

Lesson 8

Determining the Central Message

Learning Target

Use the key details and events of a story to figure out the central message, or lesson, that the author wants to share with readers.

- **Read** Many stories have a **central message**, or lesson, the author wants to share. The story teaches the lesson through the characters, the events that happen, and what the characters learn.

As you read, looking for the **key details** will help you to find the central message and understand what you read.


Look at the cartoon. Think about a lesson the boy learns by the end.



► **Think** The events in the cartoon tell about a problem the boy has and what he does. Complete the chart by adding the key details. Use those details to figure out the central message of the cartoon.

Key Detail	Key Detail	Key Detail
↓	↓	↓
What Is the Central Message?		

► **Talk** Using the key details in the chart, talk about the central message of the cartoon.



Academic Talk
Use these phrases to talk about the text.

- **central message**
- **key details**

The Girl and the Apples

by Tala Rutchel

- 1 One fall afternoon, a girl went to a farm to pick apples. She was in a hurry, so she picked carelessly both ripe apples and unripe ones. When she finished, her wagon was filled with a small mountain of apples.
- 2 The girl asked the farmer, “Quick, tell me how long you think it will take me to get back home.”
- 3 The farmer thought carefully. Then he said, “Be patient. If you go slowly, you will be back soon. If you go fast, you will not get back until night. It’s your choice.”
- 4 The girl thought, “How can that be? How can it take so long if I go fast?”
- 5 The girl wanted to get back home as soon as possible, so she rushed her horse and wagon onto the road. She made her horse walk very fast.
- 6 And suddenly . . . bump! Off fell some apples.
- 7 Every time she hit a bump, more apples rolled off her wagon. Then she had to stop and put them back on the wagon. Because of all the delays, it was night before she got home.



Close Reader Habits

Underline key details that help you figure out the central message.

Explore

How can key details help you figure out what lesson the girl in the story learns?



To find the central message, think about what each key character says and does.

► **Think**

- 1 Complete the chart by writing some key details about what the characters say and do. Then write the central message, or lesson.

Key Details (the Girl)

Key Details (the Farmer)

↓ ↓

What Is the Central Message?

► **Talk**

- 2 Think about the message of the story. Talk about what the girl learned.

►  **Write**

- 3 **Short Response** What is another lesson the girl might learn from what happened? Use the space provided on page 14 to write your answer.

HINT What might the girl think about the farmer's advice by the end of the story?

