Title/Author: *Tops and Bottoms* by Janet Stevens

Suggested Time to Spend: 5 Days (Recommendation: at least 20 minutes per day)

Common Core grade-level ELA/Literacy Standards: RL.K.1, RL.K.2, RL.K.3, RL.K.4, RL.K.7, RL.K.10; W.K.2, W.K.8; SL.K.1, SL.K.2, SL.K.3; L.K.1, L.K.2, L.K.4

Lesson Objective:

Students will listen to an illustrative literary book read aloud and use literacy skills (reading, writing, discussion, and listening) to understand the author’s intended lesson in the book.

Teacher Instructions

**Before the Lesson**

1. Read the Big Ideas, Key Understandings, and the Synopsis below. **Please do not read this to the students**. This is a description to help you prepare to teach the book and be clear about what you want your children to take away from the work.

Big Ideas/Key Understandings/Focusing Question

* Hare has strong knowledge of how plants grow and uses this knowledge to trick Bear into letting him grow and harvest crops on the bear’s land.
* How does Hare trick Bear? What is the lesson the author is trying to teach us through this story?
* One key takeaway is that it’s important to do your own work and not let someone else do your work for you (Bear) and that being clever can help you overcome difficulties (Hare).

Synopsis

This book is a trickster tale about Hare and Bear. Hare is in debt and needs money so he can feed his family. Hare convinces the lazy Bear to become business partners and lets the bear choose whether he will get the tops or bottoms of the crops that hare plants. Each time, Bear chooses and then Hare plants the kind of plant that will yield *him,* not Bear, results. For example, when Bear chooses the tops of the plants, Hare plants crops that have only edible bottoms (such as carrots). When Bear chooses bottoms, Hare plants crops that are edible only on the top such as lettuce. Bear finally gets angry and decides that he will not sleep through the planting and harvest time anymore and will do his own work.

1. Go to the last page of the lesson and review “What Makes This Read-Aloud Complex.” This was created for you as part of the lesson and will give you guidance about what the lesson writers saw as the sources of complexity or key access points for this book. You will of course evaluate text complexity with your own students in mind, and make adjustments to the lesson pacing and even the suggested activities and questions.
2. Read the entire book, adding your own insights to the understandings identified. Also note the stopping points for the text-inspired questions and activities. *Hint: you may want to copy the questions vocabulary words and activities over onto sticky notes so they can be stuck to the right pages for each day’s questions and vocabulary work.*
3. Pages are numbered starting with the first page of the story (“Once upon a time…”) as page 1, the next (Not far down the road…) as page 2, and so on. You may want to number the pages to make it easier for planning and rereading purposes.

*Note to teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs): Read Aloud Project Lessons are designed for children who cannot read yet for themselves. They are highly interactive and have many scaffolds built into the brief daily lessons to support reading comprehension. Because of this, they are filled with scaffolds that are appropriate for English Language Learners who, by definition, are developing language and learning to read (English). This read aloud text includes complex features which offer many opportunities for learning, but at the same time includes supports and structures to make the text accessible to even the youngest students.*

*This lesson includes features that align to best practices for supporting English Language Learners. Some of the supports you may see built into this, and /or other Read Aloud Project lessons, assist non-native speakers in the following ways:*

* *These lessons include embedded vocabulary scaffolds that help students acquire new vocabulary in the context of reading. They feature multi-modal ways of learning new words, including prompts for where to use visual representations, the inclusion of student-friendly definitions, built-in opportunities to use newly acquired vocabulary through discussion or activities, and featured academic vocabulary for deeper study.*
* *These lessons also include embedded scaffolds to help students make meaning of the text itself. It calls out opportunities for paired or small group discussion, includes recommendations for ways in which visuals, videos, and/or graphic organizers could aid in understanding, provides a mix of questions (both factual and inferential) to guide students gradually toward deeper understanding, and offers recommendations for supplementary texts to build background knowledge supporting the content in the anchor text.*
* *These lessons feature embedded supports to aid students in developing their overall language and communication skills by featuring scaffolds such as sentence frames for discussion and written work (more guidance available* [here](https://achievethecore.org/page/3159/ell-supports-for-writing-and-discussion)*) as well as writing opportunities (and the inclusion of graphic organizers to scaffold the writing process). These supports help students develop and use newly acquired vocabulary and text-based content knowledge.*

