect, as they say.

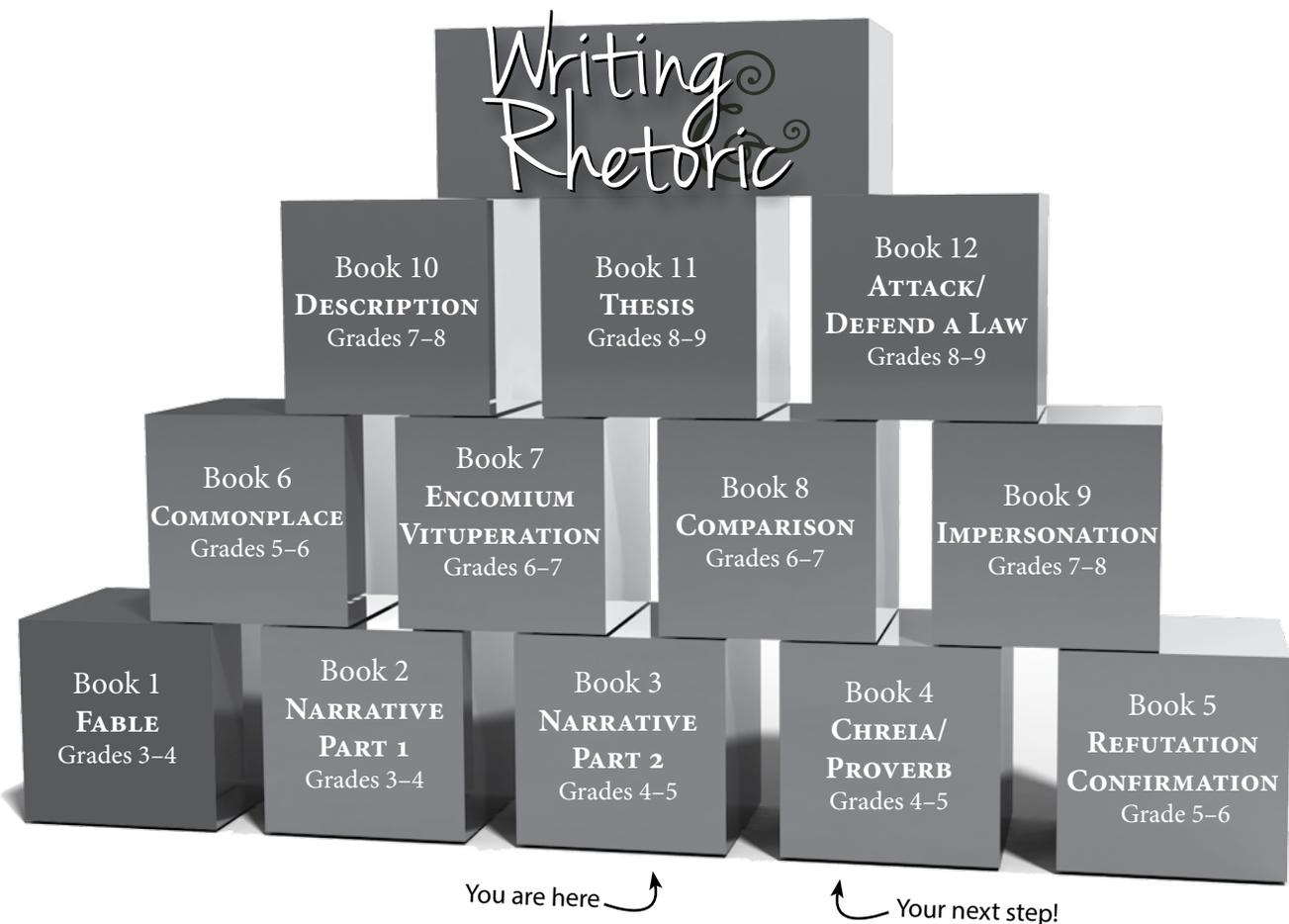
That's pretty much what these writing exercises are all about: reading and imitation. They are inspired by an ancient method of learning to write and speak known as the *progymnasmata*. "*Progymnasmata*?" you say. "Now that's a strange word." Well, of course it's strange! It's Greek, and Greek always sounds a little strange to English ears. *Progymnasmata* means "preliminary exercises." These exercises are fitness training for the writer in you, a writing workout before you study rhetoric. (Yikes, another Greek word!)

You can only be a good athlete if your body, through warm-ups and exercise, is strong, fit, and in shape. You can only be a good writer and speaker if you've mastered vocabulary, grammar, summary, amplification, and so on. Rhetoric is the

game itself—football, soccer, basketball, figure skating, relay racing, and so on. The *progymnasmata* are the stretches, the warm-ups—the push-ups, sit-ups, leg lifts, and chin-ups—needed for you to become a good writer and speaker.

The *progymnasmata* (*progym*) follow a step-by-step guide to good writing created by two ancient teachers, Hermogenes and Aphthonius. These two chaps lived in the Greek-speaking part of the Roman Empire, one in the city of Tarsus and the other in the city of Antioch. We'll take a look at their lives a little later. What you should know for now is that you are following a very ancient course of study that is still an excellent way to learn writing and speaking today, nearly 2,000 years after Hermogenes and Aphthonius lived.

Reading and imitation. Imitation and reading. That's what the *progym* is all about. Happy writing!



Introduction

Writing Happily

Where We Are Now with Writing

When it comes to writing, some students see the process as pure delight. That was my experience. I always loved taking a blank sheet of paper and transforming it into something magical: a carnival twinkling in the night, a city street shining with rain and reflecting gas lamps, an avalanche flying down a spire of rock. But I know that writing is not a magical world for many children or even some adults.

When I served as a writing instructor at the University of Southern California (USC), I saw firsthand the failure of writing instruction at our primary and secondary schools. Hardly a day went by that I wasn't grading a stack of papers, and the torment, the agony, of writing seemed to writhe through the pages.

Many of those college students had difficulty writing grammatically correct and coherent paragraphs—let alone entire essays, persuasively written. These were smart students from privileged backgrounds. So how did they get to college with such meager writing skills? What was happening in school or at home to sabotage the development of writing? Something was clearly not working.

Some years after teaching at USC, I helped to establish The Oaks Academy in the inner city of Indianapolis. Our school has grown from a modest 50 students in 1998 to 500-plus students today. At The Oaks, our mission is “to provide a rich, classical education to children of diverse racial and socioeconomic backgrounds.” Our diversity includes children who grow up in highly involved families as well as children who have limited access to opportunity and must often fend for themselves academically.

As director of curriculum, I was determined to find a writing program that served the needs of all of our students. I wanted a program that combined the best modern practices with the principles of classical education as defined by such disparate educators as the Roman rhetorician Quintilian and nineteenth-century

British reformer Charlotte Mason. I felt strongly that students could be confident, persuasive writers by the eighth grade if they received the right combination of models and practice. Above all, I wanted to avoid the wasted years that led to faltering communication in college and beyond.

I examined quite a few programs. Each in its own way seemed to be lacking—both the modern courses and those purporting to be classically inspired. Nothing seemed to be “just right.” Some programs were difficult to use. Others seemed too frivolous on the one hand or too heavy on the other. Still others lacked the necessary incremental steps.

The book you have in your hand is the fruit of my dissatisfaction. This is a curriculum built on the solid foundations of the past and framed with the vitality of the present. This is a curriculum that has been tested by ancient, medieval, and modern kids and has proven reliable for the ages. Along with caring teachers and a diet of good books, the Writing & Rhetoric series has taken the young people of The Oaks, kids from all sorts of advantaged and disadvantaged backgrounds, and shaped them into fine communicators. As a current eighth-grade teacher, I am often delighted by the rhetorical firepower in my classroom.

Imitation as a Foundation for Learning Writing

An examination of the theory and practice of modern composition reveals some obvious problems. Too often students are asked to brainstorm, “prewrite,” or “free write” according to their personal interests. This means, in essence, that they are supposed to conjure ideas out of thin air. When faced with a blank piece of paper, many students naturally draw a blank. They lack a conversation in their heads about where to begin. Good writing requires content. It abhors a vacuum.

Students are also expected to write with no clear model before them. Modern composition scolds traditional writing instruction as rote and unimaginative. It takes imitation to task for a lack of freedom and personal expression. And yet effective communication from writer to reader always requires some sort of form and structure. Many of history’s greatest writers learned by imitation. Benjamin Franklin, for example, taught himself to write by studying classic books and copying

whole passages verbatim. He would then put the book aside and try to reconstruct the passage from memory.

Today's emphasis on originality and creativity has failed. When students lack a form by which to express their ideas, their creativity lacks vitality. As Alexander Pope tells us in his "An Essay on Criticism": "True Ease in Writing comes from Art, not Chance, / As those move easiest who have learn'd to dance." In other words, writing takes the same kind of determined study as ballet or diving. Creativity uses conventional form as a stage or a springboard from which to launch grand *jetés* and somersaults.

But there's yet another problem. Too often students are expected to tackle complex writing assignments without learning the necessary intermediate steps. Without the requisite scaffolding, teachers require summer vacation narratives, persuasive letters, research papers, and poetic descriptions. All of these forms require skills that must be developed in stages. The assumption is that because most everyone can speak English well enough to be understood and form letters with a pencil, that everyone should be able to write well. And yet how many of us would expect a child to sit at a piano, without piano lessons, and play a concerto? How many of us would expect a child with a hammer and a chisel and a block of marble to carve the statue of David as well as Michelangelo?