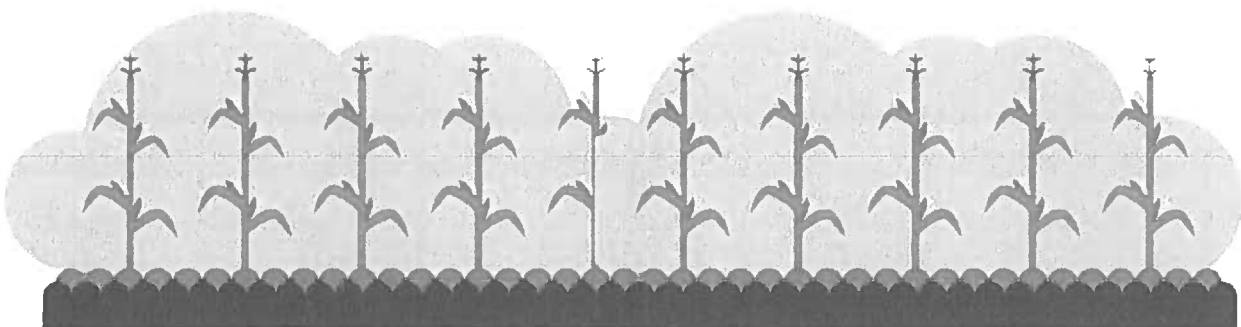
Sharing the Crops

a folktale from England

- 1 Once a farmer rented some land. “How much does it cost to use this land?” the farmer asked the landowner.
- 2 The owner wanted to get the better part of the deal. So he said, “I’ll take the top half of the crop, and you can take the bottom half.”
- 3 But the farmer was clever. He planted potatoes because they grow in the ground. At harvest time, he gave the owner the potato tops, which are not good for anything.
- 4 The owner knew he had been outsmarted. He said, “Next year, I want the bottom half of your crops.”
- 5 So the next year the farmer planted oats, which grow at the top of long grasses. The bottom half is useless grassy straw. That’s what the farmer gave to the owner.
- 6 This time the owner said, “Next year, I’ll take the top and the bottom. You can have the middle.”
- 7 So this time, the farmer planted corn. At the top of each corn stalk are tassels. At the bottom are woody stalks. In the middle is where the tasty sweet corn grows.
- 8 For a third time, the owner had been outsmarted. Now it was the farmer’s turn to suggest a deal. “From now on,” he said, “why don’t you take half of whatever I grow? Whatever I get, you will get the same.”
- 9 This was a fair deal at last. From that day on, the owner and the farmer shared the crops equally.

Close Reader Habits

Why does the landowner keep changing the deal he made with the farmer? **Underline** the key details about the first deal between the landowner and the farmer.





To find the central message of a story, think about which character learns a lesson.

► Think

- 1 This question has two parts. Answer Part A. Then answer Part B.

Part A

What is the central message of “Sharing the Crops”?

- A It is wrong to try to cheat others.
- B Never make a deal with a clever farmer.
- C The best part of a crop is usually at the top.
- D If a plan doesn’t succeed, keep trying.

Part B

Which sentence from the story **best** supports the answer you chose for Part A above?

- A “Once a farmer rented some land.”
- B “The owner wanted to get the better part of the deal.”
- C “This was a fair deal at last.”
- D “So this time, the farmer planted corn.”

► Talk

- 2 Using key details from the text, talk to your partner about how the farmer outsmarts the landowner.

► Write

- 3 **Short Response** Explain which character in “Sharing the Crops” learns a lesson. Use one detail from the folktale to support your response. Use the space provided on page 19 to write your answer.

HINT Reread to look for the character who learns a lesson.



Write Use the space below to write your answer to the question on page 18.

Sharing the Crops

3 Short Response Explain which character in “Sharing the Crops” learns a lesson. Use one detail from the folktale to support your response.


HINT Reread to look for the character who learns a lesson.

Check Your Writing

- Did you read the prompt carefully?
- Did you put the prompt in your own words?
- Did you use the best evidence from the text to support your ideas?
- Are your ideas clearly organized?
- Did you write in clear and complete sentences?
- Did you check your spelling and punctuation?

Lesson 31

Real-Life Connections

 **Introduction** When reading, you can connect the words on the page to your own life or to the wider world. Connecting words with real-life events can make their meaning clearer.

- What do you think of when you read the word *friendly*? You might remember a time when a friendly classmate smiled at you.

A friendly classmate smiled and said, "Hi."

- When you think about the word *friendly*, you might also remember what friendly people and animals in your town or city have done.

A friendly lady in town gives neighbors vegetables from her garden.

Friendly dogs wag their tails and want to be patted.

Guided Practice

Circle the correct words to complete each sentence. Then work with a partner to think of more ways to complete each sentence.

HINT To help think of more ways to complete each sentence, ask your partner questions like these.

- When were you helpful?
- What do you do when you are curious about something?

1 A helpful person might _____ .

do chores **break a glass** **trip and fall**

2 If a person is curious, she might _____ .

go to sleep **read a book** **wrap a gift**

3 It would be selfish to _____ .

take all the toys **give presents** **help others**

4 A student could interrupt a class by _____ .

writing a story **doing math** **talking loudly**

Independent Practice

For numbers 1–5, choose the correct answer to each question.

1 How might a **patient** person act?

- A** tell a friend to hurry up
- B** run to be first in line
- C** refuse to wait for someone
- D** teach a baby something new

2 What might a **stubborn** person say?

- A** "I like this new food after all."
- B** "I won't eat that even if it's good for me."
- C** "I agree with you about that."
- D** "I'll stay home because you need my help."

