

Teachers' Notes

THE VALUE OF READING

Much research has been done on the importance of reading and all studies show the same results. Students who read fluently, frequently and with pleasure consistently gain higher test scores at school as well as in their further studies, not only in English, but across the whole curriculum. Reading and enjoying the stories on this website will help your students to learn to love reading, and this will benefit every aspect of their education.

Learning to read is important, but learning to love reading is even more important.

Here are ten reasons for encouraging your students to love reading:

- Reading improves language skills, vocabulary and grammar
- Reading strengthens brain connections
- Reading increases depth of knowledge
- Reading improves memory
- Reading helps develop a creative imagination
- Reading improves concentration
- Reading encourages self-discipline
- Reading increases confidence
- Reading relaxes the body and calms the mind
- Reading improves critical thinking

HOW TO USE THE EXERCISES

1. The pre-reading questions

Prediction is an important element in comprehension. Use the pre-reading questions to help the reader to grasp the theme of the story and understand its progression. The pre-reading questions will help the reader to guess correctly the meanings of words that they may not know.

- Before reading, make sure the students have any background information they may need.
- Encourage discussion around the topic of the story, presented in the pre-reading questions.
- Make sure they know key items of vocabulary.

2. Reading the story

Allow the students time to read the story themselves in silence. Be ready to help if they stumble over unfamiliar words.

3. The exercises

The exercises follow a progression. The first exercise, entitled **How much did you understand?**, encourages students to check their overall grasp of the story and its structure. This exercise may take the form of putting sentences in the correct order, or offering true/false choices, or filling in key words. Students may have to read the story through again quickly before they can complete this exercise.

The next exercise (or exercises) focuses in more detail. There are more specific questions about time, place, person, or types of sentence. Please note that the purpose of these questions is not to teach grammar or vocabulary. They are all aimed at helping students to increase their

reading comprehension skills. Some concentrate on the comprehension of individual words. Some encourage open-ended replies.

In the **What were they feeling?** exercises, the reader focuses on the personal impact of the events in the story. These questions encourage empathy with the characters.

The next type of exercise (often entitled **What do you think?**) aims to help the student think more widely, to talk about their own ideas and responses to the story, and increase their confidence in expressing their own opinions.

Where it's appropriate, further activities are suggested, for example enacting the story as a play, thinking of a new title, looking at similar stories on this website, or retelling the story to friends.

One final word. We hope that you and the students will enjoy the stories.

Stories from Gambela



[Small map with region highlighted]

Gambela is a hot region in eastern Ethiopia, very different from the cool highlands. Many of the different groups who live there look after cattle. Before the modern world came to the Gambela region, the forests were full of wild animals, and people used to hunt them. They still fish in the great rivers. Life is changing fast in Gambela now, but the stories still remain.

Anuak Stories

1. The First Gift
2. The Father's Plan
3. Obang and his Dog
4. The Man from the River
5. Achok goes Fishing
6. The Magic Cow

Originally told by

Akwai Gora
Obang Okoti
Okok Ojulo
Akwai Gora
Cham Akwer
Ajulo Okony

A Komo Story

7. The Song from the Tree

Sambo Likasa Kaya

A Majangir Story

8. How the Dog Lost her Voice

Tito Bangey

Nuer Stories

9. Gany-Nyang and the Hyena
10. Why the Hyena Never Runs Straight
11. The Elephant and the Cock
12. Sunrise and Sunset
13. Ngap and Nyakwi

Pastor James Duoth Dol
Pastor James Duoth Dol
Niall Gatch
Gatwech Pal Menchek
Rhamsey Shwoll

An Opo Story

14. The Landlord and the Ostrich

Duwal Pul

Translations by Michael Ambatchew and Ogota Agiw.

With grateful acknowledgements to Ogota Agiw of the Gambela Regional Cultural Bureau.

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- © Exercises written by Elizabeth Laird and Ann Rossiter
- © Illustrations by Yosef Kebede and Eric Robson

The First Gift
An Anuak story

Before you read the story

- Are human beings stronger than all the animals?
- If your answer is "yes", why do you think that human beings are so strong?

Now read the story

Long, long ago, God made the world. He made the forests and the rivers. He made the trees and the grass. He made the fish and the animals. And he made man.

He called the animals and the man to one place, and spoke to them.

"Tomorrow I'm going to give you your gifts," he said. "Look for the morning star. When you see it, come to me. Listen for the cock. When he crows, come to me."

So the man and the animals went away.

Now God loved the buffalo more than all the other animals, and he said to him, "Come to me early in the morning. Come before the morning star rises in the sky. Come before the cock crows. Then I will give you the best gift of all."

The dog was hiding in the trees. He heard God's words. Quickly, he ran to the man.

"Listen," he said. "Tomorrow morning don't wait for the morning star. Don't wait for the cock to crow. Go to God early. Tell him you are the buffalo, and then you will get the best gift."

So very early the next morning, the man woke up. He put the skin of an animal on his back and he ran on his hands and feet to God.

"Who are you?" said God.

"I am the buffalo," the man said. "Is there a gift for me?"

"You are the first," said God, "and so the best gift is for you."

And God gave the man a spear.

"Are you happy now?" he said to the man.

"No," the man said. "I am not happy. Give me all the spears."
So God gave the man all the spears and the man ran away.
A little later, the buffalo came.
"Who are you?" said God.
"I am the buffalo," the buffalo said.
"Then who was it who came earlier?" said God.
"It was the man," said the buffalo. "The foster child of the dog."
"You're late!" said God. "Why didn't you come earlier? I gave the man the spear because he came first. For you there are only horns."

So God gave horns to the buffalo and to all the cattle, and to the lion and leopard he gave claws, and strong noses, so that they could smell their enemies. But the man became the master of all the animals, because he had all the spears.

[[Click here to listen to the story](#)]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

Who said these sentences?

1. "Look for the morning star."
2. "Come to me early in the morning."
3. "Don't wait for the cock to crow. Go to God early."
4. "Who are you?"
5. "Is there a gift for me?"
6. "Are you happy now?"
7. "Give me all the spears."
8. "The foster child of the dog."
9. "You're late!"

B. Which, who, what, when?

Answer these questions.

1. Which animal did God love the best?
2. What did God tell the animals to look for?
3. Who ran to the man?
4. The next morning, when did the man wake up?
5. What did the man put on his back?
6. What did God give the man?
7. Who came to God a little later?
8. What did God give the buffalo?
9. What did God give to the lion and the leopard?
10. Who became the master of all the animals?

