

How Beetle Got Her Coat

A folktale from Brazil

Recommended Key Stage: 1

Synopsis

The rat laughs at the beetle for being so slow. The rat laughs so loud he gets the attention of the parrot who proposes a race. The winner will get a coat of any colour of their choosing. The rat is certain he'll win and agrees but after they start, he discovers that no matter how fast he runs, the beetle is always ahead. They race across land and water, until finally they reach the end, with beetle winning easily. The rat asks how she did it when she walks so slowly and she says he never asked before, but she has beautiful wings.

Part 1: Share the Story

Show Brazil on a map to students. Show the journey the story has taken from Brazil to Britain and explain how stories can travel. Show them photos of beetles and the Brazilian flag.

Tell the story of How the Beetle Got Her Coat to the students.

Top storytelling tips:

- Learn the story beforehand so that you can be expressive and maintain eye contact with the students.
- Use actions and sound effects and encourage the students to join in.
- Show the characters racing across different locations (in the rainforest, across the river) to create variety
- Show how the rat moves through each location and get the children to imitate
- For younger children use a toy beetle or rat other props to bring the story to life.
- Find one or two moments in the story to stop and ask the students to predict what is going to happen next, or how they would feel if they were the characters
- Decide whether your beetle character should change emotionally or remain the same throughout.

Part 2: Discuss the story

Use the questions below to begin a discussion about the story

Questions
• Why does rat speak to beetle that way? • Why did parrot suggest a race? • Should beetle have told rat herself about her wing? • What was rat's biggest mistake? • How do you think the beetle felt at the end?

Part 3: Play the Story

Activities
Hot Seat As a class brainstorm possible questions to ask characters from the story: - <i>How did you feel when...? - What was it like when...?</i> - <i>Did you ever think that your friend would ever act like that?</i> - <i>Would you do anything differently if you had the chance?</i> - <i>What would you say to beetle/rat ... now?</i> - <i>Why did you decide to have a race?</i> - <i>Where did the race happen?</i> - <i>Why did you choose to ... etc.</i> • One person then takes the hotseat, as one of the characters, and the rest of the class ask questions, to which the person in the hotseat responds in character. • It's always a good idea to demonstrate this to younger students so they understand the concept. Show the class how to 'become' the character through the use of posture and voice. • Each hotseat character is questioned for one or two minutes then someone else has a turn as a different character. If the hot seater becomes stuck on a question, then it can be asked of the class to see what responses are given. • For a class used to drama activities they could split into smaller groups to question each other.
Perform the Story with a Soundscape • To begin with focus on one section of the story, for example: the beginning with beetle crawling alone. • Encourage the students to identify the feelings in this section and then to think about which sounds can be heard. Link in the use of instruments (including the voice) - how can the sounds help to convey the emotion of the scene? • Slowly develop the story through the sounds that can be heard, the emotions felt, and the instruments chosen (anything can be an instrument – fingernails on a desk for a rat scurrying, fingers on a palm for a beetle on a leaf). • Some students could be actors while others provide the soundtrack.
In the manner of • Get students to retell the story to each other, until they're confident • Ask students to retell a part of the story using a different emotion (example: tell the part of the story where parrot starts the race, but tell it in an angry way, tell the part where Beetle wins in a sorry way) • Get students to choose an emotion from the emotion wheel (see Resource A) without telling the other students. • Get them to retell the story with that feeling and the students have to guess which emotion they chose • Get the students to act out the story, only using actions, still choosing an emotion • Now the other students have to guess what's happening, retelling the story themselves and guess the emotion.

Part 4: Story Stimulus

Activities
Creative Challenge: - If the story of Rat and Beetle were to be continued how might Rat work to win Beetle's friendship back again? - Students could write letters from Rat apologising for his actions or from Beetle explaining how they felt throughout the race If the Mirror Could Talk - One student plays the rat or beetle, everyone else plays mirrors. - The mirrors stand still while the rat or beetle moves from one mirror to another - The mirror allow the student to talk to the character at a certain part of the story "What advice would you give the character?"

Part 5: Taking it Further:

Other stories about animals having a race

The Tortoise and the Hare (Aesop fable)

Mouse and Cat-The Zodiac race (Chinese fable)

Rabbit and Panther (Cameroon)

When reading for versions of the Rat and Beetle story there are different endings

- In one the Beetle chooses the colours of what will become the Brazilian flag (green, yellow and blue) and this explains why beetles are the same colours
- In another the grandmother Beetle asks for coats not for her but for her grandchildren and this explains why beetle have different colours of coats
- Choose which version works for you

Wider Curriculum Links

KS1 PSHE

- about the roles different people (e.g. acquaintances, friends and relatives) play in our lives
- to identify the people who love and care for them and what they do to help them feel cared for
- about different types of families including those that may be different to their own
- that it is important to tell someone (such as their teacher) if something about their family makes them unhappy or worried

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Resource A: Emotion Wheel

Use this with the “In the manner of” game, and to help students express the emotions the characters are feeling.

Working with Emotions



**The secret to working with emotions
is to distinguish what you really feel**

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