

Level  
2

# Penguin Young Readers Factsheets

## Aesop's Fables

## Teacher's Notes

### Summary of the stories

*Aesop's Fables* are ancient moral parables with a lightness of touch and a sense of fun which has always made them especially appealing to children. The Penguin Young Readers *Aesop's Fables* includes two stories: 'The Fox and the Crow' and 'The Monkey and the Dolphin'. In the first story, the crow learns a valuable lesson about vanity when the cunning fox tricks him with flattery into dropping his food. In the second story, when the monkey tells lies the dolphin stops carrying him to safety.



### Background to the stories

The fables originate with Aesop (c.620-560 BC), a Greek writer believed to have been a freed slave. He wrote numerous moralistic beast fables and these were largely transmitted orally for many years. *Aesop's Fables* were rewritten in verse in the first or the second century AD and the prose versions we find today are reworkings of these verses. They continue to be widely read and enjoyed to this day.

### About the author

Cherry Gilchrist is a lecturer and a contemporary writer for children. Previously she has worked as an astrologer, an art dealer, and a singer. She has written several books for children, among them are *Sun-Day, Moon-Day: How the Week was Made* (1998), *Stories from the Silk Road* (1999), and *A Calendar of Festivals* (2000) which traces festivals and celebrations back to their ancient origins.

### Topics and themes

**Animals.** The animal theme of *Aesop's Fables* provides an ideal way to practice animal vocabulary. Why not try brainstorming animal vocabulary and then encourage the pupils to categorize the animals into different habitats (the farm, the countryside, the jungle, the forest, the sea).

**Food.** The crow in 'The Fox and the Crow' is eating a piece of cheese. Ask the pupils to think of their favourite animals and make a list of the food they eat. They could divide the animals into those that eat meat and those that do not.

**Nature.** It is autumn in the first story. Perhaps the pupils could draw a picture of the crow in the tree in each different season. Animals need trees to sit on, build nests and for shelter from the sun. Do trees

need birds? (Yes, they carry seeds sometimes or eat insects which can hurt the tree). What are the changes around the sea in the seasons (when cold, less seaweed, baby fish in spring etc).

**Travel.** The monkey is travelling to Greece on a boat in the second story. The picture on page 8 gives plenty of details of the use of boats, which could be an introduction into the story.

**World/environment.** The first story is set in the forest and the second takes place at sea. Which other kinds of environment are there? (There are mountains, plains, rivers, jungles). Can the pupils find animals for the different places. How important are forests and seas to animals?

### Making use of the Reader

**Animal noises (warm up).** Ask the pupils to think of an animal which they do not know the name of in English. They take turns to come to the front of the class and make the noise of that animal. The other pupils guess the name of the animal. Write the vocabulary on the board as the words are found. The process can then be repeated in reverse. Point to the vocabulary on the board and encourage

the pupils to make the appropriate animal sounds. This is a fun (and noisy!) exercise and an ideal way to fix vocabulary in the memory and to check comprehension.

**Story shuffle.** You will need: a copy of the stories typed out and split into sections. The 'Fox and the Crow' can be split into 5 sections and 'The Monkey



and the Dolphin' into 6 sections (see photocopiable activity 1 for help with this). Distribute the story pieces around the class. Explain to the pupils that they must now mingle in order to find the others with the same story. Once in their groups they must stand in line according to what they think is the right order of the sentences. When everyone is ready, or after a time limit, each member of a group reads out their sentences in order.

**Chinese Whispers.** Take a sentence from one of the stories in *Aesop's Fables*, for example, 'A crow sat in a tree' or 'Everybody fell out of the boat.' Arrange all the pupils in a sitting circle on the floor if possible, or on chairs. The first pupil whispers his or her sentence to his or her partner and it is then whispered to the next pupil and so on. The last pupil to hear the sentence says it out aloud to everybody. Try and write on the board what you hear, while the

pupils look in their books for the sentence. If you have the cassette, listen to how it is really spoken and practise saying it. You could divide the class into foxes and dolphins, with a sentence each, for example, 'The fox was hungry.' 'The monkey fell into the sea.'

