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The Ant and the Chrysalis

Read the fable aloud.

An Ant nimbly running about in the sunshine in search of food came across a Chrysalis that was very near its time of change. The Chrysalis moved its tail, and thus attracted the attention of the Ant, who then saw for the first time that it was alive.

"Poor, pitiable animal!" cried the Ant disdainfully. "What a sad fate is yours! While I can run hither and thither, at my pleasure, and, if I wish, ascend the tallest tree, you lie imprisoned here in your shell, with power only to move a joint or two of your scaly tail."

The Chrysalis heard all this, but did not try to make any reply. A few days after, when the Ant passed that way again, nothing but the shell remained. Wondering what had become of its contents, he felt himself suddenly shaded and fanned by the gorgeous wings of a beautiful Butterfly.

"Behold in me," said the Butterfly, "your much-pitied friend! Boast now of your powers to run and climb as long as you can get me to listen."

So saying, the Butterfly rose in the air, and, borne along and aloft on the summer breeze, was soon lost to the sight of the Ant forever.

"Appearances are deceptive."

Three Plot Components

Give examples of recognition, reversal, and suffering (if applicable).

1. Recognition: "An Ant nimbly running about in the sunshine in search of food"; "The Chrysalis moved its tail"; "nothing but the shell remained."
2. Reversal: "he felt himself suddenly shaded and fanned by the gorgeous wings of a beautiful Butterfly. 'Behold in me,' said the Butterfly, 'your much-pitied friend!'"
3. Suffering: "soon lost to the sight of the ant forever"

Variations: Part I

Give at least two synonyms for the selected words in each sentence.

Then vary the sentence in three ways.

1. "I can **ascend** the **tallest** tree."
I: myself, athlete (I, athlete), person, adult, child
can: am able, am empowered, have the ability to, may, have the skills to, am allowed
ascend: climb, scale, crawl up, pull myself up, negotiate, zoom to the top
tallest: highest, biggest, most massive, most impressive, loftiest, largest
tree: vine, plant, sapling, oak, pine, maple, birch
1. The tallest tree I, myself, can ascend.
2. I, an athlete, am able to climb the highest oak.
3. I, a person, have the ability to scale the most massive plant.

1. THE FABLE

1. Read the fable aloud to the class.

2. Say the following words aloud and ask for students to define. Guide them towards the proper definition.

- » **chrysalis** — the hard-shelled pupa of a moth or butterfly
- » **pitiable** — pitiful or producing pity
[Ex] "the pitiable homeless children"
- » **disdainfully** — showing scorn or contempt
[Ex] "The judge looked disdainfully at the criminal."
- » **ascend** — to climb, to move higher
[Ex] "ascend the mountain"
- » **boast** — to speak proudly about oneself
[Ex] "He boasts about winning the race."
- » **borne** — carried, held up, supported
[Ex] "The rider was borne by the horse to town."
- » **aloft** — high up, in the air
[Ex] "sleeping aloft on the top bunk"

3. Say: "How does knowing these words help you better understand the story?"

4. Tell students to highlight examples of recognition and reversal as you or selected students read the fable aloud once or twice more.

Recognition occurs in either of two ways:

- A. a truth, event, or character is described in such a way that the reader identifies with or remembers a similar experience (e.g., the fable may remind us of a time when we saw an ant look for food);
- B. the audience discovers a truth not realized previously in the story (e.g., realizing that Joseph's sufferings in Egypt were intended for good - God meant to save people from famine through Joseph's leadership).

Reversal occurs when either:

- A. the high and mighty are brought low (e.g., the Ant)
- B. the low and humble are elevated (e.g., the Chrysalis).

5. Ask the students for examples of recognition in the fable and point out the following instances:

[Ex] *An Ant nimbly running about in the sunshine for food.*

- » We have probably all seen an ant on the ground.

[Ex] *The Chrysalis moved its tail ...*

- » We may have seen a caterpillar or chrysalis before it became a butterfly.

[Ex] *... nothing but the shell remained.*

- » We may have seen an empty chrysalis shell.

6. Ask the students for the reversal, and point it out:

[Ex] *... he felt himself suddenly shaded and fanned by the gorgeous wings of a beautiful Butterfly. "Behold in me," said the Butterfly, "your much-pitied friend!"*

- » The Ant, who before assumed his superiority over the Chrysalis, is brought low because the Chrysalis has become a Butterfly, who can soar high above the Ant. We can also say, therefore, that the lowly Chrysalis has been elevated to a Butterfly.

7. Ask the students for examples of Suffering in the narrative and point the following example:

[Ex] *... soon lost to the sight of the ant forever ...*

- » When the ant is left behind he realizes that he is the one to be pitied; the butterfly is freer than he is.

