

The Awongalema Tree

A folktale from East Africa

Recommended Key Stage: 1 & 2

Synopsis

The animals are starving. They know of a magical tree that grows the juiciest fruits, but no-one can remember its name. Lion decides to visit the Mountain Spirits at the top of Kilimanjaro and ask them. They tell him "Awongalema". Racing back, he steps on an ants' nest. By the time he has removed all the ants from his fur, he's forgotten the name of the tree. So, Cheetah goes, but on his way back, he runs into a termites' mound and by the time he's removed all the termites he's forgotten the name of the tree. Next is tortoise. He plods his way to the top of the mountain. On the way back he chants the name to help him remember and watches where he is going. "Haraka haraka haina baraka" – Haste makes waste. Slow down and the job will get done.

Part 1: Share the Story

Listen to **The Awongalema Tree**, told by Adam Guillain or tell the story yourself.

Top storytelling tips:

- Learn the story beforehand so that you can be expressive and maintain eye contact.
- 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 did you like/not like about the story? • Did you think lion's idea was a good one? Why? • Why do you think lion and cheetah acted like they did? • Think of a word to describe each of the three main animals. Collect them as a class and look at any similarities and differences between them. • In other versions of the story, the tree has a different name e.g. Omumborogongagabango Tree or Ungali Tree. What would you call the tree?	• Do you think lion came up with a good solution to the problem? • How would you describe the characters of the three main animals? • Would you have done something different to help you remember the name of the magic tree? • In other versions of the story, the tree has a different name e.g. Omumborogongagabango Tree or Ungali Tree. What would you call the tree?

Part 3: Play the Story

KS1 Activities	KS2 Activities
Story Walk Students stand in their own space around the room. • Tell the story slowly using Resource A • As you tell it, the students use their immediate space to mime along. • Encourage them to focus on body shapes and facial expressions to convey movement and emotions.	Whoosh! Retell the story as a whoosh with the whole class. • Sit in a circle with the children and start telling the story. • As you get to a character or part of the setting, point to a child in the circle and ask them to come to the middle to act as that part. • Support the children in making faces, using body language, etc. • After you have told a part of the story, call 'whoosh!' and ask those children to sit down, as you continue the story. • Point to more children to take their place. This way, everyone gets a chance to be in the story. • Simple props or bits of costume for the actors to wear can make the storytelling lots of fun.
How to Remember a Word Game • Split the class into teams and set up like a relay race, with half of each team at opposite ends of the playground or field. • Give the first person in each team a word or phrase to remember (ensure no-one else overhears the word). • On a signal the first person walks to the next person in the team, chanting the word quietly to help them remember it and tells the next person in their team. • The game continues until everyone has had the chance to carry the word. • Which team has finished with the closest version of the original? Note: This is a remembering game and not a whispering game and so the children can tell each other the word rather than whisper it.	Freeze Frames • Split the class into groups. • Each group chooses a short section of the story and creates a freeze frame to share. • Some members of the group can be characters in the story and some might create the setting e.g. be the mountain, the ants' nest, the tree, etc • Each group shares their freeze frame, and the rest of the class can guess which part they are being. • Organise the groups into the story order and retell the story using the freeze frames. If several groups have created the same section of the story, that's ok, that part will happen several times. E.g. the lion might kick an ants' nest more than once but the cheetah never goes up the mountain. • To avoid this you could give each group a section to focus on so that all the story is represented. • Extend by asking each group to add sound effects and/or speech and action to their freeze frame. They will only have a maximum of 30 seconds to perform.

