

## Supplemental Material S1.

Fables task with introduction, practice fable, and test fables. For each fable, the readability level (Microsoft Word, 2016) and questions are shown.

### Introduction:

This is a research project that involves fables. Fables are imaginary stories about animals and other things that act like people. Fables attempt to teach certain lessons about life. With this study, we hope to learn what people of different ages think about the moral messages of fables. We would like to learn more about **your** views and insights.

You will read a set of four fables and be asked to answer some questions about each one. Please read each story carefully, think about the questions, and use your best writing skills. You may use a pen or a pencil, whichever you prefer. If you make a mistake, please erase or cross it out, neatly, and write your corrected answer in the space provided.

After you finish a fable, please go on to the next one and complete all four stories. Please take your time and do your best work. Please don't share answers with your neighbors. This activity will require about 50 minutes to complete. Thank you for helping us with this research project. We greatly appreciate your time and effort. Do you have any questions about the activity or the research project? Let's try one for practice.

### Practice Fable

*The House Mouse and the Field Mouse*  
(Adapted from Gorman-Gard, 1992, p. 145)  
Flesch-Kincaid Reading Level = Grade 3.7

A house mouse and a field mouse were friends. Each was curious about how the other lived. One day, the house mouse went to visit the field mouse. The field mouse offered the house mouse some acorns and roots he had stored. But the house mouse did not like the food or the place where the field mouse lived.

Then, on another day, the field mouse went to visit the house mouse where they both ate cheese and bread. But the two mice were constantly interrupted and had to hide from the big cat and the noisy people who lived in the house. The field mouse did not like the dangers in the home of the house mouse. So the field mouse went home to live in peace.

The **moral** of the story is, "The grass is not always greener on the other side of the fence."

### Questions:

1. The field mouse was afraid of the cat and the people who lived in the house.  
If the field mouse had not gone home to live in peace,

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(Please complete the sentence in a way that makes sense with the story)

2. Do you agree with the moral, "The grass is not always greener on the other side of the fence"?  
Circle your answer: YES NO UNSURE
3. Explain your answer to Question #2. Tell us why you agree or disagree with the moral. Write your explanation below and on the back of this page, using full sentences with correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Please write neatly.

### Test Fables:

(1) *The Fox and the Grapes*  
(Adapted from Aesop's Fables, <http://www.taleswithmorals.com/>)  
Flesch-Kincaid Reading Level = Grade 5.2

One hot summer's day a fox was strolling through an orchard when he came upon a bunch of juicy red grapes, just ripening on a vine which had been trained over a high branch of an apple tree. "Just the thing to quench my thirst," said the fox.

Drawing back a few paces, he took a run and a jump, and just missed the bunch. Turning around again with a one, two, and three, he jumped up, but with no greater success. Again and again he tried to reach the tempting fruit.

But at last he had to give it up. As he slowly walked away with his nose in the air, he said, "Well, I never really wanted those grapes anyway. I am sure they are sour and full of worms that would make me sick if I ate them."

The **moral** of the story is, "It is easy to despise what you cannot get.

### Questions:

1. The thirsty fox tried hard to reach the delicious grapes but was unsuccessful.  
If the fox had been able to jump higher,  

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(Please complete the sentence in a way that makes sense with the story)
2. Do you agree with the moral, "It is easy to despise what you cannot get"?  
Circle your answer: YES NO UNSURE
3. Explain your answer to Question #2. Tell us why you agree or disagree with the moral. Write your explanation below and on the back of this page, using full sentences with correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Please write neatly.

(2) *The Crow and the Pitcher*  
(Adapted from Aesop's Fables, <http://www.aesopfables.com/aesopsel.html>)  
Flesch-Kincaid Reading Level = Grade 5.9

A crow who was perishing with thirst saw a pitcher on a porch. Hoping to find water, he flew to it with delight. However, when he reached the pitcher, he discovered, to his great dismay, that it was only half-full of water and he was unable to reach it with his beak.