C. What do you think?

A long time ago, there were very few people in the world, and many fierce animals. How do you think that people survived?

Human beings became masters of all the animals, as it says in the story. Do you think that human beings have used their power well?

Is it important to treat animals well?

[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

Answers to the Exercises

[[Click here to return to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to return to the story](#)]

A. How much did you understand?

1. "Look for the morning star."

God

2. "Come to me early in the morning."

God

3. "Don't wait for the cock to crow. Go to God early."

The dog

4. "Who are you?"

God

5. "Is there a gift for me?"

The man

6. "Are you happy now?"

God

7. "Give me all the spears."

The man

8. "The foster child of the dog."

The buffalo

9. "You're late!"

God

B. Which, who, what, when?

1. Which animal did God love the best?

The buffalo

2. What did God tell the animals to look for?

The morning star

3. Who ran to the man?

The dog

4. The next morning, when did the man wake up?

Very early

5. What did the man put on his back?

The skin of an animal

6. What did God give the man?

A spear or all the spears

7. Who came to God a little later?

The buffalo

8. What did God give the buffalo?

Horns

9. What did God give to the lion and the leopard?

Claws and strong noses

10. Who became the master of all the animals?

The man

Gany-Nyang and the Hyena
A Nuer story

Before you read the story

- Do you eat every kind of meat?
- Does your religion tell you not to eat some kinds of meat?
- What do you do if someone offers you meat that you cannot eat?

A dikdik is a small antelope.

Gany-Nyang and his sons went into the forest to hunt. They hunted all day, from early in the morning until late in the evening, but they didn't find any animals at all. They were very hungry.

At last, they heard the noise of an animal, and one of Gany-Nyang's sons shot at it and killed it. They were happy now. They had meat to eat.

"What kind of animal is it?" they asked their brother. "Is it a bushbuck? Or a dikdik? Come on, let's cut it up and cook it."

But their brother looked unhappy.

"I'm sorry," he said. "It's only a hyena."

Gany-Nyang and his sons looked at each other.

"What shall we do?" they said. "We are Nuer, and the Nuer don't eat hyenas. We can't change our custom. But we must eat, or we'll die."

They began to argue.

"Let's eat the hyena," some of them said.

"No," said the others. "We can't. It's wrong."

Gany-Nyang was not arguing with his sons. He was looking at the hyena. At last he said, "Listen to me, my sons. Cut off the hyena's head and throw it away."

The sons did so. Gany-Nyang looked at the hyena again.

"Now cut off the legs and throw them away," he said.

The sons did so.

"And the tail," said Gany-Nyang. "Cut that off too."

His sons cut off the tail.

"Look at this animal now," said Gany-Nyang. "Does it look like a hyena to you?"

"No," said his sons.

"Does it look like a bushbuck?"

"Why, yes!" said his sons.

"Well then," said Gany-Nyang, "if it's a bushbuck, we can eat it. Come on, boys.

What are you waiting for?"

So Gany-Nyang's sons skinned the hyena and cooked it and ate it.

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

Put these sentences in the right order.

1. "If it's a bushbuck, we can eat it."
2. "Does it look like a bushbuck?"
3. Gany-Nyang and his sons went into the forest to hunt.
4. "I'm sorry," he said. "It's only a hyena."
5. "Cut off the hyena's head and throw it away."
6. "We are Nuer, and the Nuer don't eat hyenas."
7. "Now cut off the legs and throw them away."
8. So Gany-Nyang's sons skinned the hyena and cooked it and ate it.

B. True or false?

Which of these sentences about the story are true, and which are false?

1. Gany-Nyang and his sons hunted for many days before they shot the hyena.
2. Gany-Nyang and his sons began to argue.
3. "Cut off the hyena's head," said one of Gany-Nyang's sons.
4. Gany-Nyang's sons cut off the hyena's tail.
5. Gany-Nyang and his sons ate the hyena.

C. What do you think?

Were Gany-Nyang and his sons right to eat the hyena?

Was Gany-Nyang clever to make the hyena look like a bushbuck?

If you were very, very hungry, would you eat a hyena?

[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

Answers to the Exercises

[[Click here to return to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to return to the story](#)]

A. How much did you understand?

The right order of the sentences is 3, 4, 6, 5, 7, 2, 1, 8.

Gany-Nyang and his sons went into the forest to hunt.

"I'm sorry," he said. "It's only a hyena."

"We are Nuer, and the Nuer don't eat hyenas."

"Cut off the hyena's head and throw it away."

"Now cut off the legs and throw them away."

"Does it look like a bushbuck?"

"If it's a bushbuck, we can eat it."

So Gany-Nyang's sons skinned the hyena and cooked it and ate it.

B. True or false?

1. Gany-Nyang and his sons hunted for many days before they shot the hyena.

False. They hunted all day, from early in the morning until late in the evening.

2. Gany-Nyang and his sons began to argue.

True

3. "Cut off the hyena's head," said one of Gany-Nyang's sons.

False. "Cut off the hyena's head," said Gany-Nyang.

4. Gany-Nyang's sons cut off the hyena's tail.

True

5. Gany-Nyang and his sons ate the hyena.

True

The Father's Plan An Anuak Story

Before you read the story

- Do your parents give you advice?
- What advice do they give you?
- Do you listen to their advice?

Once there was a man called Obang. He was old and sick. He lay in his hut alone.

“Soon I will be dead,” he thought.

Outside, his wives were cooking food and his children were playing.

“Who will look after them when I have gone?” Obang thought.

Then he heard voices. A young man was talking and laughing.

“That's the voice of my son,” Obang said to himself. “Why is he talking and laughing with his friends in the middle of the day? Why isn't he working?”

Someone came to the door of the hut.

"Who is it?" Obang called out.

It was Obang's friend. He came into the hut and sat down beside the old man.

"Ah, it's you," Obang said. "I'm very happy to see you. Will you help me?"

"Yes, yes, of course," said his friend.

"Old friend, I'm dying," Obang said. "And I'm worried. Who will look after my family when I'm dead?"

"You have a son," his friend said. "He can ..."

"My son is lazy and weak," said Obang. "Every day he goes out with his friends and eats and drinks. But I have a plan. He must learn to work, and you must be his teacher."

