



Aesop's Fables

**Language Activities
for the ESL Classroom**

Intermediate Level

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Preface

This is a book of classroom activities for students of English at an intermediate level. All activities are based on Aesop's Fables, a collection of stories most of which date from the 6th century BC. Some of the fables may be familiar to you from your childhood.

I have adapted many of the original stories for use in the language classroom. I don't expect teachers to work through the activities from beginning to end - I can hear some students saying "Please, not another fable"! It would be best to treat the book as a source of activities that supplement topics covered in class, or as revision exercises. The activities can also be used as 'fillers' if your lesson plan needs additional activities; most activities are about 10 - 15 minutes in duration although there are some, such as the creative writing exercises, that will last much longer.

I have also included some of the fables, adapted for intermediate level, as additional exercises for teachers to create their own activities for students.

I hope you and your students enjoy the stories and the language activities.

Lucy Carter,
Jakarta

CONTENTS

1	Mixed-up Sentences	2
2	Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary	4
3	Verb Tenses	6
4	Vocabulary Test	8
5	Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary	9
6	Creative Writing	11
7	The Past	12
8	Mixed-up Sentences	13
9	Mixed-up Sentences	15
10	The Extra Word	17
11	Mixed-up Paragraphs	18
12	The Interview	20
13	What Did They Say?	21
14	The Wrong Word	22
15	The Article	23
16	Body Idioms	24
17	Building Sentences	26
18	Word Transformations	27
19	Mixed-up Sentences	29
20	Reported Speech	31
21	What Version Is Correct?	33
22	The Missing Word	35
23	Guess The Meaning	37
24	Mixed-up Sentences	38
25	Prepositions	39
26	Creative Writing	40
27	Vocabulary	41
28	Mixed-up Sentences	42
29	Creative Writing	44
30	Mixed-up Paragraphs	45
31	What Version Is Correct?	47
32	Telling A Story	49

1 Mixed-up Sentences

Activity Putting story sentences in sequence

Instructions

Copy the following page containing the mixed-up sentences and ask students to re-arrange the sequence to form a story. One of the sentences forms the title, another sentences forms the moral of the story.

Key

The correct sequence is shown below.

The Dog and the Shadow

Once upon a time a dog had a piece of meat
and was carrying it home in his mouth to eat it in peace.
Now on his way home he had
to cross a plank lying across a running brook.

As he crossed, he looked down and saw
his own shadow reflected in the water beneath.
Thinking it was another dog with another piece of meat,
he made up his mind to have that also.
So he snapped at the shadow in the water,
but as he opened his mouth the piece of meat fell out,
dropped into the water and was never seen again.

Beware of losing the substance by grasping at the shadow.

Teacher Activity ~ Create an activity from this fable

The Fox and the Crow

A fox once saw a crow fly off with a piece of cheese in its beak and settle on a branch of a tree. "That's for me," said the fox, and he walked up to the foot of the tree. "Good-day, Miss Crow," he cried. "How well you are looking to-day: how glossy your feathers; how bright your eyes. I feel sure your voice must surpass that of other birds, just as your figure does; let me hear but one song from you so that I may greet you as the Queen of Birds."

The crow lifted up her head and began to caw her best, but the moment she opened her mouth the piece of cheese fell to the ground, only to be snapped up by the fox. "That will do," said he. "That was all I wanted. In exchange for your cheese I will give you a piece of advice for the future - Do not trust flatterers."

Re-arrange the sentences below to form a story. One of the sentences is the title, and one sentence is the moral of the story.

Thinking it was another dog with another piece of meat,

Now on his way home he had

The Dog and the Shadow

to cross a plank lying across a running brook.

he made up his mind to have that also.

Beware of losing the substance by grasping at the shadow.

So he snapped at the shadow in the water,

dropped into the water and was never seen again.

his own shadow reflected in the water beneath.

Once upon a time a dog had a piece of meat

but as he opened his mouth the piece of meat fell out,

and was carrying it home in his mouth to eat it in peace.

As he crossed, he looked down and saw

2 Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary

Activity Reading comprehension and vocabulary

Instructions

Copy the text of the two stories and the vocabulary exercises that follow them on the next page

Key

- gorging (line 1) to swallow food greedily
- induce (line 3) to persuade
- beak (line 6) a bird's bill or nose
- gratitude (line 11) thankfulness
- rough and ready (line 13) rough in manner but prompt in action
- turned up his nose at (line 16) to express dislike
- put up with (line 17) to tolerate
- feast (line 23) a dinner with large quantities of food
- scamper (line 27) to run quickly

Teacher Activity ~ Create an activity from this fable

The Ant and the Grasshopper

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 with great toil an ear of corn he was taking to the nest.

"Why not come and chat with me," said the grasshopper, "instead of toiling in that way?"

"I am helping to lay up food for the winter," said the ant, "and recommend you to do the same."

"Why bother about winter?" said the grasshopper; we have got plenty of food at present." But the ant went on its way and continued its toil. When the winter came the grasshopper had no food and found itself dying of hunger, while it saw the ants distributing every day corn and grain from the stores they had collected in the summer. Then the grasshopper knew:

It is best to prepare for the days of necessity.

Skim read the following stories, then read in detail to answer the questions that follow them.

The Wolf and the Crane

- 1 A wolf had been gorging on an animal he had killed, when suddenly a small bone in the meat stuck
2 in his throat and he could not swallow it. He soon felt terrible pain in his throat, and ran up and
3 down groaning and looking for something to relieve the pain. He tried to induce every one he met
4 to remove the bone. "I would give anything," said he, "if you would take it out." At last the crane
5 agreed to try, and told the wolf to lie on his side and open his jaws as wide as he could. Then the
6 crane put its long neck down the wolf's throat, and with its beak loosened the bone, till at last it got
7 it out.
- 8 "Will you kindly give me the reward you promised?" said the crane. The wolf grinned and showed
9 his teeth and said: "Be content. You have put your head inside a wolf's mouth and taken it out
10 again in safety; that ought to be reward enough for you."
11 *Gratitude and greed go not together.*

The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse

- 13 Once upon a time a town mouse went on a visit to his cousin in the country. He was rough and
14 ready, this cousin, but he loved his town friend and made him heartily welcome. Beans and bacon,
15 cheese and bread, were all he had to offer, but he offered them freely. The town mouse rather
16 turned up his long nose at this country fare, and said: "I cannot understand, cousin, how you can
17 put up with such poor food as this, but of course you cannot expect anything better in the country;
18 come you with me and I will show you how to live. When you have been in town a week you will
19 wonder how you could ever have stood a country life."
- 20 No sooner said than done the two mice set off for the town and arrived at the town mouse's
21 residence late at night. "You will want some refreshment after our long journey," said the polite
22 town mouse, and took his friend into the grand dining-room. There they found the remains of a fine
23 feast, and soon the two mice were eating up jellies and cakes and all that was nice.
- 24 Suddenly they heard growling and barking. "What is that?" said the country mouse. "It is only the
25 dogs of the house," answered the other. "Only!" said the country mouse. "I do not like that music at
26 my dinner." Just at that moment the door flew open, in came two huge dogs, and the two mice had
27 to scamper down and run off. "Good-bye, cousin," said the country mouse, "What! going so soon?"
28 said the other. "Yes," he replied; "Better beans and bacon in peace than cakes and ale in fear."
29

Use the context and any other clues to help you match these words and phrases with their meanings from the list below :

gorging (line 1), induce (line 3), beak (line 6), gratitude (line 11),
rough and ready (line 13), turned up his nose at (line 16),
put up with (line 17), feast (line 23), scamper (line 27).

Meanings

rough in manner but prompt in action	to swallow food greedily
to express dislike	a bird's bill or nose
thankfulness	a dinner with large quantities of food
to persuade	to tolerate
to run quickly	

3 Verb Tenses

Activity Completing texts with the correct form of a verb

Instructions

This is an exercise in using verb tenses. Use it after any lesson on verbs. There are two versions. Use the first version with weaker students. Copy one version of the story on the following page and ask students to complete the story either with the correct form of the verb given (Version A) or with an appropriate verb in the correct form (Version B).

Key

Version A - A lion had **come** to the end of his days and **lay** sick approaching death at the mouth of his cave, **gasping** for breath. The animals, his subjects, came round him and **drew** nearer as he grew more and more helpless. When they saw him on the point of death they **thought** to themselves: "Now is the time to pay off old grudges." So the boar came up and **drove** at him with his tusks; then a Bull **gored** him with his horns; still the lion lay helpless before them: so the Ass, feeling quite safe from danger, came up, and turning his tail to the lion kicked up his heels into his face. "This is a double death," growled the lion. "Only cowards **insult** dying majesty"

Version B - Accept alternative verbs if they are suitable for the context and in the correct form.

Teacher Activity ~ Create an activity from this fable

The Rooster and the Pearl

A rooster was once strutting up and down the farmyard among the hens when suddenly he spotted something shiny in the straw. "Ho! ho! that's for me," he said and soon rooted it out from beneath the straw.

What it turned out to be was a pearl that by some chance had been lost in the yard. "You may be a treasure," said the rooster, "to men that prize you, but for me I would rather have a single grain of barley than a string of pearls."

Precious things are for those that can prize them.

Version A

Complete the story below by writing in the spaces provided the correct form of the verb given in brackets. Use a dictionary to check the meaning of unknown words.