8. Choose students to narrate the fable in their own words from memory.

2. "He was **stuck** in the **thick boughs** of a great **terebinth tree** ..." 2 Samuel 18:9 (NKJV)

stuck: caught, held fast, detained against his will, trapped

thick boughs: substantial limbs, beefy arms, hefty branches, enormous appendages

terebinth tree: turpentine-producing tree, variety of tree or tree from the Mediterranean

1. He was held fast in the substantial limbs of a great turpentine-producing tree.

2. He was detained in the beefy arms of a great Mediterranean variety of tree.

3. He was trapped in the hefty branches of a great tree from the Mediterranean.

Outline

Summarize the fable by creating an outline.

I. Ant searched for food

A. Ran nimbly in sunshine

B. Saw Chrysalis

1. Near change

2. Moved its tail

3. Attracted attention

4. Saw life

II. Ant's monologue

A. "Poor, pitiable animal," cried Ant

B. "Sad fate"

C. "I am free"

1. "Run at my pleasure"

2. "Climb tallest tree"

D. "You are imprisoned"

1. "In shell"

2. "No power to move"

E. The Chrysalis heard but did not make any reply

III. Reversal a few days later

A. Only shell remained

B. Ant wondered what happened

C. Suddenly shaded and fanned

D. Butterfly's monologue

1. "Behold ... your much-pitied friend!"

2. "Boast if you can make me listen"

E. Butterfly took flight

1. "... Borne along and aloft on the summer breeze ..."

2. Ant never saw Butterfly again

Appearances are deceptive.

The Ant and the Chrysalis

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» Ensure that students are keeping the meaning of the sentences intact, while also encouraging them to use variety in their diction (i.e., word choice).

4. Repeat these directions for #2.

3. Outline

As a class, summarize the Fable in outline form.

The outline should be a basic account of the sentences in the fable. Its purpose is to clarify the events of the story. Later, the student will use the outline as an aid to writing paraphrases.

1. Ask: "There are three acts to this fable: I, II, and III. How may we summarize them? Tell what happened in each act using as few words as possible."

I. Ant searched for food

II. Ant's monologue

III. Reversal a few days later

2. Ask the students how each act should be further subdivided.

"What happens in I., *Ant searched for food*? Be concise with your words."

A. Ant ran nimbly in sunshine

B. Saw Chrysalis

Example: "What happens in I.B., *Saw Chrysalis*?"

3. When finished, go back through the outline and make note of recognition and reversal.

4. Narration

1. The students now put the fable aside and narrate it in their own words using their outlines. They should introduce their narration in this way: "(name of fable) by Aesop, as retold by (student name)."

2. Another option is to have the students rewrite the fable in their own words using their outline. Have them title their papers in this way: "(name of fable) by Aesop, as retold by (student name)." When finished, students check their work with the original fable and make any necessary additions or corrections.

2. Variations: Part 1

- Say the sentence in #1 aloud, then repeat the words in bold. Enlist the students to think of synonyms for the bold words; you may guide them as a class or coach students individually. Have them write their best answers in the blanks.
- Say: "Now compose your first sentence variation by replacing each original bold word with a synonym." (Students may alter the order of the words, but remind them that they must keep the idea of the sentence intact.) Instruct them to write two more variations, using different synonyms each time.
- When all are finished, have volunteers read their answers aloud.
 - » Ask: "Did substituting your synonyms change the meaning of the sentence or did it add variety?"

LESSON 1

5. Paraphrase 1

Using the outline, guide the students either individually or as a class in writing a paraphrase with the required figures of description. Students may not use the original fable for help.

- Brainstorm with your class for examples of anemographia, dendographia, and ethopoeia; write examples on the board and then refine them in these ways:
 - Vary the descriptions in the same way as was done in the Variations exercise.
 - Use a variety of grammatical structures.
 - Add new descriptive words: nouns, adjectives, similes, analogies, metaphors.
 - If applicable, use real-time examples (e.g., take students outside to observe the trees and wind).

Help students to understand the figures of description by referring to examples from literature.

Examples of Anemographia:

- Ex *The rushing zephyr hushed the pace of words.*
- Ex *... the wind howled dismally among the bare branches of the trees, and rumbling in the wide chimneys and driving the rain ...*
- Ex *... the wind rushed at me like a mad bull ...*
- Ex *The wind went sighing over the land, tossing the grasses to and fro.*

Examples of Dendographia:

- Ex *... as the trees of the forest are shaken by the wind.*
- Ex *... every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.*
- Ex *The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon ...*

Examples of Ethopoeia:

- Ex *When he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you troubler of Israel?"*
- Ex *Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man ...*
- Ex *You brood of vipers!*

- Tell the students to begin writing the paraphrase.
- Check in with the students regularly to help them do the following:

Paraphrases

Rewrite the fable using your outline and Variations: Part 1.
Follow the special directions for each paraphrase.

1. Rewrite the fable with an example of each of these figures of description:

- Anemographia** a vivid description of wind; e.g., "a cool breeze tickled its back"
- Dendographia** a vivid description of a tree; e.g., "the great oak that shades the forest"
- Ethopoeia** a description and portrayal of a character; e.g., "the cocky overconfident ant"

Anemographia could be used in I.A., at the beginning, in order to add wind to the setting. Aesop's figures III.C. and E. could be modified or replaced.