"How?" said his friend.

"When I am dead, burn my huts," Obang said. "Burn my foodstore. Burn everything. I can't take all these things with me. Burn them all."

"But..." said his friend.

"Please," the old man said. "Please do this for me."

A few weeks later, Obang died.

"He was a good man, and a rich man too," everyone said. "But look at his son!"

Then they smelled something. They looked at each other.

"Fire!" they shouted.

They ran towards the fire. The old man's huts, his food store, his clothes and his tools - everything was burning.

His wives and children were crying.

"What are we going to do now?" they said. "We have nothing! We'll all die!"

Obang's son was drinking with his friends but he heard the noise and ran towards the crowd.

"Come back with us," his friends said. "Have another drink. You can't do anything here."

But Obang's son looked at his father's wives and children.

"No, no," he said. "Goodbye my friends. Now I've got to work."

The young man worked hard. Every morning he started working early. He finished working late every evening. He built more huts on his father's land. He filled the stores with food. His father's wives ate well and their children were happy again.

Obang's friend smiled.

"My old friend's plan was a good one," he thought. "His son has learned to work, and I was his teacher."

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

In this story, people do things for different reasons. These sentences retell the story. Finish them using the endings below, to show the reasons for what people did.

1. Obang was happy to see his friend because.....
2. Obang was worried about his family because.....
3. Obang's wives and children were crying because.....
4. Obang's son ran towards the crowd because.....
5. Obang's son said goodbye to his friends because.....
6. Obang's wives and children were happy because.....
7. Obang's friend smiled because.....

- a)Obang's son had worked hard, built huts, and filled the stores with food.
- b)the old man's huts and his foodstore were burning.
- c)he needed to start work.
- d)he saw that Obang's plan had been a good one.
- e)he wanted his friend to help him.
- f)he heard the noise.
- g)his son went out every day with his friends and did not work.

B. Who, whose, what, when?

Answer these questions.

1. When Obang lay in his hut alone, who was outside?

2. Whose voice did Obang hear?
3. What did Obang ask his friend to burn?
4. After Obang died, people smelled something. What did they smell?
5. What was burning?
6. When did Obang's son start work every morning?

C. What do *you* think?

Was Obang right to ask his friend to burn his huts and his foodstores?

Was Obang's friend right to do what Obang wanted?

Was there any other way for Obang's son to learn how to work?

[[Click here for the answers to the exercises](#)]



Answers to the Exercises

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[[Click here to return to the story](#)]

A. How much did you understand?

1/e Obang was happy to see his friend because **he wanted his friend to help him.**

2/g Obang was worried about his family because **his son went out every day with his friends and did not work.**

3/b Obang's wives and children were crying because **the old man's huts and his foodstore were burning.**

4/f Obang's son ran towards the crowd because **he heard the noise.**

5/c Obang's son said goodbye to his friends because **he needed to start work.**

6/a Obang's wives and children were happy because **Obang's son had worked hard, built huts, and filled the stores with food.**

7/d Obang's friend smiled because **he saw that Obang's plan had been a good one.**

B. Who, whose, what, when?

1. When Obang lay in his hut alone, who was outside?

His wives and his children

2. Whose voice did Obang hear?

His son's

3. What did Obang ask his friend to burn?

His huts, his foodstore and everything

4. After Obang died, people smelled something. What did they smell?

Fire

5. What was burning?

Obang's huts, his foodstore, his clothes and his tools

6. When did Obang's son start work every morning?

Early

How the dog lost her voice
A Majangir Story

Before you read the story

- Human beings have used fire for a very long time. How do you think they learned to make fire?
- Some people can make fire without matches or lighters. Can you do it?

Now read the story

Long ago, when the world was young, the dog was the friend of man. In those days, the dog could speak. She lived with men and talked with them.

One day, the dog quarrelled with the men. They could not agree with her.

"We must find a wise man," said the dog. "He can decide who is right."

"Let's go up to the sky," the men said. "We'll find the best person there."

So the dog and the men went up to the sky. They found a wise man there who judged their quarrel, and the men and the dog were happy. But up in the sky, the men and the dog saw something new and wonderful. It was fire.

"What is it?" the men said.

"I don't know," said the dog, "but it's lovely and warm. I'm going to lie beside it."

The men began to leave the sky.

"Come on," some of them said. "Aren't you coming with us?"

"I like it here, beside this beautiful thing," said the dog. "I can run fast. I'll follow you later."

So the men went back to the earth.

After the last man left, the dog picked up a burning branch from the fire with her tail.

She ran after the men, carrying the fire, and that is how fire came down to earth.

Some time later, the dog went out hunting with the men. On the way, they met a lion. They were afraid when they saw the lion.

"This animal eats other animals," they said. "Perhaps it will eat us."

So they ran away from the lion.

At last, they caught a buffalo. They killed it, skinned it and began to cut up the meat.

"Wait," one of the men said. "Before we can eat this meat, we must give some to the spirits."

"But the spirits live far away," another man said.

"Our friend, the dog, can run fast," said a third man. "She can take some meat to the spirits."

So the men put a piece of the best fat meat into the dog's mouth.

"Go to the spirits," they said. "Give them this meat. Then we can begin to eat."

The dog began to run. She ran and ran. She was hot and tired. She wanted to let her tongue hang out of her mouth but she couldn't because of the meat. So she stopped to rest and put the meat down on the ground. Some of the juice from the meat ran down her throat. It was delicious.

"This meat is delicious," thought the dog, "and I'm very hungry, but it's a gift for the spirits. I mustn't eat it."

She picked the meat up and ran on. Soon she was hot and tired again. She stopped to rest. Again, some of the juice from the meat ran down her throat.

"I'll just eat a little bit," she thought. But after the first little piece, she took another, then another and soon the meat was all gone.

Slowly, the dog went back to the men.

"Dog," they said, "have you taken the meat to the spirits?"

The dog said nothing. She put her tail between her legs, and put her ears back, and howled.

"What's the matter with her?" the men said to each other. "Perhaps she's tired. Did she take the meat to the spirits? Perhaps she didn't."

But they took the buffalo meat anyway, and roasted it on the fire from the sky.

"Come, dog, and eat with us," they said.

But the dog didn't answer. And after that day, she never spoke again. The spirits had taken her voice away from her, because she had eaten their meat.

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

These sentences retell the story but some words are missing. Find the right words from the story to fill the gaps.

