



A Lesson on The Elves and the Shoemaker by Joseph Scharfschwerdt

Grade Level: Grade 6

Subject Area: English Language Arts

Lesson Length: 1 hour 45 minutes

Lesson Keywords: Elves, Shoemaker, Reading, Writing, Discussion, Vocabulary

Lesson Description: This lesson will challenge students to make inferences about the reading and will familiarize them with foreshadowing. It will also introduce new vocabulary words, provide them an opportunity to improve their writing, and give them questions that, by answering individually and with peers, will help them better understand the text.

Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.1: Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.3: Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 6 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.6: Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Lesson Content: Book/Story/Reading Passage

Instructions: Please read the following reading passage as many times as needed (aloud and silent) before starting to go through other lesson pages. Understanding the content of this passage is very important since the lesson activities will be all about this content. Feel free to print the passage if needed.

The Elves and the Shoemaker

by

Content: Once upon a time there was an honest shoemaker who was very poor. He worked as hard as he could, and still he could not earn enough to keep himself and his wife. At last there came a day when he had nothing left but one piece of leather, big enough to make one pair of shoes. He cut out the shoes, ready to stitch, and left them on the bench; then he said his prayers and went to bed, trusting that he could finish the shoes the next day and sell them.

Early the next morning, he rose and went to his workbench and discovered there a pair of shoes, beautifully made. The leather was gone, and there was no sign of anyone having been there. The shoemaker and his wife did not know what to make of it. Then the first customer who came was so pleased with the beautiful shoes that he bought them, and paid so much that the shoemaker was able to buy leather enough for two pairs.

Happily, he cut them out, and then, as it was late, he left the pieces on the bench, ready to sew in the morning. But when morning came, two pairs of shoes lay on the bench, most beautifully made, and no sign of anyone who had been there. It was another puzzle. That day a customer came and bought both pairs, and paid so much for them that the shoemaker bought leather for four pairs, with the money.

Once more he cut out the shoes and left them on the bench. As before, the next morning he discovered that all four pairs were made.

It went on like this until the shoemaker and his wife were prosperous. They were concerned, they could not be satisfied to have so much done for them and not know to whom they should be grateful. So one night, after the shoemaker had left the pieces of leather on the bench, he and his wife hid themselves behind a curtain, and left a light in the room.

Just as the clock struck twelve, the door opened softly and two tiny elves came dancing into the room, hopped on to the bench, and began to put the pieces together. They were quiet, they made little conversation, and they had brought tiny scissors and hammers and thread. Tap! Tap! went the little hammers; stitch, stitch, went the thread, and the little elves were hard at work. No one ever worked so fast as they. In almost no time all the shoes were stitched and finished. Then the little creatures whisked away out of the window.

The shoemaker and his wife looked at each other and said, How can we thank the little elves who have made us happy and prosperous?

I should like to make them some pretty clothes, said the wife.

I will make the shoes if you will make the coats, said her husband.

That very day they worked on this surprise for the elves. The wife cut out two tiny, tiny coats of green, two little pairs of trousers, of white, two very small caps, bright red, and her husband made two little pairs of shoes with long, pointed toes. They made the clothes as good-looking as could be, with nice little stitches and pretty buttons. By Christmas time, they were finished.

On Christmas Eve, the shoemaker cleaned his bench, and on it, instead of leather, he laid the two sets of clothes. Then he and his wife hid away as before, to watch.

Promptly at midnight, the little elves came in. They hopped upon the bench; but when they saw the little clothes there, they laughed and danced for joy. Each one caught up his little coat and things and began to put them on. They were so happy. Then, when the clock struck two, they left smiling.

They never came back any more, but from that day they gave the shoemaker and his wife good luck, so that they never needed any more help.

Task 1: Vocabulary

Instructions: Please complete the following vocabulary activity by choosing the correct meaning of each word selected from the passage and use of each word correctly in a sentence.

Q: 1 WordPhrase: Sew **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The narrator in the story says "Happily, he cut them out, and then, as it was late, he left the pieces on the bench, ready to sew in the morning." What does "sew" mean in this sentence?

A: A dish of meat and vegetables cooked in liquid

B: Join together with a needle and thread

C: Take legal action against

D: Plant a seed

Question: Which sentence uses the word "sew" correctly?

A: Johnny ripped his sweater after it got caught on a gate, so his mother had to sew it.

B: Phillip was sew hungry that his stomach started to growl during class.

C: The mailman was late, sew we didn't get grandpa's postcard until three o'clock.

D: Dad used a sew to cut off the hanging branch.

Q: 2 WordPhrase: Whisked **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: "Then the little creatures whisked away out of the window." What does "whisked" mean in the sentence?

A: Move quickly in a particular direction

B: Stir a substance rapidly

C: A utensil for whipping eggs or cream

D: Cast an evil spell on

Question: Which sentence uses the word "whisked" correctly?

A: The mice whisked into the darkness.

B: Grandma's old car whisked as she turned it on.

C: Karen forgot to put sunscreen on, so her skin was whisked by the sun.

D: Tom whisked his shirt as a result of getting barbecue sauce all over it.

Q: 3 WordPhrase: Prosperous **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: The narrator says "It went on like this until the shoemaker and his wife were prosperous." What does "prosperous" mean in the sentence?

A: Full of hope

B: Wealthy and successful

C: Unthankful

D: Bankrupt

Question: Which sentence uses the word "prosperous" correctly?

A: As a result of her new idea, the shop owner's profits doubled and she became prosperous.

B: Angela dropped her prosperous mug full of coffee on the floor.

C: Doctor Finn let the patient know he was prosperous and good to go.

D: The aircraft mechanic only had one part left to check on the airplane, the prosperous.

Q: 4 WordPhrase: Trousers **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: "The wife cut out two tiny, tiny coats of green, two little pairs of trousers, of white,..." What does the word "trousers" mean here?

A: A piece of absorbent cloth used to dry oneself

B: Garment for the upper body

C: Outer garment covering the legs

D: Leather shoes

Question: Which sentence uses the word "trousers" correctly?

A: The trouser was a particular type of warship used by the United States military.

B: That particular breed of dog is a trouser, if I'm correct.

C: The trousers had a hole at the toes.

D: The trousers did not fit him around the waist, so he took them back.

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Task 2: Forum Discussion

Instructions: This discussion forum will have questions for students to respond. Read the posted questions, and respond to each. Students are responsible for posting one initial and two peer responses for each topic.

1 - Why didn't the elves ever come back?

At the end of the passage, the narrator says They never came back any more, but from that day they gave the shoemaker and his wife good luck, so that they never needed any more help. Why do you think the elves never came back? Why did they come in the first place?

2 - What is the moral of this story?

What lessons are taught through the shoemaker and his wife's actions and the elves' acts of kindness? Cite at least two examples of the characters' actions and what moral they teach.

3 - Importance of elves' reactions to their new clothes.

Near the end of the passage, the elves sneak in once more to find new clothes waiting for them. Promptly at midnight, the little elves came in. They hopped upon the bench; but when they saw the little clothes there, they laughed and danced for joy. Each one caught up his little coat and things and began to put them on. They were so happy. Then, when the clock struck two, they left smiling. What is the importance of the shoemaker and his wife being able to see the joy of the little elves? Can you guess why they stayed for two hours before leaving?

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Task 3: Writing Activity

Instructions: Think about the purpose of foreshadowing. Citing specific details as you go, explain in 2-3 paragraphs how the author used foreshadowing to develop the plot of this story. What do you think their purpose was for using it? How does it tie in with the moral of the story?

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