Why Mosquitos Buzz in People's Ears

An African Folktale Interactive Lesson on Cause and Effect
Recommended for Grades K-3
Click here to view video.

Based on 1976 Caldecott Award Winning Book by Verna Aardema
ISBN #0140549056

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In this lesson, students will not only learn about why mosquitos buzz in peoples' ears, but they will also learn...

- how to evaluate the accuracy of information
- how to evaluate the reliability of sources
- to understand cause and effect relationships
- how to examine problems and possible solutions from multiple perspectives
- how to apply reading skills and strategies for comprehension
- how to analyze and evaluate fictional stories from a variety of cultures and times

This instructional lesson has four components.

1. **Information** related to folktales, their purpose and why they are important to learn about today. (slides 3 and 5)

2. A **cause and effect game** that reinforces the key story elements. (slides 6 through 31)

3. A **writing activity** that extends the story and provides students with an opportunity to become a storyteller in their own right! (slides 32-36)

4. **Two additional ideas** for extending the lesson and learning by using Web 2.0 tools.

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Enduring Understandings

>A plot has a series of actions from beginning of problem through to solution.

>Many stories have underlying messages.

>Fictional stories often embrace cultural ideas.

Essential Questions

>What are the causes and effects of the problem in this folktale example?

>What is the moral of this literary selection?

>How is the African American culture represented in this folktale?
Folktales

A folktales is a story that is passed down through generations by word of mouth. The stories rarely ended with the words "and they all lived happily ever after". Usually the stories taught a lesson, and often, the character learned that lesson the hard way.

Storytellers retell folktales, adding their own personal touches to entertain listeners and to teach a moral, or lesson. Myths, tall tales, legends, fables, and fairy tales are all folktales.
**Folktales**

Common elements found in folktales are:

**Setting**: The setting is where the story takes place. It can be an actual place that exists or an imaginary place.

**Characters and conflict**: Characters in folktales can be people or talking animals who sometime have exaggerated or magical abilities. The conflicts are usually everyday problems that regular people might experience.

**Style**: The style of a folktale is informal and conversational.

**Theme**: The theme of a folktale, or the folktale's moral, is a lesson about human nature from which listeners or readers can learn.
The Cause and Effect Game

Teacher Notes:

The next series of slides provide students with an opportunity to identify the cause and effect factors related to the story conflict.

**Students touch/tap** the choice they feel is the right answer and get instant feedback that they are correct and should continue or to try again.

**Note:** the SMARTBoard **advance arrow should not be used** during this game. Students must touch/tap to play and proceed through the series of slides.
Mosquito told Iguana about the yams.  
What was the effect?

Iguana put sticks in his ears.

Iguana won't wake the sun.

Iguana spreads the alarm.
Yahoo!
You excel at cause and effect!

Keep Going!
click here
Oops!
Try again!

Go
Back!
click here
Iguana did not speak to snake.

What was the effect?

Snake fell in the nest and owlet was killed.

Snake calls to monkey.

Snake went into rabbit's hole.
Yahoo!
You excel at cause and effect!

Keep Going!
click here
Oops!
Try again!
Crow saw rabbit running for her life.

What was the effect?

Crow put sticks in his ears.

Crow won't wake the sun.

Crow spreads the alarm.
Yahoo!
You excel at cause and effect!

Keep Going!
click here
Oops! 
Try again!

Go Back!
click here
Monkey hears crow crowing loudly.
What was the effect?

Monkey fell in the nest and killed owlet.

Monkey went into rabbit's hole.

Monkey spreads the alarm.
Yahoo!
You excel at cause and effect!

Keep Going!
click here
Oops!
Try again!

Go Back!
click here
Mother Owl is sad.

What was the effect?

Mother Owl fell in the nest and killed owlet.

Mother Owl spreads the alarm.

Mother Owl won't wake the sun.
Yahoo!
You excel at cause and effect!

Keep Going!
click here
Oops!
Try again!

Go Back!
click here
Iguana misses the meeting.

What's the cause?

Python says Iguana is mad at him.

Iguana has sticks in his ears.

To this day, mosquito still buzzes in people's ears.
Yahoo!
You excel at cause and effect!

Keep Going!
click here
Oops!
Try again!

Go Back!

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Sticks are removed and Iguana says Mosquito annoyed him.

What was the cause?

Python says Iguana is mad at him.

Iguana has sticks in his ears.

Monkey blames crow.
Yahoo!
You excel at cause and effect!

Keep Going!
click here
Oops! Try again!

Go Back!

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Mosquito gets an honest answer:  

**SLAP**

What was the cause?

To this day, mosquito still buzzes in people's ears.

Iguana has sticks in his ears.

Rabbit blames python.
Yahoo!
You excel at cause and effect!

Keep Going!
click here
Oops!
Try again!

Go Back!
 click here
Thanks for Playing the Cause and Effect Game!

There is still more fun learning ahead!
Keep Going...

I don’t think these guys learned about cause and effect!
Learning How to Write Folktales

**Teacher Notes:**

1. Ask each child to **add another jungle character** to the folktale.

2. Each child must **write out the dialogue** reflecting what the character would say and do.

3. On a separate sheet of paper, ask students to **illustrate their character** in action!

4. **Scan** the students' illustrations and **type** in their stories on the next slides.

**Tech Tip:** To add more slides with the background image, right click on the slide and clone the page as many times as you have students.

**Teaching Tip 1:** You may want to print these student illustrations and folktales to compile into a class book.

**Teaching Tip 2:** You could also share with parents during an Open House event by projecting their children's work using your whiteboard technology for demonstrating ways in which you are meeting the **National Technology Standards** in your classroom.
Student Author: ______________________

<Enter the text here of the student's story.>

<Insert the scanned illustration here.>
Student Author: ______________________

<Enter the text here of the student's story.>

<Insert the scanned illustration here.>
Student Author: ______________________

<Enter the text here of the student's story.>

<Insert the scanned illustration here.>
Student Author: ______________________

<Enter the text here of the student's story.>

<Insert the scanned illustration here.>

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Making a CCC! Slide Show

Teacher Notes:

Once your students have each created a page on the background of the SMARTBoard slide, save as an image file by using the Export feature in SMARTBoard (File>Export>Image File) and putting the images into the free version of PHOTODEX ProShow slide show software. Save as an .mp4 file and upload into your CCC! system using the software features in CCC!

You'll be surprised at how your students will want to see their folktales come alive as a movie forever!

Click on the icon below to go to PHOTODEX ProShow website.
Beyond the Lesson

Teacher Notes:

It is always fun to do creative projects combining younger students with older "buddy" students. This lesson on folktales is perfect for extending beyond this lesson to include older students who can use the Web 2.0 tool iEARN Collaboration Centre website to work with other students around world sharing information on the topic of folktales.

To go to this great resource, click the icon below.
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