



Language Arts

Genre

A **Fable** is a brief story that teaches a moral, often through the actions of animals that act like people.



Literary Elements

A **Moral** is a lesson taught by a fable or story. It is usually stated outright at the end of the fable.

Personification is a literary device where human characteristics are given to animals or things.

A FABLE

by Aesop

retold by Jerry Pinkney

Introduction

The real Aesop was born a slave about the year 620 B.C. in the ancient republic of Greece, where he was later granted freedom as a reward for his learning and wit. Though he died about 565 B.C., for years his clever wisdom was passed down orally from generation to generation. Somewhere around 300 B.C., about 200 stories were gathered into a collection called *Assemblies of Aesopic Tales*. No one knows how many of the narratives attributed to Aesop were actually composed by him. Interestingly, motifs from many of them occur in the storytelling traditions of a variety of cultures—proof of the universality of the themes and lessons of these tales.

The Crow and the Pitcher

The crows speak.
This is personification.

For weeks and weeks there had been no rain. The streams and pools had dried to dust, and all of the animals were thirsty. Two crows, flying together in search of water, spotted a pitcher that had been left on a garden wall. They flew to it and saw that it was half full of water. But neither one could reach far enough inside the pitcher's narrow neck to get a drink.

"There must be a way to get that water," said the first crow. "If we think it through, we'll find an answer."

The second crow tried to push the pitcher over, straining with all of his might. But it was too heavy to budge. "It's hopeless!" he croaked, and flew away to look for water elsewhere.

But the first crow stayed by the pitcher and thought, and after a time he had an idea. Picking up some small pebbles in his beak, he dropped them one by one into the pitcher until at last the water rose to the brim. Then the clever bird happily quenched his thirst.

Wisdom and patience succeed where force fails.

The moral
of the fable.

Connect and Compare



1. Why does personification work especially well in fables? What would fables be like if they only featured humans? **Personification**
2. Why do you think an author who wanted to teach a lesson would choose to write a fable? **Analyze**
3. Compare "The Crow and the Pitcher" to "Ta-Na-E-Ka." How do the main characters in both stories use their brains to solve a problem in an unusual way? **Reading/Writing Across Texts**



Find out more about fables at www.macmillanmh.com

WRITE A

Compare-and-Contrast

ESSAY

Writer's Craft

Rearrange Ideas

Sometimes rearranging ideas makes your writing clearer. For example, when you compare and contrast, **rearrange ideas** so you tell how people or things are alike in one paragraph and how they are different in another paragraph.

I Could Be a Character in a Book

by Lourdes M.

In the first paragraph, I talk about how Mary and I are alike.

→ While reading “Ta-Na-E-Ka,” I was surprised to see how much I am like the main character, Mary. Both Mary and I have families that value tradition very much. Both of our cultures have special traditions that we celebrate. For instance, Mary took part in her Ta-Na-E-Ka when she was eleven years old and I will have my quinceañera celebration when I turn fifteen. In some Hispanic cultures, the quinceañera is a tradition that celebrates a teenage girl’s fifteenth birthday.

In the second paragraph, I arranged ideas to show how Mary and I are different.

→ I also noticed how Mary and I are different. Mary did not look forward to her Ta-Na-E-Ka; however, I am very excited about my quinceañera. Also, Mary had to go on a kind of journey for her Ta-Na-E-Ka. Even though I have the choice of taking a journey for my quinceañera, I have chosen a celebration instead. This way I can be like my mother and celebrate my quinceañera with the people I love the most—my family! Maybe one day I will write a story about my incredible quinceañera experience.

Your Turn

Write a compare-and-contrast essay in which you compare yourself with a character from a story you have read. If you do not want to write about yourself, you may compare two characters, either from the same story or different stories. Be sure to arrange ideas in your essay carefully so that your comparisons are easy to follow and understand. Use the Writer's Checklist to check your writing.

Writer's Checklist

- Ideas and Content:** Is it clear whom I am comparing? Did I point out similarities and differences?
- Organization:** Did I **rearrange ideas** in my essay around the similarities and differences of my topic?
- Voice:** Can you tell that I wrote this essay? Is my personality in my writing?
- Word Choice:** Did I use fresh and snappy words to describe my subjects?
- Sentence Fluency:** Did I use different kinds of sentences? Does my essay have natural rhythm?
- Conventions:** Did I proofread my essay, checking for proper spelling, grammar, and usage? Did I use the articles *a* and *an* correctly?