Writing is never automatic. The skills of the trade will not miraculously materialize somewhere along the school way. They take years to master. This is because writing demands thoughtfulness, organization, grammatical skill, rhetorical skill, and an ear for the English language. Most children have a natural inclination for one or two of these skills. Rarely do they have a knack for all. The other skills need to be developed and matured.

When it comes down to it, writing is simply thinking on paper (or thinking in some digital realm). Writing is thought translated to symbols—the symbolic language of the alphabet. The difficulty lies in the process of translation. I may picture a face or a waterfall clearly in my mind. It's quite another thing to describe the face or waterfall articulately in writing. I may have beautiful arguments on the tip of my tongue for buying a Great Dane puppy, but can I make the case persuasively on a piece of paper? The thinking comes first; the writing comes second. Both need to mature together.

What Is to Be Done?

If we have lost our way, it rarely helps to plunge blindly forward. It often helps to retrace our steps. And so it is with writing. We have much to learn from the wisdom of the ages. The Greeks developed a system of persuasive speaking known as rhetoric. The Romans, who came later, were also in love with rhetoric, but they took it to the next level. In order to prepare their young students for dazzling oration, the Romans invented a complementary system of persuasive writing.

This writing system was so dynamic, so effective, that it outlasted the Roman Empire, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance. It even survived into early modern times. This method employed fluent reading, careful listening, models for imitation, and progressive steps. In short, it did many of the things that are out of fashion today, but gave us writers like Cicero and John Milton.

The Romans in the Greek-speaking part of the Empire called their system the *progymnasmata* (pro-gym-naz-ma-ta). This strange mouthful of a word derives from the same root for exercise as do “gymnasium” and “gymnastics.” It means “preliminary exercises.” The goal of these lessons is to prepare students for rhetoric, which is the art of writing well and speaking persuasively. This method assumes that students learn best by reading excellent examples of literature and by growing their skills through imitation. Successful writers study great writing. Successful orators study great speeches.

Each exercise is intended to impart a skill (or tool) that can be employed in all kinds of writing and speaking. The exercises are arranged from simple to more complex. What’s more, the exercises are cumulative, meaning that later exercises incorporate the skills acquired in preceding exercises. This means, for example, that the skill of reporting or narrating (derived from the narrative exercise) will be regularly practiced and used in future exercises. While engaged in praising an individual (encomium exercise), a student will need to report or narrate an important event or achievement. While comparing two individuals (comparison exercise), a student will often need to praise one of those individuals (encomium).

Studying and acquiring the skills imparted by the *progymnasmata* (hereafter referred to as *progym*) exercises is much like the way in which we acquire skill in

cooking or in a sport such as soccer. In the case of cooking, students must first learn the foundational skills of measuring, pouring, and mixing. Then they must learn skills relating to using a frying pan and oven. Each recipe requires the employment of these foundational skills—no matter how complicated it is. A sport like soccer also requires the mastery of basic skills such as kicking, passing, and dribbling. These foundational skills are carried forward into every soccer play and every game strategy.

Think of the *progym* as a step-by-step apprenticeship in the art of writing and rhetoric. What is an apprentice? It is a young person who is learning a skill from a master teacher. Our students will serve as apprentices to the great writers and great stories of history.

Quintilian, one of the master teachers of Rome, tells us that good habits are the foundation of education. In his *Institutio Oratoria*, he writes, “Once a bad habit has become ingrained, it is easier to break than bend. So strong is custom formed in early years.” This master teacher also tells us that natural ability is nothing if it is not “cultivated by skillful teaching, persistent study, and continuous and extensive practice in writing, reading, and speaking.”

Getting Started

The place to begin is reading, which should be encouraged as one of life’s great pleasures from a child’s earliest days. Parents should introduce books to babies as soon as they can keep their eyes open. Babies love to hear the sound of their parents’ voices. They love the feeling of snuggling in a parent’s lap. They love bright books and pictures. Reading helps develop joint attention (two people focusing at the same time on an object), which is necessary for any language acquisition. The more a child reads and is read to, the better the foundation for writing. And if a parent feels he or she has been negligent in reading, it’s never too late to get started.

The necessary corollary is that we must limit screens: TV, the Internet, and video games should stay off as much as possible! Without realizing it, many parents sabotage the ability of their children to think by allowing an excess of these media. Researchers are telling us, in no uncertain terms, that an imbalance of electronics can be harmful to clear thinking and focused attention. If children don’t have time

for books, they don't have time for glowing screens. (Unless, of course, that glowing screen contains a book.) Even boredom and daydreaming can be more productive than too much media exposure! A brain needs rest in order to do the hard work of synthesizing information, problem solving, and making connections between ideas.

In addition to reading, it's important for children to get comfortable with the formation of letters. Children should work on penmanship to strengthen neural pathways that allow thinking and writing at the same time. Once writing mechanics come easily, it is much easier to make progress in the complex skill of "thinking on paper." As is often the case, there's more to a fine motor skill than meets the eye. With writing, children must learn to grip the pencil properly, to move their arms and wrists smoothly, and to stay focused on the page. Keep practice sessions short, but frequent—about ten minutes a day for seven- and eight-year-olds.

Before children begin *Writing & Rhetoric: Narrative II* they should have covered the concepts in the previous two books. Many teachers and parents have begun older students with the *Fable* and *Narrative I* books and worked through them to gain the skills those books offer.

After This—Formal Rhetoric

The formal study of rhetoric will develop in students a solid theoretical understanding of rhetoric, helping them to better understand why and how to employ the skills they have acquired while studying these exercises. The *Writing & Rhetoric* series (twelve books in all) will prepare your students to enjoy transforming that blank sheet of paper into a spectacular view from atop the pinnacle of their own imagination.

Best Foot Forward

The *Progym* and the Practice of Modern Writing

Although the *progym* are an ancient method of approaching writing, they are extraordinarily relevant today. This is because modern composition owes almost everything to the *progym*. Modern writing borrows heavily from many of the *progym*'s various exercises. For example, modern stories are essentially unchanged from the ancient fable and narrative forms. Modern expository essays contain elements from the ancient *chreia*, the refutation/confirmation, and other *progym* exercises. Persuasive essays of today are basically the same as the ancient commonplace and thesis exercises. In this series, you can expect your students to grow in all forms of modern composition—narrative, expository, descriptive, and persuasive—while at the same time developing unique rhetorical muscle.

The *progym* cover many elements of a standard English and Language Arts curriculum. In *Narrative II* these include:

- Writing narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences
- Using dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations
- Asking and answering questions to demonstrate understanding of the text
- Summarizing the text
- Describing in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text
- Determining the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text
- Comparing and contrasting the point of view from which different stories are narrated, including the difference between first- and third-person narrations

While these goals are certainly worthwhile, the *progym* derive their strength from the incremental and thorough development of each form of writing. The Writing & Rhetoric series does not skip from form to form and leave the others behind, but rather builds a solid foundation of mastery by blending the forms. For example, no expository essay can truly be effective without description. No persuasive essay can be convincing without narrative. All good narrative writing requires description, and all good persuasive writing requires expository elements. Not only do the *progym* demand strong organization, but they retain all of the power of classical rhetoric.

Here is how the *progym* develop each stage of modern composition:

1. Fable—Narrative
2. Narrative—Narrative with descriptive elements
3. *Chreia* & Proverb—Expository essay with narrative, descriptive, and persuasive elements
4. Refutation & Confirmation—Persuasive essay with narrative, descriptive, and expository elements
5. Commonplace—Persuasive essay with narrative, descriptive, and expository elements

6. Encomium & Vituperation—Persuasive essay with narrative, descriptive, and expository elements
7. Comparison—Comparative essay with narrative, descriptive, expository, and persuasive elements
8. Impersonation & Description—Descriptive essays with narrative, expository, persuasive, and comparative elements
9. Thesis—Persuasive essay with narrative, descriptive, expository, and comparative elements
10. Defend/Attack a Law—Persuasive essay with narrative, descriptive, expository, comparative, and technical elements

All of the *progym* exercises are incorporated into the twelve-book Writing & Rhetoric series.

Objectives for *Narrative II*

Here are some of the major objectives for the exercises found in each section of this book:

1. Expose students to different forms of narrative writing as well as culturally important examples.
2. Model fluent reading for students and give them practice reading short texts.
3. Strengthen working memory through dictation, thus improving storage and manipulation of information.
4. Increase understanding of the flexibility and copiousness of language through sentence manipulation.
5. Facilitate student interaction with well-written texts through question and answer and through exercises in summary and amplification.
6. Give students opportunities to creatively imitate sentences and narrative sections.
7. Deepen the concepts of plot (beginning, middle, and end), dialogue, and description.
8. Encourage students to create their own fables and narratives with solid guidelines.
9. Widely and regularly require students to think critically.

Teaching Narrative II to Students

Throughout their lives, students will be telling and re-telling all kinds of stories. What a delight to know that rhetoric—the best and most persuasive writing and speaking—contains plenty of stories! Narrative is an essential rhetorical skill that never goes out of fashion. By learning the art of narrative, students can become excellent storytellers themselves.