1. Long ago the dog was the friend of men, but one day the dog with the men.
2. The dog and the men went up to the sky and found who judged their quarrel.
3. Up in the sky, the men and the dog saw something wonderful. It was
4. After the men left, the dog picked up with her tail.
5. The dog and the men went hunting and they caught
6. Before they could eat the meat, they wanted to give some to
7. The men put a piece of in the dog's mouth.
8. Some of the from the meat ran down the dog's throat.

9. The dog ate all the

10. After that day, the dog couldn't speak, because the spirits had taken.....

B. Who said these sentences?

1. "We must find a wise man. He can judge who is right."
2. "Let's go up to the sky."
3. "I like it here, beside this beautiful thing."
4. "This animal eats other animals."
5. "Before we can eat this meat, we must give some to the spirits."
6. "Go to the spirits."
7. "Have you taken the meat to the spirits?"

C. What do you think?

Human beings have always tried to understand our world and all the wonderful things in it. They made up stories like this one to explain how things began.

Modern science gives us different explanations. When people learn about science, they can easily forget the beautiful old stories of our ancestors.

Do you think these old stories are important?

Do you think that it would be sad to forget them?

How can we stop these stories being forgotten?

D. More stories to enjoy

If you liked reading this story, perhaps you will enjoy reading *The Baboon Child*, from Beni Shangul-Gumuz, *The Trees and the Axe* from Amhara, and *Wak and the Raven* from Somalia.

Click on these links.

[The Baboon Child]

[The Trees and the Axe]

[Wak and the Raven]

[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

Answers to the Exercises

[[Click here to return to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to return to the story](#)]

A. How much did you understand?

1. Long ago the dog was the friend of men, but one day the dog **quarrelled** with the men.
2. The dog and the men went up to the sky and found **a wise man** who judged their quarrel.
3. Up in the sky, the men and the dog saw something wonderful. It was **fire**.
4. After the men left, the dog picked up **a burning branch** with her tail.
5. The dog and the men went hunting and they caught **a buffalo**.
6. Before they could eat the meat, they wanted to give some to **the spirits**.
7. The men put a piece of **meat** in the dog's mouth.
8. Some of the **juice** from the meat ran down the dog's throat.
9. The dog ate all the **meat**.
10. After that day, the dog couldn't speak, because the spirits had taken **her voice**.

B. Who said these sentences?

1. "We must find a wise man. He can judge who is right."

The dog

2. "Let's go up to the sky."

The men

3. "I like it here, beside this beautiful thing."

The dog

4. "This animal eats other animals."

The men

5. "Before we can eat this meat, we must give some to the spirits."

One of the men

6. "Go to the spirits."

The men

7. "Have you taken the meat to the spirits?"

The men

The Song from the Tree A Komo Story

Before you read the story

- This story is about a man with a broken leg. He limped.
- Do you know any people with disabilities?
- Do people with disabilities have the same rights to a normal life as everyone else?

Now read the story

Once there was a woman who had three daughters. For many years she lived happily with her husband and children, but then, one day, her husband died. The woman was very sad. She didn't like living alone.

After a few years, the woman met another man. He was a good, kind man, whose name was Shigosh. Shigosh couldn't walk easily because he had a broken thigh. He limped. But the woman loved Shigosh. She wanted to marry him.

The woman's daughters didn't like Shigosh. They laughed at him because he limped. They were rude and angry, and their mother was afraid of them.

"My daughters don't want a new father," she said to Shigosh. "They'll never let me marry you. We must meet each other secretly."

Outside the woman's village, there was a big tree. Every day, the woman went to the tree and hid among the leaves. Then she sang,

"Shigosh, Shigosh,
Here in the tree,
Your wife is waiting.
Come to me!"

When Shigosh heard her, he began to sing too, as he limped quickly to the tree.

"My wife, yes! Waiting for me!"

My wife, yes! Under the tree!"

The woman heard his song, and she smiled.

"Shigosh sings like he walks," she thought. "His song goes with a limp."

She loved Shigosh. She even loved his broken thigh. She was happy with him, in their hiding place under the tree.

One day, the woman's oldest daughter heard about her mother's lover. She ran to tell her sisters.

"Our mother loves Shigosh," the oldest daughter says. "She meets him secretly under the big tree near the village."

"What?" said the second girl. "She loves that stupid old man who can't even walk? The man who limps?"

"We don't want *him* to take our father's place," said the youngest. "Come on, sisters. We must make a plan."

So the three sisters decided to catch Shigosh. They took some bark from a tree and put it in water. The bark became very slippery. Then they took the slippery bark out of the water and put it on the path near the big tree.

"Your voice is like our mother's voice," the two oldest daughters said to the youngest. "You can sing like her. Climb up into the tree and sing her stupid love song. That old man will come running to find her. He'll slip on the bark and fall. Then we'll kill him."

So the youngest daughter climbed into the big tree and began to sing,

"Shigosh, Shigosh,
Here in the tree,
Your wife is waiting.
Come to me!"

Shigosh heard her singing. At once he began to limp to the tree. He sang,

"My wife, yes! Waiting for me.
My wife, ye..."

But he never finished his song. His feet slipped on the slippery bark and he fell down. At once, the three sisters ran up to him. They hit him with their sticks and killed him. They hid his body under the leaves of the big tree.

Then the daughters ran across the river and hid in another tree near the river bank.

"Mother!" they called. "Go to your lover. He's waiting for you!"

The woman was worried when she heard this.

"Oh!" she thought. "My daughters know about Shigosh. What will they do?"

Quickly, she ran to the meeting place, but Shigosh wasn't there. Then the woman heard the noise of flies. She looked under the leaves and found Shigosh's body.

The woman was very sad, and very angry with her wicked daughters. She looked up, and saw the girls hiding across the river. She crossed the river, and stood beneath the tree where they were hiding. She looked up. She could see her oldest daughter's legs between the branches. She called out,

"My oldest child,
Up there in the tree.
I carried you in my womb.
Come down to me!"

But the oldest girl said, "No, Mother, I won't come down."

The woman looked up again. She could see her second daughter's arms round the branches, and she called out,

"My second daughter,
Up there in the tree.
Your blood is my blood.

Come down to me!"

But the second girl said, "No, Mother, I won't come down."

The woman looked up again. She could see her youngest daughter's face through the leaves.

"My youngest daughter,

Up there in the tree.

