



Tug-of-War

10

☑ Lesson Objectives

Core Content Objectives

Students will:

- ✓ Demonstrate familiarity with the story “Tug-of-War”
- ✓ Identify the setting of “Tug-of-War”
- ✓ Identify the characteristics of subgenres of fiction, including trickster tales

Language Arts Objectives

The following language arts objectives are addressed in this lesson. Objectives aligning with the Common Core State Standards are noted with the corresponding standard in parentheses. Refer to the Alignment Chart for additional standards addressed in all lessons in this domain. Students will:

- ✓ Prior to listening to “Tug-of-War,” identify orally how to play the game tug-of-war
- ✓ Compare and contrast characters in “Tug-of-War” using a Venn diagram

Core Vocabulary

boast, v. To tell someone about something in a proud way

Example: Darian loved to boast about how good he was at skating.

Variation(s): boasts, boasted, boasting

bold, adj. Brave and fearless

Example: The warrior was bold and strong.

Variation(s): bolder, boldest

foolishness, n. A lack of good sense or judgment


Example: My mother does not allow foolishness, such as dancing on chairs, in the house.

Variation(s): none

might, n. Physical strength

Example: I tried to open the bottle using all of my might, and I still couldn't get it open!

Variation(s): none

<i>At a Glance</i>	Exercise	Materials	Minutes
<i>Introducing the Read-Aloud</i>	What Do We Know?		10
	Purpose for Listening		
<i>Presenting the Read-Aloud</i>	Tug-of-War		10
<i>Discussing the Read-Aloud</i>	Comprehension Questions		10
	Word Work: Foolishness		5
 Complete Remainder of the Lesson Later in the Day			
<i>Extensions</i>	Character Comparison	chart paper, chalkboard, or whiteboard	15
	Vocabulary Instructional Activity: Finally		



Tug-of-War

10_A

Introducing the Read-Aloud

10 minutes

What Do We Know?

Tell students that today's read-aloud is a type of story known as a trickster tale. A trickster tale is a story about a character who outsmarts larger, stronger characters. Tell students that trickster tales are another type of fiction—or a story created from someone's imagination.

Ask students if any of them have ever played a game called tug-of-war. Invite volunteers to explain how the game is played and won. If none of the students have played tug-of-war, quickly explain how the game is played, either through demonstration or by drawing on the board.

Purpose for Listening

Tell students to listen carefully to find out how a character in the story, Turtle, uses the game tug-of-war to make friends. (If some students are already familiar with this trickster tale, tell them to listen to see how this version might be different from the one they know.)

1. Introducing the Read-Aloud

PAUSE AND REFLECT: *Think about what you just saw. Did you observe evidence of any of the following Listening and Learning quality indicators?*

(Refer to the lesson plan as needed.)

Indicators	Cite example of evidence	Opportunities for improvement
<i>Asking questions that stirred students' interest</i>	Y	N
<i>Activating prior knowledge</i>	Y	N
<i>Setting a purpose for listening</i>	Y	N

Other thoughts:



Tug-of-War

◀ Show image 10A-1: Turtle bragging

1 That means Turtle said things in a proud and annoying way.

Turtle was small, but he talked big. He loved to **boast** that he was friends with the biggest animals in the jungle.¹ He would say things like, “I’m just as strong as the biggest animals around here, including Elephant and Hippopotamus. That’s right: Elephant and Hippopotamus and I are friends, because I’m just as strong as they are.”

One day, Elephant and Hippopotamus happened to hear from some of the other animals what Turtle was going around saying. Elephant and Hippopotamus laughed. “So,” they said, “Turtle thinks he is as strong as we are? That’s the silliest thing we’ve ever heard. He’s so tiny compared to us!”

And when the animals told Turtle what Elephant and Hippopotamus said, Turtle became very mad. “So, they do not think that I am as strong as they are? Once they see that I am just as strong as they are, we will definitely be friends. Just wait and see!” Then Turtle set off to find Elephant and Hippopotamus.



◀ Show image 10A-2: Turtle talking to Elephant

2 or brave

He found Elephant lying down in the jungle. Elephant was as big as a mountain; his trunk was as long as a river. But Turtle was **bold**.² He walked right up and said in his loudest voice, “Hey, Elephant, my dear friend!”

