

Reynard the Fox (or Reynard in Heaven)

A folktale from France

Recommended Key Stage: KS1 and 2

Synopsis

Reynard is a cunning trickster, who is fed up of Wolf eating all the chickens. One day, in search of water, Reynard finds himself stuck at the bottom of a well. When Wolf appears and makes fun of him, Reynard is able to outsmart the Wolf and trick him into taking his place at the bottom of the well!

Part 1: Share the Story

Share the audio of **Reynard the Fox, told by Remco Heijmans** on The Story Museum website or tell the story yourself.

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.

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.

Part 2: Discuss the story

Use the questions below to begin a discussion about the story

KS1	KS2
- What was your favourite part of the story? Why? - What do you think Reynard was thinking when he ended up down the well? - How would you feel if you were stuck somewhere on your own? - Would you rather be the fox or the wolf in this story? Why? - What advice would you give Reynard or the Wolf?	- What was your favourite part of the story? Why? - What would you do in Reynard's situation? - Have you ever had to solve a problem on your own like this? What happened? - Who do you sympathise with more, Reynard or Wolf? Why? - Lots of stories have heroes and villains. Is it clear in this story who is who? How would you describe Reynard and Wolf?

Part 3: Play the Story

KS1 Activities	KS2 Activities
Phone call Retell the story in pairs, or in small groups with an adult leading. Pretend you are on the phone together and one person is telling the story of Reynard the Fox as if they are a character in the story. This will be conversational, so might sound like: 'You won't believe what happened today! So, I had just finished eating the most delicious chicken, when all of a sudden...' The other person on the phone can react and ask questions, such as: - What happened next? - How did you feel? - What did you think about that? If working in pairs, swap over when instructed, if working in a group, the adult might 'hang up' and call on another child to tell the story until it is finished. The child could act as another character in the story to get their point of view.	Tell me more • Divide into pairs. One person is the storyteller, and the other is the listener. • The storyteller says a sentence from part of the story: e.g. 'Reynard ate some nice chickens and then needed a drink. He found a well full of water.' • The listener then chooses something that they'd like to know more about: 'Tell me more about the well.' • The storyteller gives another sentence or two about the chosen aspect: e.g. 'The well was made of stone bricks, the size of loaves of bread, and was so deep that Reynard couldn't see the bottom.' • The listener then picks something else from what has just been said to ask about, for example: 'Tell me more about how Reynard felt looking into the well.' Responses can be kept basic, or the challenge could be to bring out the feelings and thoughts of the characters in the story.
Persuasion • In pairs – one is Reynard, and the other is the Wolf. • Reynard tries to persuade the other to come down into the well while the other character should try to persuade Reynard to give up and stay down there on their own. • What tactics will the students use to try and persuade the other to change their tasks? • Feedback ideas – was anyone persuaded to change what they were doing? What ideas did each other use (e.g. bribery, nagging).	Conscience Alley Divide the class into 2 groups. One group represents Reynard saying yes to tricking Wolf into coming down into the well, the other group represents the opposite. Groups discuss and prepare reasons to support their side of the argument. The two groups form two lines, facing each other, forming an 'alley.' One student plays the part of Reynard. They walk slowly down the alley. As they pass, each student speaks, trying to convince Reynard. For example: - Say 'yes' team: 'Wolf has never been kind to you. Why should you be kind to him now?' - Say 'no' team: 'Tricking wolf would be wrong. There must be another way.' When Reynard reaches the end of the alley, they can say which argument was more persuasive.

Part 4: Story Stimulus

Activities
Character presentations Write a letter from Reynard to one of his friends or family members, telling them about the events of the story. Think carefully about how the characters would be feeling and how this might affect what they write: • Would they leave out information? • How might they describe the other characters or events? • Would they make their feelings obvious or hide them? You could also write the response and ask questions of Reynard to continue delving deeper into the characters and their thoughts and feelings. Consider what the other characters might say to help Reynard.
Innovate the story What If...? Make a change to the story and present your new story in groups, pairs or independently. Think carefully about which part you'd like to change; here are some ideas to get you started: • What if Reynard wasn't cunning or clever? • What if it was one of Reynard's friends that came to the top of the well? • What if Wolf was kind? • What if Reynard was stuck somewhere else? • What if it was Wolf who was stuck? Present your new story as a written piece, or a performance with a narrator and actors.
Act it out Children act out different parts of the story in small groups, focusing on showing the character's emotions. Each group should choose one moment from the story to perform, e.g. 1. Wolf keeps eating all of the chickens and Reynard gets none. 2. Reynard gets up early, eats all the chickens and goes looking for water. 3. He goes down into the well and realises he is stuck. 4. Wolf comes along and Reynard gets an idea. 5. Wolf is tricked and comes down into the well, letting Reynard out. Each group should have at least one narrator telling their part of the story. When one group has finished, the next group can get up to start, so that the whole class is working together to tell the story.

Part 5: Taking it Further

Similar Stories

The Fox and The Crow

The Fox and The Tiger

How Firouz Tricked the Elephant King

Mousedeer and Tiger

Wider Curriculum Links

PSHE

- about what is kind and unkind behaviour, and how this can affect others
- how to talk about and share their opinions on things that matter to them
- about how to treat themselves and others with respect; how to be polite and courteous
- about everyday things that affect feelings and the importance of expressing feelings