

The Thirsty Crow: Storytelling tips and Learning tools

Before narration:

- Introduce this story as a folktale from India that has been passed down for many generations.
- Give some background to the kids about the story's setting.
[In South India, it is a common practice for people to set food out for crows before beginning their meal. Crows are believed to be deceased ancestors and by feeding crows, people seek their ancestor's blessings.
Cricket is a very famous sport in India. In fact, it is a national craze. Summers in India are very hot and when the lakes are dry, boys playing cricket on lake beds is a common sight.]

Storytelling:

- Voice act the crowing, "Kaa Kaa" and ask kids to join you
- Enact the story. Show facial expressions of the crow when searching for water [exhausted], when it finds very little in the pot [disappointed], and after it drinks water [happy]
- Before you narrate the part where the crow thinks of dropping the pebbles in the pot, ask the children to guess what the crow would do next. You may ask, "Can anyone guess what the crow did next?" Then reveal the ending

After narration:

- Ask the children:
 - If they know what a mirage is? Ask if they have noticed a water-like layer on the road while going on a car-ride on a sunny day? Introduce/discuss this optical illusion [A mirage is a naturally occurring optical phenomenon in which light rays are bent to produce a displaced image of distant objects or the sky. Source: Wikipedia]
 - To describe what they think they could see if they were able to fly above the ground (bird's eye view)?
 - Describe the crow using adjectives

Extended activity:

- This story can be used to teach the scientific principle of displacement:
 - Discuss why the water level in the pot rises on dropping pebbles
 - An experiment can be conducted in the class with a plastic bowl, pebbles, and water to verify
- Are crows smart? Research shows that they are. Discuss this topic with the children

Reading Comprehension:

Ask the children:

- 1) What do you think the meaning of "scavenging" is?
- 2) What is the word closest in meaning to "exhausted" in the story?
- 3) Can you think of a word to complete the phrase: parched _____
- 4) Why was the crow seeing illusions?
- 5) Why couldn't Kaa initially drink the water in the pot?
- 6) "Thank heavens I paid attention in my science class!" Why does Kaa say this?
- 7) Imagine what the garden with the pot would look like and describe it in your own words in a few sentences

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Answer Key:

- 1) To search for food, especially leftovers
- 2) Tired
- 3) Earth
- 4) The heat, exhaustion, and thirst were creating illusions
- 5) The water level was not high enough, and Kaua didn't have a long beak
- 6) The volume of water displaced is equal to the volume of the pebbles dropped in the pot.
Hence water level rises with each pebble until it reaches the top where Kaua can drink it.
Kaua wouldn't have known this if he had not paid attention in science class!
- 7) Left up to the students' creativity