Elephant looked all around to see where the voice could be coming from. Finally, he looked down—way down—and spotted Turtle. “Oh, it’s you, is it?” said Elephant. “What is this **foolishness** I hear, that you claim to be as strong as I am?”³ How silly! I am much larger than you, and thus much stronger than you! Big animals and little animals cannot be friends.”

3 Foolishness means silly or ridiculous. People usually laugh at foolishness.

“Now, Elephant,” said Turtle, “just listen. You think that because you’re so much bigger than me, that makes you better. Well, let’s



- 4 [Point to the image and the difference in size between Turtle and Elephant.] Who do you think would win if Turtle and Elephant played tug-of-war?



- 5 Who do you think would win if Turtle and Hippopotamus played tug-of-war?

have a tug-of-war to find out.”

“A tug-of-war?” said Elephant. He laughed so hard the earth shook for miles around. “Why,” he said to Turtle, “you haven’t got a chance.”

◀ **Show image 10A-3: Turtle giving Elephant one end of a vine**

“Maybe so,” said Turtle. “But if you’re so sure, what have you got to lose?” Then Turtle cut a very long vine and gave one end to Elephant. “Here,” said Turtle. “Now, if I pull you down, I am stronger. If you pull me down, you are stronger. We won’t stop tugging until one of us pulls the other over, or the vine breaks. And if the vine breaks, we are equal, and will call each other friend.”⁴

“Now I’ll go pick up my end,” said Turtle, “and when you feel me start tugging, you tug back.”

And Turtle walked off with the other end of the long, long vine until, some time later, he found Hippopotamus bathing in the river.

“Oh, friend, I’m here!” shouted Turtle. “Come out of the water and say hi!”

◀ **Show image 10A-4: Turtle talking to Hippopotamus**

Hippopotamus could hardly believe his ears. “How could we be friends? You are so much smaller than me,” he said quizzically.

“Now hold on, friend Hippo,” said Turtle. “You think that because you’re so much bigger than me, that makes you better. Well, let’s have a tug-of-war to find out. Whoever pulls the other down is stronger. We will keep pulling until one of us wins or the vine breaks. And if the vine breaks, we are equal, and we will finally be friends.”⁵

“But Turtle, how could you win? You are so much smaller than me, and everyone knows that big animals are stronger than little animals,” said Hippopotamus.

“Well, let us see,” said Turtle, and he gave Hippopotamus an end of the long, long vine. “Now I’ll go pick up my end,” said Turtle, “and when you feel me start tugging, you tug back.”



6 Do Hippopotamus and Elephant know that they are playing tug-of-war against each other? Who do they think they are playing tug-of-war against?

7 This means they were pulling as hard as they could.



Turtle walked into the jungle and picked up the middle of the vine. He gave it a good hard shake. When Hippopotamus felt this, he started to tug. When Elephant felt the tug, he tugged back.

◀ **Show image 10A-5: Elephant and Hippopotamus tugging**

Elephant and Hippopotamus both tugged so mightily that the vine stretched tight.⁶ Turtle settled into a comfortable spot and watched for a while as the vine moved just a little bit one way, then just a little the other way. He took out his lunch and munched on his food very slowly, enjoying every bite. Then he yawned and fell asleep.

He woke a couple of hours later, feeling very refreshed from his nap. He looked up to see the vine still stretched tight, and he smiled. Yes, Elephant and Hippopotamus were still pulling with all their **might**.⁷ Neither one could pull the other over.

“I suppose it’s about time,” said Turtle, and he cut the vine.

◀ **Show image 10A-6: Elephant and Hippopotamus tumbling down**

When the vine broke, both Elephant and Hippopotamus tumbled down, WHUMP BUMPITY—BUMP BAM BOOM!

Turtle went to see Elephant, and found him sprawled on the ground, rubbing his head. “Turtle,” said Elephant, “you are very strong and quite powerful! You were right; we are equal. I guess that bigger doesn’t mean better after all, and that big animals and little animals can indeed be friends.”