3 What might a **generous** person do?

- A** help a friend with homework
- B** eat candy without sharing
- C** disobey his parents
- D** scare a friend's dog

4 How might someone cause **confusion**?

- A** by solving a problem
- B** by telling the truth
- C** by giving poor directions
- D** by speaking clearly

5 What is a **rude** thing to do?

- A** invite a friend to a party
- B** talk while others are talking
- C** offer to wash the dishes
- D** help a neighbor plant a garden

WORDS TO KNOW

As you read, look inside, around, and beyond these words to figure out what they mean.

- trotted/trotting
- stall

ZEL

the Gentle Donkey

A FOLKTALE FROM HAITI

- 1 Long ago, there was a gentle donkey named Zel. Everyone in town loved Zel because she was so pleasant and kind. But Zel's owner, Madame Charity, was angry and mean. She was so mean that she threw rocks at birds for singing too loud. She yelled at little boys when they laughed. But she was the meanest of all to poor Zel.
- 2 Every Saturday, Madame Charity sold sugar and rice at a market. Whoever arrived earliest sold the most. But Madame Charity always woke up late. Then she got angry and yelled at Zel, who had done nothing wrong.
- 3 In a huff, Madame Charity would then load heavy bags of rice and sugar onto Zel's back. Last, she climbed on top of it. "Hurry, Zel!" she yelled. "Get me to market as fast as you can!" Although Zel always trotted as fast as she could, it was never fast enough for Madame Charity.



4 One day, Zel's friend Touloulou the crab visited. "Did you have a good day at the market?" asked Touloulou.

5 "Madame Charity was mad at me all day. I work as hard as I can, but she is always mean to me."

6 "Madame Charity is always late. She won't blame herself, so she blames you," said Touloulou.

7 "Yes," said Zel. "And because everyone is afraid of her angry tongue, she never sells much at the market."

8 "I will help you," said Touloulou.

9 The next Saturday, Madame Charity woke up at 9 a.m. "Oh, no! I'm late again!" she yelled. As she tossed her heavy bags onto Zel's back, Touloulou the crab grabbed onto the hem of her long skirt. Madame Charity climbed on Zel's back. Touloulou held tightly to her skirt.

10 Zel started trotting. Madame Charity remembered how late she was. She opened her mouth to speak angrily, but Touloulou pinched her ankle.

11 “Ouch!” Madame Charity rubbed her ankle. She forgot how late she was. But soon she remembered. “Faster, Zel! Faster!” she yelled.

12 Again Touloulou pinched Madame Charity’s ankle.

13 “Ouch!” shouted Madame Charity.

14 When they got to the market, Madame Charity saw that someone had taken the stall she liked to use. In a fit of rage, Madame Charity opened her mouth to yell. For the third time, Touloulou pinched her ankle. Madame Charity screamed.

15 “What’s wrong?” people asked.

16 “Hurrying to get to market, I must have hurt my ankle. It’s very painful. Ouch! Ouch! Ouch!”