The Sick Lion

A lion had _____ (come) to the end of his days and _____ (lie) sick approaching death at the mouth of his cave, _____ (gasp) for breath. The animals, his subjects, came round him and _____ (draw) nearer as he grew more and more helpless. When they saw him on the point of death they _____ (think) to themselves: "Now is the time to pay off old grudges." So the boar came up and _____ (drive) at him with his tusks; then a bull _____ (gore) him with his horns; still the lion lay helpless before them: so the Ass, feeling quite safe from danger, came up, and turning his tail to the lion kicked up his heels into his face. "This is a double death," growled the lion, "Only cowards _____ (insult) dying majesty".

Version B

Complete the story below by writing in the spaces a suitable verb in the correct form. Use a dictionary to check the meaning of unknown words.

The Sick Lion

A lion had _____ to the end of his days and _____ sick approaching death at the mouth of his cave, _____ for breath. The animals, his subjects, came round him and _____ nearer as he grew more and more helpless. When they saw him on the point of death they _____ to themselves: "Now is the time to pay off old grudges." So the boar came up and _____ at him with his tusks; then a bull _____ him with his horns; still the lion lay helpless before them: so the Ass, feeling quite safe from danger, came up, and turning his tail to the lion kicked up his heels into his face. "This is a double death," growled the lion, "Only cowards _____ dying majesty".

4 Vocabulary Test

Activity A multiple choice vocabulary test

Instructions

Copy the text with the multiple choice items at the bottom of the page and ask students to complete the test

Key

The Donkey and the Sheepdog

A farmer one day came to the **stable** to see to his beasts of burden: among them was his favourite donkey that was always well fed and often carried his master. With the farmer came his sheepdog, who danced about, **licked** his hand and **frisked** about as happy as could be. The farmer felt in his pocket, gave the sheepdog some food, and sat down while he gave his orders to his **servants**. The sheepdog jumped into his master's lap, and lay there blinking while the farmer **stroked** his ears. The donkey, seeing this, broke loose from his halter and commenced **prancing** about in imitation of the sheepdog. The farmer could not **hold** his sides with laughter, so the donkey went up to him, and putting his feet upon the farmer's shoulder attempted to **climb** into his lap. The farmer's servants rushed up with sticks and **pitchforks** and soon **taught** the donkey that clumsy jesting is no joke.

Complete the story below by writing in the spaces a suitable word from the list below it. Note that some of the words in the list are not used in the story. You may use a dictionary to check the meaning of unknown words.

The Donkey and the Sheepdog

A farmer one day came to the _____ to see to his beasts of burden: among them was his favourite donkey that was always well fed and often carried his master. With the farmer came his sheepdog, who danced about, _____ his hand and _____ about as happy as could be. The farmer felt in his pocket, gave the sheepdog some food, and sat down while he gave his orders to his _____. The sheepdog jumped into his master's lap, and lay there blinking while the farmer _____ his ears. The donkey, seeing this, broke loose from his halter and commenced _____ about in imitation of the sheepdog. The farmer could not _____ his sides with laughter, so the donkey went up to him, and putting his feet upon the farmer's shoulder attempted to _____ into his lap. The farmer's servants rushed up with sticks and _____ and soon _____ the donkey that clumsy jesting is no joke.

walking	stroked	climb	servants	animals	hold
pitchforks	farmhouse	licked	stop	knives	forks
stable	walk	taught	frisked	prancing	bit

5 Reading Comprehension and Vocabulary

Activity Reading comprehension with vocabulary

Instructions

Copy the text and exercise on the following page for students.

Key

do someone a turn (line 4) - do a favour for someone

plight (line 9) - in a difficult situation

gnaw (line 9) - eat away at,

bound (line 9) - tied up,

hemp (line 12) - a plant whose fibre is used in rope-making

regret (line 15) - to be sorry

paid no heed to (line 15/16) - ignore,

by and by (line 17) - In time, after a while

cord (line 17) - rope

Teacher Activity ~ Create an activity from this fable

The Man and the Snake

A farmer's son accidentally trod upon a snake's tail, which turned and bit him so that he died. The father, in a rage, got his axe and pursued the snake, cutting off part of its tail. In revenge the serpent began stinging several of the farmer's cattle causing him great loss.

The farmer then thought it best to make it up with the snake and brought food and honey to the mouth of its nest, saying to it: "Let's forget and forgive; perhaps you were right to punish my son, and take vengeance on my cattle, but surely I was right in trying to revenge him; now that we are both satisfied why should not we be friends again?"

"No, no," said the snake; "take away your gifts; you can never forget the death of your son, nor I the loss of my tail."

Injuries may be forgiven, but not forgotten.

Skim read the following stories, then read in detail to answer the questions that follow the text.

The Lion and the Mouse

1 Once when a lion was asleep a little mouse began running up and down upon him; this
2 soon wakened the lion, who placed his huge paw upon him, and opened his big jaws to
3 swallow him. "Pardon, O King," cried the little mouse: "forgive me this time, I shall never
4 forget it: who knows but what I may be able to do you a turn some of these days?" The
5 lion was so thrilled at the idea of the mouse being able to help him, that he lifted up his
6 paw and let him go. Some time after the lion was caught in a trap, and the hunters who
7 wanted to carry him alive to the King, tied him to a tree while they went in search of a
8 wagon to carry him on. Just then the little mouse happened to pass by, and seeing the
9 lion's plight, went up to him and soon gnawed away the ropes that bound the King of the
10 Beasts. "Was I not right?" said the little mouse.
11 The morale of the story is 'little friends may prove great friends'.

The Swallow and the Other Birds

12 One day a farmer was sowing some hemp seeds in a field where a swallow and some
13 other birds were hopping about picking up their food. "Beware of that man," said the
14 swallow. "Why, what is he doing?" said the others. "That is hemp seed he is sowing; be
15 careful to pick up every one of the seeds, or else you will regret it." The birds paid no
16 heed to the swallow's words.
17 By and by the hemp grew up and was made into cord, and of the cords nets were made,
18 and many a bird that had despised the swallow's advice was caught in nets made out of
19 that very hemp. "What did I tell you?" said the swallow. The morale of the story? Destroy
20 the seed of evil, or it will grow up to be your ruin.

Use the context and any other clues to help you match these words with their meanings from the list below:

do someone a turn (line 4), plight (line 9), gnaw (line 9), bound (line 9),
hemp (line 12), regret (line 15), paid no heed to (line 15/16), by and by (line 17),
cord (line 17)

Meanings

do a favour for someone
ignore
in a difficult situation
eat away at
to be sorry
In time, after a while
rope
tied up
a plant whose fibre is used in rope-making

6 Creative Writing

Activity An exercise in creative writing - writing a story from guidelines

Instructions

This is an exercise in creative writing. Write up the rules on the board or dictate the following. The rules for writing are that the story must :

- begin with this sentence:
The frogs were living as happy as could be in a marshy swamp that suited them fine.
- end with this sentence:
By the time the frogs repented it was too late.
- include the answers to the following questions
Why did the frogs want to have a King?
Where did the log come from?
What did the frogs do with the log?
Why were the frogs unhappy with the log?
What did the stork do when it arrived?
- have a suitable title.
- be between 250 and 300 words in length.

Pre-teach *repent* (expressing regret), *log* (trunk of a cut down tree), *stork* (a bird)

Answer Key

There are no correct answers to this exercise. As an extra activity students could exchange stories and read and correct them. The full text of the fable upon which this exercise follows.

The Frogs Desiring a King

The frogs were living as happy as could be in a marshy swamp that suited them fine. They went splashing about caring for nobody and nobody troubled them. But some of them thought that this was not right, that they should have a king and a proper constitution, so they determined to send up a petition to Jove to give them what they wanted. "Mighty Jove," they cried, "send unto us a king that will rule over us and keep us in order."

Jove laughed at their croaking, and threw down into the swamp a huge log, which came splashing into the swamp. The frogs were frightened out of their lives by the commotion made in their midst, and all rushed to the bank to look at the horrible monster; but after a time, seeing that it did not move, one or two of the boldest of them ventured out towards the log, and even dared to touch it; still it did not move. Then the greatest hero of the frogs jumped upon the log and commenced dancing up and down upon it, thereupon all the frogs came and did the same; and for some time the frogs went about their business every day without taking the slightest notice of their new King log lying in their midst.

But this did not suit them, so they sent another petition to Jove, and said to him, "We want a real king; one that will really rule over us." Now this made Jove angry, so he sent among them a big Stork that soon set to work gobbling them all up. By the time the frogs repented it was too late. Moral of the story? Better no rule than a cruel rule.

7 The Past

Activity

An exercise in the past simple and past continuous

Instructions

Copy the story with the gaps below and distribute to students. Ask students to complete with the past simple or past continuous form of the verb shown in brackets. This exercise could be usefully done after a lesson on the past simple and past continuous

Answer Key

The Mountains in Labour

One day the farmers noticed that the Mountains were in labour; smoke was **pouring** out of their summits, the earth was **quaking** at their feet, trees were **crashing**, and huge rocks were **tumbling**. They felt sure that something horrible was **going** to happen. They all **gathered** together in one place to see what terrible thing this could be. They waited and they waited, but nothing came. At last there was a still more violent earthquake, and a huge gap **appeared** in the side of the Mountains. They all fell down upon their knees and waited. At last a tiny mouse **poked** its little head and bristles out of the gap and **ran** down towards them, and ever after it has been said "Much outcry, little outcome."