Most likely your students have been exposed to many types of narrative from an early age. They've heard everything from simple fables to more complex parables and histories. The idea that there are different story types should not be surprising to them, but it helps to articulate this idea. Genres multiply as students get older, and the brain stores best what it can classify.

As always, there is wisdom in the sequence of the *progymnasmata* (*progym*). By starting with imaginative fables and stories, students wade into writing and rhetoric without getting in over their heads. They move from the simple to a more complex version of what they already know. Since the *progym* are cumulative, students can move forward with confidence, mastering each step along the way and using all that they have mastered in each succeeding exercise.

Getting to Know This Book

Learning to write isn't as easy as making pie, but it is potentially just as pleasurable. In *Writing & Rhetoric: Narrative II*, we've teamed up a writer and an editor who love literature and who have worked to make this not only an effective exercise of the past but a relevant, user-friendly, delightful program for the present. What follows is a brief description of the template of this book, explaining not only the content of each section but also its purpose and benefits.

The Chapter Story

Each chapter has a story (or several) that is well told, lively, and wise and has a beginning, middle, and end. Part of the beauty of the *Writing & Rhetoric* series is the fact that it uses stories that are noteworthy in their own right. When a child cares about a character and what happens to him—when she gets wrapped up in the language—her delight helps her to think and write more enthusiastically. Well-told stories also populate your students' minds with rich content so they get to practice skills without also having to invent content. All of the stories in the book are recorded in a downloadable MP3 file so that your students can experience the pleasure of being read to and taking the story in through a different door.

Tell It Back—Narration

Every time a student hears a story in this book, he will also practice narrating the story back. Multiple intelligences—memory, sequence, main idea—are developed by this practice. In addition to exercising their executive functions, students will begin to internalize an outline of the material. Later in this book, when they learn outlining, they will discover that they are already equipped to complete the task. Some educational models have based their entire strategy on this important skill.

Talk About It and Speak It

These two sections mirror our conviction that writing, speaking, and thinking are critical skills that work together. Some educators believe that difficulties with writing stem from a lack of deeper thought. These books use comprehension, reading aloud, discussion, and even oral performance as ways to help students become critical thinkers according to the way their bodies (and brains) are made. These three abilities—writing, speaking, and thinking—practiced together strengthen each other.

Go Deeper

This section seeks to develop comprehension, not only of the story but of individual words, roots of words, parts of speech, synonyms, and analogies. The questions, rather than draining a story of its delight, make the experience more vivid and stimulate an appetite for catching details that guide the student not only to the story’s meaning but to the pleasure of the story as well. In most of the lessons, you will find a few multiple-choice questions in the “Go Deeper” section. Although classically minded educators often eschew multiple-choice questions, they are nonetheless a universal assessment tool. They are used in this section of *Writing & Rhetoric: Narrative II* so that students gain familiarity with this type of test.

Writing Time

This aspect of the book is the most obvious! We give all kinds of practice, from dictation to sentence play (in which students imitate sentences and learn how many ways there are to construct a sentence) to *copia* to summary and amplification. *Copia* is Latin for “abundance” or “copiousness.” It is a stretching exercise that teaches students to reach for new words to express variations of the same idea, allowing them to experience the joy of the abundance of language. Students eventually get the chance to write their own stories after months of working with excellent models.

Important Notes

Flexibility is built into the program.

We have crafted this book to be useful to students at different levels with different needs. Teachers can do some of the exercises aloud instead of having students write them. Students can write out answers to “Talk About It” questions if teachers would like for them to have more written work. Teachers can also have students work together to tackle parts of lessons that are difficult. For instance, teachers should feel free to shorten the length of dictations or write difficult words on the board. Education is personal, and one size does not fit all.



You do not need to tackle all writing exercises for every chapter.

All teachers have important objectives and time constraints. As such, you may not want to tackle all exercises in each lesson. Each time you see the indicated icon, you’ll know that, because of the diverse exercises provided, you have many choices for class practice. There will be other opportunities to do similar exercises in lessons to come. So, while each skill is important in developing a solid foundation for rhetoric, there will be numerous opportunities for students to work on those skills. Teachers know their students best and you should feel free to choose your schedule accordingly.



Decide whether to do oral narration or outlining.

When you see the indicated icon, you should decide whether oral narration or narration via outline would best serve your class. Oral narration serves the memory, while outlining improves understanding of story structure. Doing both is also a fine choice. Again, we aim for you as the teacher to tailor this program to the needs of your students. We are working our way toward written narrations and several of these lessons contain the building blocks of written narration.



Consider using sentence suggestion.

For some students, content generating at this stage is still quite time consuming. When you come to an instruction that asks students to use a word they have just defined in a sentence (these instructions will be indicated with the icon you see above), consider giving them a prompt that helps them create a stronger sentence. For instance, if the instruction is, “Use the word ‘conceited’ in a sentence,” you could prompt students by giving them examples of conceited people: movie stars or famous soccer players, etc. Instruct students to finish the sentence that you have begun.



Highlight.

Throughout this book, we teach the skill of highlighting to differentiate between the fictional or opinion parts of a piece and the nonfiction or fact parts. Sometimes these instructions sequentially follow the piece (on the next page, for instance). In the Teacher’s Edition we include the highlighting and reference the instruction to the student. The student edition does not include the highlighting.



Include elocution instruction.

We believe that speaking well makes students better writers and that writing well makes for better speakers. We focus in this book on the various aspects of speaking well, which include recitations, speeches, dramatic presentation, and the sharing of student work. In each book we expand our elocution instructions. You will see them appear in chapter 1, and then we will prompt you in each “Speak It” section with an icon to remind you of the instructions. Check page 187 for a refresher on these instructions. Your students will need you to highlight one aspect or other of elocution every time they practice public speaking.

The purpose of this lesson is to introduce the concept of rhetoric and to refresh the ideas of narrative, plot, and character.

In this lesson, your students will practice:

- putting story events in order (beginning, middle, and end)
- distinguishing between narrative and non-narrative passages



Lesson 1

What Makes a Story a Story?

People love stories, don't they? They love it when the movie theater grows dark or the curtain goes up at the theater or when they turn the first page of a book. People love the sense of new adventure that comes with the start of a story. Since people love stories, it only makes sense that you will be listened to, you will be heard better, if you can tell stories well.

Let's say you are the president of Eureka Bank and you want people to listen carefully to your speech about the importance of saving money in banks. "Saving money?" your listeners say. "Sounds about as interesting as watching paint dry." Yawn, yawn, *yawn!*

But then you tell the true story of a woman who threw out her mother's mattress. It was a moth-eaten, dusty old mattress, so why not get rid of it? Only after the mattress was hauled away by a garbage truck did the woman learn that it was stuffed with a million dollars. "A million dollars?" she screamed. Down the road she ran, looking high and low for the truck. In a panic, she searched through dumps and

landfills. Did she ever find the million-dollar mattress? No. The money is probably lying in a moldy heap under piles of rotten fish and blue cheese, lost forever.

Now you have your listeners' attention, don't you? No more yawning.

One of the reasons we study writing and speaking is to learn how to win people to our ideas. We want to persuade people that we have something important to share. The bank president wants to persuade people to save their money in his bank. The senator wants to persuade people to vote for her in the next election. And the boy on bended knee wants to persuade the girl to marry him.

The name for the art and practice of persuasive writing and speaking is an odd word called **rhetoric** (REH-teh-rik). Say it out loud a few times. Some people see rhetoric as an art just like painting or music. As with other arts, rhetoric is an ability that requires the long practice of skills and involves creativity in applying those skills. There is no one way to speak or write persuasively, no rule book or simple set of instructions. Just as there are many different ways for artists to portray a subject's face, rhetoric can be done an infinite number of ways and requires skill and creativity. And guess what? Storytelling is a huge part of rhetoric.

► What makes a story a story? Do you remember what every story has in common?

Every story has a beginning, a middle, and an end.

In other words, stories contain an order of events like a timeline. You've had some practice with timelines, haven't you? In a timeline of civilization, the ancient world is the beginning: ancient Egypt, ancient Babylon, ancient Greece, ancient Rome, ancient India, and so on. Then comes the middle of the story of civilization: the Middle Ages. This is the time of knights and castles, of barbarian invasions and far-off crusades, of queens and dukes and princesses. The end of the story of civilization, at least so far, is the modern age to which we belong.

A story contains its own timeline. Most stories start with the beginning, go to the middle, and finish at the end. But some stories start in the middle, go to the beginning, and finish at the end. And some stories actually start at the end and work backwards, finishing in the beginning. The stories in this book all follow the typical pattern: beginning, middle, and end.

If your life were a story, it might go like this: In the beginning you were a baby, sucking your thumb and slurping milk from a bottle. In the middle you were a toddler, a kid, a teenager, and finally an adult. At the end of your life story, you became an elderly person with a head of frosty hair. That is the story of every person who lives to see old age.

- ▶ Now think about the four seasons. If the seasons of the year were a story, what season might be the beginning?
- ▶ If the spring is the beginning of the year, what two seasons are the middle?
- ▶ What season does that leave to end the story?

Poets often imagine the spring to be the youngest part of the year. It's the season when baby birds appear in their nests and baby lambs skip across their pastures.

Summer and fall. These seasons are the prime of the year, bright with color and ripe with fruit.

