

Spider®

THEME

Readers can relate to characters from stories in many ways, and different types of stories can teach us distinct lessons. Explore the characters and genres of stories through the articles in this issue of Spider Magazine.

CONVERSATION QUESTION

How do we know how a character is feeling?

TEACHING OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a tall tale.
- Students will recognize the genre, key elements, and characteristics of literary texts.
- Students will write a tall tale.
- Students will read and analyze a folktale.
- Students will obtain, evaluate, and communicate information.
- Students will conduct research and create a booklet on the information they discovered.
- Students will read and analyze realistic fiction.
- Student will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Students will recognize the importance of self-confidence in handling daily tasks and challenges.



In addition to supplemental materials focused on core English Language Arts skills, this flexible teaching tool offers vocabulary-building activities, questions for discussion, and cross-curricular activities.

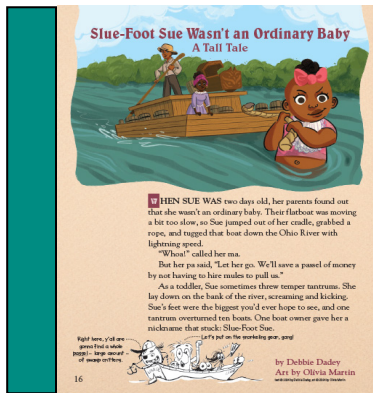
SELECTIONS

- **Slue-foot Sue Wasn't an Ordinary Baby**
Tall Tale
- **Why the Whale Lives in the Sea**
Folktale
- **Ava the Big**
Realistic Fiction

Slue-foot Sue Wasn't an Ordinary Baby

pp. 16–19, Tall Tale

Use this story about an extraordinary baby that beats a giant snake in a multi-game contest to teach students about tall tales.



RESOURCES

- Tall Tale organizer

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a tall tale.
- Students will recognize the genre, key elements, and characteristics of literary texts.
- Students will write a tall tale.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **passel** (p. 16) a large number or group of people or things
- **fussing** (p. 17) showing that you are annoyed or unhappy
- **churned** (p. 18) stirred or mixed something with force
- **port** (p. 19) a town or city where ships stop to load and unload cargo

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do we know how a character is feeling?

Ask the students what they know about tall tales. Draw a K-W-L chart on the board. Write this information in the K column. Ask students what they want to know about tall tales and write this information in the W column. Leave the L column blank until after you have finished reading and completing the activity. Tell students to think about the characters as you read the story and see if they can figure out how they are feeling.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud, along with the definitions. Discuss the definitions with students and use examples to reinforce meanings. Once done, ask for volunteers to go to the board. Give this student one of the vocabulary words, in secret. He or she will draw an example of the word as the other students make guesses based on the picture. The artist will continue adding to the picture until someone guesses the word. The student that guesses correctly is the next artist. Continue the same sequence with the other words.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. Why is "Slue-foot Sue Wasn't an Ordinary Baby" a good name for this story?
2. How did she get her nickname, Slue-foot Sue?
3. What makes this story a tall tale?
4. What do you think Wiley Water Moccasin represents?
5. What happens because of their swimming race?
6. Who won the "swimming, wrestling, and spitting contest"?
7. Why did Slue-foot Sue invite Wiley to the party?

SKILL FOCUS: Identify Genre

INSTRUCT: Remind students of the elements of a tall tale: larger-than-life main character, problem solved in a funny way, exaggerated details, told from someone's imagination, and filled with descriptive language. Tall tales are told as if they were true, even though the reader knows that the story could never happen. Reference the K-W-L chart you started. Discuss the elements of a tall tale and have students give examples of what they have learned about tall tales. Add these to the L column of the chart. Distribute the *Tall Tale* organizer. Have students work in pairs to complete it. Students will complete the organizer with elements from the tall tale, "Slue-foot Sue Wasn't an Ordinary Baby."

ASSESS: Observe and collect when finished with the extended activity.

EXTEND

ELA: Distribute another copy of the *Tall Tale* organizer to students. Instruct students to complete the organizer with elements of their own tall tale. After students complete the organizer have them use the information to write a story of their own.

Tall Tale: Fill in the elements of a tall tale.

Character Name

What does your character look like?

Setting of your tall tale

Character Traits Exaggeration

Problem

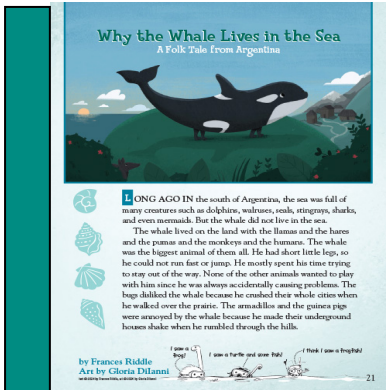
Solution

Spider® Teacher Guide: April 2024

Why the Whale Lives in the Sea

pp. 21–25, Folktale

This story is a folktale about how whales used to live on land, walking among humans and other animals, then came to live in the sea. Use this example to help students understand what a folktale is.



RESOURCES

- Analyze Folktales

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze a folktale.
- Students will obtain, evaluate, and communicate information.
- Students will conduct research and create a booklet on the information they found.