I love you best.

Come down to me!"

But the youngest girl said, "No, Mother, I won't come down."

Then the mother was very, very angry, and she picked up an axe and started to cut down the tree. The tree fell across the river and made a bridge. The first and second daughters ran across the bridge, away from their mother. But the tree fell on top of the youngest daughter and broke the bone in her thigh. The girl's leg never got better, and from that day she could not walk easily. She limped.

"Look at her," everyone said. "She and her sisters were cruel to a man because he limped. They laughed at him, and then they killed him. Now God wants her to suffer too."

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

In the first part of this story, the woman falls in love with Shigosh, the man with the limp. Put these sentences in the right order.

1. But the woman loved Shigosh. She wanted to marry him.
2. The woman was very sad. She didn't like living alone.
3. The woman heard his song, and she smiled.

In the second part of the story, the woman's three daughters kill Shigosh. Put these sentences in the right order.

1. They took some bark from a tree and put it in water.
2. They hid his body under the leaves of the big tree.
3. "Come on, sisters. We must make a plan."

In the third part of the story, the woman tries to punish her daughters. Put these sentences in the right order.

1. Then the woman heard the noise of flies.
2. But the tree fell on top of the youngest daughter and broke the bone in her thigh.
3. The woman looked up again. She could see her youngest daughter's face through the leaves.

B. What were they feeling?

These sentences retell the story. Fill in the gaps from the list of words below to show what the characters were feeling. You will need to use some words more than once.

1. When the woman's husband died, she was
2. The woman's daughters laughed at Shigosh. They were and
3. Their mother was of them.
4. The girls' mother was with Shigosh in their hiding place under the tree.
5. The girls' mother was when her daughters called to her.

6. The girl's mother was and with her daughters.
7. When the youngest girl did not come down from the tree, her mother was
8. Everyone said that the girls were

wicked, very angry, cruel, happy, worried, very, very angry, rude, very sad, afraid, angry

C. What do you think?

Disabled people can suffer because others see only their disability. But a disability is only one part of a person's life.

Do you know anyone with a disability?

How can you help them to make friends and have a normal life?

D. More stories to enjoy

In this story, there are songs and rhymes. These make the story easy to remember, and make it sound like poetry. There are other stories in this collection with songs and rhymes. Click on these links if you would like to read some of them.

[Weyna and Gella]

[The Hyena's Funeral]

[The Lion's Bride]

[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

Answers to the Exercises

[[Click here to return to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to return to the story](#)]

A. How much did you understand?

The right order of the sentences is 2, 1, 3

The woman was very sad. She didn't like living alone.

But the woman loved Shigosh. She wanted to marry him.

The woman heard his song, and she smiled.

The right order of the sentences is 3, 1, 2

"Come on, sisters. We must make a plan."

They took some bark from a tree and put it in water.

They hid his body under the leaves of the big tree.

The right order of the sentences is 1, 3, 2

Then the woman heard the noise of flies.

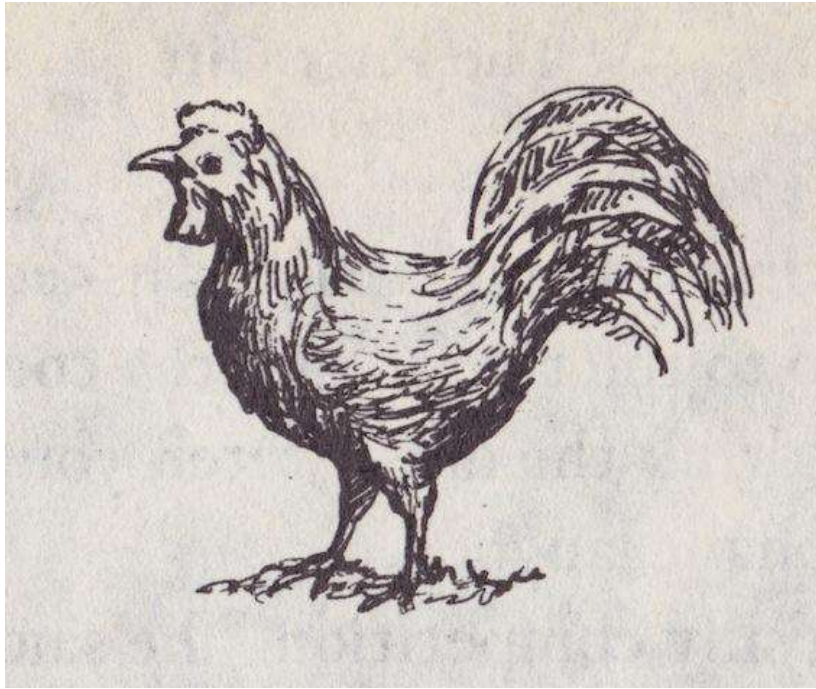
The woman looked up again. She could see her youngest daughter's face through the leaves.

But the tree fell on top of the youngest daughter and broke the bone in her thigh.

B. What were they feeling?

1. When the woman's husband died, she was **very sad**.
2. The woman's daughters laughed at Shigosh. They were **rude** and **angry**.
3. Their mother was **afraid** of them.
4. The girls' mother was **happy** with Shigosh in their hiding place under the tree.
5. The girls' mother was **worried** when her daughters called to her.
6. The girl's mother was **very sad** and **very angry** with her **wicked** daughters.
7. When the youngest girl did not come down from the tree, her mother was **very, very angry**.
8. Everyone said that the girls were **cruel**.

The Elephant and the Cock
A Nuer Story



Before you read the story

- Is it better to be big, or clever?

Now read the story

Once there was a cock who lived near an elephant. The cock was small and weak, and the elephant was big and strong. He was proud, too.

"Look at me," the elephant often said to the cock. "I'm big and strong. You're small and weak. I'm much, *much* more important than you."

The cock soon became tired of the elephant.

"You're not more important than I am," he said. "I know you're bigger than me, but I'm cleverer than you. That means that I'm more important than you are."

"No, it doesn't," said the elephant.

"Yes, it does," said the cock, "but we'll never agree, so let's have a competition."

"What kind of competition?" asked the elephant.

"Let's go to the river," said the cock. "Then we'll see who can drink the most water, you or me."

The elephant laughed.

"What a silly competition!" he said. "I'll win. Of course I'll win! I can drink much, *much* more water than you can."

