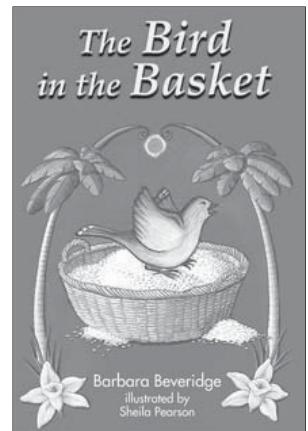


The Bird in the Basket

by Barbara Beveridge

illustrated by Sheila Pearson



Book Summary

This story from Indonesia is about three poor but hard-working sisters. When the youngest sister discovers a magical bird it seems that their worries are over. Each morning, the bird fills a basket with rice – more than enough to meet their daily needs. However, when their mean uncle hears of this wonderful bird, he wants to have it for himself.

Features of the Book

- Traditional tale
- Indonesian setting
- Formal language
- Stylized illustrations
- The message in the story
- Past forms of verbs – *grew, flew, woke, ate, burst*
- Evocative use of language – *Ke-ke-ko, kekeko*

Purpose

The Bird in the Basket can be used to introduce and reinforce the following skills:

- recognizing the form of traditional tales;
- understanding that authors write in different ways for different purposes;
- determining the author's underlying message;
- comparing traditional tales with other genres;
- using text as a model for students' own writing.

The Guided Reading Lesson

- Recognizing the form of traditional tales
- Understanding that authors write in different ways for different purposes
- Determining the author's underlying message

Introducing the text

You may wish to read this story as part of a study of traditional tales. Give the students the opportunity to read a range of tales from different cultures so that they can contrast and compare them.

Look at the cover and title page of the book together.

- *What kind of story is this?*
- *What does "retold by" mean?*

Discuss the idea that in stories like this, the original author is usually unknown. The stories are often retold by different authors, each in their own particular way.

- *Barbara Beveridge has written the story in her own words. What other traditional or folk tales do you know?*
- *Which parts of the world are they from?*

Show the students the covers of other books with a similar format, reinforcing the idea that the stories are retold.

Find Indonesia on a map or globe and relate its position to other countries that the students know.

Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read the first chapter of the book.

- As you read, think about how the author has introduced and described the characters and the setting for the story.

Encourage the students to clarify the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary by asking for help or by using a dictionary. When everyone has finished, discuss what the students have found that sets the scene for the story. For example:

Characters

There are three sisters.

The youngest is called Little One.

Their parents are dead.

They are poor.

Setting

The story takes place in Indonesia.

The girls live in a house near a lake.

They have a garden.

Ask the students to support their answers by using words or sentences from the text. Discuss the idea that this first chapter introduces some of the characters and describes where the story takes place.

- The main part of the story is still to come. What do you think will happen next?
- What part do you think the bird will play in the story?

Ask the students to read to the end of the book independently. You could use the following purpose-setting questions:

- What is the author trying to tell us in this story?
- Is there a message you can find?

Discuss the idea of an underlying message in the text if you have not done so already as part of a wider study of folk tales.

Students that finish first can reread and note down their answers to the purpose-setting questions.

Discuss the idea of the message or moral of the story – something that the reader is meant to learn from. The students may suggest:

- The girls were kind to the bird, so it rewarded them.
- The uncle was greedy and got nothing.
- Treat others kindly, and you will be treated kindly yourself.

Revisiting the Text

The suggested activities below can be used immediately after the guided reading lesson if appropriate or could be taken as a mini-lesson at a later time.

S Comparing traditional tales with other genres

After sharing a range of folk tales and traditional tales, the students will come to recognize some common features of the genre.

✎ To help reinforce this, the students could use the Venn diagram on the blackline master on page 67 to compare the features of nonfiction texts and traditional tales. Some of the features could be:

Nonfiction:

- gives the reader facts
- often has photographs
- talks about real things
- can be written in chapters
- sometimes has an index.

Folk tale:

- can start with “Once” or “Once upon a time”
- often from another country
- usually retold
- often has good and wicked characters
- can include magical events
- has a problem to be solved
- often has a message for the reader.

Ask the students to give a verbal summary of their work. You may want to model this for them. This helps to reinforce the idea that authors write in different ways for different purposes.

S Using text as a model for students' own writing

✎ After the students have compared the traditional tale with other kinds of writing, they could use the features of traditional tales to write a folk tale of their own. It may help to look at another well-known traditional tale to reinforce these features. An example might be The Hare and the Tortoise.

Ask the students to share their story with the group, summarizing the plot and asking whether anyone thinks there is a message for the reader.