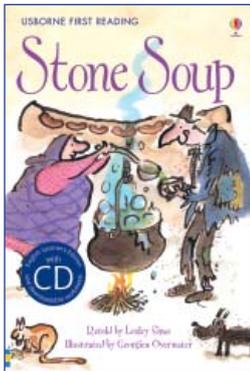


Stone Soup • Teacher's notes



Author: traditional, retold by Lesley Sims

Reader level: Elementary

Word count: 193

Lexile level: 140L

Text type: Folk tale

About the story

One evening, a poor man comes to a cottage, and asks if he might rest for a while. The old woman in the cottage is about to turn him away when he claims that he can make soup from a stone. Intrigued, she lets him in and puts a pot of water on the fire; the old man adds his stone. Tasting it, he declares it delicious, but “an onion would make it better” – and then a potato, and then some meat... Finally he serves it up. It is of course excellent, and the old woman forgets her hostility and invites him to stay for supper.

The story is told across Europe, with variations from country to country. Sometimes the old man is a tramp, sometimes a soldier or soldiers returning from the Napoleonic wars. In Scandinavia, the man uses a nail to make his soup, and in Eastern Europe and Russia, an ax or axe.

In Portugal, the story is told of a monk visiting the town of Almeirim in the Ribatejo region, where “sopa de pedra” (stone soup in Portuguese) is still served in local restaurants, made with pork, *chouriço* sausage, potatoes, onions, garlic and herbs.

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.

p3 cottage	p11 yummy
knock	p12 chopped
p8 pot	popped [meaning
p9 added	“put”]
shiny	p22 bowls
p10 bubbled	p24 pocket
tasted	p25 Stay

Key phrases

p4	May I..?
	for a while
p19	to lick your lips
p23	must be
	[supposition]



Stone Soup • Teacher's notes

Before reading

Ask the students if they like soup. Who eats soup, when and why? [e.g. it's healthy, inexpensive, good for light meals or first courses, good when the weather is cold.] How many different kinds of soup can they think of? [e.g. chicken, tomato, fish...] You could write them up on the board.

Ask if students can tell you some of the ingredients used to make soup, and write a list on the board. You could say that many soup recipes start with frying onions, then adding other vegetables, herbs and seasoning and maybe some meat. Soup needs lots of liquid too.

Show the class the book cover. Would they like to eat stone soup? What ingredients might it have? If someone told you they were going to make soup out of a stone, would you believe them?

.....

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.

- | | | | |
|-----|---|-----|--|
| p2 | How can you tell that the man is poor? | p14 | What are the cat and dog doing? |
| p5 | Why doesn't the woman want him to stay? | p20 | Who else likes meat? |
| | Would you let the man come into your house? | p21 | Who has done the most work to make the soup? |
| p8 | Why is she hanging the pot over a fire? | p24 | Is the stone really magic? Why does the man put it back in his pocket? Do you think he might use it again? |
| | How do you cook things at your home? | p25 | Why is the woman friendly towards the man now? Who else is enjoying the soup? |
| | Can you see the cat and dog? Does the cat look happy? | | |
| p11 | Do you believe the soup is yummy? | | |
-

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.

.....

After reading

Ask students if they liked the story. How would they describe the poor man? And the old woman?

Why do you think he tricked the woman with the stone? Do you think it was a mean trick?

Think about how the story works: the man starts with a stone, then adds one ingredient after another to make soup, then takes the stone out. How do you think the man might: make a fruit salad; get dressed for a special occasion; build a house? (He might have to ask more than one person!) Can you think of anything else he might do, little by little?

