

The Yammering Yam

An Ashanti story from Africa

Recommended Key Stage: EYFS and KS1

Synopsis

A farmer tries to dig up a yam but discovers it is too early when the yam starts to talk and tells him to put it back! Terrified, the man runs through the town where he meets a fisherman with a talking fish, a washer woman with talking clothes and finally, the chief of the village, whose chair starts to complain too! A humorous story about respect and treating everything with kindness.

Part 1: Share the Story

Share the audio of **The Yammering Yam**, as told by Adam Guillain from the 1001 stories website, or tell the story yourself. You may need to pre-teach some vocabulary, such as Yam.

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.
- Use toys or puppets to help engage younger listeners
- 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

EYFS	KS1
• What did you think of the story? • What is your favourite vegetable? • Would you like to meet a talking vegetable or animal? What would you say to it? • How do you think the farmer felt when he heard a talking yam? • Go outside - what can you see growing? What is the same/ different about the plants you can see? • How do you think we can help plants to grow?	• What did you think of the story? • What do you think your breakfast would say to you if it could talk? • What do you think the farmer was thinking/ feeling when the yam started talking to him? • How did the farmer feel by the end? Was it different to how he felt at the beginning? • Why do you think the yam was cross? Was it right to be angry? • The man ran away from the yam. What would you have done? Would you have done things differently? • How are some ways we can show respect? • What can we learn from this story?

Part 3: Play the Story

EYFS Activities	KS1 Activities
Story Walk Use the script (Resource A) to retell the story. As you retell the story the children become the characters and act out what you are reading. Stop at key points and encourage the children to think carefully about how to show the action and/or emotion of the character with their body shapes and facial expressions. Could stop to 'interview' one or two of the children so they can explain their choices.	
Role Play - Set up a farm role play area or tuff tray (this could be inside or outside) with vegetables, gardening tools, animals, costumes. - Can the children retell the story? Can they come up with their own version using a similar structure to the story they have just heard? - Encourage children to think about their feelings during role play, and how they can manage them/ help each other, and show respect.	Phone Call After the farmer has been chased by a talking yam, dog, fish and clothes, he might make a phone call to one of his friends to tell them what happened! Working in pairs, or with an adult: This will be conversational, so might sound like: 'You won't believe what happened today! I was digging up the yams as usual, when suddenly one started talking to me!' 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.
Soundscape Work as a whole class to retell the story using music and noise. - Experiment with different ways to make noise, using voice, clapping, stomping, natural materials, objects in the classroom or musical instruments– discuss what would be best for each sound (e.g. farmer digging, running, fish flapping, etc.) - Talk about body and mouth percussion – what sounds can we make this way? Where would they be best in the story? Split into groups, with each group taking one moment from the story. One by one, each group will tell their part of the story only using the sounds they have decided, until the whole story is told.	

Part 4: Story Stimulus

EYFS Activities	KS1 Activities
Speech Bubbles - Children work with an adult to think about what the characters are feeling during the story. Children could draw a picture of the farmer or the yam and with adult support can then write/partially write what they are saying at a particular point in the story. - Discuss with the children, e.g.: - How does the farmer feel when the yam starts talking? How does the yam feel when it's pulled out too early? The speech bubble might read: "I am scared", or it could read something like: "Please put me back, I am not ready!" Children could use a mirror to help them think about facial expressions attached to different emotions.	Write a letter This could be: - from the Farmer to one of his friends explaining what happened, or - a persuasive letter to the farmer from the yam telling him to be more respectful next time, or - from the chief convincing everyone that yams, fish, dogs etc don't talk. Consider the feelings of who ever is writing the letter. Have your writer explain this to whoever they are writing to – how do you want the reader to feel?
Continue the story Who else does the farmer meet? What inanimate object do they have that comes to life? Act out what happens, the interaction, the farmer's response/ reaction. Share your new story with the rest of the class.	
Plant some seeds and grow some vegetables As a class, plant some seeds of your choosing in pots or in an outside space if you have it. Talk about what they expect will happen to the seed and how long it might take. Monitor the seed over a period of time and keep a diary of its progress with words and drawings (either as a class, or as individuals). Discuss with the children what is going on underground as well as above – growing roots. As an extra challenge, you could ask the children to write a diary entry from the point of view of the seed. What is happening to it in the ground? How does it feel? What will happen when it grows? Your work around growing the seed could be a springboard for conversations around patience and helping living things in our environment.	
Nature walk Go on a nature walk in your outside environment or somewhere local. Take clipboards, paper and pencils to record what you find. Stop at various points on your walk and ask the children what can they hear/see/feel? What is growing here? Compare different plants/ trees/ wildlife that you find. Children can record their findings in different ways - draw pictures, make rubbings, write down in words, take photos if you have access to a tablet or camera. As you are walking around the space, discuss with the children how we can show respect to living things in our environment – e.g. don't pick wild plants/flowers, don't tread on certain plants, don't pick up insects or do so carefully if you know it is safe, etc.	

Part 5: Taking it Further

Similar Stories

Monkey and Mango

The Gigantic Turnip

The Big Round Pancake

The Gingerbread Man

Wider Curriculum Links

PSED – EYFS

- *Show sensitivity to their own and to others' needs*

Understanding the World – EYFS

- *Explore the natural world around them, making observations and drawing pictures of animals and plants*
- *Understand some important processes and changes in the natural world around them, including the seasons and changing states of matter*

PSHE - KS1

- *about what is kind and unkind behaviour, and how this can affect others*
- *about how to treat themselves and others with respect; how to be polite and courteous*
- *how people and other living things have different needs; about the responsibilities of caring for them*
- *about things they can do to help look after their environment*

Science – KS1

- *Pupils should use the local environment throughout the year to explore and answer questions about plants growing in their habitat. Where possible, they should observe the growth of flowers and vegetables that they have planted.*

Resource A

Story Walk Prompts

- You are a farmer. It's a beautiful, sunny day and it's time to dig up the vegetables!
- Oh look! A lovely yam growing underground!
- Grab the yam and PULL!
- What? The yam is pulling back! Try again...
- Wait...Did that yam just talk? No of course not! Was it the dog?
- Now the dog is talking! Ah! What are you going to do? Run!
- Oh, look there's the fisherman – quick tell him what happened
- Oh no, he doesn't believe you... Show me how you feel
- But wait... Now the fish is talking! Ah! What are you going to do? Run!
- Ah, there is a woman washing her clothes – she'll know what to do!
- Oh, she doesn't believe you either...
- But wait... Now her clothes are talking! Ah! What are you going to do? Run!
- Quick, everybody, we need to tell the Chief!
- Uh oh... the chief looks angry... Show me how you feel
- But now, the chair is talking! Ah! Run!
- Now you are the little yam. Someone has put you back into the soil
- You are so comfortable and happy, show me how that looks