**Lesson 29 Teacher's Guide**

**Brer Rabbit at the Well**

by Sharon Richards

Fountas-Pinnell Level I

Folktale

Selection Summary

The animals in a village are planting a garden. It is hard work, so Brer Rabbit pretends to have a thorn in his paw. When Brer Wolf sends him to the well to wash, Brer Rabbit jumps in a bucket and drops to the bottom of the well to take a nap. When Brer Fox finds him there, Rabbit claims he is fishing.

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### Characteristics of the Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Folktale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Text Structure</td>
<td>Third-person narrative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Plot organized chronologically</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Laziness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trickery with traditional folktale character</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Animals behaving like humans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes and Ideas</td>
<td>Some animals (and people) do not do their share of the work.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tricksters always seem to win in the end.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You can get into trouble by not minding your own business.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language and Literary Features</td>
<td>Straightforward, direct language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Humor</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Sentence Complexity | A mix of simple sentences (some with prepositional phrases) and compound sentences:

*Brer Rabbit jumped into the empty bucket for a nap, but he was heavier than the bucket of water.*

| | Exclamations |
| Vocabulary | Concept words, such as *empty, bottom, heavier, aside;* vivid verbs, such as *leaned, startled, tossed* |
| Words | Mostly one- and two-syllable words, except for *heavier, animals* |
| Illustrations | Lively watercolor illustrations show animals' personalities and support the text. |
| Book and Print Features | Nine pages of text; illustrations on every page |
| | Four to eight lines of text per page |
| | Word labels highlight key vocabulary in many illustrations |

**Brer Rabbit at the Well** by Sharon Richards

**Build Background**
Help children use their knowledge of animal stories and trickster tales to build interest in the story. Ask a question such as the following: *What stories have you read or heard in which one animal tricks another?* Read the title and author and talk about the cover illustration. Tell children that this story is a folktale, a kind of story that is passed from generation to generation over many, many years.

**Introduce the Text**
Guide children through the text, noting important ideas and helping with unfamiliar language and vocabulary so that they can read the text successfully. Here are some suggestions:

- **Page 2:** Explain that this is a story about Brer Rabbit and some other animals who live near each other. One of the animals is going to play a trick on the other.  
  **Suggested language:** *Turn to page 2 of this book. Read the sentence: The animals in the village decided to plant a garden, so they got some tools and seeds. Look at the picture. What kind of place is a village?*

- **Page 3:** Draw attention to the label, hoe, and to the picture of the hoe. Tell children that a hoe is a garden tool, and explain its purpose. Read the sentence: *Brer Rabbit leaned on his hoe. Why do you think Brer Rabbit stopped working and leaned on his hoe? How do you think he was feeling? What clues can you find in the picture?*

- **Page 4:** Read the sentence: *Brer Rabbit tossed his hoe aside. Did Brer Rabbit throw his hoe down hard, like he was angry? Or did he let it fall gently to the ground?*

- **Page 5:** Point out the cutaway picture of the well and explain how a well works to children.  
  **Suggested language:** *Now turn back to the beginning of the story and read to find out what happens to Brer Rabbit and his animal friends.*

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**Target Vocabulary**
- **contained** – held or kept inside of something
- **grateful** – pleased and thankful
- **leaned** – bent your body in a certain direction, p. 3
- **odd** – strange or unusual
- **search** – to look carefully for something
- **startled** – shocked or surprised by something that happens suddenly, p. 10
- **tossed** – threw something lightly, p. 4
- **village** – a group of houses and buildings in a country area, p. 2
Read
As the children read, observe them carefully. Guide them as needed, using language that supports their problem solving ability.

Remind children to use the Summarize Strategy and to stop to tell important events as they read.

Discuss and Revisit the Text

Personal Response
Invite children to share their personal responses to the story.
Suggested language: What part of the story was the funniest? What part was most surprising?

Ways of Thinking
As you discuss the text, help children understand these points:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking Within the Text</th>
<th>Thinking Beyond the Text</th>
<th>Thinking About the Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The animals are planting a garden, and Brer Rabbit pretends to have a thorn in his paw to get out of helping.</td>
<td>• Some people are lazy and will do anything to get out of doing work.</td>
<td>• The story is a folktale, with animals that have human characteristics and behave like humans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• He goes to the well to take a nap, and drops to the bottom in a bucket.</td>
<td>• Tricksters can sometimes get themselves into trouble.</td>
<td>• The story is funny, because first Brer Rabbit gets stuck in the well, and then Brer Fox gets stuck in the well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• He tricks Brer Fox into thinking he is fishing, and Brer Fox jumps in the other bucket.</td>
<td>• If you don’t mind your own business, or you get tricked, you can get into trouble, too.</td>
<td>• The ending is a surprise, because Brer Rabbit does not get caught or punished for playing tricks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Brer Rabbit runs home, leaving Brer Fox stuck in the well.</td>
<td>• Playing a trick can have humorous consequences.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Choices for Further Support

• **Fluency** Invite children to choose a passage from the text to act out or use for Reader’s Theater. Remind them to use good expression, and to say the dialogue as if the characters are really speaking.

