



A Lesson on The Elves and the Shoemaker by Kristin Nessler

Grade Level: Grade 5

Subject Area: English Language Arts

Lesson Length: 1 hour 45 minutes

Lesson Keywords: The Elves and the Shoemaker, Reading, Writing, Fairy Tale

Lesson Description: This lesson aims to have students put their reading and writing skills into practice to make inferences and obtain a deeper understanding of the text. In reading and examining the text through specific questions, students will see how a poor man and his wife became rich, and students will seek to answer why.

Common Core Standards Covered with This Lesson

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.1: Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.2: Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.5.9: Compare and contrast stories in the same genre (e.g., mysteries and adventure stories) on their approaches to similar themes and topics.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.5.1: Quote accurately from a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.5.4a: Use context (e.g., cause/effect relationships and comparisons in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

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.

Bright and early the next morning, he rose and went to his workbench. There lay a pair of shoes, beautifully made, and the leather was gone! There was no sign of anyone having been there. The shoemaker and his wife did not know what to make of it. But 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 a 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. And in the morning all four pairs were made.

It went on like this until the shoemaker and his wife were prosperous people. But 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, but they had wee little 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 commenced their task. The wife cut out two tiny, tiny coats of green, two little pairs of trousers, of white, two bits of caps, bright red, and her husband made two little pairs of shoes with long, pointed toes. They made the clothes as dainty 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.

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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: whisked **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: The author in our story says, "Then the little creatures whisked away out of the window"... What does the word "whisked" mean in this sentence?

- A: whipped
- B: stirred
- C: left quickly
- D: brushed lightly

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

- A: My mother whisked the eggs to a froth.
 - B: The train whisked the two friends from Ohio.
 - C: The comb whisked her hair out of her face.
 - D: Emotions whisked around in Jeffrey's head.
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Q: 2 WordPhrase: wee **WordPhraseTier:** 2

Question: The author in our story says, "They were quiet, but they had wee little scissors and hammers and thread"... What does the word "wee" mean in this sentence?

- A: video game console
- B: early
- C: tiny
- D: special

Question: Which of the sentences below uses the word "wee" correctly?

- A: Seeing the wee baby brought a smile to her face.
 - B: "Wee!" They children yelled as the rollercoaster flew forward.
 - C: Lisa managed to stay awake into the wee hours of the morning.
 - D: We did not know where to turn.
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Q: 3 WordPhrase: trousers **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The author in our story says, "The wife cut out two tiny, tiny coats of green, two little pairs of trousers, of white, two bits of caps..." What does the word "trousers" mean in this sentence?

- A: twins
- B: glasses
- C: socks
- D: pants

Question: Which one of the sentences below uses the word "trousers" correctly?

- A: The trousers were ecstatic when they realized they had won the game.
 - B: "We will never reach the top of the trousers!" Jake moaned.
 - C: Fall was approaching; Mama took his trousers out of the closet
 - D: Olivia refused to eat the trousers; they were too sour.
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Q: 4 WordPhrase: stitch **WordPhraseTier:** 3

Question: The author in our story says, "He cut out the shoes, ready to stitch, and left them on the bench..." What does the word "stitch" most nearly mean in this sentence?

- A: sew
- B: cramp
- C: hasten
- D: glue

Question: Which of the sentences below uses the word "stitch" correctly?

- A: Mario stopped playing soccer when his side began to stitch.
 - B: Aaron burned his hand on the stitch.
 - C: Emily thought of the stitch after she had turned in the test.
 - D: I need to stitch my socks; there is a hole in them!
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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 - The use of "Tap! Tap!" and "stitch, stitch"

Onomatopoeia is the use of a word to depict a natural sound. The author of this text uses onomatopoeia in this sentence, Tap! Tap! went the little hammers; stitch, stitch, went the thread, and the little elves were hard at work. How does the author's use of the words tap, tap and stitch, stitch enhance your understanding of the text?

2 - "Once upon a time there was an honest shoemaker who was very poor"

The author begins the story with, Once upon a time there was an honest shoemaker who was very poor. What parts of this sentence are critical to the understanding of the rest of the story? Why?

3 - Definitions of "happy" and "prosperous"

How does the author of the story define the words happy and prosperous? Do you agree with his definition? Why or why not?

4 - Present on Christmas Eve

What do you think the significance is of giving the gift to the elves on Christmas Eve?

5 - The Quietness of the Elves

The author makes a point of talking about how quiet the elves were. What do you think is the significance of this?

6 - Moral of the Story

What do you think the moral of the story is? Based on what the moral suggests, how do you think the story would have changed if the shoemaker and his wife had reacted differently?

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Task 3: Writing Activity

Instructions: You are to write and post a 500 word essay comparing this story with another fairy tale that you have read (ex. Cinderella, The Three Little Pigs, etc.). Identify and discuss at least two differences and two similarities. Be sure to provide specific references from the story.

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