KEY VOCABULARY

- rumbled** (p. 21) moved along with a low, heavy, continuous sound
- figured** (p. 23) expected or thought something
- blowhole** (p. 23) a hole on the top of a whale or other animal's head, used for breathing
- twitched** (p. 24) made a slight, sudden movement that is not controlled or deliberate

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do we know how a character is feeling?

Explain to the students that many years ago during ancient times, stories were used to explain why the things we experience happen. Stories were told to explain the weather, sickness, and many other events that happened in the lives of those who lived during those times. Pair students together or have them work in small groups to come up with a creative answer to the question, “Why do birds fly?” Have students share their responses. Then, explain that the folktale they will read explains why whales live in the sea and no longer walk on land.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud, along with the definitions. Divide the class into groups of four. Distribute four notecards to each group. Have students write each vocabulary word on each of the four notecards. Tape a word to each student's back without them seeing the word. Have all students “mingle” with each other. They can ask yes/no questions to each other to figure out what their word is. If a student thinks they know what the word is, they go to the teacher, say their word, and use the word in a correct sentence.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

- Why did the whale spend most of his time trying to stay out of the way?
- What happened when the whale yawned?
- Who did the villagers go to for help?
- Do the villagers and other animals have good reasons to not want a whale in the village?
- What lesson did this story teach you?

SKILL FOCUS: Analyze Folktales

INSTRUCT: Explain that folktales are stories that have been passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth, or oral tradition. Folktales were made up to explain the wonders of the world or to teach lessons. Often, animals have human characteristics. The setting is usually a place that is described easily, leaving room for your imagination to fill in the gap. The time the story takes place is a “fantasy time” such as “A long time ago.” Ask students to think of examples from other folktales they are familiar with. Have students work in pairs to complete the *Analyze Folktales* worksheet using details from “Why the Whale Lives in the Sea.”

ASSESS: After all pairs have finished the worksheet, discuss responses as a class.

EXTEND

Science: Have students conduct research to learn how an animal has adapted to its surroundings over time. Have them create a booklet or pamphlet to convey what they have learned.

Analyze Folktales Fill in the chart below with details from “Why the Whale Lives in the Sea.”

Element	Details
The story explains how something came to be.	
Animal characters have human qualities.	
The setting is explained/the time is stated.	
Characters are good or bad.	

Ava the Big

pp. 27–31, Realistic Fiction

This story will help teach students about character development in realistic fiction as they read about two girls who seem to be total opposites but end up balancing each other.



RESOURCES

- Reader's Response Pyramid

OBJECTIVES

- Students will read and analyze realistic fiction.
- Students will analyze how individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.
- Students will recognize the importance of self-confidence in handling daily tasks and challenges.

KEY VOCABULARY

- **lopsided (p. 28)** having one side that is lower or smaller than the other
- **rehearse (p. 28)** to prepare for a public performance or play
- **slump (p. 30)** to sit or fall suddenly or heavily
- **burlap (p. 31)** a strong, rough fabric that is used mostly for making bags

ENGAGE

Conversation Question: How do we know what a character is feeling?

Ask students to share experiences that helped them learn something about themselves or helped them grow and change. These experiences could be having a friend move away, overcoming an embarrassing moment at school, or losing an important game in the sport they play. Tell students that this story is about two girls who seem like complete opposites but aren't. Both girls are put in a situation that helps them work together and realize they are more alike than they thought.

INTRODUCE VOCABULARY

Display the vocabulary words and read them aloud, along with the definitions. Then display the sentences below and have students use the vocabulary words to complete them.

1. The heavy crystal was sent in a _____ bag.
2. Please fix the _____ picture on the wall.
3. When you are performing on stage it is important not to _____.
4. I cannot go to the movies because I must _____ for my dance recital.

READ & DISCUSS

After students read the story, use these questions to prompt discussion:

1. What does Ava mean when she says, "I try to balance the bad with the good"?
2. Why did Ava J. think that she and Ava Z. were not alike, at first?
3. Why do you think Ava J. started to be unable to remember anything good?
4. Why do you think Ava J. doesn't want to be the giant in the school play?
5. What obstacle do the Avas overcome together?

SKILL FOCUS: Character Development

INSTRUCT: Explain that the main character in a story might seem one way at the beginning of a story, but changes throughout the story. As readers, students can analyze the ways a character changes by understanding what happens in a story and relating the story to their own lives. Distribute the *Reader's Response Pyramid* to students and have them complete it.

ASSESS: Have students complete the worksheet and discuss their responses as a class. Collect and evaluate.

EXTEND

Social Emotional Learning: Have students think about a memory, special moment, or an experience that required them to have self-confidence. Students can write about this experience and draw a picture to go with it. Invite students to share their experiences.

Reader's Response Pyramid Answer the questions about Ava J from the story, "Ava the Big."

How would you describe the main character in this story?

What change happens at school?

How does Ava J. feel about Ava Z.?

What conflict do the Avas have?

How do the Avas resolve the conflict in the story?

What did Ava J. learn from her experience?

What is the message of this story?