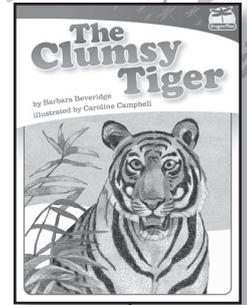


The Clumsy Tiger

retold by Barbara Beveridge

illustrated by Caroline Campbell



Overview

This text is a folk tale in which a tiger is outwitted by a cat. The tiger asks the cat to teach him to become quick and clever. The tiger learns quickly, but there is one thing the clever cat realises he shouldn't teach him! This text is a companion to the Dragonflies fluent title *The Competition*.

Suggested purposes

This text supports the comprehension strategies of summarising the main ideas, understanding the author's purpose, using illustrations to understand text, and comparing and contrasting. The storyline, illustration style, and features of a traditional tale provide opportunities for making connections between this text and *The Competition*. It provides excellent opportunities for expressive reading and retelling.

Text features (Focus on only one or two per session.)

- the clear narrative structure
- the features of a traditional tale
- the way the illustrations support and extend the ideas
- the direct address of the reader at the end of the story and the layout features (text placement, italics, and bold print) that add emphasis
- the traditional opening that sets the tale in a distant time
- the talking animals
- the battle of wits between the characters
- the humorous ending
- the lively verbs – *climb, hide, jump, pounce, prowl, run*
- the adjectives – *big, clever, clumsy, quick, slow, strong, tall*
- the use of commas to support phrasing
- the indicators of time – *once, one day, every day, soon, then*
- the use of idiom on page 8
- the opposites – *slow, quick*
- the silent letters – *climb, climbed, could, know, right, taught, through, who*
- the different sounds for “ou” – *could, enough, pounce, through*

Possible challenges

- the irregular verb “taught”
- students for whom English is a second language may need support with the idiom “that’s it!” (meaning “that’s the end”) on page 8 and “just as well” (meaning “that’s a good thing”) on page 11.

Setting the scene

Tell the students you are going to read a traditional tale from China. Find out what they know about China. You could help them locate it on a world map. Remind the students that traditional tales are a way of explaining why things are as they are. Discuss the features of a traditional tale, such as talking animals, a familiar opening phrase, a distant setting, repetition, humour, unlikely things happening, and often a surprise ending.

Look at the cover. *What do you know about tigers?*

Read the title. *What does “clumsy” mean? Does this fit with what you know about tigers? What do you think this story will tell us about the tiger?*

Back cover – Read aloud the preview question. Discuss the students’ predictions.

The first reading

Read the names of the author and the illustrator. Ask the students to read the text silently, pausing at various points for discussion or to clarify any difficulties.

Pages 2 and 3 – Clarify the setting and the main ideas. *What was the tiger’s problem?*

Page 5 – *What does the tiger like about the cat? Would you trust the tiger?*

Page 6 – You may need to reassure the students about the irregular verb “taught”. *How do you know the cat was a good teacher?*

Page 8 – *Why does the cat say “That’s it”? What is he thinking? How do you think the story might end?*

Ask the students to read to the end of the tale and check their predictions. If necessary, clarify the meaning of the idiomatic phrase “it’s just as well” on page 11.

Page 12 – *Who is the author talking to? Draw out the idea that the direct address to the reader makes the author seem more like a storyteller. How does she want you to read this page? Did this tale finish the way you thought it would? What is the main message?*

Ideas for revisiting the text (Choose only one or two per session.)

- Listen to the students reread the text to a partner, observing their use of phrasing and expression, particularly in the sections of dialogue and page 12. If necessary, model and talk about the use of commas to support phrasing.
- Recall the introductory discussion and ask the students to think, pair, and share about the features of a traditional tale. Also talk about how the author makes herself seem more like a storyteller on page 12 and by using idiom on pages 8 and 11.
- Analyse the narrative structure. Identify the problem, the complication, and the resolution.
- Ask the students to act out the meanings of some of the descriptive language, such as the verbs “pounce” and “prowl” or the adjectives “clumsy”, “quick”, “slow”, and “strong”.
- Focus on the illustrations. How do they support the ideas? You could look at how the illustrations convey the menacing nature of the tiger (the close-up on the cover and his frightening appearance on page 2). You could also discuss the changing relationship between the characters (the quick, clever cat on page 5; the co-operative, cheerful tiger on pages 6 and 7 but the threatening one on page 9; and the cat dominating the illustrations, safely and wisely out of reach, on pages 10 and 11).
- Talk about how the tiger changes over the course of the story. Compare the adjectives that describe the tiger at the beginning and at the end. Using the illustrations for inspiration, think of other adjectives to describe both characters.
- Talk about the similarities and differences between the cat and the tiger. You could record this as a Venn diagram.
- Have the students retell the tale to the group.

- If necessary, briefly remind the students how the verb “teach” changes to “taught” in the past tense. Together, think of other similar examples, such as “catch”/“caught” or “buy”/“bought”.
- Focus on the silent “b” in “climb” and “climbed”. Remind the students that there are many words in English that have silent letters and can be tricky to spell. Write other examples from the story on the board and have the students identify the silent letters.
- Write the words “could”, “enough”, “pounce”, and “through” on the board and discuss the different sounds of the “ou” digraph. Explain to the students that letters and digraphs can have many sounds so that they can draw on this awareness when they are decoding unfamiliar words.

Suggestions for further activities

- Read other examples of “trickster” characters.
- Read other traditional tales and compare their traditional tale features with those in the tiger tales.
- Act out the story or turn it into a puppet play.
- Retell the tale to the group.
- Read other folk tales about tigers.
- BLM word activity: use descriptive language

The students can identify the descriptive and lively vocabulary in the text. They can record the words that describe each character on the Venn diagram. They can then think of alternative words with the same meaning and add them to the diagram, for example, clever – smart, bright, wise.

- BLM comprehension activity: summarise the main events

The students can discuss and record the main events. They can summarise them using the model provided.