Read the following story and complete the gaps with the correct form of the verb shown in brackets.

The Mountains in Labour

One day the farmers noticed that the Mountains were in labour; smoke was _____ (pour) out of their summits, the earth was _____ (quake) at their feet, trees were _____ (crash), and huge rocks were _____ (tumble). They felt sure that something horrible was _____ (go) to happen. They all _____ (gather) together in one place to see what terrible thing this could be. They waited and they waited, but nothing came. At last there was a still more violent earthquake, and a huge gap _____ (appear) in the side of the Mountains. They all fell down upon their knees and waited. At last a tiny mouse _____ (poke) its little head and bristles out of the gap and _____ (run) down towards them, and ever after it has been said "Much outcry, little outcome."

8 Mixed-up Sentences

Activity Putting sentences in the correct sequence

Instructions

Copy the mixed-up sentences on the following page. Students work in groups to put the sentences in the correct order.

Key

The correct order of the sentences is given below

The Hares and the Frogs

The hares were so persecuted by the other beasts, they did not know where to go. As soon as they saw a single animal approach them, off they used to run. One day they saw a troop of wild horses stampeding about. In quite a panic all the hares scuttled off to a nearby lake, determined to drown themselves rather than live in such a continual state of fear. But just as they got near the lake, a troop of frogs, frightened by the hares, jumped into the water.

"Truly," said one of the hares, "things are not so bad as they seem, "There is always someone worse off than yourself."

Teacher Activity ~ Create an activity from this fable

The Dog and the Wolf

A gaunt wolf was starving when he happened to meet a domestic dog who was passing by. "Ah, cousin," said the dog, "I knew how it would be; your irregular life will soon be the ruin of you. Why do you not work steadily as I do, and get your food regularly given to you?"

"I would have no objection," said the wolf, "if I could only get a place." "I will easily arrange that for you," said the dog; "come with me to my master and you shall share my work."

So the wolf and the dog went towards the town together. On the way there the wolf noticed that the hair on a certain part of the dog's neck was very much worn away, so he asked him how that had come about.

"Oh, it is nothing," said the dog. "That is only the place where the collar is put on at night to keep me chained up; it chafes a bit, but one soon gets used to it." "If that is the case then good-bye to you" said the Wolf.

Better starve free than be a fat slave.

Put the following sentences in their correct order to form a story. One of the sentences is the title, one sentence is the moral of the story.

But just as they got near the lake, a troop of frogs, frightened by the hares, jumped into the water.

One day they saw a troop of wild horses stampeding about.

"There is always someone worse off than yourself."

The Hares and the Frogs

determined to drown themselves rather than live in such a continual state of fear.

In quite a panic all the hares scuttled off to a nearby lake,

"Truly," said one of the hares, "things are not so bad as they seem,

The hares were so persecuted by the other beasts, they did not know where to go.

As soon as they saw a single animal approach them, off they used to run.

9 Mixed-up Sentences

Activity Putting sentences in the correct sequence

Instructions

Copy the mixed-up sentences on the following page. Students work in groups to put the sentences in the correct order.

To make the exercise more challenging for the more advanced students in the group you could combine the sentences in this exercise with the sentences in the previous exercise by copying the sentences in both exercises, cutting into strips and mixing up the sentences.

Key

The Forester and the Snake

One winter's day a forester was tramping home from his work when he saw something black lying on the snow.

When he came closer he saw it was a snake which looked dead.

He took it up and put it inside his shirt to keep warm while he hurried home.

As soon as he got indoors he put the snake down on the hearth before the fire.

The children watched it and saw it slowly come to life again.

Then one of them stooped down to stroke it.

The snake raised its head, put out its fangs and was about to sting the child to death.

So the Woodman seized his axe, and with one stroke cut the snake in two.

"Ah," said he, "There's no gratitude from the wicked."

Put the following sentences in their correct order to form a story. One of the sentences is the title, one sentence is the moral of the story.

Then one of them stooped down to stroke it.

"Ah," said he, "There's no gratitude from the wicked."

The snake raised its head, put out its fangs and was about to sting the child to death.

When he came closer he saw it was a snake which looked dead.

The Forester and the Snake

As soon as he got indoors he put the snake down on the hearth before the fire.

So the Woodman seized his axe, and with one stroke cut the snake in two.

The children watched it and saw it slowly come to life again.

One winter's day a forester was tramping home from his work when he saw something black lying on the snow.

He took it up and put it inside his shirt to keep warm while he hurried home.

10 The Extra Word

Activity Identify the extra word that shouldn't be there.

Instructions

Copy the instructions and the text of the story below. Pre-teach *bill* (long beak).

Answer Key

The extra words that should be removed are shown in bold.

The Fox and the Stork

At one time the Fox and the Stork were very good friends.
The Fox invited the Stork to **the** dinner, and as a joke put nothing before her but some soup in a very shallow dish. This the Fox could easily drink up, but the Stork could only wet the end of her long bill in it, and left the meal as **more** hungry as when she began.
"I am sorry," said the Fox, "the soup is not **so** to your liking."

"Do not apologise," said the Stork. "I hope you will come and dine with me soon." **When** a day was arranged for the Fox to visit the Stork. When they were seated at the table their dinner was **being** contained in a very long-necked jar with **which** a narrow mouth, into which the Fox could not insert his mouth. All he could manage to do was to lick the outside of the jar. "I will not **make** apologise for the dinner," said the Stork, "one bad turn deserves another."

Read the text below and look carefully at each line. Some of the lines are correct, and some have a word which should not be there. If a line is correct put a tick beside it. If a line has a word that should not be there, cross the word out.

The Fox and the Stork

_____ At one time the Fox and the Stork were very good friends.
_____ The Fox invited the Stork to the dinner, and as a joke put nothing
_____ before her but some soup in a very shallow dish. This the Fox
_____ could easily drink up, but the Stork could only wet the end of her
_____ long bill in it, and left the meal as more hungry as when she began.
_____ "I am sorry," said the Fox, "the soup is not so to your liking."

_____ "Do not apologise," said the Stork. "I hope you will come and dine
_____ with me soon." When a day was arranged for the Fox to visit the Stork.
_____ When they were seated at the table their dinner was being contained in a
_____ very long-necked jar with which a narrow mouth, into which the Fox could
_____ not insert his mouth. All he could manage to do was to lick the
_____ outside of the jar. "I will not make apologise for the dinner," said the Stork,
_____ "one bad turn deserves another."

11 Mixed-up Paragraphs

Activity

Separate the paragraphs that go together and put in order

Instructions

Copy the three titles and the paragraphs on the following page, and cut into strips. Mix up the paragraphs on a table and ask students to select the paragraphs that belong to each of three stories and put them in order under the three titles.

Teach the meaning of *moulting*, *strut*, *peck*, *plumes*, *hoofs* but only if students ask.

Key

Here are the original stories

The Fox and the Mask

A Fox had managed to get into the store-room of a theatre. Suddenly he observed a face glaring down on him and began to be very frightened; but looking more closely he found it was only a mask that actors use to put over their face.

"Ah," said the fox, "you look very fine; it is a pity you have not got any brains." The moral of the story is "outside show is a poor substitute for inner worth".

The Jay and the Peacock

A jay venturing into a yard where peacocks used to walk, found there a number of feathers which had fallen from the peacocks when they were moulting. He tied them all to his tail and strutted down towards the peacocks.

When he came near them they soon discovered that he wasn't a peacock, and striding up to him pecked at him and plucked away his borrowed plumes.

So the jay could do no better than go back to the other jays, who had watched his behaviour from a distance; but they were equally annoyed with him, and told him "It is not only fine feathers that make fine birds."

The Frog and the Ox

"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."

"O child," said the old frog, "that was only Farmer White's ox. It isn't so big either; it may be a little bit taller than I, but I could easily make myself quite as broad; just you see." So he blew himself up. "Was he as big as that?" he asked. "Oh, much bigger than that," said the young frog.

Again the old one blew himself up, 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 this moment he burst. The moral of the story? Self-conceit may lead to self-destruction.

The Fox and the Mask

The Jay and the Peacock

The Frog and the Ox

And then he said: "I'm sure the Ox is not as big as - ". But at this moment he burst. The moral of the story? Self-conceit may lead to self-destruction.

So the jay could do no better than go back to the other jays, who had watched his behaviour from a distance; but they were equally annoyed with him, and told him "It is not only fine feathers that make fine birds."

When he came near them they soon discovered that he wasn't a peacock, and striding up to him pecked at him and plucked away his borrowed plumes.

"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."

A Fox had managed to get into the store-room of a theatre. Suddenly he observed a face glaring down on him and began to be very frightened; but looking more closely he found it was only a mask that actors use to put over their face.

"O child," said the old frog, "that was only Farmer White's ox. It isn't so big either; it may be a little bit taller than I, but I could easily make myself quite as broad; just you see." So he blew himself up. "Was he as big as that?" he asked. "Oh, much bigger than that," said the young frog.

"Ah," said the fox, "you look very fine; it is a pity you have not got any brains." The moral of the story is "outside show is a poor substitute for inner worth".

A jay venturing into a yard where peacocks used to walk, found there a number of feathers which had fallen from the peacocks when they were moulting. He tied them all to his tail and strutted down towards the peacocks.

Again the old one blew himself up, 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.