So the elephant and the cock asked all the other animals to come to the river and judge their competition. The elephant put his trunk into the water and the cock put his beak into the water. The elephant began to pour water down his throat, but the cock just opened and closed his beak. He didn't drink anything at all.

The elephant went on drinking. He became bigger. He drank some more. He became even bigger. He drank more, and more, and more. At last, the elephant burst.

"Ah," said the cock to all the other animals. "You see? It's much, *much* better to be

clever than to be big!"

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

Who said these sentences?

1. "I'm much, *much* more important than you."
2. "You're not more important than I am."
3. "But we'll never agree, so let's have a competition."
4. "I'll win. Of course I'll win!"
5. "You see? It's much, *much* better to be clever than to be big!"

B. Fill in the gaps

Fill in the gaps in these sentences from the story.

1. The cock soon became of the elephant.
2. "What kind of?"
3. "Let's go to the"
4. The elephant put his into the water and the cock put his into the water.
5. The elephant began to pour water down his
6. At last, the elephant

C. Jokes

This story is a really a joke.

Did it make you laugh?

Do you know any good jokes?

Tell them to your friends!

[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

Answers to the Exercises

[Click here to return to the exercises]

[Click here to return to the story]

A. How much did you understand?

1. "I'm much, *much* more important than you."
The elephant
2. "You're not more important than I am."
The cock
3. "But we'll never agree, so let's have a competition."
The cock
4. "I'll win. Of course I'll win!"
The elephant
5. "You see? It's much, *much* better to be clever than to be big!"
The cock

B. Fill in the gaps

Fill in the gaps in these sentences from the story.

1. The cock soon became **tired** of the elephant.
2. "What kind of **competition**?"
3. "Let's go to the **river**."
4. The elephant put his **trunk** into the water and the cock put his **beak** into the water.
5. The elephant began to pour water down his **throat**.
6. At last, the elephant **burst**.

Obang and his Dog An Anuak Story

Before you read the story

- Do you have a dog?
- Do you like dogs?
- How can dogs help people?
- A dog is sometimes called "man's best friend". Do you agree?

Now read the story

Obang had a good dog. It was clever and quick and it could run fast. It knew its master's voice. It was a good hunter and could catch wild pigs.

One day, Obang and his dog went hunting. The dog ran fast into the forest and Obang followed it. But suddenly, the dog stopped. There was a lion in front of it. The lion was eating a bushbuck.

The lion saw the dog and opened its big mouth. The dog ran quickly back to Obang, its master.

“Why did the dog run back to me?” thought Obang.

Obang went on and found the lion. The dog was behind him. It felt braver now because it was with its master. It ran up to the lion and tried to take its meat. The lion was very angry and ran after it. The dog was frightened, and it ran behind its master again.

Now Obang was between the angry lion and the dog, and the lion was coming after him. Obang tried to run fast, but the lion was running faster. The lion was coming nearer and nearer.

“I'm going to die!” Obang thought. “The lion's going to eat me!”

Suddenly, he came to the edge of the Alwaro river. He jumped into the water and swam to the other side. The lion stood on the bank and watched him go. He didn't like to

swim.

Obang went home. He was very angry.

"My dog's a fool," he said to everyone. "It brought an angry lion to me. It nearly killed me! Where is that dog? I'm going to kill it!"

"What?" said Obang's friends. "You want to kill your dog? You can't do that. It's a good dog. It's quick and clever. It knows your voice. Perhaps, one day, you will need it."

A few weeks later, Obang went hunting again. He walked quietly along the forest path and his dog ran on in front of him.

A big python was lying under a tree. Obang didn't see it. He put his foot on the python's tail. At once, the python caught him. It climbed up Obang's legs, then it began to climb up his body.

"Help!" shouted Obang. "Help!"

The dog heard him. It ran back to its master, and saw the python. It went up to it and bit its tail. The dog's teeth were sharp. The python didn't like it. The dog pulled harder and harder. At last the python slipped off Obang and went into the bushes.

Obang lay on the path. He couldn't move. His dog ran round him and barked. At last, Obang sat up. He felt a bit better. He tried to stand. He was all right now.

Then Obang saw the python again. It was coming back! It wanted to catch him again! But the python was weaker now. Its tail was still bleeding. Quickly, Obang took out his knife and killed it. He made a fire and burnt the python. Soon there was nothing but ashes.

Obang and his dog went back to the village.

"You were right," Obang said to everyone. "Today I needed my dog. A big python caught me. It nearly killed me but my dog bit its tail and pulled it off me. My dog saved my life."

His friends smiled.

"Yes," they said. "A man must always be kind to his dog because a good dog is a man's best friend."

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

In the first part of this story, Obang and his dog meet a lion in the forest.

Put these sentences in the right order.

1. Now Obang was between the angry lion and the dog.
2. The lion saw the dog and opened its big mouth.
3. "Where is that dog? I'm going to kill it!"
4. One day, Obang and his dog went hunting.
5. He jumped into the water and swam to the other side.
6. But suddenly the dog stopped. There was a lion in front of it.

In the second part of the story, Obang and his dog meet a python in the forest.

Put these sentences in the right order.

1. The dog heard him. It ran back to its master, and saw the python.
2. Quickly, Obang took out his knife and killed it.
3. A big python was lying under a tree.
4. "A man must always be kind to his dog."
5. The dog pulled harder and harder.
6. It climbed up Obang's legs, then it began to climb up his body.

B. Prepositions

Prepositions are words that can show where things are. For example: behind, between, in front of, up, down, etc.

Fill the gaps in these sentences with prepositions from the list below. You will need to use one preposition twice.

1. The dog ran fast the forest.
2. There was lion of it.
3. Obang went on and found the lion. The dog was him.
4. The lion was very angry and ran it.
5. Now Obang was the angry lion and the dog.
6. He jumped the water.
7. At once the python caught him. It climbed Obang's legs.
8. At last the python slipped Obang.
9. Then Obang saw the python again. It was coming!

back, up, between, in front of, into, behind, after, off

C. What do you think?

Was Obang wrong to think about killing his dog?

Do you think that animals have rights?

How should people treat animals?

Is it wrong to make animals suffer?

[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

Answers to the Exercises

[[Click here to return to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to return to the story](#)]

A. How much did you understand?

The right order for these sentences is 4, 6, 2, 1, 5, 3

One day, Obang and his dog went hunting.

But suddenly the dog stopped. There was a lion in front of it.