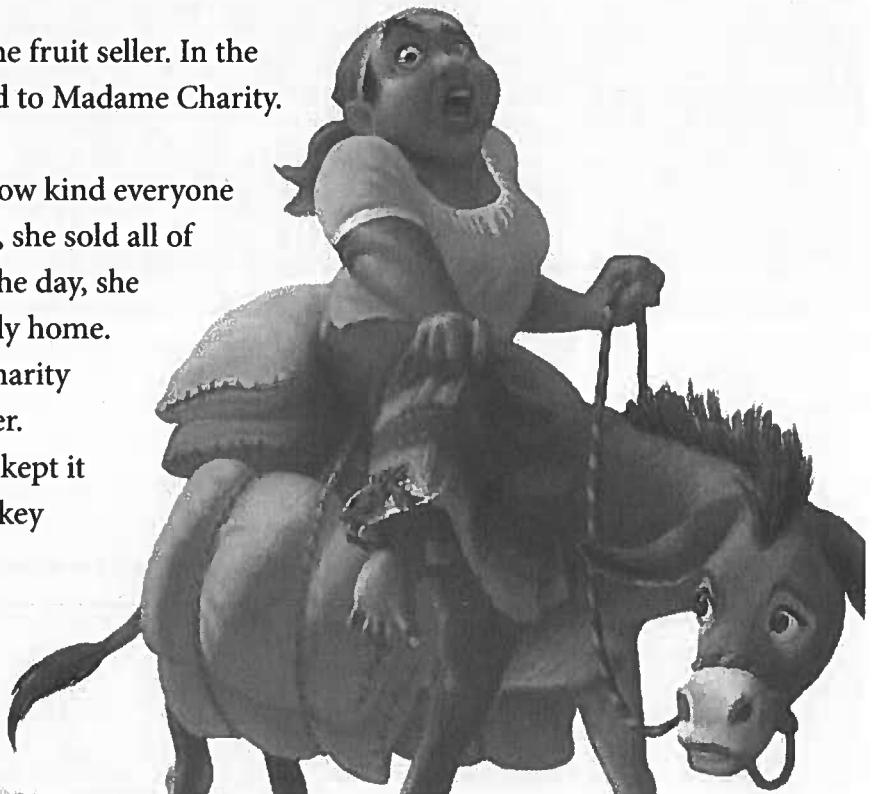
17 The fish seller said, “Madame Charity, you should get up earlier. Then you will not have to rush. Next week, I will wake you at 6 a.m.”

18 “Thank you,” said Madame Charity. She was surprised at the man’s kindness.

19 “Let me fix your ankle,” said the fruit seller. In the past, the fruit seller had not talked to Madame Charity. Today he felt sorry for her.

20 When Madame Charity saw how kind everyone was, she smiled. For the first time, she sold all of her rice and sugar. At the end of the day, she saddled Zel gently and rode quietly home.

21 From that day on, Madame Charity tried not to raise her voice in anger. Sometimes she got angry, but she kept it to herself. And Zel the gentle donkey was happy at last.



Think Use what you learned from reading the selection to respond to these questions.

- 1 Which detail in the first part of the story explains why Madame Charity is cruel to Zel?
 - A Zel does not walk to the market as fast as she is able to.
 - B Madame Charity is always angry and mean.
 - C Madame Charity does not have enough sugar and rice to sell.
 - D Everyone in town loves Zel because she is pleasant and kind.

- 2 Describe how Touloulou helps Zel.

- 3 This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then answer Part B.

Part A

What is the central message of this story?

- A Honesty is the best policy.
- B Kindness gets better results than anger.
- C Things are not always as they appear.
- D Beware of strangers.

Part B

Which sentence from the story is **most** important to the central message of the story?

- A "Madame Charity, you should get up earlier."
- B "Then she got angry and yelled at Zel. . . ."
- C "From that day on, Madame Charity tried not to raise her voice in anger."
- D "Today he felt sorry for her."

4 What is the meaning of the word *market* as it is used in this sentence from the story?

Every Saturday, Madame Charity sold sugar and rice at a market.

- A a store where food and spices are bought
- B a place where people buy and sell things
- C a street fair where people gather
- D a bank where money is exchanged



Write A central message of “Zel, the Gentle Donkey” is that being kind to others can cause good things to happen. Explain how the actions of the characters in the story show this central message.

5 **Plan Your Response** Make a list of things from the story that tell about the kindness of some of the characters.

6 **Write an Extended Response** Review the central message of “Zel, the Gentle Donkey.” Explain how the characters in the story help deliver this message. Use details from the story to support your answer.

Lesson 7

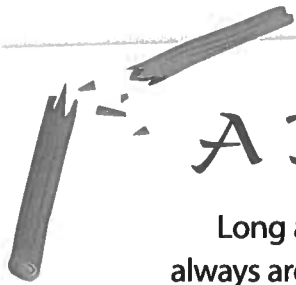
Recounting Stories

Learning Target

Retell or recount stories from around the world by telling key events in the order in which they happened.