The crow tried everything he could think of to reach the water. He even collected some sticks to use as straws to draw up the water. But this did not work and all of his other efforts were also in vain. At last, he decided to collect as many stones as he could find. He carefully dropped them one by one into the pitcher, until he brought the level of water up to his reach. In this way, he was able to drink the water to save his own life.

The **moral** of the story is, "Necessity is the mother of invention."

Questions:

1. The thirsty crow was dismayed that he could not reach the water in the pitcher. If the crow had not thought of a clever solution to his problem,  

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(Please complete the sentence in a way that makes sense with the story)
2. Do you agree with the moral, "Necessity is the mother of invention"?  
Circle your answer: YES NO UNSURE
3. Explain your answer to Question #2. Tell us why you agree or disagree with the moral. Write your explanation below and on the back of this page, using full sentences with correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Please write neatly.

(3) *The Ant and the Grasshopper*

(Adapted from Aesop's Fables, <http://www.aesopfables.com/aesopsel.html>)

Flesch-Kincaid Reading Level = Grade 5.5

In a field one summer's day a grasshopper was hopping about, chirping, singing, and dancing to his heart's content. An ant passed by, dragging kernels of corn to the nest.

"Why not come and sing and dance with me," said the grasshopper. "Why are you toiling so hard and struggling with those kernels of corn in that way?"

"I am helping to lay up food for the winter," said the ant, "and I recommend that you do the same!"

"Why bother about winter now?" said the grasshopper. "We have plenty of food at the present." But the ant went on its way and continued its toiling and struggling.

When the winter came, the grasshopper had no food and he found himself sad, cold, and hungry. Meanwhile, the ants were distributing kernels of corn from the stores they had collected in the summer. Suddenly the grasshopper realized what he should have done.

The **moral** of this story is, "It is best to prepare for the days of necessity."

Questions:

1. Instead of storing up food for the winter, the grasshopper played, danced, and sang all summer, enjoying himself and entertaining the ants as they worked hard.

If the grasshopper had stored up food for the winter, he

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(Please complete the sentence in a way that makes sense with the story)

2. Do you agree with the moral, "It is best to prepare for the days of necessity"?  
Circle your answer: YES NO UNSURE
3. Explain your answer to Question #2. Tell us why you agree or disagree with the moral.  
Write your explanation below and on the back of this page, using full sentences with correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Please write neatly.

(4) *The Rooster and the Fox*

(Adapted from Aesop's Fables, <http://www.storyit.com/Classics/Stories/>)

Flesch-Kincaid Reading Level = Grade 5.4

A rooster was perched on a branch of a very high tree, crowing loudly. His powerful exclamations were heard throughout the forest and caught the attention of a hungry fox who was out and about, looking for prey. The fox saw how high the bird was positioned in the tree and thought of a sly way to bring the rooster down for his meal.

"Excuse me, my dear proud Rooster," he gently spoke. "Have you not heard of the universal treaty and proclamation of harmony that is now set before all beasts and birds and every creature in our forest? We are no longer to hunt or prey nor ravish one another, but we are to live together in peace, harmony, and love. Do come down, Rooster, and we shall speak more on this matter of such great importance."

Now, the rooster, who knew that the fox was known for his sly wit, said nothing but looked out in the distance, as if he were seeing something.

"At what are you looking so intently?" asked the fox.

"I see a pack of wild dogs," said the rooster, "and I do believe they're coming our way, Mr. Fox."

"Oh, I must go," said the fox.

Please do not go yet, Mr. Fox," said the rooster. "I was just on my way down. We will wait on the dogs and discuss this new time of peace with all."

"No, no," said the fox, "I must go. The dogs have not heard of this treaty of peace yet."

The **moral** of this story is, "Beware of the sudden offers of friendship."

Questions:

1. The rooster told a lie about a pack of wild dogs to save himself from the fox.  
If the rooster had listened to the wily fox,

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(Please complete the sentence in a way that makes sense with the story)

2. Do you agree with the moral, "Beware of the sudden offers of friendship"?  
Circle your answer:    YES    NO    UNSURE
3. Explain your answer to Question #2. Tell us why you agree or disagree with the moral.  
Write your explanation below and on the back of this page, using full sentences with correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Please write neatly.