**Lying monkeys.** First check that the pupils have understood the story 'The Monkey and the Dolphin' and that they understand the meaning of 'liar' and 'lies'. Then divide the pupils into at least three groups. Each pupil then writes two sentences about themselves: one is true but the other is a lie. Each group takes a turn at coming to the front of the class to tell the lies and the truths of their group. The other groups must guess which sentences are true and which are not and write their answers down. At the end of the game the results are taken in and the group with the most correct answers is the winner.

### Using the accompanying audio cassette

**During listening 1.** Divide the class into foxes, crows, monkeys and dolphins. When they hear their name, they stand up and sit down again quickly. Pupils can mime the story as they listen. Page 2, they look up. Page 4 open their mouth to sing, page 6 they 'eat' the cheese. Page 9, sway as on a

boat in a rough sea, page 11, climb on the dolphin's back, page 14, fall with a splash.

**2.** Combine the listening exercise with photocopiable activity number 1 and ask the students to number the pictures in the order of the story as they listen to the cassette.

### Notes on the activities in the Factsheet

- 1 Pupils put the pictures in the order of the story by writing a number 1-5 in each box. They may need to look at the book to help them. Pupils draw pictures in the second set of boxes to make the story 'The Monkey and the Dolphin'.
- 2 Pupils put a cross next to each word that does not appear in the stories. One example has been done for them.
- 3 This activity helps pupils with vocabulary.
- 4 Pupils look at the pictures then complete the sentence with the animal's name.

### Answers to the activities

#### In the back of the Reader

##### Before you read

- 1 a) A fox and crow  
b) two.

##### After you read

3. 1. monkey 2. dolphin 3. crow 4. fox  
4. b) no, c) no, d) yes, e) no.

##### In the Factsheet

Activity 1. b, d, a, e, c.

Activity 2. swim, giraffe, zoo, autumn, queen, train, plane, ugly.

Activity 3. Fox crow beak monkey cheese king dolphin boat sailor bird storm fable liar goodbye tree noise dinner.

Activity 4

- a. It's a monkey's tail.
- b. It's a fox's tail
- c. It's a dolphin's tail.
- d. it's a crow's tail.

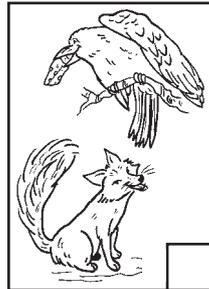
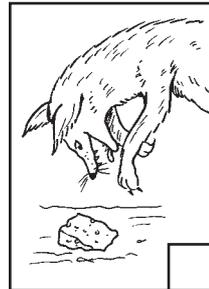


# Aesop's Fables

Name.....

## Activity 1

1. Put a number in each square to make the story 'The Fox and the Crow'.

a	b	c	d	e
				

2. Draw a picture in each square to make the story 'The Monkey and the Dolphin'.

- a. The monkey and the sailor are in the boat      b. The monkey is on the dolphin's back      c. The monkey falls into the sea

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## Activity 2

Which words are *not* in Aesop's Fables?

- clever    monkey    swim    ✗ giraffe    crow    dolphin
- liar    cheese    zoo    autumn    sing    king
- queen    sailor    ship    aeroplane    handsome    ugly



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# Aesop's Fables

Name.....

## Activity 3

How many words can you find?

foxcrowbeakmonkeycheeseekingdolphinboatsailor  
birdstormfableliargoodbyetreenoisedinner

## Activity 4

Which animal?

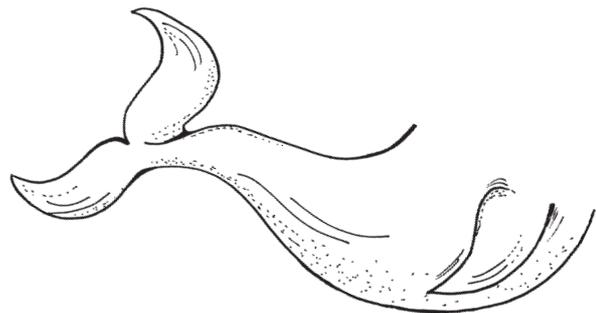
a) It's a *monkey's* tail.



b) It's a \_\_\_\_\_ tail



c) It's a \_\_\_\_\_ tail.



d) It's a \_\_\_\_\_ tail.