Part 4: Story Stimulus

KS1 Activities	KS2 Activities
Apology Letter Both lion and cheetah fail to bring the name of the magic tree back to the starving animals because of things that happen on their journey. Choose one of the animals to be and write a letter to everyone explaining what went wrong and if it will change the way you behave in the future.	Morals to Stories This story has a moral to it: Haraka Haraka Haina Baraka - Hurry hurry has no blessing (or Haste makes waste) • What do you think this means in relation to the story? • Can you come up with a new moral for this story? • Pick your favourite story (oral story/book/graphic novel/film/theatre) and see if you can write a moral/a lesson to be learned.
Innovate the Story Choose another three animals to journey to the top of the mountain to find out the name of the magical tree from the Mountain Spirits. • What could go wrong for the first two animals? • How will the third one remember the name? For example: Elephant – plods along swinging its trunk. A meerkat pops out of its den and spooks the elephant who charges off. When it calms down it finds it cannot remember the name of the tree. Snake – slithers all the way there but on the way back it slips into a tree to see where its going and becomes tangled in the branches. By the time it is untangled, it can no longer remember the name of the tree. Spider – scuttles to the mountain and when it finds out the name it spins it into a web which it carries back to everyone.	

Part 5: Taking it Further

Similar Stories

Tree of Life (South America)

The Tortoise and the Hare (Europe)

Elephant and Giraffe (East Africa)

Wider Curriculum Links

KS1 Design and Technology

- use the basic principles of a healthy and varied diet to prepare dishes (e.g. design a fruit salad for everyone to eat)

KS1 PSHE

- about what keeping healthy means; different ways to keep healthy
- about foods that support good health and the risks of eating too much sugar
- about how physical activity helps us to stay healthy; and ways to be physically active everyday

KS2 PSHE

- about the elements of a balanced, healthy lifestyle
- about choices that support a healthy lifestyle, and recognise what might influence these
- about what constitutes a healthy diet; how to plan healthy meals; benefits to health and wellbeing of eating nutritionally rich foods; risks associated with not eating a healthy diet including obesity and tooth decay.
- how regular (daily/weekly) exercise benefits mental and physical health (e.g. walking or cycling to school, daily active mile); recognise opportunities to be physically active and some of the risks associated with an inactive lifestyle

Resource A – Story Walk

This version of the story is from the tortoise's point of view, but you could adapt it for any of the three main animals.

- You are a small tortoise carrying your home on your back. Show how a tortoise looks and moves.
- You are so hungry and thirsty. Hunt around for something to eat, even a small blade of grass would do.
- Lion has suggested visiting the Mountain Spirits to find out the name of the magic tree that will provide food for everyone. You are feeling hopeful. Show how hopeful you are.
- Wave goodbye to lion as he runs off so quickly. Settle down for a nap while you wait for him to return.
- Wake Up! Lion is back. Clap and wave hello. This is exciting, you'll be able to eat soon.
- Oh no, he's forgotten the name of the magic tree because of some ants. Show your frustration
- Hold your empty tummy and show how upset you are.
- It's cheetah's turn to go to the mountain. You're feeling hopeful again.
- Wave goodbye to cheetah as he rushes off. Settle down for a nap while you wait for him to return.
- Wake Up! Cheetah is back. Clap and wave hello. This is exciting, surely you'll be able to eat soon.
- Oh no, he's forgotten the name of the magic tree because of some termites. Show your frustration.
- Hold your empty tummy and show how upset you are.
- You've been chosen to journey to the mountain. Puff your chest up and show how proud you are to be given the chance.
- Off you go, plodding along, plodding along, plodding along.
- It's very high at the top of the mountain and there's a very dark cave in front of you.
- Peer into the darkness, it looks scary.
- Here's the name of the tree, "Awongalema".
- Yes, you did it. Give yourself a pat on the back.

Learning Resources

- Now, set off down the mountain chanting Awongalema, Awongalema, Awongalema.
- Make your steps match the rhythm of the word all the way back to the animals. (Keep chanting Awongalema so the children can move to the beat)
- Shout the name to the trees – “Awongalema!”
- Here comes the fruit, and everyone is eating.
- You are so happy. Show how happy you are by doing a little dance of joy.
- Now tuck into some juicy fruits, you are the hero and deserve some food.