- **Read** When you **recount** a story, you are retelling the story in your own words. Be sure that you include the key details and **events** that happened in the beginning, middle, and end. Tell the events in the **sequence**, or order, in which they happened.

Read this story. Think about what happens at the beginning, middle, and end. Then reread the story. What are the most important details?



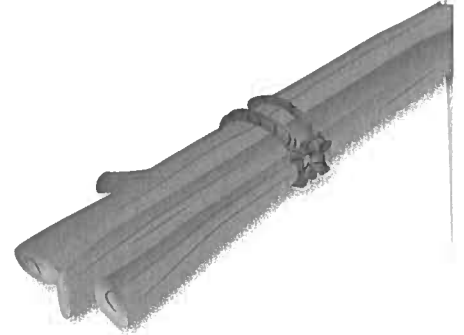
A Bundle of Sticks

Long ago, a mother had three children who were always arguing. "Your arguing sounds worse than the clucking of all the hens in the world," their mother told them. She wanted them to stop!

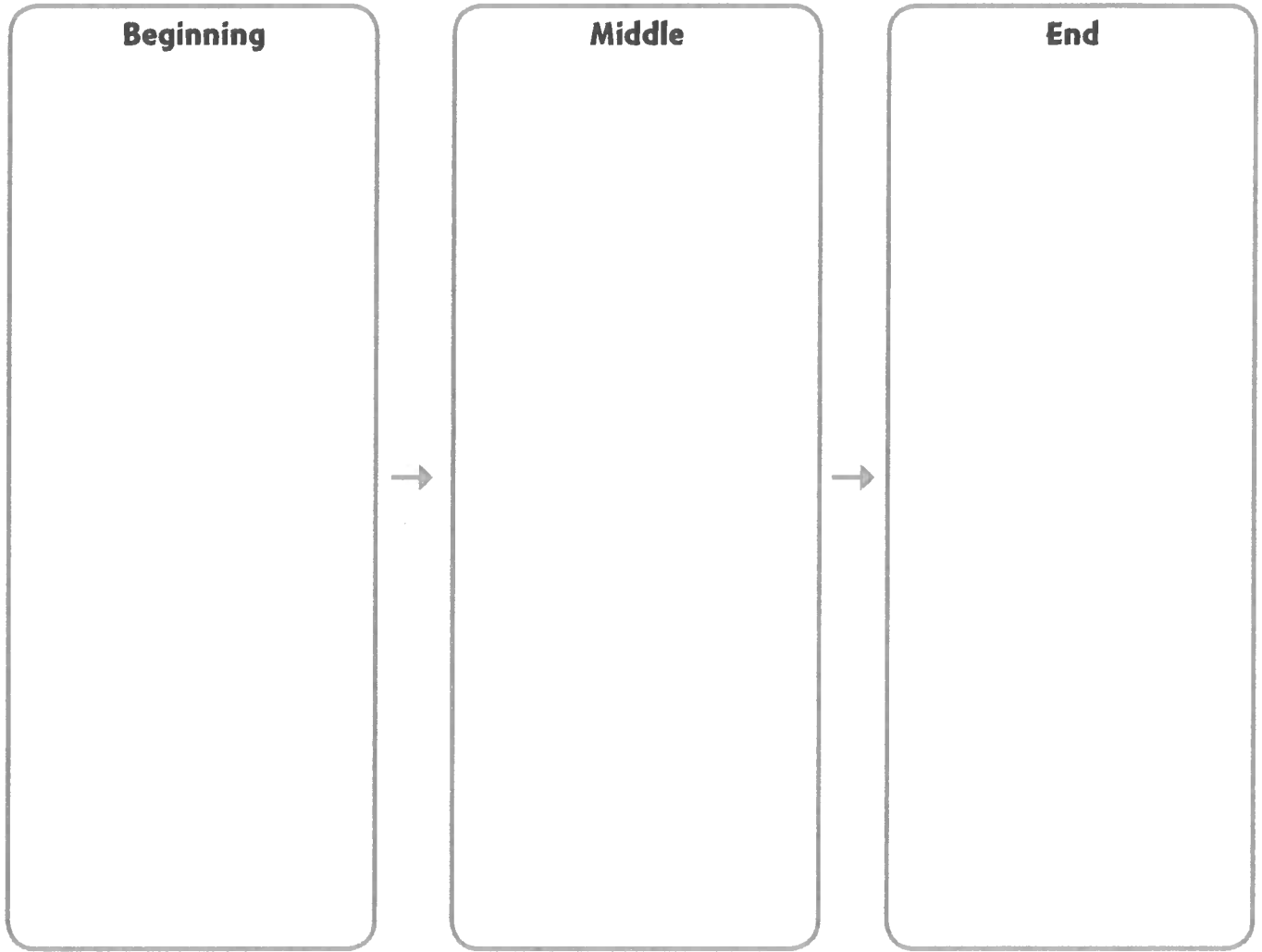
One day she got an idea. She gathered the children around her. Then she took a stick and broke it. "See how easy it is to break one stick?" she asked. Then she tied three sticks together. She asked each child to try to break the sticks. None of the children could break the bundle.