The Lesson – Questions, Activities, and Tasks

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| TEACHER NOTE: Number the pages starting with the first page of the text and thereafter number each vertical set of two pages sequential numbers. | |
| **Questions/Activities/Vocabulary/Tasks** | **Expected Outcome or Response (for each)** |
| **FIRST READING:**  Before reading the story, show how the book opens in an unusual way. Discuss the title and how the book opens. Ask, “What is the top of this book?” “What is the bottom of this book?” “How do you know?’  Read aloud the entire book with minimal interruptions. Stop to provide word meanings or clarify only when you know the majority of your students will be confused.  Because this book uses a lot of dialogue, use your voice to distinguish between the characters. | Allow students to explore how this book opens in an unusual way. Use another book to show the expected way to open it.  The goal here is for students to enjoy the book, both writing and pictures, and to experience it as a whole. This will give them some context and sense of completion before they dive into examining the parts of the book more carefully. |
| **SECOND READING:**  Say: “Today we’re going to reread *Tops and Bottoms* and we’re going to focus on the main characters of Bear and Hare. “  Create a whole class t-chart that lists Bear and Hare as headings  Read page 1 and stop. The author says that the father bear gave all of his wealth to his son. What clues are on this page to help us understand what “wealth” means?  What are some words the author uses to describe Bear?  What type of character is Bear? How do you know? (Add student responses to T-chart.)  Read page 2. What clues are on the page to help us describe Hare? (Add student responses to T chart.) | “… lots of money and lots of land” tells what “wealth” means.  Bear is lazy because it says, “But all bear wanted to do was sleep.”  Hare is “clever.” Explore with students what it means to be clever. Someone who is clever is smart and has good ideas. But Hare does not have any money because he foolishly lost a bet.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Bear** | **Hare** | | * lazy * wealthy, lots of money | * clever * poor * gets into trouble | |
| **THIRD READING:**  Before rereading pages 3-6, place a large piece of brown butcher paper on the board and have separate pictures of carrots with tops, radishes with tops, beets with tops, lettuce, broccoli, celery, and corn with stalks, tassels and husks available to stick on the paper during this reading.  Also, create a new T-chart with Bear’s choice and Hare’s action as headings on it. As you read through the book with the students, stop and write on the chart Bear’s choice and then Hare’s action.  Say: “Over the next few days, we are going to reread parts of the book and try to figure out how the Hare tricks the Bear.”  Start rereading on page 3. Stop on page 6.  On page 3, say, “Harvesting means gathering the food once it’s done growing.” Act this out with your picture veggies.  On page 4, the word “weeded” comes up. Say: “Weeding means when gardeners take out the bad plants that they don’t want growing in the garden or field.”  On page 5, the author says, “Bear slept as the crops grew.” What do you think the author means by “crops”?  On page 6, the author uses the words ‘plucked’ and the phrase, ‘put it aside.’ Model for the students how to pluck something and put it aside and then have them act it out.  Place the beets, carrots, and radishes on the paper and ask, *“Edible* means that you can eat a plant. What part of these vegetables is edible?”  How does Bear feel about getting the tops of these vegetables? Why does he feel that way? | As you reread the book, stop at the parts where the author talks about ”tops” and “bottoms” and have the students place the pictures of the matching vegetables on the brown paper.  Ask your students to act out harvesting and gather veggies from a pretend garden.  A crop is a plant that you grow to eat.  The bottoms of the carrots, beets, and radishes are edible.  Bear is upset because he cannot eat the tops of these plants. The Hare got the “good” part or the “edible” part.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Bear’s choice** | **Hare’s action** | | tops | Plants carrots, turnips, beets | |
| **FOURTH READING:**  Say: “Today we will continue to read *Tops and Bottoms* to figure out how Hare tricks Bear.”  Start rereading on page 7. Finish on page 14.  On page 7, ask students, “Why does Bear choose the bottoms?”  “Why does Hare choose to plant lettuce, broccoli, and celery this time?”  On page 11, ask students “Why does bear choose the tops *and* the bottoms this time?”  Ask, “Why does hare choose to plant corn this time?”  End this read with the question, “What does the author mean by “tops” and “bottoms”? Have the students draw pictures of the tops and bottoms of the different kinds of produce.  Titles of books can often give you a clue about what the book is going to be about.  How did the title of this book help us understand what this book is about? Why do think the author decided to make the book open in this unusual way?  **FIFTH READING:**  Today we are going to think about how the characters change in the story and what lesson we can learn from this story.  Begin to reread on page 15. Read to the end.  On page 15, ask students “Why does Bear choose to plant his own crops this time?”  Look back at your charts that compared Bear and Hare. Review what Bear and Hare were like at the beginning of the story. Then ask the following questions:  On page 16, ask students, “How does Bear change? What causes the change to happen?”  On page 16, ask, “How does the Hare change? What causes that change to happen?”  Ask students, “Do you think Hare is a good character or a bad character? What makes you say that?” | Continue to add to chart:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Bear’s chooses this --** | **Hare does this --** | | tops | Plants carrots, turnips, beets | | bottoms | Plants lettuce, broccoli and celery | | Tops and bottoms | Plants corn | |  |  |   Bear chooses the bottoms because he expects Hare to plant the same crop.  The tops of broccoli, lettuce, and celery are edible. Hare wants to keep that part to sell or eat.  Students match the vegetables as in chart above.  Bear thinks he will get an edible part of the plant if he chooses the tops and bottoms.  But it is the middle of corn that is edible. Hare is tricking Bear again by getting the good part of the plant.  Students draw pictures of veggies and their tops and bottoms.  Students should say it is about the tops and bottoms of plants or crops.  Students should say that Bear is not lazy anymore, so he decides to plant his own crops.  Bear changes because he is not lazy anymore. He no longer want to get tricked by Hare. He now plants his own crops and does not sleep all day. The Hare is now able to feed his family and start a business because he was clever and tricked the Bear.  Students could argue this both ways:  Good -- because he was able to feed his family and he never lied or stole; he just used his knowledge of plants.  Bad -- because he tricked Bear and was not fair to him when he did not tell him what plant he was going to plant. |