Example I.A.:

"An Ant *gracefully skipping about in the sunshine with a cool breeze* tickling its back ..."

The dendographia could be used at II.C.2. in modifying "tallest tree," or the whole fable could take place in a tree.

Example II.C.2.:

"... if I wish, ascend the *majestic oak which shades the forest* ..."

Ethopoeia could be used at I.A., I.B., or III.C.

Example III.C.:

"Wondering what had become of its contents, *the cocky and self-assured Ant* felt himself fanned ..."

2. Rewrite the fable by inverting the sequence of events. Start with the commonplace.

"Appearances are deceptive."

The Ant did not realize at the time that he would never see the Butterfly again. The haughty little insect had quickly lost sight of the Butterfly, which had been borne along and aloft on a summer breeze, just after the Butterfly challenged the Ant.

"Behold your much-pitied friend. Boast now if you can make me listen," the Butterfly had calmly commented.

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Lesson 1

- » Transform the points of their outline into sentences.
- » Use proper grammar and spelling.
- » Use fine penmanship.
- » Maintain paragraph form (e.g., indent).
- » Include the figures of description.

6. Paraphrase 2

This exercise (whether inverting the sequence or starting from the middle) trains students to view a set of ideas from a variety of perspectives and to work from effects to causes—a deductive exercise.

- You may help students understand this sequential change by telling about your day backwards from the present to the past, and then you may ask them to tell about their own day in this way. Another helpful illustration of this process may be done by telling a well-known story from the end to the beginning (e.g., Little Red Riding Hood, David and Goliath, etc.).

The Ant thought back over the last few minutes. He had found himself suddenly fanned and shaded by the wings of a magnificent creature as he contemplated the mystery of the empty cocoon. The cocoon had been a Chrysalis near its time of change a few days before this encounter had occurred. Days earlier, movement in the Chrysalis' tail alerted the Ant to the fact that it was actually alive.

"Poor pitiable creature," he had exclaimed. "What a sad fate is yours. I can run hither and thither at my will or ascend the tallest tree, while you are imprisoned in your cocoon and cannot move."

The Chrysalis had said nothing at the time, which had put a damper on the Ant's boasting for the time being. That eventful day had started like so many others with the Ant diligently and nimbly searching for food in the bright summer sunshine. This day, it turned out, would end in amazement and contemplation.

Variations: Part 2

Give at least two synonyms for the selected words in each sentence. Then vary the sentence in three ways.

- "The **Butterfly rose** in the air."
 - butterfly: gossamer-winged insect, the stately Monarch, colorful-winged creature
 - rose: ascended, drifted upward, floated aloft, headed skyward
 - air: atmosphere, sweet summer breeze, the heavens, the blue yonder
 - 1. The gossamer-winged insect ascended into the atmosphere.
 - 2. The stately Monarch drifted upward on the sweet summer breeze.
 - 3. Toward the heavens the colorful-winged creature floated aloft.
- "The **wind rushed** at me like a **mad bull**." — Charles Dickens, "The Holly-Tree"
 - wind: northeaster, gust of air, icy blast, squall
 - rushed: confronted, raced toward, overpowered, charged
 - mad: frenzied, berserk, uncontrollable, maniacal
 - 1. A northeaster confronted me like a frenzied bull.
 - 2. A mighty gust of air raced toward me like a bull who had gone berserk.
 - 3. An icy blast overpowered me like an uncontrollable bull.

8. Final Draft

- Pick either Paraphrase 1 or Paraphrase 2 for the students to correct and rewrite.
- Say: "Go to the fable and compare it with your paraphrase. Underline any important parts of the fable that were left out of your paraphrase. For example, if you forgot an important character or event, underline the sentence in which you found it in the fable. These omissions will be added to your final draft."
- Check in with the students and help them discover omissions.
- Say: "Now we will look for any other mistakes in our paraphrase that need correction. Look at each sentence and underline mistakes. You may need to underline misspelled words, incomplete sentences (e.g., run-ons or fragments), improper or missing punctuation."
- Check in with the students and help them correct mistakes.
- You may have the students begin the final draft or assign it for homework. It will be written on a separate sheet of paper. Have them title their paper in this way: "(name of fable) by Aesop, as retold by (student name)." Remind students to include any important parts of the Fable that they omitted and to correct any mistakes.
- On the following class period, collect final drafts and grade with this rubric:
 - » Handwriting _____ / 5
 - » Mechanics _____ / 15
(spelling, punctuation, grammar)
 - » Content _____ / 40
(storyline, sentence & paragraph structure, style)
 - » Vocabulary/Diction _____ / 20
(word choice)
 - » Figures of Description _____ / 20

7. Variations: Part 2

Follow the same procedure as in Part I.