12 The Interview

Activity Reading comprehension, followed by role-play

Instructions

Copy the story below for your students. Put them in pairs to prepare for the interview between the Emperor and Androcles. Allow students time to prepare their scripts. If there is an odd number of students then have one (or more) groups of three in which one student role-plays an interviewer from CNN News interviewing the Emperor and Androcles.

Skim read the following story, then read in detail. Work with another student. One of you will play the Emperor, and the other plays Androcles. Role-play the interview between the Emperor and Androcles. Act out the interview with Emperor asking why the lion didn't attack Androcles.

Androcles

A slave named Androcles once escaped from his master and fled to the forest. As he was wandering about there he came upon a lion lying down moaning and groaning. At first he turned to flee, but finding that the lion did not pursue him, he turned back and went up to him.

As he came near, the lion put out his paw, which was all swollen and bleeding, and Androcles found that a huge thorn had got into it, and was causing all the pain. He pulled out the thorn and bound up the paw of the lion, who was soon able to rise and lick the hand of Androcles like a dog.

Then the lion took Androcles to his cave, and every day used to bring him meat from which to live. But shortly afterwards both Androcles and the lion were captured, and the slave was sentenced to be thrown to the lion, after the latter had been kept without food for several days. The Emperor and all his Court came to see the spectacle, and Androcles was led out into the middle of the arena.

Soon the lion was let loose from his den, and rushed bounding and roaring towards his victim. But as soon as he came near to Androcles he recognised his friend, and licked his hands like a friendly dog.

The Emperor, surprised at this, summoned Androcles to him, who told him the whole story. Whereupon the slave was pardoned and freed, and the lion let loose to his native forest.

Gratitude is the sign of noble souls.

13 What Did They Say?

Activity

Reading comprehension, direct speech

Instructions

Copy the story below in which the direct speech has been removed. Ask students to complete the story by choosing the most appropriate quotation for each gap.

Key

The quotations are shown below in their correct locations in the story.

The Bat, the Birds, and the Beasts

A great conflict was about to take place between the Birds and the Beasts. When the two armies were collected together the Bat hesitated which to join. The Birds that passed his perch said **"Come with us"**; but he said **"I am a Beast"**. Later on, some Beasts who were passing underneath him looked up and said **"Come with us"**; but he said **"I am a Bird"**. Luckily at the last moment peace was made, and no battle took place, so the Bat came to the Birds and asked **"Can I join my feathered friends?"** but they all turned against him and he had to fly away. He then went to the Beasts, but soon had to beat a retreat, or else they would have torn him to pieces. **"Unfortunately I see it now,"** said the Bat, **"He that is neither one thing nor the other has no friends"**.

Read the story below. There are gaps where the direct speech should be. Choose the most appropriate phrase from the list given at the end and write it in the space provided. One of the phrases is used twice, and one of the phrases is not used at all.

The Bat, the Birds, and the Beasts

A great conflict was about to take place between the Birds and the Beasts. When the two armies were collected together the Bat hesitated which to join. The Birds that passed his perch said _____; but he said _____. Later on, some Beasts who were passing underneath him looked up and said _____; but he said _____. Luckily at the last moment peace was made, and no battle took place, so the Bat came to the Birds and asked _____ but they all turned against him and he had to fly away. He then went to the Beasts, but soon had to beat a retreat, or else they would have torn him to pieces. _____ said the Bat, _____.

"He that is neither one thing nor the other has no friends"
"Can I join the Beasts?"
"I am a Bird"
"Can I join my feathered friends?"
"Come with us"
"Unfortunately I see it now,"
"I am a Beast"

14 The Wrong Word

Activity Identify the grammatical errors

Instructions

Copy the text and instructions at the bottom of the page for students. Pre-teach *hart*, *antlers*.

Key

The words that are in error are corrected and highlighted in bold below.

The Deer and the Hunter

The deer was once **drinking** from a pool and admiring his reflection in it. "Ah," said he, "where can you see noble antlers such as these? I wish I **had** legs more worthy to bear such a noble crown; it is a pity they are so slim." At that moment a hunter approached and sent **an** arrow after him. The deer bounded away and soon, with the help of his nimble legs, he was nearly out **of** sight of the hunter. He didn't notice where he was going and as he passed **under** some trees he caught his antlers in the low branches allowing the hunter time to **catch** up. "Alas! alas!" cried the deer, "We often despise **what** is most useful to us."

Read the text below and look carefully at each line. Some of the lines are correct, and some have grammatical error with one incorrect word. If a line is correct put a tick beside it. If a line has a grammatical error cross out the error and write the correct word in the space to the left of the line.

The Deer and the Hunter

_____ The deer was once drank from a pool and admiring his reflection
_____ in it. "Ah," said he, "where can you see noble antlers such as these?
_____ I wish I have legs more worthy to bear such a noble crown; it is a pity
_____ they are so slim." At that moment a hunter approached and sent the
_____ arrow after him. The deer bounded away and soon, with the help of
_____ his nimble legs, he was nearly out by sight of the hunter. He didn't
_____ notice where he was going and as he passed across some trees he
_____ caught his antlers in the low branches allowing the hunter time to caught
_____ up. "Alas! alas!" cried the deer, "We often despise which is most useful to us."

15 The Article

Activity Using **A, An, The, and No Article**

Instructions

Copy the story with the missing articles and the instructions to students.

Key

The correct articles (or absence of an article) are shown below in bold.

The Man and the Wood

A man came into a wood one day with **an** axe head in his hand, and begged all **the** trees to give him a small branch which he wanted for **a** particular purpose. **The** trees were good-natured and gave him one of their branches. What did the man do but fix it into **the** axe head, and soon set to work cutting down **(no article)** tree after **(no article)** tree. Then **the** trees saw how foolish they had been in giving their enemy the means of destroying themselves.

In this story the article is missing from some of the lines. Read the text carefully and decide whether there should be an 'a', 'an', or 'the' in the gap, or no article.

The Man and the Wood

A man came into a wood one day with _____ axe head in his hand, and begged all _____ trees to give him a small branch which he wanted for _____ particular purpose. _____ trees were good-natured and gave him one of their branches. What did the man do but fix it into _____ axe head, and soon set to work cutting down _____ tree after _____ tree. Then _____ trees saw how foolish they had been in giving their enemy the means of destroying themselves.

16 Body Idioms

Activity Vocabulary - the body and some body idioms

Instructions

Copy the text and the exercise for students on the following page.

Key

The idioms and their meanings are :

The decision is in her hands - It's up to her to decide

She hasn't got a leg to stand on - There's no justification for it

She's an old hand at the job - She has a lot of experience.

She hasn't the stomach for it - She hasn't the courage to do it

She'll fight tooth and nail to get it - She'll try very hard to get it

Teacher Activity ~ Create an activity from this fable

The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

A wolf found great difficulty in getting at the sheep because of the vigilance of the shepherd and his dogs. But one day it found the skin of a sheep that had been thrown aside, so it put it on over its own pelt and strolled down among the sheep.

The lamb that belonged to the sheep, whose skin the wolf was wearing, began to follow the wolf in the sheep's clothing; so, leading the lamb a little apart, he soon made a meal off her, and for some time he succeeded in deceiving the sheep, and enjoying hearty meals.

Appearances are deceptive.

Skim read the following story. Then read the story again and scan for parts of the body. How many parts of the body are mentioned? What are they?

The Belly and the Members

One fine day it occurred to the members of the body that they were doing all the work and the belly was having all the food. So they held a meeting, and after a long discussion, decided to strike until the belly consented to take its proper share of the work. So for a day or two, the hands refused to take the food, the mouth refused to receive it, and the teeth had no work to do. But after a day or two the members began to find that they themselves were not in a very active condition: the hands could hardly move, and the mouth was all parched and dry, while the legs were unable to support the rest. So thus they found that even the belly in its dull quiet way was doing necessary work for the body, and that all must work together or the body will go to pieces.

Some parts of the body are used in idioms. An idiom is a phrase made up of words which individually do not make sense but taken together are used to describe something or someone.

For example : I'll give you a hand means I'll help you.

Match the following idioms with their meanings.

Idioms	Meanings
The decision is in her hands	There's no justification for it
She hasn't got a leg to stand on	She hasn't the courage to do it
She's an old hand at the job	She'll try very hard to get it
She hasn't the stomach for it	It's up to her to decide
She'll fight tooth and nail to get it	She has a lot of experience.

17 Building Sentences

Activity Creating grammatically correct sentences

Instructions

Copy, or write on the board, the skeleton sentences given below. Explain the instructions. Work through the first sentence with the class eliciting their suggestions. Their suggestions do not have to be the same as the example given. Encourage creativity within the constraints of grammatically correct structures.

Key

Here is the actual story. Students' examples will almost certainly be different.

The Fox and the Grapes

One hot summer's day a fox was strolling through an orchard when he came to a bunch of grapes ripening on a vine.

"Just what I need as I am thirsty," he said.

Walking back a few paces, he took a run and a jump, and just missed the bunch.

Turning round again with a one, two, three, he jumped up, but with no success.

Again and again he tried, but at last had to give up and walked away, saying: "I am sure they are sour."

Moral of the story - It is easy to despise what you cannot get.

The following words are from a story called *The Fox and the Grapes*. Each line has words from a sentence in the story but there are words missing. Each hyphen (-) represents one or more words. See if you can build grammatically correct sentences and reconstruct the story by using suitable words in the gaps. Add appropriate punctuation.