The mother told the children, "We're just like the sticks. When we don't stay together, our family is weak. When we stay together, nothing can break us apart."


The children understood! From that day forward, they didn't argue (as much).



► **Think** The chart below will help you to organize the most important details of a story. Think about what happened in the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Then add those details to the chart.



► **Talk** Using the key details in your chart, retell the story to your partner.

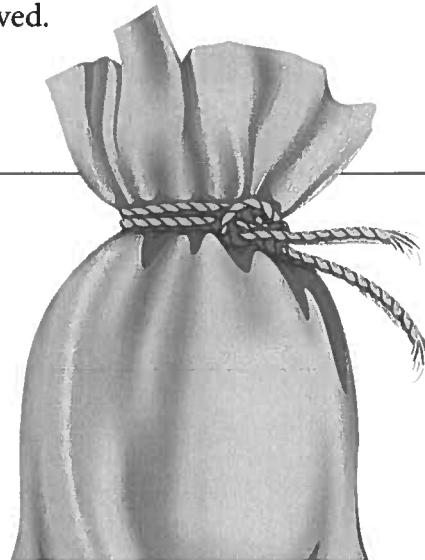
 **Academic Talk**
Use these words to talk about the text.

- **recount**
- **sequence**
- **character**
- **setting**
- **events**

Brother and Sister

a folktale from Korea

- 1 Long ago, a brother and sister grew rice to sell. Through the long summer, they worked together to care for the rice paddies. In the fall, they harvested all the rice and put the rice into bags. Each got the same number of bags.
- 2 After one harvest, the brother announced he was soon to be married. The sister knew her brother would need money to buy a new house for his bride. She didn't feel the rice was divided fairly, so that night, she took an extra bag of rice to her brother's house in secret.
- 3 The brother, too, felt the rice was not divided fairly. His sister had a large family. She would need more rice. So that night, the brother took an extra bag to his sister's house in secret.
- 4 The next day, the brother and sister counted their rice bags. Strange! Both had the same number as before. So that night, when the moon was full, they made another attempt. In the moonlight, the brother and sister each saw the other carrying a bag of rice! They laughed. The mystery was solved.



Close Reader Habits

Underline the sentences that tell the key events.

Explore

How do you choose which details to include when you recount a story?



To decide whether a detail is important, think about whether the story makes sense without it.

Think

- 1 Recount the folktale "Brother and Sister" by adding key details to the chart below.

Beginning	<i>A brother and sister grow and sell rice. They each get the same number of bags of rice.</i>
Middle	<i>Sister</i> <i>Brother</i>
End	

Talk

- 2 Using the details from your chart, take turns retelling the story with your partner.