The lion saw the dog and opened its big mouth.

Now Obang was between the angry lion and the dog.

He jumped into the water and swam to the other side.

"Where is that dog? I'm going to kill it!"

The right order for these sentences is 3, 6, 1, 5, 2, 4

A big python was lying under a tree.

It climbed up Obang's legs, then it began to climb up his body.

The dog heard him. It ran back to its master, and saw the python.

The dog pulled harder and harder.

Quickly, Obang took out his knife and killed it.

"A man must always be kind to his dog."

B. Prepositions

1. The dog ran fast **into** the forest.
2. There was lion **in front** of it.
3. Obang went on and found the lion. The dog was **behind** him.
4. The lion was very angry and ran **after** it.
5. Now Obang was **between** the angry lion and the dog.
6. He jumped **into** the water.
7. At once the python caught him. It climbed **up** Obang's legs.
8. At last the python slipped **off** Obang.
9. Then Obang saw the python again. It was coming **back**!

Why the hyena never runs straight
A Nuer Story



Before you read the story

- Have you ever seen a hyena running?
- Why does it run in a crooked way?

Now read the story

One day, the fox went into the forest and met his uncle, the hyena.

"Hello, uncle," he said. "What are you doing here?"

"My mother has sent me into the forest to find sticks of wood for the fire," said the hyena. "But I'm very hungry. I haven't eaten anything for two days."

"What?" said the fox. "That's terrible! Come home with me and your sister will feed you. You can't stay here. You'll die in the forest without any food."

"Thank you," answered the hyena, "but I can't come with you. I have many enemies in the village who are looking for me. I'm afraid they'll kill me."

"Don't worry," said the fox. "I'll tie you up in your sticks of firewood and carry you home. Then I'll hide you in my house and your sister will feed you."

The hyena thanked the fox and the fox tied him up in his bundle of sticks and carried him home.

When the fox arrived at his hut, he put the bundle of sticks down beside the door and went to find his mother. She was cooking some food.

"Please, Mother," said the fox. "Give me some food. I'm very hungry."

But he didn't tell her about the hyena.

His mother gave him a spoonful of food, and the fox took it to the bundle of sticks and gave it to the hyena. The hyena opened his mouth wide. The food went in, and the spoon went in, and the hyena swallowed them both.

The fox's mother called out, "Son! Son! Bring me my spoon! The food's burning in the pot. I want to stir it."

The fox ran back to the hyena.

"Give me back the spoon," he said. "My mother needs it. The food is burning in the pot."

"I can't give you the spoon," said the hyena. "I've swallowed it. And because I was very hungry, the spoon has already gone down into my stomach."

The fox was angry with the hyena and afraid of his mother. He ran back to her and said, "Please Mother, wait. I'll bring your spoon very soon. But first give me a stick. I want to beat the bundle of wood beside the door. There are scorpions inside it."

So the fox's mother gave him a stick and the fox began to beat the bundle of firewood. He beat it so hard that he broke the hyena's leg.

"Help! Stop! Save me!" shouted the hyena, and he jumped out of the bundle of firewood and ran away, back to the forest, crying all the way.

"Son, son, what are you doing?" said the fox's mother.

"I'm beating your brother, the hyena," said the fox, "because he swallowed your spoon."

And from that day to this, the hyena has never run straight, because he has a spoon in his stomach.

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

Who said these sentences?

1. "Hello, uncle. What are you doing here?"
2. "I have many enemies in the village who are looking for me."
3. "I'll tie you up in your sticks of firewood and carry you home."
4. "Give me some food. I'm very hungry."
5. "Bring me my spoon! The food's burning in the pot."
6. "I can't give you the spoon."
7. "I want to beat the bundle of wood beside the door."
8. "I'm beating your brother, the hyena."

B. True or false?

Are these sentences about the story true or false?

1. The hyena's sister sent him into the forest to find sticks of wood for the fire.
2. The fox invited the hyena to come home to his house.
3. The fox tied the hyena up in his bundle of sticks.
4. The fox told his mother about the hyena inside the bundle of sticks.
5. The fox gave the hyena some food on a spoon, and the hyena swallowed the spoon.
6. The fox's mother needed her spoon, because the food was burning in the pot.
7. The fox beat the bundle of sticks, because there were scorpions in it.
8. The hyena beat the fox, and broke his leg.
9. The hyena ran back to the forest, crying all the way.
10. Now the hyena runs straight, because he has a spoon in his stomach.

C. Imitating animals

Can you imitate the sound of a hyena?

Can you bark like a dog?

Can you roar like a lion?

Try imitating animal noises, and make your friends laugh.

[[Click here for the answers to the exercises](#)]

[Click here to return to the exercises]

[Click here to return to the story]

A. How much did you understand?

Who said these sentences?

1. "Hello, uncle. What are you doing here?"

The fox

2. "I have many enemies in the village who are looking for me."

The hyena

3. "I'll tie you up in your sticks of firewood and carry you home."

The fox

4. "Give me some food. I'm very hungry."

The fox

5. "Bring me my spoon! The food's burning in the pot."

The fox's mother

6. "I can't give you the spoon."

The hyena

7. "I want to beat the bundle of wood beside the door."

The fox

8. "I'm beating your brother, the hyena."

The fox

B. True or false?

1. The hyena's sister sent him into the forest to find sticks of wood for the fire.

False. The hyena's mother sent him into the forest to find sticks of wood for the fire.

2. The fox invited the hyena to come home to his house.

True

3. The fox tied the hyena up in his bundle of sticks.

True

4. The fox told his mother about the hyena inside the bundle of sticks.

False. The fox didn't tell his mother about the hyena inside the bundle of sticks.

5. The fox gave the hyena some food on a spoon, and the hyena swallowed the spoon.

True

6. The fox's mother needed her spoon, because the food was burning in the pot.

True

7. The fox beat the bundle of sticks, because there were scorpions in it.

False. The fox only pretended that there were scorpions in the bundle of sticks.

8. The hyena beat the fox, and broke his leg.

False. The fox beat the hyena and broke his leg.

9. The hyena ran back to the forest, crying all the way.

True

10. Now the hyena runs straight, because he has a spoon in his stomach.

False. The hyena never runs straight, because he has a spoon in his stomach.

The Magic Cow An Anuak Story

Before you read the story

- Sometimes children are left alone without a family to help them. What can they do to survive?
- Who helps them?
- Can they grow up to be happy?