- summer's day - fox - orchard - grapes.

- what - need - I - thirsty

Walking - run - jump - missed -.

- again - one - two - jumped - no success.

- again - tried - give up - walked - sure - sour.

18 Word Transformations

Activity

Vocabulary and synonyms

Instructions

Copy the story and the instructions for students on the following page. You could start the exercise by working on the first missing word with the students eliciting possible synonyms : "Think of as many words that you know that have the meaning *occur*."

Key

The Horse, Hunter, and Stag

A quarrel had **arisen** between the horse and the stag, so the horse came to a hunter to ask his **help** to take revenge on the stag. The hunter agreed, but said: "If you wish to **defeat** the stag, you must permit me to place this piece of iron between your teeth, so that I may guide you with these reins, and **allow** this saddle to be placed upon your back so that I may keep steady upon you as we follow after the enemy." The horse agreed to the **conditions**, and the hunter soon saddled and bridled him. Then with the aid of the hunter the horse soon overcame the stag, and said to the hunter: "Now, **dismount**, and remove those things from my mouth and back."

"Not so fast, friend," said the hunter. "I have now got you under bit and spur, and **prefer** to keep you as you are at present." The moral of the story?
- If you allow men to use you for your own **purposes**, they will use you for theirs.

Teacher Activity ~ Create an activity from this fable

The Two Crabs

One fine day two crabs came out from their home to take a stroll on the sand. "Child," said the mother, "you are walking very ungracefully. You should accustom yourself to walking straight ahead without moving from side to side."

"Well, mother," said the young one, "please set the example yourself, and I will follow you."

Example is the best principle.

In this activity there are some words missing, but the first letter of each word is shown. At the end of each line with a missing word is another word with a similar meaning. Use the word at the end of the line to help you decide what the missing word should be. You may use a dictionary. Make sure that the form of the missing word is correct (verb tense, singular or plural).

The Horse, Hunter, and Stag

A quarrel had a _____ between the horse and the stag, so the horse came to a hunter to ask his h_____ to take revenge on the stag. The hunter agreed, but said: "If you wish to d_____ the stag, you must permit me to place this piece of iron between your teeth, so that I may guide you with these reins, and a_____ this saddle to be placed upon your back so that I may keep steady upon you as we follow after the enemy." The horse agreed to the c_____, and the hunter soon saddled and bridled him. Then with the aid of the hunter the horse soon overcame the stag, and said to the hunter: "Now, d_____, and remove those things from my mouth and back."

"Not so fast, friend," said the hunter. "I have now got you under bit and spur, and p_____ to keep you as you are at present." The moral of the story?
- If you allow men to use you for your own p_____, they will use you for theirs.

occur
assistance

conquer

permit

terms
help

get off, get down

wish

intentions

19 Mixed-up Sentences

Activity Reading comprehension

Instructions

Produce one copy of the sentences on the following page, one set for each group of students. Ask students to match the sentences with the correct story and put in the correct sequence.

Key

The complete texts of the two stories are given below.

The Fox and the Lion

When the fox first saw the lion he was terribly frightened, and ran away and hid himself in the wood. Next time however he came near the King of Beasts he stopped at a safe distance and watched him pass by. The third time they came near one another the fox went straight up to the lion and passed the time of day with him. He asked him how his family were, and when he should have the pleasure of seeing him again. Then turning his tail, he parted from the lion without much ceremony. Familiarity breeds contempt.

The Lion and the Statue

A man and a lion were discussing the relative strength of men and lions in general. The man contended that he and his fellows were stronger than lions by reason of their greater intelligence. "Come now with me," he cried, "and I will soon prove that I am right." So he took him into the public gardens and showed him a statue of Hercules overcoming the lion and tearing his mouth in two.

"That is all very well," said the lion, "but it proves nothing, for it was a man who made the statue." We can easily represent things as we wish them to be.

Teacher Activity ~ Create an activity from this fable

The Four Oxen and the Lion

A lion used to prowl about a field in which four oxen lived. Many a time he tried to attack them; but whenever he came near they turned their tails to one another, so that whichever way he approached them he was met by the horns of one of them. At last, however, they quarrelled among themselves, and each went off to pasture alone in a separate corner of the field. Then the lion attacked them one by one and soon made an end of all four.

United we stand, divided we fall.

The following sentences have been mixed up from two stories. The two stories are *The Fox and the Lion* and *The Lion and the Statue*.

Using these as clues work with another student to identify which sentences belong to each story, and then put the sentences in the correct order

He asked him how his family were, and when he should have the pleasure of seeing him again.

"Come now with me," he cried, "and I will soon prove that I am right."

The third time they came near one another the fox went straight up to the lion and passed the time of day with him.

"That is all very well," said the lion, "but it proves nothing, for it was a man who made the statue."

Next time however he came near the King of Beasts he stopped at a safe distance and watched him pass by.

So he took him into the public gardens and showed him a statue of Hercules overcoming the lion and tearing his mouth in two.

The man contended that he and his fellows were stronger than lions by reason of their greater intelligence.

We can easily represent things as we wish them to be.

Familiarity breeds contempt.

Then turning his tail, he parted from the lion without much ceremony.

When the fox first saw the lion he was terribly frightened, and ran away and hid himself in the wood.

A man and a lion were discussing the relative strength of men and lions in general.

20 Reported Speech

Activity Converting direct speech into reported speech

Instructions

This exercise is best done after a lesson on reported speech, or as a revision exercise. Copy the text and the direct speech statements that follow it on the next page. Ask students to turn the direct speech statements into indirect, reported speech.

Key

Note that there are possible acceptable alternatives to each. In the last example the preferred alternative is to keep the moral of the story in the present, as it is something that is still true today.

- 1 He said **that he had** a whole bag of tricks which contained hundreds of ways of escaping **his** enemies.
- 2 The cat said **that he had** only one and **(that) he** generally managed with that.
- 3 The cat said **that that was his plan and asked (the fox)** what **he was** going to do.
- 4 The cat, who had been looking on, **had** said **that** one safe way **would be/is** better than a hundred which **one** cannot/**could not** reckon on.

Teacher Activity ~ Create an activity from this fable

The Crow and the Pitcher

A crow, half-dead with thirst, came upon a pitcher which had once been full of water; but when the crow put its beak into the mouth of the pitcher he found that very little water was left in it, and that he could not reach far enough down to get at it.

He tried, and he tried, but at last had to give up in despair. Then a thought came to him, and he took a pebble and dropped it into the pitcher. Then he took another pebble and dropped that into the pitcher. He dropped yet another pebble into the pitcher, and steadfastly continued dropping pebbles into the pitcher.

At last he saw the water mount up near the top of the pitcher and, after casting in a few more pebbles, he was able to quench his thirst and save his life.

Little by little does the trick.

Read the story about the fox and the cat, then rewrite the direct speech statements that follow it into indirect, reported speech

The Fox and the Cat

A fox was boasting to a cat of its clever ways of escaping its enemies. "I have a whole bag of tricks," he said, "which contains hundreds of ways of escaping my enemies."

"I have only one," said the cat; "and I generally manage with that." Just at that moment they heard the cry of a pack of hounds coming towards them, and the cat immediately scampered up a tree. "This is my plan," said the cat. "What are you going to do?"

The fox thought first of one way, then another, and while he was debating the hounds came closer, and at last the fox in his confusion was caught up by the hounds and soon killed by the huntsmen. The cat, who had been looking on, said: "Better one safe way than a hundred on which you cannot reckon."

1. "I have a whole bag of tricks," he said, "which contains hundreds of ways of escaping my enemies."
2. "I have only one," said the cat; "and I generally manage with that."
3. "This is my plan," said the cat. "What are you going to do?"
4. The cat, who had been looking on, said: "Better one safe way than a hundred on which you cannot reckon."

21 What Version Is Correct?

Activity

Reading comprehension and information exchange

Instructions

In this activity students work in pairs. Each student is given a different version of a story. The two versions differ in a number of words, but only one version of the story is correct for each difference. Give one student version A and the other version B. Allow about 5 - 10 minutes for each student to silently read through his/her version of the story. Tell the students that as they read through their versions they may notice some text that doesn't quite fit or appears illogical. They should just make a note of it at this stage and continue to read the rest of their versions.

The students then work in pairs taking it in turns to read their sentences to each other. Where there is a difference they must decide which version is correct. Remind students that version A could be correct for some differences and version B correct for other differences.

You can start students off with the first difference in the first sentence as an example. Version A refers to a lawyer, version B refers to a shepherd boy. In this case version B is correct because we do not expect lawyers to look after sheep.

At the end of the activity check the students' answers against the key below:

The Shepherd's Boy

There was once a young **shepherd boy** who looked after his sheep at the bottom of a **mountain** near a dark forest. He was very **lonely**, so he thought of a plan to get some company and excitement. He rushed down towards the village calling out "Wolf, Wolf". The **villagers** came out to meet him, and some of them stopped with him for a considerable time. This **pleased** the boy so much that a few **days** afterwards he tried the same trick, and again the villagers came to his help. But shortly after this a **wolf** actually did come out from the **forest**, and the boy of course cried out "**Wolf, Wolf**," still louder than before. But this time the villagers, who had been fooled **twice** before, thought the boy was again deceiving them, and **nobody** came to his help. So the **wolf** made a good meal of the **boy's** flock of **sheep**, and when the boy complained, **the wise man of the village** said: "A liar will not be believed, even when he speaks the truth."

