

## *Clumsy Jesting is no Joke: Learning from Aesop*

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**Grade level:** Middle and high school

**Content areas:** English Language Arts and Social Studies

**Invitation:** Aesop's fables – older than the Olympics, newer than the Super Bowl, bigger than the New York Times, smaller than a fortune cookie, more complex than a novel and as simple as a comic book -- Aesop teaches us basic truths gleaned from watching creatures interact.

**Assessment:** Students show evidence of developing analytical and writing skills as they:

- Create a concept map of Aesop's fables
- Read and analyze a collection of Aesop's fables
- Create a modern retelling of one Aesop fable

### **Technology tools**

Dana by AlphaSmart or Dana Wireless  
Printer  
Computer  
PiCo Map or Inspiration for Palm OS  
Palm Reader  
Internet Browser

### **Internet sites:**

Aesop eBook Collection for Palm Reader  
<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/ebooks/Alist.html>

Online collection of Aesop's Fables  
<http://www.AesopFables.com>

Traditional and Modern versions of Aesop's Fables  
<http://www.umass.edu/aesop/open.html>

A list of Aesop's quotes and morals to fables  
<http://www.chesco.com/~artman/aesop.html>

Life of Aesop information:  
<http://www.wendy.com/children/aesop.html>

### **Additional resources:**

Traditional collections of Aesop fables.

## National Standards for Students

### National Educational Technology Standards

- Understand basic concepts and operations
- Practice responsible use
- Use technology tools to enhance learning, collaborate, publish and promote creativity.
- Use telecommunications and a variety of media and formats to communicate.
- Locate, evaluate and share information

### National Council of Teachers of English

- Read a wide range of print and non-print texts
- Read a wide range of literature
- Apply a wide range of reading strategies
- Use spoken, written, and visual language to communicate effectively
- Employ a wide range of writing strategies
- Apply knowledge of language structure and conventions
- Conduct research
- Use technological and information resources
- Participate in literacy communities

For a detailed explanation of NETS for Students visit: [http://cnets.iste.org/students/s\\_stands.html](http://cnets.iste.org/students/s_stands.html)

Learn more about NCTE Standards at: <http://www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/110846.htm>

## Step-by-Step

### Step 1: Preparation

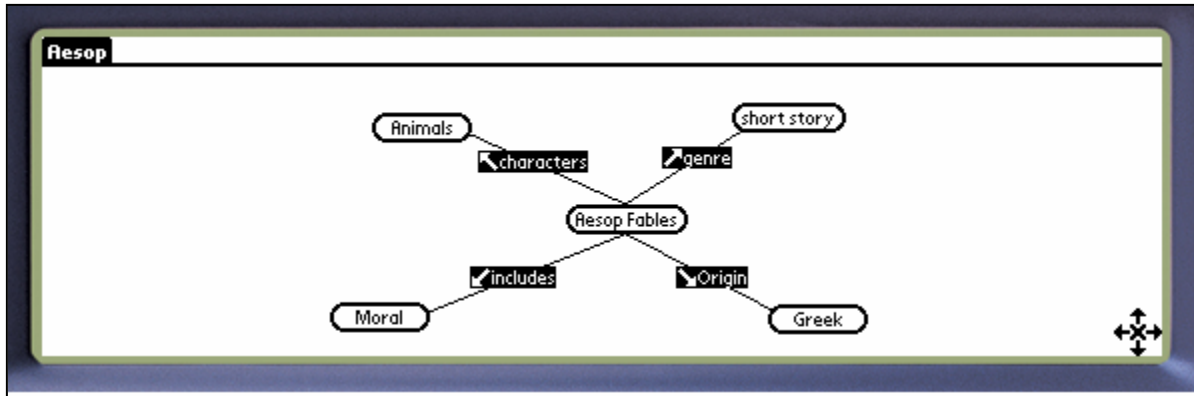
Download the eBook for Palm collection of Aesop's Fables from <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/ebooks/Alist.html> and HotSync to install on the teacher's Dana. Beam the eBook or copy to SD card to load on student Danas.

Launch DanaWeb. Go to the Options menu. Uncheck "Load Images with Page." Check "PDA Content if Available. Then go to <http://www.wendy.com/children/aesop.html> and bookmark the site. To bookmark, go to the site, then go to the Records menu, select "Add to Bookmarks."

### Step 2: Introduce Aesop and Create Concept Map

Launch DanaWeb and visit <http://www.wendy.com/children/aesop.html> to learn basic information about Aesop. Students may want to save this page (using the Save As feature in the DanaWeb Navigate menu).

Students use PiCo Map or Inspiration for Palm OS to create concept map about Aesop's fables. For example:



### Step 3: Analyze a class fable

Select and assign a fable. For example, you might assign a fable from a traditional resource or select one from the collect of fables in your Palm Reader application. After students read the fable, use a modified *Somebody Wanted But So* strategy to analyze the fable. Follow these steps.

1. Launch AlphaWord.
2. Enter the main character (“Somebody”). Click the TAB key.
3. Enter the motivation for the main character (“Wanted”). Click the TAB key.
4. Enter the conflict (“But”). Click the TAB key.
5. Enter the resolution (“So”). Click the TAB key.
6. Enter the moral (“Moral”). Click the TAB key.
7. Save the file.
8. Launch Excel on your computer. Enter Somebody, Wanted, But, So, and Moral headings in Cells A1 through E1. Like this:

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Somebody	Wanted	But	So	Moral
2					
3					

9. Place the cursor in cell A1 to make it active.
10. Connect Dana to the computer and press the SEND key. Your text will complete the spreadsheet.
11. Assign additional fables using the Fables eBook in your Palm Reader application.
12. Repeat for each fable students read.
13. Once students have charted several fables, analyze to note common character faults, motivations, conflicts, resolutions and morals.

#### Step 4: Create Fables

Launch AlphaWord and enter Somebody, Wanted, But, So, Moral in a new document. Using this as the storyboard, create a modern fable. Use modern characters and feature the common character faults, motivations, conflicts, resolutions and morals discovered earlier. HotSync or send to the designated computer or beam to the teacher's Dana.

#### Step 5: Host a Fable Fair

Students share original fables.