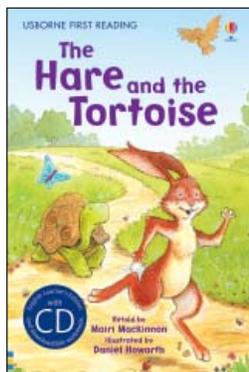


The Hare and the Tortoise • Teacher's notes



Author: Aesop, adapted by Mairi Mackinnon

Reader level: Intermediate

Word count: 667

Lexile level: 430L

Text type: Folk tale/fable

About the story

Harry Hare loves running, and is always boasting about his speed and teasing Tom Tortoise about his slowness. One day Harry is feeling especially pleased with himself, and issues an open challenge to a race. Everyone is astonished when Tom accepts. Harry trains intensively, but Tom doesn't bother. On the day of the race, Harry makes a good start but soon tires. He decides to have a nap, confident that he will still win easily. He is horrified to wake up hours later; he makes one final sprint, but is too late – Tom has crossed the finish line just ahead of him.

About the author

Some of the world's best-known fables and folk tales are attributed to Aesop (e.g. The Boy who cried Wolf, The Goose that laid the Golden Eggs, 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 authors such as 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.

hare	p29 rest
p6 history	p32 nap
p7 training	p33 shade
p8 boasting	p36 setting
record	p38 beat
p11 creature	p39 stretches
race	p40 crowd
prove	cheering
p12 plodded	p41 shell
p16 crazy	p43 dived
p19 course	p44 fables
p21 exercise	p46 moral
p26 ambled	p47 steady
p27 umpire	

Key phrases

p9	Take your time run on the spot
p13	Are you serious? that's a good one!
p15	we'll all have a good laugh
p20	there was no point
p25	to keep on
p27	On your marks, get set, go!
p29	out of sight catch my breath
p31	for a while
p33	to settle down
p34	to make one's way
p37	with a start
p42	Whatever happened to him?
p43	out of breath

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Before reading

With your students, brainstorm things that go really fast and things that go really slowly. Which do they think are the fastest and slowest? Encourage them to consider animals as well as cars, planes and people.

Search for a picture of a hare, and see if students recognize it. They may say "rabbit", and you can explain that they are from the same family, but hares are larger, have longer ears and run faster. Spell out the word to show that it is different from the hair on your head. Where do hares live? [Mountains, woods and grassland.] Search also for a picture of a tortoise – students should have no problem recognizing this one. Can they guess the story you are going to be looking at, and does anyone know it already?

Look at the cover of the book. You could compare top speeds for a tortoise and a hare – up to 70km/h (45mph) for a hare (in a town he'd be breaking the speed limit) and around 0.5km/h (0.3mph) for a tortoise (it could take him 10 minutes to cross a large classroom).

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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| pp4-5 | What is Harry's job? Do you think he's good at it? | p17 | What sort of things do you think the news reporters are saying about the race? |
| p7 | Besides "fast", can you think of any other words to describe Harry? [confident, proud, boastful...] | pp22-23 | Why do Harry's friends look so excited, and Tom's friends don't? |
| p9 | How do you think Harry behaves with Tom? | p27 | Who do you think is the umpire? What is his job? [To make sure the race is run fairly, and to judge who is the winner.] |
| pp10-11 | Do you know the names of the other animals working in the office? Who do you think is working the hardest? [Look over the page and you'll find some more; can you spot one who isn't working very hard at all?] | p35 | Can you think of some words to describe Tom's friends? [e.g. helpful, kind...] |
| p13 | Why does Harry think Tom is joking? | p40 | What do you think the crowd are cheering? |
| | | p41 | Why does Harry feel cold all over? |
| | | p43 | How does Harry feel now? How do you think Tom feels? |

After reading

Ask the students if they liked the story. Who did they want to win, Tom or Harry?

Read the **About this story** pages at the end. Can the students name any other Aesop's fables? Here are some morals from Aesop's fables, split in two. You could write them on the board in two jumbled-up columns, and ask the students to link the right pairs. Discuss what the morals mean.

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| Try hard enough... | ...and you'll get what you want. |
| If you play tricks on people... | ...don't be surprised if they play tricks on you. |
| A simple, quiet life... | ...is better than a rich and dangerous one. |
| No-one believes liars... | ...even when they tell the truth. |
| Be happy... | ...with what you have. |
| Little friends... | ...can be great friends. |

Do students know any other stories with morals?