Teacher Activity ~ Create an activity from this fable

The Goose With the Golden Eggs

One day a farmer going to the nest of his goose found there an egg all yellow and glittering. When he took it up it was as heavy as lead and he was going to throw it away, because he thought a trick had been played upon him. But he took it home on second thoughts, and soon found to his delight that it was an egg of pure gold. Every morning the same thing occurred, and he soon became rich by selling his eggs. As he grew rich he grew greedy; and thinking to get at once all the gold the goose could give, he killed it and opened it only to find nothing.

Greed often over-reaches itself.

Version A - Student 1

Do not show this to the other student. Work with the other student by taking turns to read aloud each other's sentences. If some of the sentences are not the same then decide whose version is correct. Sometimes this version will be correct, sometimes the other version will be correct. There will be clues in the story to help you decide.

There was once a young lawyer who looked after his sheep at the bottom of a mountain near a dark forest. He was very lonely, so he thought of a plan to get some company and excitement. He rushed down towards the village calling out "Wolf, Wolf". The city dwellers came out to meet him, and some of them stopped with him for a considerable time. This annoyed the boy so much that a few months afterwards he tried the same trick, and again the villagers came to his help. But shortly after this a snake actually did come out from the forest, and the boy of course cried out "Snake, snake," still louder than before. But this time the villagers, who had been fooled twice before, thought the boy was again deceiving them, and everybody came to his help. So the wolf made a good meal of the lawyer's flock of cows, and when the boy complained, the wise man of the village said: "A liar will not be believed, even when he speaks the truth."

Version B - Student 2

Do not show this to the other student. Work with the other student by taking turns to read aloud each other's sentences. If some of the sentences are not the same then decide whose version is correct. Sometimes this version will be correct, sometimes the other version will be correct. There will be clues in the story to help you decide.

There was once a young shepherd boy who looked after his sheep at the bottom of a lake near a dark forest. He was very busy, so he thought of a plan to get some company and excitement. He rushed down towards the village calling out "Wolf, Wolf". The villagers came out to meet him, and some of them stopped with him for a considerable time. This pleased the boy so much that a few days afterwards he tried the same trick, and again the villagers came to his help. But shortly after this a wolf actually did come out from the lake, and the boy of course cried out "Wolf, wolf," still louder than before. But this time the villagers, who had been fooled five times before, thought the boy was again deceiving them, and nobody came to his help. So the snake made a good meal of the boy's flock of sheep, and when the boy complained, the village idiot said: "A liar will not be believed, even when he speaks the truth."

22 The Missing Word

Activity

Reading comprehension and vocabulary

Instructions

Copy the stories and the instructions on the following page. Students should skim read all three stories and then read in detail. Most of the missing words could appear in more than one story so the students should be encouraged to read the context in which the required word appears. One strategy that they could use is to eliminate those words that are least likely to fit in the gap.

Key

Story A - The Young Thief and His Mother

A young **man** had been caught in a daring act of robbery and had been condemned to be executed for it. He expressed his desire to see his **mother**, and to speak with her before he was led to execution, and of course this was granted.

When his **mother** came to him he said: "I want to whisper to you," and when she brought her ear near him, he nearly bit it off. All the bystanders were horrified, and asked him what he could mean by such brutal and inhuman conduct. "It is to punish her," he said. "When I was young I began with stealing little things, and brought them home to my **mother**. Instead of rebuking and punishing me, she laughed and said 'It will not be noticed.' It is because of her that I am here to-day."

"He is right, woman," said the priest, "Bring up a **child** in the way he should go; and when he is a **man** he will not depart from it."

Story B - The Man and His Two Wives

In the old days, when a **man** was allowed to have more than one **wife**, a middle-aged **man** had one **wife** that was old and one **wife** that was young; each loved him very much, and desired to see him like herself.

Now the **man**'s hair was turning gray, which the young **wife** did not like, as it made him look too old for her **husband**. So every night she used to comb his hair and pick out the white ones. But the older **wife** saw her **husband** growing gray with great pleasure, for she did not like to be mistaken for his **mother**. So every morning she used to arrange his hair and pick out as many of the black ones as she could.

The consequence was the **man** soon found himself entirely bald. The moral of the story? Yield to all and you will soon have nothing to yield.

Story C - The Mother and the Wolf

"Be quiet now," said a **mother** to a **child** sitting on her lap. "If you make that noise again I will throw you to the **wolf**." Now it chanced that a **wolf** was actually passing close under the window as this was said. So he crouched down by the side of the house and waited. "I am in good luck to-day," thought he. "It is sure to cry soon, and I haven't had a good for many days." So he waited and waited until at last the **child** began to cry, and the **wolf** came forward and looked up at the **mother**, wagging his tail. But all the **mother** did was to shut down the window, call for help, and the dogs of the house came rushing out. "Ah," said the **wolf** as he ran away, "Enemies' promises were made to be broken."

Here are three separate stories. There are gaps in each story. Complete the stories by choosing the most appropriate word from the following list. You may use each word more than once. At the end of the activity match the correct title with its story.

wife wolf child mother man husband

Story A

A young _____ had been caught in a daring act of robbery and had been condemned to be executed for it. He expressed his desire to see his _____, and to speak with her before he was led to execution, and of course this was granted.

When his _____ came to him he said: "I want to whisper to you," and when she brought her ear near him, he nearly bit it off. All the bystanders were horrified, and asked him what he could mean by such brutal and inhuman conduct. "It is to punish her," he said "When I was young I began with stealing little things, and brought them home to my _____. Instead of rebuking and punishing me, she laughed and said 'It will not be noticed.' It is because of her that I am here to-day."

"He is right, woman," said the priest, "Bring up a _____ in the way he should go; and when he is a _____ he will not depart from it."

Story B

In the old days, when a _____ was allowed to have more than one _____, a middle-aged _____ had one _____ that was old and one _____ that was young; each loved him very much, and desired to see him like herself.

Now the _____'s hair was turning gray, which the young _____ did not like, as it made him look too old for her _____. So every night she used to comb his hair and pick out the white ones. But the older _____ saw her _____ growing gray with great pleasure, for she did not like to be mistaken for his _____. So every morning she used to arrange his hair and pick out as many of the black ones as she could.

The consequence was the _____ soon found himself entirely bald. The moral of the story? Yield to all and you will soon have nothing to yield.

Story C

"Be quiet now," said a _____ to a _____ sitting on her lap. "If you make that noise again I will throw you to the _____." Now it chanced that a _____ was actually passing close under the window as this was said. So he crouched down by the side of the house and waited. "I am in good luck to-day," thought he. "It is sure to cry soon, and I haven't had a good for many days." So he waited and waited until at last the _____ began to cry, and the _____ came forward and looked up at the _____, wagging his tail. But all the _____ did was to shut down the window, call for help, and the dogs of the house came rushing out. "Ah," said the _____ as he ran away, "Enemies' promises were made to be broken."

Which of these titles belongs to Story A, B and C ?

The Man and His Two Wives
The Young Thief and His Mother
The Mother and the Wolf

23 Guess The Meaning

Activity

Developing reading comprehension skills

Instructions

In this activity students are required to guessing the meaning of words that they will not find in any dictionary. The purpose is to encourage students to guess the meaning of unknown words from the context. Copy the story below, and the instructions that go with it. Point out that it is unlikely that they will guess the real meaning of the unknown words but they should be able to identify what part of speech the word is (noun, verb etc).

Key

Accept other possible words. Students are unlikely to work out that an *ashugora* is an ass or mule, but the better students should recognise it as an animal. Similarly they should be able to deduce what the other unknown words might refer to, and at least work out the parts of speech. There may be several possible correct answers that students produce. Here is the official version.

The Ass in the Lion's Skin

An **Ass** once **found**, by accident, a **Lion's skin** which the hunters had left out in the sun to dry. He put it on and went towards his native village. All fled at his approach, both men and animals, and he was a proud **Ass** that day. In his delight he lifted up his **voice** and brayed, but then every one knew him, and his **owner** came up and gave him a **beating** for the fright he had caused. And shortly afterwards a Fox came up to him and said: "Ah, I knew you by your **voice**."

Fine clothes may disguise, but silly words will disclose a fool.

In the following story there are some highlighted words that you will not know - they're not in any dictionary! Can you work out what the words might mean? The context in which the words appear may help you. You may find several possible correct answers.

An **ashugora** once **blurgiced**, by accident, a **laksa's thromboi** which the hunters had left out in the sun to dry. He put it on and went towards his native village. All fled at his approach, both men and animals, and he was a proud **ashugora** that day. In his delight he lifted up his **carrynx** and brayed, but then every one knew him, and his **binsai** came up and gave him a **snarkfurling** for the fright he had caused. And shortly afterwards a Fox came up to him and said: "Ah, I knew you by your **carrynx**."

24 Mixed-up Sentences

Activity

Reading comprehension and information exchange

Instructions

Copy the sentences below and cut into strips. Tell your students that they are going to put the sentences in sequence to form a story. Place all the strips face down and in a random order on a table away from the group.

Each student takes a turn to approach the table, turns over one of the remaining strips, reads the sentence and remembers the content. The strip is then turned down in a separate area of the table and the student returns to the group.

The student then tells the rest of the group the sentence, in his/her own words. Another student writes down the content of the recalled sentence. Continue the exercise with a different student approaching the table until all eight sentences have been read and remembered. The group then works together to decide the correct sequence.