Then Turtle went to see Hippopotamus, who was also sprawled on the ground, rubbing his head. “So, Turtle,” said Hippopotamus, “we are equal after all. You were right, my friend.”

◀ **Show image 10A-7: Elephant, Hippopotamus, and Turtle together**

From then on, whenever the animals held a meeting, there at the front sat Elephant, Hippopotamus, and Turtle. And they always called each other friends.

2. Presenting the Read-Aloud

PAUSE AND REFLECT: *Think about what you just saw. Did you observe evidence of any of the following Listening and Learning quality indicators?*

(Refer to the lesson plan as needed.)

Indicators	Cite example of evidence	Opportunities for improvement
<i>The presentation of the read-aloud reflected familiarity with the text (read clearly, steady pace, difficult words pronounced easily and correctly)</i>	Y	N
<i>The teacher employed guided listening supports (GLS)?</i>	Y	N
<i>Images were in students' view</i>	Y	N

Other thoughts:

Comprehension Questions

10 minutes

1. *Literal* Who are the characters in the story? (The characters in this story are Hippopotamus, Elephant, and Turtle.)
2. *Literal* What is the setting of the story? (The setting of this story is the jungle.)
3. *Inferential* Do Hippopotamus and Elephant think Turtle can be friends with them? Why not? (No, they think that Turtle is much too small to be friends with them.)
4. *Literal* When does Turtle tell Hippopotamus and Elephant to start tugging on the vine? (Turtle tells Hippopotamus and Elephant to start tugging on the vine when they feel a tug on the other end of the vine.)
5. *Literal* Where is Turtle during the tug-of-war? (During the tug-of-war, Turtle is in the middle, where Hippopotamus and Elephant can't see him.)
6. *Inferential* Why do Hippopotamus and Elephant finally agree to be friends with Turtle? (Hippopotamus and Elephant finally agree to be friends with Turtle because they think he beat them at tug-of-war and is just as strong as they are.)
7. *Evaluative* Remember that “Tug-of-War” is a special kind of fiction story. Which part of the story tells you that “Tug-of-War” is fiction, or a made-up story? (Animals cannot actually talk.) What kind of fiction is this story? (This story is a type of fiction known as a trickster tale.) Which part of the story tells you that “Tug-of-War” is a trickster tale? (Turtle tricks the bigger animals into thinking that he is stronger than he actually is.)

[Please continue to model the *Think Pair Share* process for students, as necessary, and scaffold students in their use of the process.]

I am going to ask a question. I will give you a minute to think about the question, and then I will ask you to turn to your neighbor and discuss the question. Finally, I will call on several of you to share what you discussed with your partner.

8. *Evaluative Think Pair Share:* What else could Turtle have done to become friends with Hippopotamus and Elephant? (Answers may vary.)
9. After hearing today's read-aloud and questions and answers, do you have any remaining questions? [If time permits, you may wish to allow for individual, group, and/or class research of the text and/or other resources to answer these remaining questions.]

Word Work: Foolishness

5 minutes

1. In the read-aloud you heard Elephant say to Turtle, “What is this *foolishness* I hear, that you claim to be as strong as I am?”
2. Say the word *foolishness* with me.
3. *Foolishness* means the silly things you do or say.
4. Ian took part in foolishness when he jumped on the bunk bed and hit his head on the ceiling.
5. Have you ever seen or heard someone taking part in foolishness? Try to use the word *foolishness* when you tell about it. [Ask two or three students. If necessary, guide and/or rephrase the students' responses: “_____ took part in foolishness when . . .”]
6. What's the word we've been talking about?

3. Discussing the Read-Aloud

PAUSE AND REFLECT: *Think about what you just saw. Did you observe evidence of any of the following Listening and Learning quality indicators?*

(Refer to the lesson plan as needed.)

Indicators	Cite example of evidence	Opportunities for improvement
<i>Asked 3-5 comprehension questions immediately after reading.</i>	Y	N
<i>Opportunity for partner or small group discussion based on read-aloud.</i>	Y	N
<i>Word work completed (extended/explicit vocabulary work with listed vocabulary words)</i>	Y	N

Other thoughts: