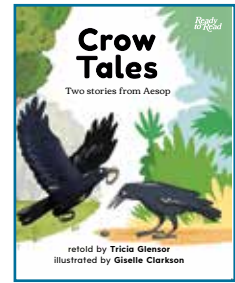


Crow Tales

Two stories from Aesop

retold by Tricia Glensor
illustrated by Giselle Clarkson

This text is levelled at Blue 1.



Overview

Crow Tales contains retellings of two Aesop's fables: "Silly Crow" (a warning about the dangers of flattery) and "Clever Crow" (about the importance of using one's brain and of persistence and patience).

Crow Tales supports the development of a self-extending reading process, requiring students to "monitor their reading, searching for and using multiple sources of information in order to confirm or self-correct" and to use a variety of comprehension strategies to "engage more deeply with texts" (*The Literacy Learning Progressions*, page 10). In particular, these stories provide opportunities for students to think critically about the author's message.

There is an audio version of the text as an MP3 file at www.readytoread.tki.org.nz

Related texts

Ready to Read retellings of Aesop's fables: *The Ant and the Grasshoppers* (a play, shared); *Purr-fect!* (Yellow 3)

Other animal tales: *I'm the King of the Mountain, A Good Idea, Dragons! Dragons! Dragons!* (Ready to Read, shared); *I Want to Fly* (Blue 2); *The Little Red Hen* (Green 1)

Text characteristics

Crow Tales has the following text characteristics that help develop the reading behaviours expected of students reading at Blue.

A clear narrative structure for each tale, with a distinct beginning, middle, and end

Most content explicitly stated but also some implicit content that provides opportunities for students to make predictions and inferences

Two stories within one book and a contents page

Illustrations and visual language features that support and extend the meaning but may not exactly match the words

Some literary phrasing ("Out fell", "higher and higher", "How clever I am")

A range of punctuation, including speech marks, commas, question marks, and exclamation marks to support phrasing and meaning

Many high-frequency words

Silly Crow

Crow saw some bread on the ground. She picked it up with her beak and flew up into a tree.



Clever Crow

It was a hot day, and Crow was thirsty. She dipped her beak into a jug of water, but the water was too far down. "Oh, no," thought Crow. "I'm so thirsty. What can I do?"



Dialogue between easily identified speakers

Sentences that run over more than one line but do not split phrases, and several lines of text on every page

Interest words, sometimes within noun phrases (for example, "Silly Crow", "Clever Crow", "bread", "ground", "Fox", "shiny black feathers", "a beautiful beak", "pleased", "proud", "a wonderful voice", "forest", "thirsty", "a jug of water", "idea", "stone", "a long drink") and a variety of verbs including irregular past-tense verb forms (for example, "came", "fell", "flew", "had", "ran", "saw", "thought") that are strongly supported by the context, the sentence structure, and/or the illustrations

Reading standard: After one year at school

The Literacy Learning Progressions

Suggested reading purpose

(What can the students expect to find out or think about as a result of reading this text?)

To find out why Crow is silly (or clever)

To think about the author's message

Possible learning goals

(What opportunities does this text provide for students to learn more about how to “read, respond to, and think critically” about texts?)

The behaviours listed below link to *The Literacy Learning Progressions*. **Select from and adapt** them according to your students' strengths, needs and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*Reading and Writing Standards for years 1–8*, Knowledge of the learner, page 6).

This text provides opportunities for students, over several readings, to:

- **make connections** between their prior knowledge and information in the story to **make predictions and inferences**
- identify the main events in the story (**summarise**)
- think about the **main idea** (or message) in each story
- **make meaning** by searching for and using multiple sources of information rather than one source
- **monitor** their reading and self-correct where necessary, for example, by rerunning text or checking further sources of information.

Introducing the story

- A short video on the importance of introducing the text is available at <https://vimeo.com/142446572>
- Use your knowledge of your students to ensure that the introduction to the story activates their prior knowledge and supports them for a successful first reading. **Select from and adapt** the following suggestions.

