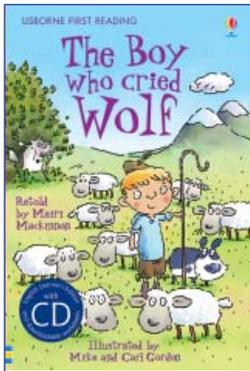


The Boy who cried Wolf • Teacher's notes



Author: based on a story by Aesop

Reader level: Lower Intermediate

Word count: 597

Lexile level: 250L

Text type: Fable/folk tale

About the story

Sam lives in a sleepy mountain village. Every day, his job is to take the sheep up the mountain and watch over them as they graze. Sam is bored and lonely, and one day he can't resist the temptation to create a little excitement. Running down to the village, he raises the alarm: "A wolf has come out of the forest!" Horrified, the villagers race up the hill, only to find that there is no wolf and the sheep are quite safe.

Sam tries the trick twice more, and fewer and fewer villagers believe him – until the time a wolf really does come, and a desperate Sam finds he can't convince anyone now that it really matters.

About the author

Some of the world's best-known fables and folktales are attributed to Aesop (e.g. The Boy who cried Wolf, The Fox and the Crow, The Hare and the Tortoise) as well as many familiar English expressions ("sour grapes", "crying wolf" and so on). However, the writer himself remains a mystery.

Tradition has it that Aesop was a slave in Ancient Greece, living from around 620-564BC. He is mentioned by the Classical authors Aristophanes, Herodotus and Plutarch, and there are a number of biographical details that are impossible to confirm – it was said, for instance, that he was physically very ugly but famous for his wisdom, and was given his freedom and became an adviser to kings and city-states before insulting the people of Delphi and being sentenced to death on a trumped-up charge.

The collection of Aesop's Fables has since been translated into many languages, and retold by famous authors including La Fontaine in France and Beatrix Potter (The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse) in the UK.

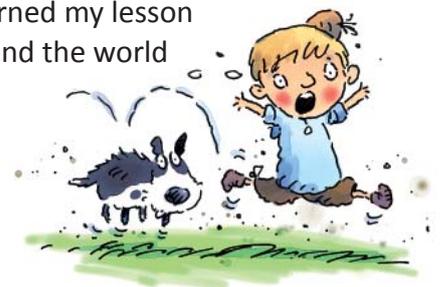
Key words

Your students might not be familiar with some of these words, which are important in the story.

cried [meaning "shouted"]	p17 forest
p3 villagers	p20 reached
p6 hill	p29 grinning
p7 meadow	p33 furious
p8 watched	p35 terrified
[meaning "guarded"]	p37 begged
p9 mutton	p43 lies
brain	p44 fables
p10 lonely	Ancient Greece
p14 moaned	p46 moral
	p47 liars
	truth

Key phrases

p7	Here we are again
p10	Same old...
p13	they didn't have much to say
p20	puffing and panting
p21	All that way, for nothing
p27	We'd better make sure
p32	You think you're so clever
p43	I've learned my lesson
p45	all around the world



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Before reading

If you can, search online for a sound clip of a wolf howling – or you may be able to imitate a wolf-howl yourself. (The class may enjoy trying out their own wolf-howls too.) You could draw the curtains or pull down the blinds first for extra atmosphere. Ask the class if they can identify the animal. What do they know about wolves? (For example: where and how they live, what they look like, what they like to eat.) Can they think of any wolves in stories? (Red Riding Hood, Peter and the Wolf etc.) Are these wolves friendly or scary?

Show students the book's cover. What can they see in the picture? What is the boy doing? You could explain what a shepherd does – moving sheep from place to place and protecting them from danger. You could add that sheep often go to graze (eat grass) high up in the hills or mountains, in places that can't be used to grow crops.

Do they think the boy is doing a good job? (He seems not to have seen the wolf...)

Reading or listening

You can listen to the story on CD or read it aloud to the students, take turns to read or read together silently. Each double page spread in the book is one track on the CD, so that you can pause between tracks or repeat tracks if your students need it. The first reading is in a British English accent, and it is followed by an American English reading. The words are exactly the same. After the story, there is a short selection of key phrases that can be used for pronunciation practice.

During reading: you might like to ask some of these questions.

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| p3 | Why do you think it says 'maybe'? | p18 | Why do the people run towards the wolf, not away from it? What are they afraid the wolf will do? |
| p6 | Does Sam look happy? Do you think his dog has an important job? | p22 | Why are the villagers angry? |
| p8 | What do you think it would be like to watch sheep all day? Why does Sam need to watch them? (They might get lost, or get stuck, or be in danger from wild animals.) | p26 | Why doesn't the man believe him? |
| p11 | What does Sam want to do instead? | p29 | What does Sam find so funny? |
| p17 | Has Sam really seen a wolf? | p33 | Does anyone else find it funny? [The dog] |
| | | p36 | Why does no one believe him? |
| | | p40 | How do you think Sam is feeling? |

After reading

Ask the students what they think about the story's ending. Some might feel that Sam got what he deserved, others might feel sorry for him because he had a lonely, boring job. What else could he have done to make his day more interesting?

Has anyone heard the expression "crying wolf" before? Now that they've read this story, can they guess what it means? Can anyone think of another example of someone pretending that something bad had happened, then not being believed when something bad really did happen? For example, Hilaire Belloc's rhyme *Matilda* tells of the little girl who called the fire brigade when the house wasn't really on fire. What do students think happened when the house *did* catch fire?

Look at the illustrations in the "About this story" section (pp 44-47). The animals in the pictures on pp44-46 appear in other Aesop's fables. Can students identify the stories? If so, can they retell the stories (or any other Aesop's fables they know) and remember the morals? Several are available as Usborne English Learners' Editions: you may already have studied, or go on to study, *King Donkey Ears*, *The Daydreamer*, *Androcles and the Lion* or *The Hare and the Tortoise*.