• **Comprehension** Based on your observations of the children’s reading and discussion, revisit parts of the text to clarify or extend comprehension. Remind children to go back to the text to support their ideas.

• **Phonics/Word Work** Provide practice as needed with words and word parts, using examples from the text. Point out words with double vowel patterns, such as tools and seeds (page 2), and looked (page 8). Have children take apart and read the words.
Writing about Reading

Critical Thinking
Have children complete the Critical Thinking questions on BLM 29.7.

Responding
Have children complete the activities at the back of the book. Use the instruction below as needed to reinforce or extend understanding of the comprehension skill.

Target Comprehension Skill

Understanding Characters
Remind children that they can understand story characters by thinking about the character’s actions and what they mean. Model the skill, using a “Think Aloud” like the one below:

Think Aloud
When the character of Brer Rabbit said he was fishing, Brer Fox believed him. Brer Fox wanted to fish, too, so he took action and jumped into the bucket and went to the bottom of the well. I think this means Brer Fox isn’t very smart!

Practice the Skill
Have children share another example of a character’s action in the story and what it means. Have children tell how noticing what the character did helped them to understand the character.

Writing Prompt: Thinking About the Text
Have children write a response to the prompt on page 6. Remind them that when they think about the text, they reflect back on the text. They notice what the author did, and why it is special or unusual.

Assessment Prompts
• What will Brer Fox probably do when he gets out of the well?
• What does the word startled mean in this sentence?
  The farmer pulled up the bucket and was startled by what he saw.
English Language Development

Reading Support In Introduce the Text (page 2), use pictures (village, bucket, hoe) and demonstrations (leaned, tossed, startled) that will help children understand the concepts and ideas in the text. Do not ask children to read any text they will not understand.

Vocabulary Explain the meaning of the word thorn and show pictures or photographs of plants with thorns.

Oral Language Development

Check children’s comprehension, using a dialogue that best matches their English proficiency level. Speaker 1 is the teacher, Speaker 2 is the child.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning/Early Intermediate</th>
<th>Intermediate</th>
<th>Early Advanced/ Advanced</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 1: What are the animals doing?</td>
<td>Speaker 1: What does Brer Rabbit want to do?</td>
<td>Speaker 1: Why do Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox go to the well?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 2: planting a garden</td>
<td>Speaker 2: He wants to take a nap.</td>
<td>Speaker 2: Brer Rabbit goes to the well because he wants to stop working and take a nap. Brer Fox goes to the well because he wants to see if Brer Rabbit really has a cut.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 1: Who stops working?</td>
<td>Speaker 1: Why does Brer Fox jump into the bucket?</td>
<td>Speaker 2: Brer Rabbit pretends to have a thorn in his paw.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 2: Brer Rabbit</td>
<td>Speaker 2: He wants to go fishing.</td>
<td>Possible response: Brer Rabbit talks and tricks others, which real rabbits do not do.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 1: Where does Brer Rabbit go?</td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Brer Rabbit pretends to have a thorn in his paw. What does this tell you about him?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker 2: to the well</td>
<td></td>
<td>Possible response: He is not afraid to tell lies to avoid work, and he is lazy.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Responding

Understanding

Characters What did you learn about Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox in the story? Copy and complete the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>What It Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brer Rabbit</td>
<td>He says there’s a thorn in his paw</td>
<td>He can trick others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brer Fox</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write About It What other stories have you read about characters who play tricks? Write a few sentences that tell how you feel about one of those characters. Give examples to support your ideas.
Brer Rabbit at the Well

Thinking About the Text
Think about the questions below. Then write your answer in one or two paragraphs.

Look at the picture on page 10. Even though Brer Rabbit tricked Brer Fox, the two animals are laughing together. Why do you think the author decided to show this picture at the end of the story?

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Think About It

Read and answer the questions.

1. Why does Brer Fox jump into the bucket?

2. How do you know that Brer Rabbit is not a real rabbit?

3. Brer Rabbit pretends to have a thorn in his paw. What does this tell you about him?

Making Connections  At the beginning of this story, a group of animals work together to build a garden. Does this remind you of other stories you have read? Explain.

Write your answer in your Reader’s Notebook.
Brer Rabbit at the Well • LEVEL I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>page</th>
<th>Selection Text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 2    | Brer Rabbit tossed his hoe aside.  
      | He went to the well to take a nap! 
      | “Let the other animals work,”  
      | thought Brer Rabbit. |
| 3    | Brer Rabbit saw two buckets  
      | hanging inside the well.  
      | An empty bucket was at the top.  
      | A bucket full of water was  
      | at the bottom. |
| 4    | Brer Rabbit jumped into the empty  
      | bucket for a nap, but he was heavier  
      | than the bucket of water. |

Comments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accuracy Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(# words read correctly/67 × 100) %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Correction Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(# errors + # Self-Corrections/ Self-Corrections)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Behavior | Code | Error |
---|---|---|
Read word correctly | ![cat] | 0 |
Repeated word, sentence, or phrase | ![cat] | 0 |
Omission | ![cat] | 1 |