For English language learners, you could talk through the cover illustration and the first few pages before the whole-group session to build confidence with vocabulary. You can find useful guidance about supporting English language learners at <http://esolonline.tki.org.nz/ESOL-Online/Planning-for-my-students-needs/Resources-for-planning/Supporting-English-Language-Learning-in-Primary-School-SELLIPS>

- A few days before reading this book, enjoy rereading and discussing *Purr-fect!* and make the book available in their browsing boxes. You could also read other animal tales or fables as part of your classroom programme to familiarise students with this type of story.
- Having two stories in this book gives you the option of introducing and having the students read and discuss the first story and then read “Clever Crow” without a further introduction, to build their independence. This approach is taken in this support material.
- Read the title and discuss the cover illustration. Ask the students to share what they know about crows.
- Prompt the students to infer from the title that there is more than one story in this book. If necessary, explain that the word is “tales” (not “tails”) and help them to make the connection to fairytales to clarify that a “tale” is a story. Either now or after the students have read “Silly Crow”, you could explain that these tales are special sorts of tales called fables and that each tale has a message. Make connections to any prior knowledge the students have of fables.
- Explain the purpose of the contents page and read the titles of the two tales. Clarify that these are tales about two different crows, as suggested by the cover illustration. Discuss what it means to be silly or clever.
- At this point, you could explain how you want the students to read the book (whether they will be reading both tales or just the first one).
- Have the students use the contents page to find out where the story of “Silly Crow” starts and turn to page 2.
- Have the students use the illustrations on pages 2 and 3 to clarify who the characters are (you may need to tell them Fox's name). Draw attention to the bread in Crow's mouth on page 3 and the look on Fox's face and encourage the students to predict what might be happening (what Fox is trying to do). The positioning of the characters here and the expression on Fox's face may remind the students of the similar scenario in *Purr-fect!* *I wonder what Fox might be saying to Crow. How do you think Crow feels about Fox?* Use the discussion as an opportunity to draw out or feed in some of the interest vocabulary, such as “beak”, “beautiful”, “shiny black feathers”, and “proud” that the students will meet when they read the story.
- Share the reading purpose and have the students begin reading. Tell them you will talk about “Silly Crow” together before they read the second tale.

Monitoring the reading

- Observe closely as the students read “Silly Crow” and/or “Clever Crow” quietly to themselves. Note their confidence and perseverance as well as any instances of self-monitoring, cross-checking, and self-correction. Provide support to individual students as necessary.
- If a student makes an error without noticing, wait until the end of the sentence or the page before intervening, unless they stop reading. Waiting gives them the opportunity to notice the error and fix it. Use appropriate prompts to draw their attention to the error. For example:

Text in book	Student reads	Teacher prompt
She picked it up with her beak and flew up into a tree.	She picked it up with her beak and flied up into a tree.	Prompt the student to check. <i>You said ... could we say it that way? Read it again so that it sounds right.</i> (For an English language learner, this may sound right, so you could say: <i>In English, we say “flew up into a tree.”</i>)
“I like your shiny black feathers.”	“I like your sh- ” (the student stops reading)	<i>You know the beginning of that word. Well done. Remind the student of the earlier discussion. What is Fox looking at? Prompt the student to read on to the end of the sentence to clarify that the sentence is about feathers. Now try the whole sentence again and think about what kind of feathers the crow has.</i>
“You must have a wonderful voice.”	You must have a lovely voice.	Prompt the student to check the visual information. <i>That makes sense but does it look right? What can you see in the word that will help you?</i>
“Oh, no,” thought Crow.	“Oh, no,” said Crow.	Prompt the student to check. <i>That makes sense but does that word look like “said”? Look at how it starts. Try it again. If necessary, tell the student the word and make a note to come back to it after the reading.</i>

- Other prompts that you could use include: *Are you sure?; Does that look right and sound right?; You said ... does that make sense?; Look at the beginning of the word; Were you right?; Look for something you know in that word; What else could you check?; What did you notice?*
- Remember to base these prompts on what you know about the students’ prior knowledge. For example, asking an English language learner if a word sounds right may not be useful if they are not familiar enough with English

phonemes and vocabulary to know the answer. In this case, an explanation and further examples would be more effective, or simply telling them the word.

- Reinforce the students’ attempts to problem-solve, whether they are successful or not, for example: *I noticed that you went back and reread that sentence when it stopped making sense. That was great checking and fixing.*
- For further suggestions about ways to support students to self-monitor (to cross-check, confirm, and self-correct), see *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 1–4*, page 130.

Discussing “Silly Crow”

- Enjoy the students’ responses to the ending of “Silly Crow”. Remind them of the reading purpose: *Why was Crow silly?* If necessary, support the students to realise that Fox was trying to make Crow open her mouth so the bread would fall out. *Do you think Crow really had a “wonderful voice”?*
- Explain (or remind) the students that this tale is a fable and that a fable has a message, something the author wants the reader to learn. *What do you think the author wants us to learn from the tale of “Silly Crow”?* (For example, “don’t show off”, “don’t believe everything people say”, “be careful of tricky people”).
- After this brief discussion, have the students turn to page 6 and read the title of the second tale. Clarify the purpose for reading and monitor the students as they read the story quietly to themselves.

