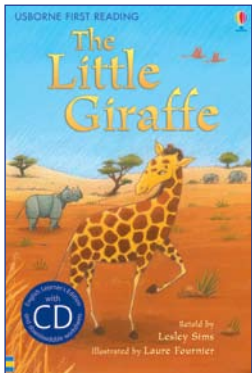


## The Little Giraffe • Teacher's notes



**Author:** traditional, retold by Lesley Sims

**Reader level:** Elementary

**Word count:** 195

**Lexile level:** 180L

**Text type:** Folk tale from East Africa

### About the story

According to this charming African tale, the first giraffe in the world had a short neck, and his best friend was Rhino. The two animals searched the dry land for plants to eat, until their hunger led them to ask a wise man for help. He promised to make them a magic drink if they came back the next day. The little giraffe returned to the wise man's house, but he didn't know where Rhino was. He drank the drink and his neck grew very long; now he could reach the leaves high in the trees. Meanwhile, Rhino had found some dry grass and forgotten all about the wise man. He was amazed to see the long-necked giraffe, but furious to find that the magic drink was all finished. Rhinos still eat dry grass and look angry today.

Both giraffes and rhinos are native to East Africa, and this traditional tale has been passed down through many generations. East Africa has an ancient tradition of herbal medicines, with thousands of plants that can be used for medicinal purposes. Traditionally, many villages would have a wise man or medicine man who could treat all manner of complaints.

### About the author

Lesley Sims always wanted to be a writer. She has written a range of stories, including funny history books and books for beginner readers. In her spare time, she likes going to plays and concerts, playing the saxophone and reading.



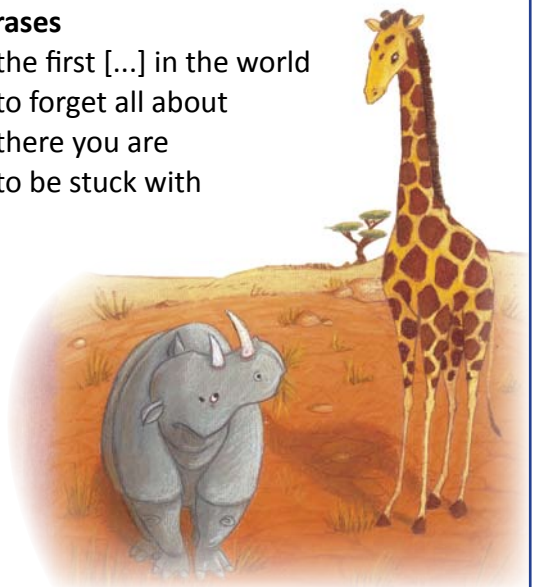
### Key words

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

|                |                            |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| giraffe        | p17 reach                  |
| p4 East Africa | leaves                     |
| p5 Rhino       | p18 found                  |
| p8 earth       | grass                      |
| p9 anywhere    | p19 not-so-little          |
| p11 wise       | p20 mine                   |
| p12 come back  | left [meaning "remaining"] |
| p13 magic      | p22 himself                |
| p14 visited    | p23 still                  |
| p16 began      |                            |
| grew           |                            |

### Key phrases

|     |                              |
|-----|------------------------------|
| p3  | the first [...] in the world |
| p18 | to forget all about          |
| p19 | there you are                |
| p21 | to be stuck with             |



# The Little Giraffe • Teacher's notes

## Before reading

Find some photos of giraffes and rhinos in their natural habitat. Brainstorm to find out what the students know about each animal. Prompt them with questions if necessary: What do they look like? Where do they live? What do they eat? Have students ever seen them in zoos or wildlife parks?

Explain that giraffes and rhinos both live in East Africa (there are also some species of rhinos in Asia), and point out the dry, sparse landscape in your photos. Do students think it is easy to find food?

Now show the class the cover of this book. Can they see anything different about this giraffe from the ones you have shown in your photos?

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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.

- |                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| p2-3 Which other animals are in this picture?                            | p18 What made Rhino forget about going to the wise man?                                                                                                                                   |
| pp6-7 What sort of food are they looking for?                            | p21 Rhino seemed happy to find some dry grass. Why is he not happy now?                                                                                                                   |
| pp8-9 Why do you think they can't find any food?                         | p23 What's Rhino doing here? [You may not want to give the word "charging", but you can explain that he is angry and he is running.] Do any other animals do this? [Bulls, elephants etc] |
| p11 Where does the wise man live?                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| pp12-13 What ingredients can you see in his hut?                         |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| p14 What's the big pot and stick for? [crushing herbs to make medicines] |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| p16 What do you think the giraffe is thinking and feeling?               |                                                                                                                                                                                           |

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## Puzzles (pages 24-29)

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

Why didn't the wise man just give the giraffe some food? Why is making him tall better? Which do you think is worse, being angry with yourself or angry with someone else?

You may want to talk more generally about folk tales: how in the past stories weren't written down, printed, bought in bookshops and read; they were told out loud by storytellers, remembered by the listeners and passed on to new generations. Folk tales often begin as imaginative ways of explaining why things are the way they are. Imagine a child asking "Why do giraffes have such long necks?" or "Why do rhinos look angry?" and a storyteller coming up with an interesting answer. That answer may then grow into a story to be told again and again.

Brainstorm some other questions which could lead to interesting stories, e.g. Why can't penguins fly? If you have time, you might like to choose a few good examples and have students work together in small groups, sketching out stories to answer the questions.

