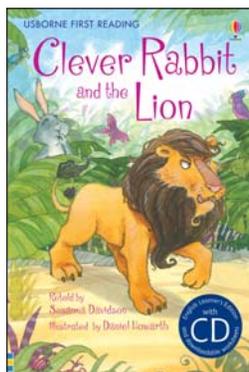


Clever Rabbit and the Lion • Teacher's notes



Author: traditional Indian fable, adapted by Susanna Davidson

Reader level: Elementary

Word count: 226

Lexile level: 260L

Text type: Fable/folk tale

About the story

Lion terrorises the other animals in the jungle and threatens to eat them all, sure that they are too small and weak to resist him. Clever Rabbit has a plan, though, and when Lion comes looking, the animals hide. Clever Rabbit tells Lion that another, bigger and fiercer lion prevented him from coming earlier. He takes Lion to see the “other lion” and shows him his own reflection in a deep river. Lion tries to attack the “other lion”, leaps into the river and is swept away. He begs for help, but the other animals remind him that they are too small and weak to do anything. Lion is never seen again.

The story is adapted from the great Indian collection of fables and folk tales, the Panchatantra, which was probably first written down in the third century BC although it brings together many much older fables. These may well have influenced the collection we know as Aesop's fables, and several stories from the Panchatantra later figure in the Arabian Nights. As in Aesop's fables, the stories are predominantly about animals, and are used to teach life lessons, although these are less overtly “moral” than Aesop's, and often more supportive of cunning than fair dealing.

Between the sixth and the fifteenth centuries, the Panchatantra was translated into Persian, Arabic, Greek, Hebrew and Latin, and from the Latin into modern European languages. It was one of the earliest books to be printed on Gutenberg's printing press, and remained popular until the late nineteenth century, although it is less well-known today.

About the author

Susanna Davidson has written over 50 books for children. She grew up in the Surrey countryside surrounded by all kinds of animals, from parakeets and terrapins to rats, rabbits and snakes. She now lives in London, writing about animals rather than living with them.

Key words

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

| | | | |
|----|---------------------------|-----|---------|
| p3 | paws | p15 | show |
| | sharp | p16 | led |
| | claws | | deep |
| p4 | jungle | | wide |
| | roared | p19 | shook |
| p5 | cried [meaning “shouted”] | p20 | leaped |
| p6 | weak | p21 | swept |
| p7 | plan | p22 | rushing |
| p8 | hid | p25 | let out |

Key phrases

| | |
|-----|---------------------------|
| p3 | great big |
| p4 | to eat [something] all up |
| p7 | Don't worry |
| p14 | Oh no, you're not |
| p21 | to be swept away |
| p22 | At last |
| p23 | never seen again |



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Before reading

Search for images of two types of jungle or grassland animals: predators such as lions, tigers, jaguars, panthers (make sure the pictures look suitably fierce) and the animals likely to be their prey (deer, wild pigs, monkeys, rabbits and other small animals). Then see if your students can divide them into two categories – they may come up with other ways of dividing the group besides hunters and hunted.

Think of some words to describe each group. Examples for the predators might be: big, hungry, scary.

Look at the book's cover. Which animals can you see? (See if your students are sharp-eyed enough to spot the butterfly, bird and two beetles as well.) Which animal looks big and fierce? Does the rabbit look scared?

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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.

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

- | | | | |
|-------|---|-----|--|
| p4 | Lion thinks he can eat the other animals because he's king of the jungle. Is that fair? | p13 | Why is Lion roaring? Why do you think he is angry? |
| p6 | Can you think of a word to describe Lion? [You might want to introduce or explain: bully.] | p14 | Can you see the other animals running away? Is Clever Rabbit scared yet? |
| pp8-9 | [It's fun to spot all the animals hiding, but be aware that this is one of the puzzles at the back of the book, so you might not want to spend too long on it at this point.] | p18 | Can Lion really see another lion? What can he see? |
| | | p24 | Who says the animals are small and weak? Who said it first? |
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Puzzles (pages 26-29)

You might like students to work on these in pairs or small groups. If so, ask the "After reading" questions before doing the puzzles.

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After reading

What do you think the message of the story is?

What do you think happened to Lion? Maybe in the end he climbed out of the river, a long way away. Do you think he had learned anything? Do you think he had changed?