Write

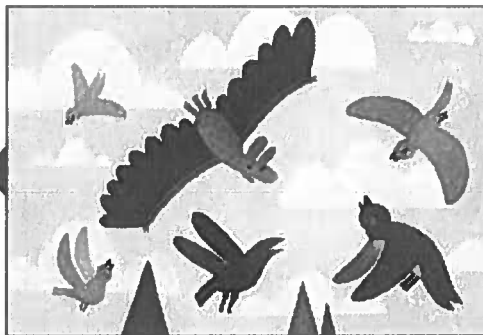
- 3 **Short Response** Which details from the chart do you think are most important? List them and tell why you chose them. Use the space provided on page 37 to write your answer.

HINT What details would you need to help a friend understand what happens in the story?

HOW THE BAT GOT WINGS

◀◀ A CHEROKEE NATION TALE ▶▶

- 1 A long time ago, the bat was a tiny mammal. It had no wings. One day, the mammals and birds decided to play a game. The birds played on one team, and the mammals played on the other team.
- 2 The bat wanted to play with the mammals, but the mammals laughed at her size. "You are too small," they said.
- 3 So the bat asked to play with the birds. The birds said, "You don't have wings, but we can make you some out of a drum." The birds stretched the skin of a drum into wings.
- 4 The birds put the wings on the bat and said, "Flap your wings." The bat jumped off a tree and flapped her wings, but she didn't fly in a straight line like the birds. Instead, she flew every which way in a crazy, zigzag pattern.
- 5 The birds let the bat play on their team. Just as she had done before, the bat flew in a crazy, zigzag pattern. The mammals on the other team could not catch the bat. The bat scored the winning points for the birds.
- 6 When the game was over, the mammals said, "Who is that superstar on your team?"
- 7 The birds said, "It is the bat. We gave her wings."
- 8 The mammals did not know what to say. After all, they had refused to let the tiny bat play on their team. The mammals had learned their lesson. From that day on, they let any animal of any size play on their team.



Close Reader Habits

Which details would you include to recount the story? **Underline** the most important ones.



When you get ready to recount a story, choose the most important details.

► Think

1 Number the items to show the order of some events in the story.

___ The bat flies in a crazy, zigzag pattern.

___ The birds make wings for the bat.

___ The mammals do not let the bat play on their team.

2 Why do the birds win the game?

- A The mammals cannot follow the bat's movements.
- B The mammals are surprised to see the bat on the team.
- C The mammals refuse to play against a bat.
- D The birds fly in a crazy, zigzag pattern.

► Talk

3 Using key details from the text, talk to your partner about how the bat's way of flying helps the birds win.

► Write

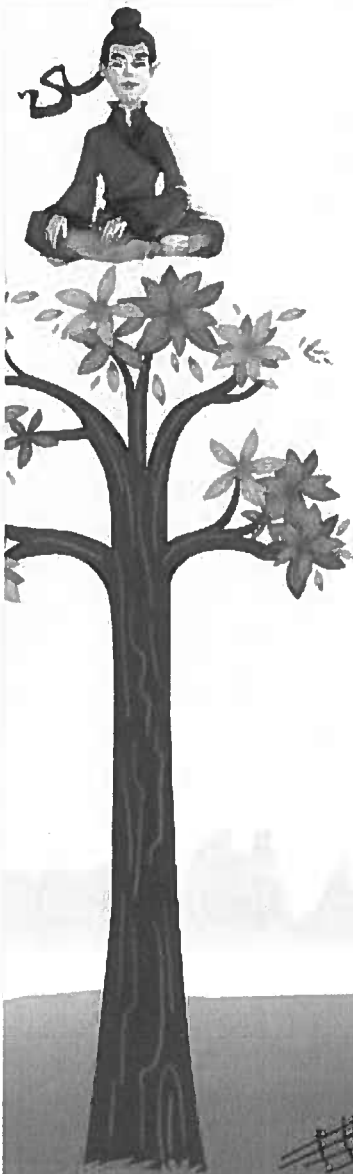
4 **Short Response** In your own words, recount what happens when the bat plays the game with the birds. Be sure to include the most important details from the story. Use the space provided on page 40 to write your answer.