Copy and cut the following sentences into strips. They are in the correct order here.

The Two Travellers and the Bear.

Two travellers were travelling together through a wood, when a bear rushed out upon them.

One of the travellers happened to be in front and, seizing hold of the branch of a tree, hid himself among the leaves.

The other, seeing no way out, threw himself flat down upon the ground, with his face in the dust.

The bear, coming up to him, put his muzzle close to his ear, and sniffed.

But at last with a growl he shook his head and slouched off, for bears will not touch dead meat.

Then the traveller in the tree came down to his companion and, laughing, said "What was it that the bear whispered to you?"

"He told me," said the other, "Never trust a friend who deserts you at a pinch."

25 Prepositions

Activity Practice in using prepositions

Instructions

Copy the incomplete story below. Ask students to complete it with an appropriate preposition.

Key

The Two Pots

Two pots had been left **on** the bank of a river, one **of** brass, and one **of** earthenware. When the tide rose they both floated **off down** the stream. Now the earthenware pot tried its best to keep away **from** the brass one, which cried out: "Fear nothing, friend, I will not strike you."

"But I may come **in** contact **with** you," said the other, "if I come too close; and whether I hit you, or you hit me, I shall suffer **for** it. So, let's try to stay away **from** each other."

The strong and the weak cannot keep company.

Complete the following story using the correct preposition.

The Two Pots

Two pots had been left _____ the bank of a river, one _____ brass, and one _____ earthenware. When the tide rose they both floated _____ _____ the stream. Now the earthenware pot tried its best to keep away _____ the brass one, which cried out: "Fear nothing, friend, I will not strike you."

"But I may come _____ contact _____ you," said the other, "if I come too close; and whether I hit you, or you hit me, I shall suffer _____ it. So, let's try to stay away _____ each other.""

The strong and the weak cannot keep company.

26 Creative Writing

Activity

Constructing sentences and a story from information given

Instructions

Copy the instructions and the list of words at the bottom of the page. Students may work on their own, or the exercise may be done as a class exercise where you write the suggested sentences on the board.

Key

Students' stories will almost certainly differ from this version. Students should be given credit for any story as long as the sentences are grammatically correct and only the words in the list are used. The original version in which the words in the list appear is given below.

The Fisherman and the Little Fish

A fisherman caught just one little fish. "Let me go, please," said the fish. "I am too small for you. Put me back into the river and I shall soon grow, then you can eat me."

"No, my little fish," said the fisherman, "I have you now. I may not catch you again."

A little thing in hand is worth more than a great thing in prospect. (The moral of story is not included in the word list)

Construct at least five grammatically correct sentences using only the words below. Arrange the sentences you construct into a story. You may use each word as many times as you like, but you should try to use ALL the words at least once. Add punctuation as necessary. At the end of the exercise exchange your story with another student's and check their grammar. Compare your story with your teacher's story.

A		
again		
am	little	
and	may	
back	me	said
can	me	shall
catch	me	small
caught	my	soon
eat	no	the
fish	not	then
fisherman	now	too
for	one	you
go	please	
grow	Put	
have	river	
I		
into		
just		
let		

27 Vocabulary

Activity

Reading comprehension and vocabulary

Instructions

Copy the text and the questions at the bottom of the page for students

Key

- 1 extremely valuable - precious
- 2 to remove - to put out
- 3 to be unable to accept that someone should have something - cannot bear to think
- 4 greedy - avaricious
- 5 greed - avarice
- 6 jealousy - envy
- 7 jealous - envious
- 8 one's greatest wish - one's heart's desire
- 9 sadness - grief
- 10 wicked acts - vices

Skim read the following story, then read in detail and answer the questions at the end.

Avaricious and Envious

Two neighbours came before Jupiter and prayed him to grant their hearts' desire. Now one was full of avarice, and the other eaten up with envy. So to punish them both, Jupiter granted that each might have whatever he wished for himself, but only on condition that his neighbour had twice as much.

The avaricious man prayed to have a room full of gold. No sooner said than done; but all his joy was turned to grief when he found that his neighbour had two rooms full of the precious metal.

Then came the turn of the envious man, who could not bear to think that his neighbour had any joy at all. So he prayed that he might have one of his own eyes put out, by which means his companion would become totally blind.

Vices are their own punishment.

Find a word or phrase in the story that has the same meaning as:

- 1 extremely valuable
- 2 to remove
- 3 to be unable to accept that someone should have something
- 4 greedy
- 5 greed
- 6 jealousy
- 7 jealous
- 8 one's greatest wish
- 9 sadness
- 10 wicked acts

28 Mixed-up Sentences

Activity

Reading comprehension

Instructions

Copy the page that follows containing the mixed-up sentences, one copy for each group of students. Ask the students in each group to re-arrange the sentences to make an interesting story.

Key

The sequence in which the sentences appear is given below.

The Wind and the Sun

The Wind and the Sun were disputing which was the stronger.

Suddenly they saw a traveller coming down the road, and

the Sun said: "I see a way to decide our dispute.

Whichever of us can cause that traveller to take off his cloak shall be regarded as the stronger. You begin."

So the Sun retired behind a cloud, and the Wind began to blow as hard as it could upon the traveller.

But the harder he blew the more closely the traveller wrapped his coat round him, till at last the Wind had to give up in despair.

Then the Sun came out and shone in all his glory upon the traveller, who soon found it too hot to walk with his coat on.

Kindness effects more than severity.

Teacher Activity ~ Create an activity from this fable

The Labourer and the Nightingale

A labourer lay listening to a nightingale's song throughout the summer night. So pleased was he with it that the next night he set a trap for it and captured it. "Now that I have caught you," he cried, "you will always sing to me."

"We nightingales never sing in a cage," said the bird.

"Then I'll eat you," said the labourer, "I have heard that nightingale on toast is quite delicious."

"Please don't kill me," pleaded the nightingale, "but let me free, and I'll tell you three things worth far more than my poor body." The labourer let him loose, and he flew up to a branch of a tree and said: "Firstly, never believe a captive's promise. Secondly, keep what you have. And the third piece of advice is: Do not grieve for what is lost forever." Then the song-bird flew away, never to return.

Put the sentences below in the correct sequence to make an interesting story. One of the sentences is the title. One sentence is the moral of the story and appears as the last sentence.

Suddenly they saw a traveller coming down the road, and

Then the Sun came out and shone in all his glory upon the traveller, who soon found it too hot to walk with his coat on.

So the Sun retired behind a cloud, and the Wind began to blow as hard as it could upon the traveller.

Whichever of us can cause that traveller to take off his cloak shall be regarded as the stronger. You begin."

Kindness effects more than severity.

The Wind and the Sun were disputing which was the stronger.

The Wind and the Sun

the Sun said: "I see a way to decide our dispute.

But the harder he blew the more closely the traveller wrapped his coat round him, till at last the Wind had to give up in despair.

29 Creative Writing

Activity Developing writing skills

Instructions

This is an exercise in creative writing. Write up the rules on the board or dictate the following. The rules for writing are that the story must :

- begin with this sentence:
 " A man and his son were once going with their donkey to the market."
- end with
 "If you try to please everyone, you will please no one."
- include the answers to the following questions

 What did the farmer say to the man?
 Why did the group of men think the son was lazy?
 What did the man do when he overheard the two women speaking?
 Why did people laugh when they arrived at the town?
 What happened to the donkey at the bridge?
- have a suitable title and have no more than 300 words.

Key

The full text of the fable upon which this exercise is based is given below.

The Man, the Boy, and the Donkey

A man and his son were once going with their donkey to the market. As they were walking along a farmer passed them and said: "You fools, what is a donkey for but to ride upon?"

So the man put the boy on the donkey and they went on their way. But soon they passed a group of men, one of whom said: "See that lazy youngster, he lets his father walk while he rides."

So the man ordered his boy to get off, and got on himself. But they hadn't gone far when they passed two women, one of whom said to the other: "Shame on that lazy lout to let his poor little son trudge along."

Well, the man didn't know what to do, but at last he took his boy up before him on the donkey. By this time they had come to the town, and the passers-by began to jeer and point at them. The man stopped and asked what they were scoffing at. The men said: "Aren't you ashamed of yourself for overloading that poor donkey of yours?"

The man and boy got off and tried to think what to do. They thought about it until at last they cut down a pole, tied the donkey's feet to it, and raised the pole and the donkey to their shoulders. They went along amid the laughter of all who met them till they came to the bridge, when the donkey, getting one of his feet loose, kicked out and caused the boy to drop his end of the pole. In the struggle the donkey fell over the bridge and drowned in the river.

"That will teach you," said an old man who had been following them. "If you try to please everyone, you will please no one."

30 Mixed-up Paragraphs

Activity

Reading comprehension

Instructions

Give a copy of the following page to each student. Allow students time to read the texts.

Key

The Miser and His Gold

Once upon a time there was a miser who used to hide his gold at the foot of a tree in his garden; but every week he used to go and dig it up and gloat over his gains. A robber, who had noticed this, went and dug up the gold and made off with it.

When the miser next came to gloat over his treasures, he found nothing but the empty hole. He tore his hair, and raised such an outcry that all the neighbours came around him, and he told them how he used to come and visit his gold.

"Did you ever take any of it out?" asked one of them. "No," said he, "I only came to look at it."