But is winter the end of the story? No. Spring will wake the dead earth and the story of the years starts over again.

Taken together, the events of a story—the beginning, middle, and end—are called the **plot** of a story. "Plot" means "plan." Every story has a plan.

Winter! Poets often imagine the winter to be the old age of the year. Winter skies and winter snow appear as gray and white as the hair of an elderly person. Many animals sleep through the winter in hibernation. All of nature has the appearance of death.

Besides having a plot, stories must also have

characters. Think of any story and you will immediately think of the persons in the story. Lucy, Edmund, Aslan, and the White Witch are some of the characters in *The Chronicles of Narnia*. As you can see in the case of Aslan the lion, a character need not be a human being.

The characters of a story make the story interesting. How interesting would *Charlotte's Web* be without Charlotte? What if the author had written his book about an empty cobweb gathering dust on the ceiling? How interesting would "Hansel and Gretel" be without Hansel and Gretel? We want to see them escape the wicked, kid-eating witch. The persons of a story—the characters—make a story fun to read.

- ▶ Name some of the characters in "Little Red Riding Hood." Name some of the characters in the *Chronicles of Narnia* series or another popular book series.

"Little Red Riding Hood": the wolf, Little Red Riding Hood, Grandmother, the hunter, the mother
Chronicles of Narnia series: Aslan, Susan, Lucy, Edmund, Peter, Mr. Tumnus, Eustace, Jill, Prince Rillian, Mr. and Mrs. Beaver, to name a few

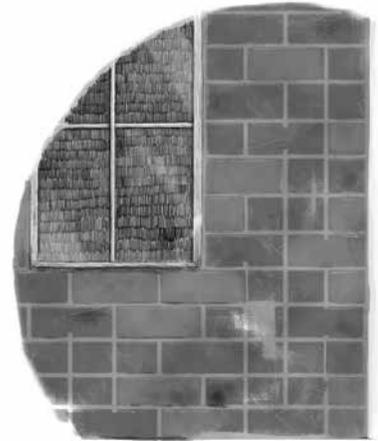
► Can you think of a story without characters? No, there is no such thing.

Now we know, after all is said and done, what makes a story a story. All narratives must have a beginning, a middle, and an end—a plot. They must also contain persons or characters.

Tell It Back—

TE 1. Everyone tells stories—your parents; your friends; your teachers; your pastors, priests, and rabbis; and even the president of the United States. Explain why it’s important to be able to tell stories.

TE 2. What are the two central aspects that make a story?



Talk About It—

TE 1. Do you remember the definition of “rhetoric”? Use it properly in a sentence.  What does it mean to persuade someone?

TE 2. Why is it important to speak persuasively if you are trying to sell cookies or lemonade? Why is it important to speak persuasively if someone says something untrue about you or your family?

TE 3. What are some things that make up the beginning, middle, and end of a year at school? What are some things that make up the beginning, middle, and end of a holiday such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, or Hanukkah?

TE 4. In the last book you learned that “narrative” is a fancy word for “story.” To narrate means “to tell” and comes from the Latin word *narrare*, which also means “to tell.” So if you’re telling a story, you’re narrating a narrative. Try using the words “narrate” and “narrative” correctly in two separate sentences. 

Go Deeper—

^A This exercise can be completed intuitively, but prior knowledge of the selected stories is helpful.

1. Almost every story has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Try to put the events in order below using *B* for beginning, *M* for middle, and *E* for end. There are clues in these passages to help you figure out the correct order. ^A

A. Little House in the Big Woods—based on the book (with the same name) by Laura Ingalls Wilder

 B In the black winter night, Ma and her daughter Laura go outside to milk the cow. They are surprised to see a dark shape by the wooden fence. Ma thinks it's her cow, Sukey, out of the barn.

 M Ma gives the cow a slap on the shoulder and tells her to get out of the way of the gate. But the lantern reveals long, shaggy hair and two glowing eyes.

 E Ma realizes that the cow is, in fact, a bear. She grabs her daughter and runs to safety in the cabin.

B. Charlie and the Chocolate Factory—based on the book (with the same name) by Roald Dahl

 E Charlie becomes the new owner of the Wonka Chocolate Factory. No longer a poor boy, Charlie is rich for the rest of his days.

 M With a coin he finds in the gutter, Charlie buys a chocolate bar. As he unwraps the bar, he sees a glint of gold foil. Lo and behold, it's a golden ticket, a prize-winning passport into the chocolate factory! He is one of five lucky children who get to take a tour of the chocolate factory.

 B Charlie Bucket lives near a large, mysterious chocolate factory. Because he is a poor boy, he can rarely afford to buy a chocolate bar. Instead, he sniffs the delicious odors that waft from behind the high walls surrounding the strange factory buildings within.

C. Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass —

adapted from the autobiography (with the same name) by Frederick Douglass

B I was born into slavery near Hillsborough in Talbot County, Maryland. I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any record containing it. My mother and I were separated when I was but an infant—before I knew her as my mother.

E On the third day of September 1838, I left my chains and succeeded in reaching New York. How did I feel when I found myself in a free state? It was a moment of the highest excitement I ever experienced.

M The escape plan we finally concluded upon was to get a large canoe and paddle directly up the Chesapeake Bay. On our arrival at the head of the bay, a distance of seventy or eighty miles from where we lived, it was our idea to turn our canoe adrift and follow the guidance of the north star till we got beyond Maryland.

D. The Emperor's New Clothes —adapted from Hans Christian Andersen's story in *The Yellow Fairy Book*, edited by Andrew Lang

M One day two impostors arrived who gave themselves out as weavers and said that they knew how to manufacture the most beautiful cloth imaginable. Not only were the texture and pattern uncommonly beautiful but the clothes were invisible to anyone who was not fit for his office or who was unpardonably stupid. "Those must indeed be splendid clothes," thought the emperor. "If I had them on I could find out which men in my kingdom are unfit for the offices they hold; I could distinguish the wise from the stupid! Yes, this cloth must be woven for me at once." And he gave both the impostors much money, so that they might begin their work.

B Many years ago there lived an emperor who was so fond of new clothes that he spent all his money on them in order to be beautifully dressed. He did not care about his soldiers; he did not care about the theater.

He only liked to go out walking to show off his new clothes. He had a coat for every hour of the day.

E So the emperor went along in the parade under the splendid canopy, and all the people in the streets and at the windows said, “How matchless are the emperor’s new clothes! That train fastened to his dress, how beautifully it hangs!”



No one wished it to be noticed that he could see nothing, for then he would have been unfit for his office, or else very stupid. None of the emperor’s clothes had met with such approval as these had.

“But he has nothing on!” said a little child at last.

2. After each selection write “narrative” or “non-narrative.” Use your best guess.

Songs

Remember that narratives have a timeline of events (a plot) and characters.

A. Sweet Betsy from Pike

Oh, don’t you remember sweet Betsy from Pike,
Who crossed the big mountains with her lover Ike,
With two yoke of cattle, a large yellow dog,
A tall Shanghai rooster and one spotted hog?

narrative

B. Do Your Ears Hang Low? —Children’s song

Do your ears hang low?
Do they wobble to and fro?
Can you tie ’em in a knot?
Can you tie ’em in a bow?
Can you throw ’em o’er your shoulder
Like a continental soldier?
Do your ears hang low?

non-narrative

C. Home on the Range —Brewster M. Higley

Home, home on the range,
Where the deer and the antelope play,
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word
And the skies are not cloudy all day.

non-narrative

D. Oh, My Darling Clementine —American folk ballad

In a cavern, in a canyon,
Excavating for a mine
Dwelt a miner forty-niner,
And his daughter Clementine.

Drove the ducklings to the water
Ev'ry morning just at nine,
Hit her foot against a splinter,
Fell into the foaming brine.

narrative

Poems

Remember that narratives have a timeline of events (a plot) and characters.

A. The Tiger —William Blake

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

non-narrative

B. There was a little girl —Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

There was a little girl
Who had a little curl



Right in the middle of her forehead.
When she was good
She was very, very good,
But when she was bad she was horrid!

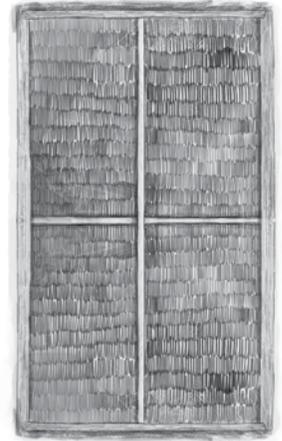
non-narrative **B**

^BAlthough we have the beginnings of a character here, there is no story.

C. Froggie Went A-Courtin' —Scottish Nursery Rhyme

Froggie, a-courting he did ride,
Sword and pistol by his side.
He rode up to Miss Mouse's door
Where he had never been before.
He took Miss Mouse upon his knee,
Said, "Miss Mouse, will you marry me?"

narrative



D. Limerick —often attributed to William Cosmo Monkhouse

There was a young lady from Niger,
Who smiled as she rode on a tiger.
They came back from the ride
With the lady inside,
And the smile on the face of the tiger.

narrative

E. For Want of a Nail —Proverbial rhyme

For want of a nail, the shoe was lost;
For want of the shoe, the horse was lost;
For want of the horse, the rider was lost;
For want of the rider, the battle was lost;
For want of the battle, the kingdom was lost;
And all from the want of a horseshoe nail.

non-narrative

Passages from Ancient Books

Remember that narratives have a timeline of events (a plot) and characters.

A. **The Wandering Rocks** —adapted from *Stories from the Odyssey*

A strong current caught the boat and whirled her swiftly towards danger. The water boiled and eddied around them, and the blinding spray was dashed into their faces. A sudden panic came upon the crew of the boat, so that they dropped their oars and sat helpless and unnerved, expecting instant death. In this emergency, Odysseus summoned up all his courage and strode up and down between the benches, shouting and calling each man by name. “Why are you sitting there,” he cried, “huddled together like sheep? Row, men, row for your lives! And you, helmsman, steer straight for the passage, lest we be crushed between the Wandering Rocks.”

narrative

B. **Daniel in the Lion’s Den** —Daniel 6:16-17 from the Hebrew Scriptures

So the king gave the order, and they brought Daniel and threw him into the lions’ den. The king said to Daniel, “May your God, whom you serve continually, rescue you!” A stone was brought and placed over the mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with his own signet ring.

narrative



C. **Of David** —Psalm 131:1-2 from the Hebrew Scriptures

My heart is not proud, O LORD, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me. But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me.

non-narrative

D. The Parable of the Lost Coin —Luke 15:8-9 from the Christian

Scriptures

Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, “Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.”

narrative

E. The Sayings of Confucius —adapted from a translation by Leonard Lyall

If a man doesn’t care about beauty but honors worth, if he helps his father and mother with all of his strength, if he behaves modestly in public . . . and if he is faithful to his friends, then I would call that man wise, even if he has never been to school.

non-narrative

F. Sun Tzu—The Art of War —adapted from a translation by Lionel Giles

After crossing a river, your army should get as far away from it as possible. If you must cross over a marsh, get over it as quickly as possible. All armies prefer high ground to low ground, and sunny places to dark.

non-narrative

Writing Time— 

1. **COPYWORK**—Neatly copy the sentence below in the space provided.

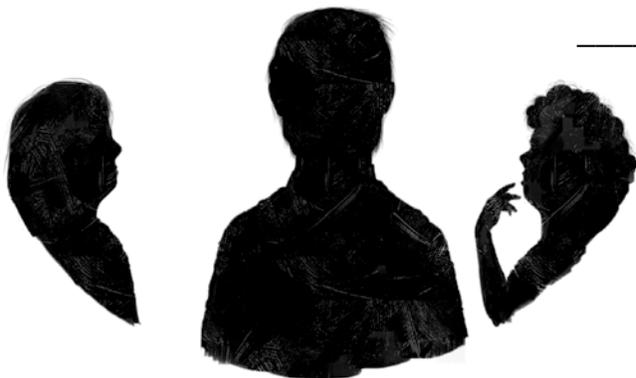
I was born into slavery near Hillsborough in Talbot County, Maryland. I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen any record containing it.

2. **DICTATION**—Your teacher will read a little part of “Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass” back to you. Please listen carefully! After your teacher reads once, she will read slowly again and include the punctuation marks. Your task will be to write down the sentences as your teacher reads them one by one.

— Modify according to student level. Note that dictations are not spelling tests. Difficult words can be spelled on the board prior to dictation.

—  How did I feel when I found myself in a free state? It was a moment of the highest excitement I ever experienced.

3. **SUMMARY**—Write a summary narrative of one of your favorite stories. It can be as simple as a beginning, middle, and end, or you can elaborate further. Write it in complete sentences. Tell the name of the story as well as the major events and characters.



Speak It—

• Remind your students that repetition is the key to memorizing anything. Consider breaking them up into groups and having each group put the information to music or chant, then have a competition to decide which one to adopt for the class.

- Memorization is an important way to strengthen your brain and to add to its store of knowledge. ^c
- Memorize your summary of the story you chose in the “Writing Time” section and share it with the class. Consider adding excitement and changing the volume of your voice according to the part of the story you are telling.

A Note on Proper Elocution

In the last two books in the Writing & Rhetoric series you learned about elocution, or the art of speaking skillfully. We believe that as you practice speaking skillfully, your writing will be improved. We also believe that your writing will improve your speaking—they work together.

Ancient educators taught us nearly everything we know about rhetoric. Aristotle noted two important parts of rhetoric: **logos** and **lexis**. *Logos* is Greek for “word” and also for “logical reasoning.” So *logos* is the content, the substance of a speech. It’s what you put down on paper and the words that are spoken. *Lexis* is the delivery of the words, how the speech comes across to the audience.

Both *logos* and *lexis* are important for effective oration. We might call them substance and style today. The content of a speech can mean the difference between sharing excellent ideas or spouting stuff and nonsense. The way you use your voice in speaking can mean the difference between catching the interest of your audience or putting them to sleep.

What are some ways to make the delivery, or *lexis*, of a speech more interesting? You already know that proper volume—loudness and softness—is vital to *lexis*. Speed—not speaking too quickly or too slowly—is also key. In addition to proper volume and speed, there is also **inflection**. What is inflection?

Think about the different ways you could say the words, “I’d like to have you for dinner.” If you say this sentence in a nice, casual voice, it sounds as if you are inviting someone to your house for a meal. If you say it sarcastically, it sounds like you really don’t want them to come over for dinner. If you say it in a raspy, wolfish voice, it sounds as if you want to eat someone up. The change in the pitch or tone of your voice is called inflection.

In order to hold your audience's attention, you are going to need to use the highs and lows of your voice. Inflection tells the audience when they need to be excited or when they should laugh or get serious. We know that when a person asks us a question, his voice will get a little higher at the end of his sentence. We know when we're about to hear bad news because a person's voice goes lower. A good speaker will know how to use inflection to make his speech more powerful.

So when you practice speaking, remember to speak with

- clear pronunciation.
- good posture.
- eye contact.
- volume. Everyone in the room should be able to hear you.
- drama. You should sound sad when the words call for sorrow, angry when the words call for anger. Any emotion in the text should find its way into your voice.
- gestures. Gestures accentuate the emotions in your voice and make the reading even more dramatic.
- pauses and proper speed. Never read so quickly that you don't have a chance to take regular breaths. Pauses help to accentuate your emotions like gestures.

The purpose of this lesson is to review various types of story (fable, parable, fairy tale, history, myth) and to introduce ballads (story songs).

In this lesson, your students will practice:

- distinguishing between story types based on simple definitions



Lesson 2

A Review of Narrative Types

In the first lesson, we learned that stories, or narratives, have two elements: a plot or plan with a beginning, middle, and end; and characters. People have been telling stories for so many thousands of years that different types of stories have come about. Let's review the types of stories you've encountered so far in the Writing & Rhetoric series: fables, parables, fairy tales, myths, and histories. Each of these story types has its own special definition.

A **fable** is a short story that teaches a simple moral lesson, usually with talking animals.

A **parable** is a short story that teaches a moral, spiritual, or heavenly lesson and is always true to life.

A **fairy tale** is a fanciful story for children, usually with magical people or creatures.

History is a narrative of actual events.

A **myth** is an ancient story not based on actual events, with gods, goddesses, and heroes, that is used to explain life and nature.

These are all good examples of types of stories, but there are still more. There are jokes, for instance. Do you realize that some of the funniest jokes contain a narrative? Here is a story joke from the Middle Ages:

A Spaniard was traveling late and desired to have a bed for the night. He came to a small town with a shabby little inn.

He rapped on the inn door, and a window opened above him. “What do you want?” demanded the innkeeper.

“For starters, I’d like some supper,” the Spaniard replied.

“What’s your name?” demanded the innkeeper.

“My name is Don Pedro Gonzales y Lopez Gayetan de Guevara.”

“Well, sir,” the innkeeper said, “We don’t have enough meat for so many.”

Why is this joke funny? It’s because Spanish people are known to have long names. The lazy innkeeper is looking for an excuse to not cook supper and pretends that the one Spaniard is many people. This short joke contains a narrative; it has a beginning, a middle, and an end.

Another type of story is the **ballad**, a song that tells a story. Many ballads also contain a beginning, middle, and end. Here is the beginning of a very long ballad that tells the story of Robin Hood:

A Gest of Robin Hood

—adapted

Attend and listen, gentlemen,
That be of freeborn blood;
I shall tell you of a good yeoman,
His name was Robin Hood.

Robin was a proud outlaw,
While he walked upon the ground:
So courteous an outlaw
Was never another found.



The ballad goes on for nearly 2,000 lines more. We learn about Robin’s many adventures as he battles the Sheriff of Nottingham. Sadly, the song ends with the betrayal and death of Robin Hood. The last stanza goes like this:

Christ have mercy on his soul,
That died upon the road!
For he was a good outlaw,
And did poor men much good.



Of course, there are many more types of stories than the ones we’ve listed here. There are genre stories such as mysteries, romances, science fiction, and westerns. There are animal tales, folk tales, tall tales, and legends. There are bragging stories and tattling stories. There are biographies and autobiographies. There are as many types of stories in the world as are necessary to satisfy the human soul.

Tell It Back—

TE Take some time to memorize the story-type definitions in the Go Deeper section. Feel free to make notecards and practice with a partner. Then, describe in your own words each story type and give an example of it from this text or from your own experience.

Talk About It—

TE 1. Name one example of a story type that is not included in the list of categories you defined in your answer to the question in the “Tell It Back” section.

TE 2. Do you think that, in some way, the type of story you listed in question 1 does fit in one of the categories this chapter describes?

TE 3. Can you remember the title of a fable (animal tale) that you learned in *Writing & Rhetoric: Fable*?

Before you move ahead in this workbook, it might be a good idea to stop and have some practice playing story detective. So here’s your job, young detective:

- Using the definitions of the different types of narrative you've learned about so far, try to find clues that will help you to label the following short paragraphs.
- Here we go!

Go Deeper—



TE

Each of these narratives represents a certain type of story. Label the following paragraphs as fable, parable, fairy tale, history, myth, or ballad.

Fable: A short story that teaches a simple moral lesson, usually with talking animals

Parable: A short story that teaches a moral, spiritual, or heavenly lesson and is always true to life

Fairy tale: A fanciful story for children, usually with magical people or creatures

History: A narrative of actual events

Myth: An ancient story not based on actual events, with gods, goddesses, and heroes, that is used to help explain life and nature

Ballad: A song that tells a story

A. fable In a field one summer's day a Grasshopper was hopping about, chirping and singing to its heart's content. An Ant passed by, bearing along a heavy kernel of corn he was taking to the nest. "Why not come and chat with me," said the Grasshopper, "instead of toiling and moiling in that way?" "I am helping to lay up food for the winter," said the Ant, "and recommend you do the same."

B. history Two days passed before the French army arrived. When King Philip saw the English his blood boiled, so much did he dislike them. He ordered his crossbowmen to advance, and the English sprang up to meet them. Just at that moment a terrible thunderstorm broke over the field, and the rain fell in torrents. The strings of the Frenchmen's bows were so drenched that they became almost useless.

- C. myth Tyr the Brave stalked up to the wolf and thrust his arm into his enormous mouth. As soon as he did, the other gods bound the beast with the magic cords. When the wolf strained and pulled, the cords became tighter and stiffer. The gods shouted and laughed with glee when they saw that the wolf was bound. But Tyr did not join in their mirth, for the wolf in his rage snapped his great teeth together and bit off his hand.
- D. fable A Fox was boasting to a Cat of its clever devices for escaping its enemies. “I have a whole bag of tricks,” he said, “which contains a hundred ways of escaping my enemies.” “I have only one,” said the Cat. Just at that moment they heard the cry of a pack of hounds coming toward them. The Cat immediately scampered up a tree and hid. While the Fox was thinking about all the ways to escape his enemies, he was caught by the hounds and killed by the huntsmen.
- E. parable He said: “In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared about men. And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, ‘Grant me justice against my adversary.’ For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, ‘Even though I don’t fear God or care about men, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won’t eventually wear me out with her coming!’”
- E. myth The three goddesses—Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite—appeared to the shepherd Paris while he was tending his sheep on Mount Ida. “Decide which of us is most beautiful,” the goddesses demanded. Hera promised him power and riches if he chose her. Athena promised him glory and fame in war. But Aphrodite, goddess of love, knew the young man’s heart. “If you choose me,” she told Paris, “I will give you the most beautiful woman in the world.”

G. ballad

John Henry told his captain,
Lightning was in his eye:
“Captain, bet yo’ last red cent on me,
For I’ll beat it to the bottom or I’ll die,
Lawd, Lawd, I’ll beat it to the bottom or I’ll die.”

Sunshine hot and burning,
Weren’t no breeze a-tall,
Sweat ran down like water down a hill,
That day John Henry let his hammer fall,
Lawd, Lawd, that day John Henry let his hammer fall.



H. fairy tale About midnight, the giant entered the apartment and with his club struck many blows on the bed, the very place that Jack had been sleeping. But Jack had put a log there in his place. Thinking that he had broken all Jack’s bones, the giant went back to his room. Early the next morning, Jack put on a bold face and walked into the giant’s room. “Thank you for my lodging,” he said. “I slept very well!”

I. fairy tale A poor old woman, who lived with her one little granddaughter in a wood, was out gathering sticks for fuel and found a green stalk of sugar cane. As she was about to add the cane to the bundle, along came a goblin in the form of a wild boar. “Give me the sugar cane,” he snorted. But the old woman refused. “I am going to take the cane home and let my little granddaughter suck its sweet sap.” The boar, angry at her refusal, said that during the coming night he would come and eat her granddaughter instead of the cane and went off into the wood.

J. parable Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, ‘Come, for everything is now

ready.’ But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, ‘I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.’ Another said, ‘I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I’m on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.’ Still another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’ The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, ‘Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.’”

K. ballad

Silvy, Silvy, all on one day,
She dressed herself in man’s array,
A sword and pistol all by her side,
To meet her true love she did ride.

She met her true love all in the plain,
“Stand and deliver, kind sir,” she said,
“Stand and deliver, kind sir,” said she,
“Or else this moment you shall die.”

Oh, when she’d robbed him of all his store,
She says, “Kind sir, there’s one thing more,
A diamond ring which I know you have,
Deliver that, your sweet life to save.”



L. history When Columbus discovered the New World he brought back with him to Europe many new and curious things, one of which was cocoa. Some years later, in 1519, the Spanish conquistador Cortes landed in Mexico, marched into the interior, and discovered, to his surprise, not the huts of savages but a beautiful city with palaces and museums. This city was the capital of the Aztecs, a remarkable people, notable alike for their ancient civilization and their wealth. Their national drink



was chocolate, and Montezuma, their emperor, who lived in a state of luxurious magnificence, “took no other beverage than the *chocolatl*, a drink of chocolate flavored with vanilla and other spices.”

Writing Time—



1. **COPYWORK**—Neatly copy the following sentence in the space provided:
About midnight, the giant entered the apartment and with his club struck many blows on the bed, the very place that Jack had been sleeping.

2. **DICTATION**—Your teacher will read a little part of *Jack the Giant Killer* back to you. Please listen carefully! After your teacher reads once, she will read slowly again and include the punctuation marks. Your task will be to write down the sentences as your teacher reads them one by one.

— Modify according to student level. Note that dictations are not spelling tests. Difficult words can be spelled on the board prior to dictation.

—  But Jack had put a log there in his place. Thinking that he had broken all Jack’s bones, the giant went back to his room.

The purpose of this lesson is to refresh in the minds of your students the importance of fables and to remind students that the main idea of most fables is found in the moral.

In this lesson, your students will practice:

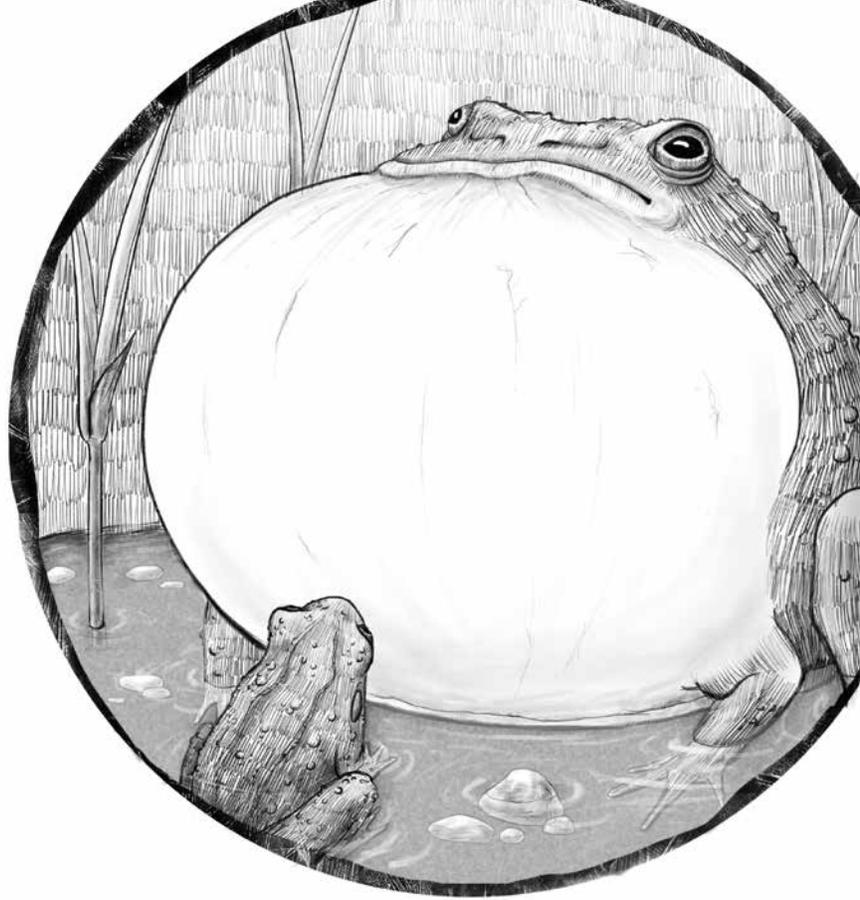
- finding synonyms for nouns and adjectives
- summarizing a fable
- amplifying a fable
- writing a fable
- proper elocution

Lesson 3

Fable Refresher

Chances are that you already know about fables. They are one of the simplest forms of story, and the entire first book of the Writing & Rhetoric series is dedicated to them. Let's take a minute to review what you may have learned about fables in previous lessons.

For many hundreds of years, narratives have been used to teach valuable lessons to children. One type of narrative, fables, is one of the most enjoyable ways to learn to be a little wiser. It's much easier to hear a story about a foolish animal than to receive a lecture about not acting a fool yourself, isn't it? At the end of a fable, a moral lesson usually sums up the story. Here is a fable by the greatest of fable tellers, Aesop of ancient Greece.



The Frog and the Ox

—*Aesop's Fables* (based on Joseph Jacobs's 1894 retelling)

“Oh, Father,” said a little Frog to the big one sitting by the side of a pool, “I have seen such a terrible monster! It was as big as a mountain, with horns on its head, and a long tail, and it had hoofs divided in two.”

“Tush, tush, tush,” said the old Frog, “that was only the Farmer’s Ox. It isn’t so big either. He may be a little bit taller than I, but I could easily make myself as broad. Just you see!” So he blew himself out, and blew himself out, and blew himself out.

“Was he as big as that?” asked the old Frog.

“Oh, much bigger than that,” said the young Frog.

Again the old one blew himself out, and asked the young one if the Ox was as big as that.

“Bigger, Father, bigger,” was the reply.

So the Frog took a deep breath, and blew and blew and blew, and swelled and swelled and swelled. And then he said: “I’m sure the Ox is not as big as—” But at that moment the **conceited** old Frog burst.

MORAL: *Self-conceit may lead to self-destruction.*

Tell It Back—Narration

Without looking at the parable, tell back *The Frog and the Ox* as best as you can remember it using your own words and any words from the story. For further practice, you can record your telling back and play it afterward. Try to keep the events of the story in their proper order. Here is the first sentence to get you started: “‘Oh, father,’ said a little Frog to the big one sitting by the side of a pool, ‘I have seen such a terrible monster!’”

Talk About It—

TE

1. The word “boast” comes from a German word meaning “to blow up, to puff up, to swell.” Some typical boasting remarks are, “I can do that with my eyes closed,” or “I can do that with one arm tied behind my back.” Why do you suppose some people boast? What does the boaster hope to accomplish?

TE

2. What is another word for boasting?

TE

3. Julius Caesar fought a short war with the kingdom of Pontus in 47 BC. He arrived outside the town of Zela and was attacked by a huge army. Without budging, Julius Caesar’s Roman forces swiftly defeated their enemies. The battle was such an easy victory that Caesar boasted in Latin, “*Veni, vidi, vici,*” which means “I came, I saw, I conquered.” Why do you think Caesar said this? How is Caesar’s boast different than the Frog’s boast, “I could easily make myself just as broad as the Ox”?

TE

4. A proverb from the Hebrew Scriptures says, “Let someone else praise you, and not your own mouth; an outsider, and not your own lips” (Proverbs 27:2). Is this wise advice? Why or why not?





5. Look up the word “conceited” in a dictionary. Write the definition in the space below and then use “conceited” in your own complete sentence. Make sure that your sentence hints at the meaning of the word. In other words, another person should be able to guess at what “conceited” means because of your sentence.

Definition: To be conceited is to think too highly of oneself.

Sentence: The conceited movie star _____

Sample sentence: The conceited movie star blew kisses to her fans and then rolled her eyes.

A complete sentence will have a subject and a verb, and it will express a complete thought. Always start with a capital letter. Always finish with an end mark such as a period or question mark.

6. Look up the word “conceited” in a thesaurus. Write down other words that are **synonyms** of “conceited.” A synonym is a word that has nearly the same meaning.

Sample answers: big-headed, egotistical, cocky, snotty

7. Use a synonym of “conceited” to rewrite the sentence you wrote in #5 above.

Sample sentence: The big-headed movie star blew kisses to her fans and then rolled her eyes.

Writing Time—

1. **DICTATION**—Your teacher will read a little part of *The Frog and the Ox* back to you. Please listen carefully! After your teacher reads once, she will read slowly again and include the punctuation marks. Your task will be to write down the sentences as your teacher reads them one by one.

— Modify according to student level. Note that dictations are not spelling tests. Difficult words can be spelled on the board prior to dictation.

—  He may be a little bit taller than I, but I could easily make myself as broad. Just you see!

2. **SENTENCE PLAY**—

- A. So the Frog took a deep breath, and blew and blew and blew, and swelled and swelled and swelled. What if the Frog didn't take a deep breath but instead shot out his tongue? The sentence might now read, So the Frog shot out his tongue, and licked and licked and licked, and grinned and grinned and grinned. Follow the same pattern in the following sentences by repeating **verbs**—the action words.

- i. What might happen if the Frog took a big jump?

The Frog took a big jump and _____

— Sample sentence: The Frog took a big jump and flipped and flipped and flipped, and crashed and crashed and crashed.

- ii. What if the Frog started to sing?

The Frog started to sing and _____

— Sample sentence: The Frog started to sing and chirped and chirped and chirped, and croaked and croaked and croaked.

B. He may be a little bit taller than I, but I could easily make myself as broad.

What a silly boast for a frog to make about an ox! Now it's your turn to write an equally conceited boast.

i. Using the underlined sentence as a model, write a boast for a snail about a racehorse.

Sample sentence: She may be a little bit taller than I, but I could easily outrun her.

"She may be a little bit _____ than I, but I could easily _____."

ii. Using the underlined sentence as a model, write a boast for a beggar about a king.

Sample sentence: He may be a little bit better dressed than I, but I could easily buy a crown as nice as his.

"He may be a little bit _____ than I, but I could easily _____."

iii. Using the underlined sentence as a model, write your own boast for a mouse about a cat.

_____ Sample sentence: She may be a little bit sharper in the teeth than I, but I could easily wrestle her to the ground.

3. **COPIOUSNESS**—If you worked with the first books in the Writing & Rhetoric series (*Fable* and *Narrative I*), you are familiar with copious writing. Practicing copiousness means that you are going to find lots of ways to say the same thing. In the Writing and Rhetoric series, copiousness comes in the writing section of each lesson. ^A



^A *Copia* is Latin for "abundance" or "copiousness." It is a stretching exercise for students of rhetoric, a method whereby students reach for new words to express variations of the same idea. The Dutch scholar Erasmus used copiousness as a method for training students in rhetoric during the sixteenth century. His book *De Utraque Verborum ac Rerum Copia* is famous for finding hundreds of variations for the statement, "Your letter pleased me greatly." Examples of these variations include: "Your epistle greatly raised my spirits," "Your missive filled me with much delight," and "What a joy it was to receive your letter." Erasmus's goal was to help his students grow in eloquence and in flexibility as they reworked sentences with the full array of words at their disposal.



Whether you know it or not, you speak copiously all the time. Take the typical kid who has ice cream on the brain. She may say, “Wow, it’s hot. What about ice cream?” “I’m boiling. Ice cream sure sounds amazing.” “I feel like I’m stuck in a furnace. I need ice cream.” “I’m a puddle of sweat. I’ll perish without ice cream.” And so on. Copiousness comes naturally, especially when you want something really, really badly.

To begin this practice, you’re going to work on changing the nouns and adjectives in a sentence.

A **noun** is a person, place, thing, or idea. An **adjective** adds description to a noun and helps us to “see” it more clearly. For example, when you sell cold lemonade, “lemonade” is a noun because it is a thing. The word “cold” is an adjective because it describes the lemonade. Here’s another example: When you visit your “sweet, old grandmother,” “grandmother” is a noun because it is a person. What are the adjectives that describe grandmother? There are two. sweet and old

A. Mark the nouns and adjectives in the following sentence. Place an *N* over the nouns and an *ADJ* over the adjectives. There are four nouns and three adjectives.

N ADJ N ADJ N ADJ N

“Oh, Father,” said a little Frog to the big Frog, “I have seen such a terrible monster!”

B. In the sentence you labeled, replace the adjectives with synonyms, or adjectives that have close to the same meaning. Do not repeat any words. Use a thesaurus only if you get stuck.

i. “Oh, Father,” said a _____ Frog to the _____ Frog, “I have seen such a _____ monster!”

Sample synonyms for “little”: small, short, tiny, itsy-bitsy, mini, teeny, wee, puny, or (as implied by the story) younger or child (as in child frog)

ii. "Oh, Father," said a _____ Frog to the _____ Frog, "I have seen such a _____ monster!"

Sample synonyms for "big": large, fat, huge, gross, enormous, or (as implied by the story) older or adult

iii. "Oh, Father," said a _____ Frog to the _____ Frog, "I have seen such a _____ monster!"

Sample synonyms for "terrible": awful, horrendous, fearful, frightening, shocking, dreadful

C. Next replace the nouns "father" and "monster" with synonyms, or nouns that have close to the same meaning. Do not repeat any words. Use a thesaurus only if you get stuck.

Sample synonyms for father: papa, dad, daddy, pa, pop

i. "Oh, _____," said a little Frog to the big Frog, "I have seen such a terrible _____!"

Sample synonyms for monster: beast, brute, creature, giant, freak

ii. "Oh, _____," said a little Frog to the big Frog, "I have seen such a terrible _____!"

Now replace both the adjectives and nouns (except for "Frog") with any adjectives or nouns you'd like. They do not have to be synonyms. Do not repeat any words that you have already used.

iii. "Oh, _____," said a _____ Frog
(N) (ADJ)
to the _____ Frog, "I have seen such a
(ADJ)
_____!"
(ADJ) (N)

Sample sentence: "Oh, Cousin, said a green Frog to the red Frog, I have seen such a crazy dragonfly!"

iv. “Oh, _____,” said a _____ Frog
(N) (ADJ)
to the _____ Frog, “I have seen such a
(ADJ)
_____!”
(ADJ) (N)

D. Can you think of a noun to replace the word “frog” that has nearly the same meaning? Hint: You can be creative and use a word that describes a frog, such as “jumper.”

A synonym for “frog” is _____.

Sample synonyms: croaker, amphibian, hopper

4. **SUMMARY**—When you summarize a story, you want to keep only the most important ideas. The rest of the writing can be done away with.

A. Read *The Frog and the Ox* again. Decide which event in the story is the most important for communicating the moral. This event is the action in the story that accompanies the main idea. In most fables, the moral of the story is the main idea but it appears first as part of the action of the story. Once you have decided what the main idea of the story is, circle or highlight it.

B. Underline any words that are essential to telling the story. Use these words to tell the story briefly in your summary.

C. Cross out any words or sentences that are extra details. These details might make the fable more fun to read, but they aren’t necessary for readers to understand the main idea.

D. Summarize the fable in four sentences or less. You should feel free to rearrange words or add words as needed.

The Frog and the Ox

—Aesop's Fables



“Oh, Father,” said a little Frog to the big one sitting by the side of a pool, “I have seen such a terrible monster! It was as big as a mountain, with horns on its head, and a long tail, and it had hoofs divided in two.”

“Tush, tush, tush,” said the old Frog, “that was only the Farmer’s Ox. It isn’t so big either. He may be a little bit taller than I, but I could easily make myself as broad. Just you see!” So he blew himself out, and blew himself out, and blew himself out. “Was he as big as that?” asked the old Frog.

“Oh, much bigger than that,” said the young Frog.

Again the old one blew himself out, and asked the young one if the Ox was as big as that.

“Bigger, Father, bigger,” was the reply.

So the Frog took a deep breath, and blew and blew and blew, and swelled and swelled and swelled. And then he said: “I’m sure the Ox is not as big as — But at that moment the conceited old Frog burst.”

MORAL: *Self-conceit may lead to self-destruction.*

Summary:

Sample summary: A little Frog said to his father that he had seen a terrible monster. The big Frog said that the monster was only the Farmer’s Ox and bragged that he could make himself just as broad. So the big Frog took a deep breath and blew and swelled till he burst.

5. **AMPLIFICATION**—Take your summary of *The Frog and the Ox* and make it longer.

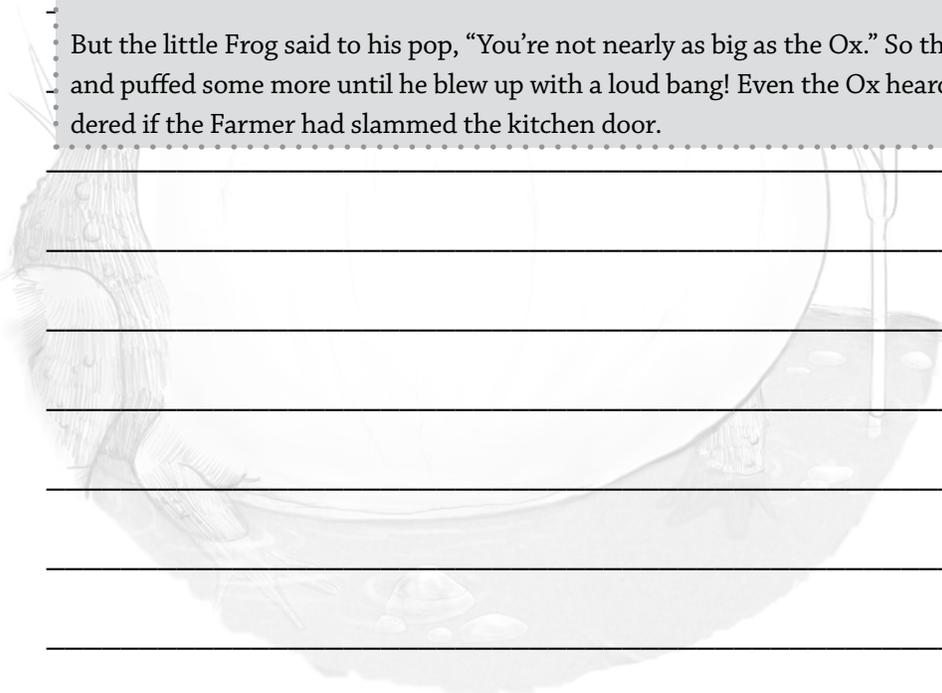
- You can add description and details. What do the frogs look like? What sort of pool are the frogs sitting beside? What are some new ways in which the little Frog can describe the monstrous Ox? What does the old Frog look like as he is blowing himself up?
- You can add talking, which is called **dialogue**. Amplify the old Frog’s boast, making it longer and even more conceited. What does the little Frog say as he sees his father swelling bigger and bigger? Does the Ox make any comment as he watches the old Frog blow up?
- You can expand the moral lesson by telling why “self-conceit may lead to self-destruction” and why it is important not to boast.

Sample amplification:

A little green Frog said to his big bullfrog father that he had seen a terrible monster. “It was as big as a house, and its thick skin was covered with long, shaggy hair. It almost crushed me as I was sitting in a puddle by the side of the road.”

Now the big Frog liked to show off for his son and he was a bit of a braggart as well. He laughed at the little Frog and said, “That monster is only the Farmer’s Ox. And it’s not as big as you think. Why, I can make myself just as big any day I choose. In fact, I can make myself even bigger than that runty creature.” To prove his point, the big Frog started huffing and puffing, and he huffed and puffed till he looked like a green helium balloon.

But the little Frog said to his pop, “You’re not nearly as big as the Ox.” So the big Frog huffed and puffed some more until he blew up with a loud bang! Even the Ox heard the noise and wondered if the Farmer had slammed the kitchen door.



Stories will vary.

Sample fable:

Once there was a big mother hen and her little chick. The mother tried hard to teach her chick to be safe and protect himself. She knew the times when the eagle fed—usually in early morning and at dusk—and she told her chick to stay in the coop during those two hours of the day so that he couldn't be spied by the hungry eagle. The chick usually followed his mother's advice, but after proving himself strong in a contest among the other chicks, he boasted to his friends, "I have grown strong and smart and am not afraid of the eagle that feeds in the morning and at dusk. Today I will search for worms in the early morning." The other chicks were terrified and begged their friend not to do it. But the chick believed himself strong enough and watchful enough. In the early morning he left the coop to look for the juicy worm he could already taste. While he searched he did not notice the huge shadow of the eagle that flew across the sky just behind him. The chick's friends watching from the coop screeched at the top of their lungs, causing their friend to look up and see the shadow just as he came to a bush. He raced under the bush and escaped the eagle. If it hadn't been for his friends, he would have been eaten. MORAL: Self-conceit may lead to self-destruction.



Speak It —

The following are two narrative poems about pride and conceit. Your teacher may ask you to memorize a stanza or a whole poem. Notice how the first poem is nearly the same as our fable *The Frog and the Ox*.

The Frogs and the Bull

—from *Aesop, in Rhyme* by Marmaduke Park

A Bull once treading near a bog,
Displaced the **entrails** of a frog,
Who near his foot did trust them;
In fact, so great was the **contusion**,
And made of his inwards such confusion,
No art could re-adjust them.

It chanced that some who saw his fate,
Did to a friend the deed relate,
With croakings, groans, and hisses;
“The beast,” said they, “in size excell’d
All other beasts.” Their neighbor swell’d,
And ask’d, “as large as this is!”

“Oh, larger far than that,” said they,
“Do not attempt it, madam, pray;”
But still the frog distended,
And said, “I’ll burst, but I’ll exceed,”
She tried, and burst herself indeed!
And so the matter ended.

MORAL:

*Should you with pride inflate and swell,
As did the frog: then who can tell!
Your sides may crack, as has been shown,
And we with laughing crack our own.*



This next poem was written by Heinrich Hoffmann, a psychiatrist and very popular writer of moral poems for children. “Phoebe Ann” first appeared in the book *Slovenly Betsy*. Instead of popping like a balloon, Phoebe experiences something equally shocking.

Phoebe Ann, the Proud Girl

—from *Slovenly Betsy* by Heinrich Hoffmann



This Phoebe Ann was a very proud girl,
Her nose had always an upward curl.
She thought herself better than all others beside,
And beat even the peacock himself in pride.

She thought the earth was so dirty and brown,
That never, by chance, would she look down;
And she held up her head in the air so high
That her neck began stretching by and by.
It stretched and it stretched; and it grew so long
That her parents thought something must be wrong
It stretched and stretched, and they soon began
To look up with fear at their Phoebe Ann.

They prayed her to stop her upward gaze,
But Phoebe kept on in her old proud ways,
Until her neck had grown so long and spare
That her head was more than her neck could bear—
And it bent to the ground, like a willow tree,
And brought down the head of this proud Phoebe,
Until whenever she went out a walk to take,
The boys would shout, “Here comes a snake!”



Her head got to be so heavy to drag on,
That she had to put it on a little wagon.
So don't, my friends, hold your head too high,
Or your neck may stretch, too, by and by.