HINT Review the game in paragraphs 5 to 8.

WORDS TO KNOW

As you read, look inside, around, and beyond these words to figure out what they mean.

- **fuss**
- **disbelief**



True or False

a folktale from Myanmar (Burma)

- 1 There once were three poor brothers who loved to tell tall tales. They traveled throughout the countryside telling wild stories. They always claimed that their tales were true, but no one ever believed them.
- 2 One day, the three brothers met a rich traveler. The man was dressed in fine clothes and wore shining jewels. The brothers wanted his things. "Let's ask him to play a game. Each of the four of us will tell a tale of a past adventure. The rule is that if anyone doubts the truth of another's story, he must become that person's servant. The man will never believe our stories. Getting him to doubt our stories will be like rolling off a log. He will have to become our servant."
- 3 The others liked this plan. They did not want a servant. But they wanted the man's fine things. The man agreed to the game.
- 4 The first brother told a story of how he had climbed a tree and could not get down. So he ran to a nearby cottage and borrowed a rope.
- 5 The second brother told of jumping into the stomach of a tiger who wanted to eat him. "I made such a fuss that the tiger spit me out," he said.



- 6 The third told of helping the village fishermen. He said he turned into a fish and jumped into the river. There, he turned back into a man and killed the big fish that were eating all the little fish.
- 7 The rich man listened to the three tales without saying one word of disbelief. Then he told his story. He said he was searching for three servants who had run away from him.
- 8 “You three must be the ones I am looking for,” he said.
- 9 The brothers looked at him with alarm. If they doubted him, they must become his servants. That was their rule. But if they said his story was true, they would have to become his servants too!
- 10 They said nothing.
- 11 Finally, the man said he would let them go if they promised never to tell tall tales again.
- 12 The brothers agreed, and they kept their promise.



► **Think** Use what you learned from reading the selection to respond to these questions.

1 Number the items to show the order of some events in the story.

- ___ Each brother told his make-believe story.
- ___ Three brothers talked a rich traveler into playing a game.
- ___ The rich man made them promise not to tell tall tales.
- ___ The rich man told them a story.
- ___ The rich man did not question the brothers' stories.
- ___ The brothers realized they were trapped.

2 This question has two parts. First, answer Part A. Then answer Part B.

Part A

Why did the three brothers want to play a game with the traveler?

- A** They wanted to see if he would believe their tall tales.
- B** They wanted to trick him so they could have what he owned.
- C** They disliked people who had more money than they did.
- D** They were once the rich traveler's servants.

Part B

Write a sentence from paragraph 2 that supports the answer you chose for Part A.

- 3 Which is the **best** recounting of the third brother's story?
- A He plays a trick on the fishermen. He pretends to be a big fish catching small ones.
 - B He gets away from the fishermen by swimming in the river like a fish.
 - C He helps the fishermen. He turns himself into a fish and then back into a person to kill a big fish.
 - D He becomes a fish so that he can help the fishermen chase fish into their nets.
- 4 Which is the **best** description of the brothers' problem at the end of the folktale?
- A The brothers think the rich man's story is the best of all the stories they have heard.
 - B The rich man believes that the brothers are the runaway servants he is looking for.
 - C The brothers promise never to tell tall tales again as they know they should not be doing that.
 - D No matter how the brothers answer the rich man, they will have to become his servants.

5 Which **two** details could you leave out when recounting this story?

- A The brothers tell their tales throughout the countryside.
- B The brothers ask a rich traveler to play a game.
- C A tiger spit one brother out after eating him.
- D The rich man said nothing about the brothers' stories.
- E The rich man told a story about missing servants.
- F The brothers agreed not to tell any more tall tales.

6 Reread these sentences from paragraph 2.

The man will never believe our stories. Getting him to doubt our stories will be like rolling off a log.

What does the word *doubt* mean in this context?

- A dislike
- B understand
- C mistrust
- D enjoy