"Then come again and look at the hole," said a neighbour; "it will do you just as much good - wealth unused might as well not exist."

The Fox Without a Tail

It happened that a fox caught its tail in a trap, and in struggling to release himself lost all of it but the stump. At first he was ashamed to show himself among his fellow foxes.

But at last he determined to put a bolder face upon his misfortune, and summoned all the foxes to a general meeting to consider a proposal which he had to place before them. When they had assembled together the fox proposed that they should all do away with their tails.

He pointed out how inconvenient a tail was when they were pursued by their enemies, the dogs; how much it was in the way when they desired to sit down and hold a friendly conversation with one another.

He failed to see any advantage in carrying about such a useless encumbrance. "That is all very well," said one of the older foxes; "but I do not think you would have recommended us to dispense with our chief ornament if you had not happened to lose it yourself." 'Distrust interested advice' is the moral of this story.

Belling the Cat

Long ago, the mice had a general council to consider what measures they could take to outwit their common enemy, the cat. Some said this, and some said that; but at last a young mouse got up and said he had a proposal to make, which he thought would meet the case.

"You will all agree," said he, "that our chief danger consists in the sly and treacherous manner in which the enemy approaches us. Now, if we could receive some signal of her approach, we could easily escape from her.

I venture, therefore to propose that a small bell be procured, and attached by a ribbon round the neck of the cat. By this means we should always know when she was about, and could easily retire while she was in the neighbourhood."

This proposal met with general applause, until an old mouse got up and said: "That is all very well, but who is to bell the cat?" The mice looked at one another and nobody spoke. Then the old mouse said: "It is easy to propose impossible remedies."

Rearrange the following paragraphs to make three separate stories and choose the correct titles from this list:

Belling the Cat	The Miser and his Cat
The Miser and the Cat	The Fox Without a Tail
The Cat without a Tail	Removing the Cat's Tail
The Miser and his Gold	

"Did you ever take any of it out?" asked one of them. "No," said he, "I only came to look at it."
"Then come again and look at the hole," said a neighbour; "it will do you just as much good - wealth unused might as well not exist."

I venture, therefore to propose that a small bell be procured, and attached by a ribbon round the neck of the cat. By this means we should always know when she was about, and could easily retire while she was in the neighbourhood."

He pointed out how inconvenient a tail was when they were pursued by their enemies, the dogs; how much it was in the way when they desired to sit down and hold a friendly conversation with one another.

It happened that a fox caught its tail in a trap, and in struggling to release himself lost all of it but the stump. At first he was ashamed to show himself among his fellow foxes.

"You will all agree," said he, "that our chief danger consists in the sly and treacherous manner in which the enemy approaches us. Now, if we could receive some signal of her approach, we could easily escape from her.

Once upon a time there was a miser who used to hide his gold at the foot of a tree in his garden; but every week he used to go and dig it up and gloat over his gains. A robber, who had noticed this, went and dug up the gold and made off with it.

Long ago, the mice had a general council to consider what measures they could take to outwit their common enemy, the cat. Some said this, and some said that; but at last a young mouse got up and said he had a proposal to make, which he thought would meet the case.

But at last he determined to put a bolder face upon his misfortune, and summoned all the foxes to a general meeting to consider a proposal which he had to place before them. When they had assembled together the fox proposed that they should all do away with their tails.

He failed to see any advantage in carrying about such a useless encumbrance. "That is all very well," said one of the older foxes; "but I do not think you would have recommended us to dispense with our chief ornament if you had not happened to lose it yourself." 'Distrust interested advice' is the moral of this story.

When the miser next came to gloat over his treasures, he found nothing but the empty hole. He tore his hair, and raised such an outcry that all the neighbours came around him, and he told them how he used to come and visit his gold.

This proposal met with general applause, until an old mouse got up and said: "That is all very well, but who is to bell the cat?" The mice looked at one another and nobody spoke. Then the old mouse said: "It is easy to propose impossible remedies."

31 What Version Is Correct?

Activity

Reading comprehension and information exchange

Instructions

In this activity students work in pairs. Each student is given a different version of a story. The two versions differ in a number of words, but only one version of the story is correct for each difference. Give one student version A and the other version B. Allow about 5 minutes for each student to silently read through his/her version of the story. Tell the students that as they read through their versions they may notice some text that doesn't quite fit or appears illogical. They should just make a note of it at this stage and continue to read the rest of their versions.

The students then work in pairs taking it in turns to read their sentences to each other. Where there is a difference they must decide which version is correct. Remind students that version A could be correct for some differences and version B correct for other differences.

You can start students off with the first difference in the first sentence as an example; Version A refers to an eagle, version B refers to an aircraft. In this case version A is correct because an aircraft cannot be wounded or killed.

Key

At the end of the activity check the students' answers against this correct version:

The Eagle and the Arrow

An **eagle** was soaring through the **sky** when suddenly it heard the **whizz** of an arrow as it pierced its skin. It realised that it had been **mortally wounded**. Slowly it **fluttered** down to the earth, with its **blood** pouring out of it. Looking down upon the arrow with which it had been pierced, it found that the **shaft** of the **arrow** had been built with one of its own feathers. "Alas!" it cried, as it **died**, "We often give our **enemies** the means to destroy us."

Teacher Activity ~ Create an activity from this fable

The Mule's Brains

The lion and the fox went hunting together. The lion, on the advice of the fox, sent a message to the mule, proposing to make an alliance between their two families. The mule came to the place of meeting, overjoyed at the prospect of a royal alliance. But when he came there the lion simply pounced on the mule and killed it, and said to the fox: "Here is our dinner for to-day. Watch you here while I go and have a nap. Woe betide you if you touch my prey." The lion went away and the fox waited; but finding that his master did not return, ventured to take out the brains of the mule and ate them up. When the lion came back he soon noticed the absence of the brains, and asked the fox in a terrible voice: "What have you done with the brains?"

"Brains, your Majesty! it had none, or it would never have fallen into your trap."

Wit has always an answer ready.

Version A - Student 1

Do not show this to the other student. Spend a few minutes reading the text then work with the other student taking it in turns to read aloud each other's sentences. If some of the sentences are not the same then decide whose version is correct. Sometimes this version will be correct, sometimes the other version will be correct. There will be clues in the story to help you decide.

An aircraft was soaring through the sky when suddenly it heard the whizz of an arrow as it pierced its skin. It realised that it had been mortally wounded. Slowly it floated down to the earth, with its fuel pouring out of it. Looking down upon the arrow with which it had been pierced, it found that the shaft of the arrow had been built with one of its own feathers. "Alas!" it cried, as it died, "We often give our enemies the means to destroy us."

Version B - Student 2

Do not show this to the other student. Spend a few minutes reading the text then work with the other student taking it in turns to read aloud each other's sentences. If some of the sentences are not the same then decide whose version is correct. Sometimes this version will be correct, sometimes the other version will be correct. There will be clues in the story to help you decide.

An eagle was soaring through the sea when suddenly it heard the bang of an arrow as it pierced its skin. It realised that it had been killed. Slowly it fluttered down to the earth, with its blood pouring out of it. Looking down upon the arrow with which it had been pierced, it found that the tip of the missile had been built with one of its own feathers. "Alas!" it cried, as it flew away, "We often give our friends the means to destroy us."

32 Telling A Story

Activity

Listening comprehension and information exchange

Instructions

Select four of your best students and send them outside the room for about 15 minutes with a separate exercise to keep them busy. While they are outside the room dictate the story below, to the rest of the group. Explain any unknown vocabulary.

Choose or ask a student to prepare to read the story aloud to the first of the group of four (student A) when he/she is invited back into to the room. Student A listens to the story and is allowed to ask two questions about it. Student B is invited into the room and A tells the story to B, who in turn is allowed to ask two questions if necessary. C is invited in and the process is repeated with B telling the story to C, who is also allowed to ask two questions. Finally D is called back in and C tells the story to D. (Students A, B, C and D should not make notes on what they hear).

In the meantime the group in the room makes notes under three headings: 'information added', 'information left out' and 'information changed', as the story telling progresses from A to D.

At the end write up the three headings on the board and ask students to volunteer what was added, omitted and changed.

Key

There are no correct answers as such. The exercise is designed as an exercise in listening skills and information exchange. Here is the story to dictate.

The Milkmaid and Her Bucket

Patty the Milkmaid was going to market carrying her milk in a bucket on her head. As she went along she began calculating what she would do with the money she would get for the milk. "I'll buy some chickens from Farmer Brown," said she, "and they will lay eggs each morning, which I will sell to the parson's wife. With the money that I get from the sale of these eggs I'll buy myself a new blue cotton dress and matching hat; and when I go to town, all the young men will come up and chat with me. Polly Shaw will be jealous, but I don't care. I shall just look at her and toss my head like this." As she spoke she tossed her head back, the bucket fell off it, and the milk was spilt. So she had to go home and tell her mother what had occurred.

"Ah, my child," said the mother, "You should never count your chickens before they are hatched."

Teacher Activity ~ Create an activity from this fable

The Trumpeter Taken Prisoner

A trumpeter during a battle ventured too near the enemy and was captured by them. They were about to proceed to put him to death when he begged them to hear his plea for mercy. "I do not fight," said he, "and indeed carry no weapon; I only blow this trumpet, and surely that cannot harm you; then why should you kill me?" "You may not fight yourself," said the others, "but you encourage and guide your men to the fight." *Words may be deeds.*