Discussing both tales

You can revisit these tales several times, focusing on different aspects and providing opportunities for the students to build comprehension and fluency. Many of the discussion points listed here also lead naturally into “After reading” activities.

- Discuss Clever Crow’s idea. *What did she do that was clever?*
- Recap the students’ ideas about the message in “Silly Crow”, then ask them to think about what they could learn from the tale of “Clever Crow” (for example, “use your brain”, “don’t give up”, or “be patient”).
- Have the students reread both tales, stopping to discuss points of interest. You can explore such features as:
 - the characters’ thoughts and feelings. Focus on the page 3 illustration: *What clues tell you what Fox and Crow are thinking?* Track how Clever Crow’s feelings change from page 6 to page 8. Enjoy reading together “How clever I am!”
 - the use of speech marks to indicate dialogue and the attributions to clarify who the speaker is. You could read “Silly Crow” using a modified form of Readers’ Theatre, with the teacher as the narrator.

Encourage the students to think about how they could convey Fox’s trickiness and Crow’s silliness. (If necessary, clarify that, in the second tale, Clever Crow is talking to herself.)

- the sentences that run over two lines. Remind the students to read on until the full stop even if the sentence sounds like it has finished. If necessary, model the appropriate phrasing and intonation.
- the narrative structure of the tales. Together, create sentences to summarise the beginning, middle, and end of each tale and record them on a summary chart like the one below.

	Beginning	Middle	End
“Silly Crow”	Crow found a piece of bread.	Fox wanted the bread and tried to trick Crow.	Fox’s trick worked, and he got the bread.
“Clever Crow”	Crow was thirsty, but she couldn’t reach the water in the jug.	She put stones in the jug, and the water got higher and higher.	Crow could drink the water.

- the use of noun phrases (for example, “shiny black feathers”, “a beautiful beak”, “a wonderful voice”, “a jug of water”) to provide descriptive detail. Remind the students to read on to the next word when the meaning isn’t clear.
- the irregular past-tense verb forms (for example, “came”, “fell”, “flew”, “had”, “ran”, “saw”, “thought”). Reread the sentences where the words occur and support the students in identifying the relevant present-tense forms. Explain that some verbs can’t have “ed” added (for example, “came” not “comed”, “fell” not “falled”). (And see After reading.)

After reading: practice and reinforcement

After-reading tasks should arise from your monitoring of the students’ needs during the lesson and provide purposeful practice and reinforcement. Where possible, make links to other texts, including texts generated from language experience and shared writing, and to the wider literacy programme (oral language, writing, handwriting, alphabet and word games and activities) and other curriculum areas.

Select from and adapt these suggestions, according to the needs of your students.

- Ask the students to reread the tales to a partner. Listen in, noting their ability to use punctuation to support phrasing and expression. You could also use this time to do a quick Running Record with a student to provide more information on an aspect you have noticed.
- The students can build their comprehension and fluency by rereading the story while listening to the audio version. Audio versions also provide English language learners with good models of pronunciation, intonation, and expression.
- Provide many opportunities for the students to reread this book and other animal stories or fables (see Related texts). You could also read picture book versions to the group or class.
- Provide the students with a jug, water, and stones or marbles for them to try out Clever Crow’s solution. The students could take photos and use them to write a recount or instructions.
- Have the students draw and write about the beginning, middle, and end of one of the stories. Encourage them to refer to the book as well as the summary chart.
- They could add thought bubbles for each character to a photocopy of the page 3 illustration.
- Build vocabulary by exploring the language in the stories. The students could:
 - work together to create a simple word web about crows, writing words from the text around a picture of a crow and generating other words or phrases
 - draw a picture of Fox and then work in pairs to brainstorm words or phrases to describe him (for example, clever, tricky, sly, red).
- Give the students cards with the present-tense and past-tense forms of verbs (including irregular verbs) from the text (for example, “pick”, “picked”; “fly”, “flew”; “gobble”, “gobbled”; “laugh”, “laughed”; “run”, “ran”; “dip”, “dipped”; “think”, “thought”; “fall”, “fell”) for them to match up. Provide further support, particularly for English language learners, by rereading sentences in the story that use the verbs or by making up oral sentences together. Alternatively, you could create a cloze task where the past-tense verbs are omitted. For example:

What did Crow pick up off the ground?
Crow _____ up some bread.

Where did Crow fly with the bread?
She _____ up into a tree.