FINAL DAY WITH THE BOOK - Culminating Task

*What lesson did you learn from this book? Draw a picture of the lesson you learned from Hare and Bear. (Review the anchor charts and have a conversation with the class before the students draw/write their ideas.)*

Expectations:

* Beginning of K- Students should draw a picture of someone working hard and not being lazy OR someone using their brain to solve a problem. Students should be able to orally tell you about the picture.
* Middle of K - Students should be able to add labels--such as “work” or “lazy”--to their pictures using developmental spelling.
* End of K - Students should be able to add a sentence using developmental spelling such as “You should do your own work.” Or “Use your brain.”

Vocabulary

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| **These words merit less time and attention**  (They are concrete and easy to explain, or describe events/  processes/ideas/concepts/experiences that are familiar to your students) | **These words merit more time and attention**  (They are abstract, have multiple meanings, and/or are a part  of a large family of words with related meanings. These words are likely to describe events, ideas, processes or experiences that most of your student will be unfamiliar with. |
| Page 3 - profit- money you make when you sell something  Page 4 - weeded- removing unwanted plants from your garden or yard  Page 6 - plucked- pick | Page 2 - clever- smart  Page 3 - harvesting- when you gather the crops you have planted  Page 5 – crops -- plants that you plant and grow to eat  Page 11 - scowled- frown when you are angry  Page 14 - yanked- pull quickly |

Extension learning activities for this book and other useful resources

* Dr. Jean – “Parts of a Plant” video -- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJzn_joMoz8>
  + This song teaches the parts of a plant and could be helpful to introduce the vocabulary of root, stem, flower and leaves. *Note: This is particularly supportive of English Language Learners.*
* Farming by Gail Gibbons
  + This book explores the topic of farming. It could be helpful to introduce the content of how farms work. It shows the many chores that farmers must do throughout the different seasons. It clearly shows how hard you must work on a farm which will help students understand why Bear was lazy and did not want to plant and harvest his own crops.
* Seed to Plant -- National Geographic Kids
  + This book is an informational book that could be used to introduce more content knowledge about plants and parts of a plant in order to support understanding of the “tops” and “bottoms” of a plant. *Note: This is particularly supportive of English Language Learners.*

**What Makes This Read-Aloud Complex?**

1. **Quantitative Measure**

Go to <http://www.lexile.com/> and enter the title of your read-aloud in the Quick Book Search in the upper right of home page. Most texts will have a Lexile measure in this database.

Most of the texts that we read aloud in K-2 should be in the 2-3 or 4-5 band, more complex than the students can read themselves.

2-3 band 420-820L

4-5 band 740-1010L

\_\_580L\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. **Qualitative Features**

Consider the four dimensions of text complexity below. For each dimension\*, note specific examples from the text that make it more or less complex.

This book is a retelling of a trickster folktale. Students can learn two lessons from this book: do your own hard work OR if you use your brain you can overcome difficulties in your life.

Low complexity: this story is chronological and has lots of pictures to help students understand the story.

There are many words that students may not be familiar with. Some such as “harvesting” or “crops “are specific to farming or plants. Others are broader such as “scowled” or “scooped.”

Students will need to understand that you can eat different parts of a plant in order to understand how the hare tricks the bear.

**Meaning/Purpose**

**Structure**

**Language**

**Knowledge Demands**

\*For more information on the qualitative dimensions of text complexity, visit <http://www.achievethecore.org/content/upload/Companion_to_Qualitative_Scale_Features_Explained.pdf>

1. **Reader and Task Considerations**

What will challenge my students most in this text? What supports can I provide?

* The most challenging part of this text is understanding how the hare tricked the bear on purpose in order to benefit himself and not bear. This understanding is vital for students to be able to understand the messages of the book. It is also complex because there is not a clear right or wrong in this story. One could argue that the hare was doing the right thing to support his family or one could argue that he tricked the bear in an unkind way.

How will this text help my students build knowledge about the world?

* This text supports students in learning about farming, plants, trickster tales, and folktales.

1. **Grade level**

What grade does this book best belong in? K as a read-aloud

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