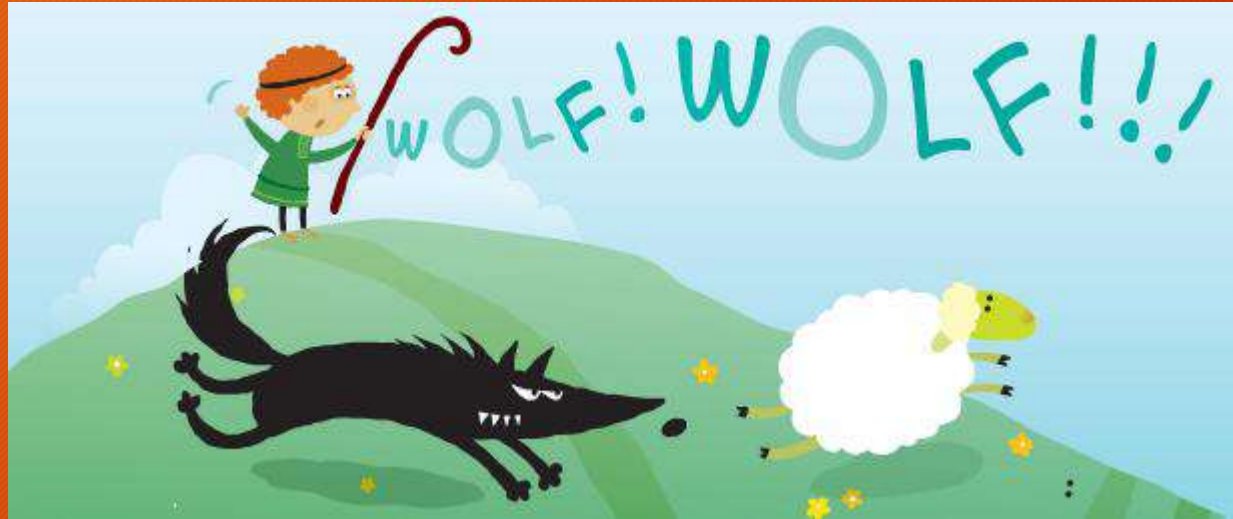


The Exemplum

Exemplum

- A brief narrative that illustrates a moral truth.
 - In other words, a story that:
 - Shows the **dangers** of living an immoral life
 - Shows the **value** of living a righteous life.
 - Demonstrates a **core cultural value**:
 - Honesty, Fairness, Kindness, Caring, Providing, Spiritual Obedience, Determination, Patriotism

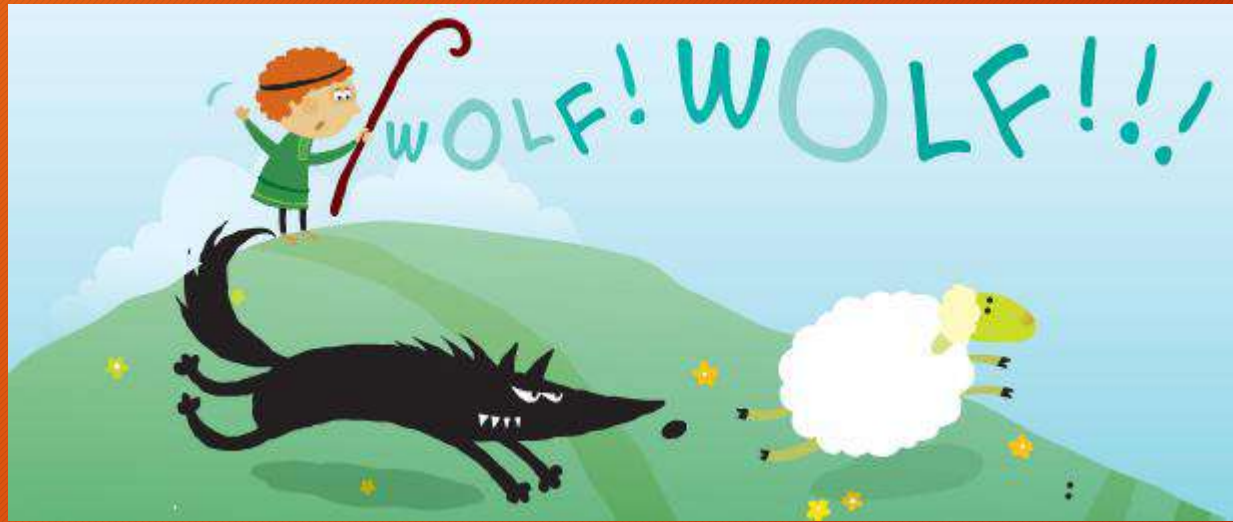
Exemplums You Might Know



What famous kids' story is this from?

The Boy Who Cried Wolf

Exemplums You Might Know



What cultural value is exemplified in this story?

At its simplest level, this story exemplifies honesty.

At a deeper level it exemplifies the importance of maintaining credibility, if you want to be taken seriously.

Exemplums You Might Know

The Three Little Pigs



“Bye Mom”



House of Straw



House of Brick

What cultural value does this fairy tale exemplify?

Hard work pays off—quick sloppy work will hurt you somewhere, somehow.

The Exemplum: The Pardoner's Tale



Pardoners were supposed to pardon sins and raise money for the church. However, it was very easy for dishonest pardoners to cheat others out of their money.

Chaucer's Pardoner is a dishonorable man who loves money and doesn't mind lying to get it. Ironically, his tale is about how love of money leads dishonest people to their deaths.

An Exemplum from The Canterbury Tales

The Pardoner's Tale



Plotting and betrayal:
Friends turn against each
other for what?



In “The Pardoner’s Tale” the moral is
directly stated:
Radix malorum est cupiditas—
Money is the root of all evil. Sometimes
the morals are not directly stated, but
demonstrated instead

The Exemplum: Your Assignment

You will write a one-page exemplum that is similar in style to Chaucer's Tales.

Pay careful attention to the following assignment requirements. Your grade depends on it.

The Exemplum: Your Assignment

Assignment Requirements

- **Prologue:** Four lines of rhyming couplets that describe your main character.
- **Characters:** The characters in your tale must be described using figurative language (simile, metaphor).
- **Exemplum:** Your tale must teach a moral lesson.
- **Dialogue:** Your tale must include some dialogue (conversation) between characters.
- **Length:** Tale must be at least one page long. That is about 250 words.
- **Rhyme:** The entire tale must be written in rhyming couplets and iambic pentameter. More on this in a minute.

The Exemplum: Your Assignment

So, what is a rhyming couplet?

A rhyming couplet is simply two lines that rhyme with each other.

Here are several from Chaucer himself:

There was a Knight, a most distinguished man,
Who from the day on which he first began,
To ride abroad had followed chivalry,
Truth, honor, generousness, and courtesy.

The Exemplum: Your Assignment

Iambic Pentameter:

This sounds more complicated than it really is. Basically, iambic pentameter means a line has (or has darn close to) ten syllables: Count the syllables in the lines below.

There was a Knight, a most distinguished man,
Who from the day on which he first began,

The Exemplum: Your Assignment

Performance

You will perform your tale in front of a different British Lit class. That class will vote on the best performance at the end of the presentations.

You can read from your tale, of course, but you should be smooth enough to show that you actually know what you're talking about. It should look rehearsed, not like you are reading it for the first time.

Origins of the Exemplum



Exemplums were often used by priests in the Middle Ages to support moral messages in sermons.