

LESSON 1

Understanding Allegory

Pre-lesson Planning:

- Make sure you have a copy of 'The Tortoise and The Hare', and 'The Fox and the Crow' (they have both been included).
- Print and photocopy all accompanying worksheets for students.

Classroom Layout:

Individual Desks

Lesson Plan:

READ the fable, *The Tortoise and The Hare* to students.

DISCUSS the meaning of this fable.

Use the following questions as a guide:

- Who/what does the hare represent? And the tortoise?
- Is this just a story for children?
- What is the 'moral' of the story?
- Why tell a story like this? Why not just explain the 'moral' to people?
- Why use animals?

In essence, there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers here. Students may have differing opinions on the moral of the story; that's fine. Really, you just want to stimulate discussion and get students thinking about how fables are allegorical.

EXPLAIN that the story is an **ALLEGORY**.

allegory |'alə, gôrē|

noun (pl. **allegories**) A story, poem, or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning, typically a moral or political one: *Pilgrim's Progress* is an allegory of the spiritual journey.
• a symbol.

Allegory is a form of extended metaphor, in which objects, persons, and actions in a narrative, are equated with the meanings that lie outside the narrative itself. The underlying meaning has moral, social, religious, or political significance, and characters are often personifications of abstract ideas, such as charity, greed, or envy. Thus an allegory is a story with two meanings; a literal meaning and a symbolic meaning.

Learners should copy this definition into their books.



EXPLAIN that many allegories use animals to represent human characters, vices, types of people or qualities of human nature.

HAND OUT the worksheet *The Allegorical Meaning of Animals* and instruct students to work through it in pairs, filling it in as comprehensively as possible.

FEEDBACK and discuss what the students have decided for the animals. Some might have slightly different answers – this doesn't matter, as long as they all identify that there are human qualities often ascribed to animals (*dog – loyalty, lion – bravery, owl – wisdom etc.*).

READ the fable, *The Fox and the Crow* to students BUT don't read the final line – get the students to see if they can guess what the piece of advice was! Then discuss: *If it is an Allegory, what is the literal meaning, and what is the symbolic meaning?*



If you want to mix it up, you could play videos of these fables – just search YouTube; they are all there.

HAND OUT the worksheet *Unpacking Fables*, and instruct students to work on this individually – this should help cement their understanding of the double meanings in allegorical stories.



If there is no time left, this can be completed for homework.