Now read the story

Once upon a time there was a man who had two wives. One day, his first wife became ill. She called her two children and said to them, "My dear children. Soon I will die. Now kiss me, and say goodbye."

Her children were very sad.

"Mother," they said. "Our father's second wife hates us. If she doesn't give us food, what shall we do?"

"Don't worry," their mother said. "When you're hungry, go into the forest. You'll find someone to feed you there."

The mother died, and the two boys cried for many days. Then they went to their father's second wife.

"Please," they said. "We're hungry. Let us eat with you."

"What?" said their stepmother. "You want me to give you food? I don't have enough for my children. Go away. I haven't got anything for you."

The younger brother began to cry.

"I'm hungry," he said to his older brother. "I want something to eat."

His older brother took his hand.

"Don't worry," he said. "Remember what our mother said. We'll go into the forest and

find someone to feed us there."

So the two children went into the forest, and there they found a cow. The cow was very kind to them. Every day she gave them food to eat. The children were happy. They were never hungry now.

The children of the second wife could not understand it.

"Who feeds you?" they asked their brothers. "Why are you never hungry? And why do you go to the forest every day?"

One morning, the oldest girl said, "I'm coming with you to the forest today. I want to know where you find your food."

Her two stepbrothers tried to stop her.

"No, don't come," they said. "You'll be tired and hungry. We don't do anything in the forest. We have no mother to give us food, so we just walk all day until we're tired."

But their sister asked them again and again, so at last they agreed to take her.

They walked about in the forest all day, until they came to the home of the cow. The older boy didn't want to tell his stepsister about the cow. He wanted to keep the secret. But his little brother was very hungry, and he said, "Please, I'll die if I don't have some food. Call the cow and let's eat."

So they called the cow and she came and gave food to the brothers, and they ate it.

When they got home, the children's stepsister said to her mother, "I know my brothers' secret. There's a cow in the forest who gives them food every day."

The next day, the woman went to her husband.

"Husband," she said. "You know that I'm pregnant and our new baby will soon be born. I need to eat very good food. If I don't eat well, the baby won't be strong. Bring me the cow from the forest."

"What cow?" her husband said. "I don't have a cow."

His wife became angry.

"I know your secret," she said. "I want the cow that feeds your children."

So her husband brought the cow from the forest and gave it to his wife.

"Kill it," she said. "I must eat its meat to make my baby strong."

Her husband tried to argue with her but she didn't listen to him. At last, he agreed to kill the cow. He picked up his knife and cut the cow's throat, but the cow refused to die.

Then his wife said, "If the cow doesn't die, I will kill your two children."

When the children heard this, they said, "Let the cow die," and she died.

The woman tried to skin the cow, but the skin refused to come off the meat.

"If this skin doesn't come off the dead cow," the woman said, "I will kill the children."

When the children heard this, they said, "Let the skin come off," and the skin came off the dead cow.

The woman put the meat into the pot and tried to cook it, but the meat refused to cook.

"If the meat doesn't cook, I will kill the children," said the woman.

When the children heard this, they said, "Let the meat cook," and the meat began to cook.

When the meat was cooked, the woman tried to take the pot off the fire, but the pot didn't move.

"If the pot doesn't come off the fire, I will kill the children," said the woman.

When the children heard this, they said, "Let the pot come off the fire," and it came off the fire.

Then the woman took the meat out of the pot, and ate it.

The two brothers were worried now.

"Our stepmother has killed our cow and now she wants to kill us," they said. "We

must run away."

So they ran away into the forest. There, they lost each other. One brother went one way. The other went another way. Years passed, and the brothers grew up. The younger brother went away, but the older brother stayed near the forest.

One day, as the older brother was walking near a village, he saw a girl, and he fell in love with her. She was the daughter of the chief. The chief had many daughters, but this one was the most beautiful of them all.

The young man began to meet the girl secretly, and she fell in love with him, too.

Now, there was a war between the villages at that time. Every night, when it was dark, enemies came to fight against the village where the chief and his daughter lived. So every night, the young man came to fight for the chief.

One day, the chief said to his men, "Who is the stranger who comes every night and fights beside me? I want to meet him."

"Ask your daughters," his men said. "They will know."

So the chief told everyone to come to a meeting. When they were all together, he called his daughters and said to them, "Bring your husbands and your lovers here, so that I can see them all."

So all the chief's daughters came with their husbands and their lovers. But the young man from the forest, who loved the chief's most beautiful daughter, had smallpox and he was very ill. He sat far away from the others and did not look up at the chief.

The chief's beautiful daughter ran up to him and took his hand.

"What are you doing?" said the chief. "Come away from that man. He has smallpox."

"But father," said the girl, "this is the man who fights beside you every night. He is brave and strong. I love him and I want to marry him."

The chief was angry when he heard this. He didn't want his daughter to marry a man with smallpox. He began to shout at her. Then he stopped. Everyone was looking at him.

"What's the matter?" asked the chief. "Why are you all looking at me?"

"Your - your head, sir," the people said. "Look! It's growing! It's getting bigger and bigger!"

The chief put his hands up to his head. It was true. His head was growing bigger and bigger.

"Please, father," his daughter said, "please let me marry this man. If you don't let me marry him, your head will grow and grow. If you do, it will become the right size again."

Everyone said, "Yes, sir, let her marry the young man. Do what she says."

So the chief agreed to the marriage. At once his head stopped growing and became the right size again.

Then the young man and the chief's daughter were married, and they lived happily ever after.

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

There are three parts to this story. In the first part, the two children lose their mother, but they find a magic cow in the forest who feeds them. In the second part, the children's stepmother kills the cow, and the children run away. In the third part, the older brother falls in love with the daughter of a chief, and in the end he marries her.

Part One

Put these sentences in the right order.

1. The children of the second wife could not understand it.
2. So the two children went into the forest, and there they found a cow.
3. The mother died, and the two boys cried for many days.
4. The older boy didn't want to tell his stepsister about the cow.
5. Once upon a time there was a man who had two wives.

Part Two

Put these sentences in the right order.

1. The woman put the meat into the pot and tried to cook it, but the meat refused to cook.
2. Then the woman took the meat out of the pot, and ate it.
3. So her husband brought the cow from the forest and gave it to his wife.
4. When the meat was cooked, the woman tried to take the pot off the fire, but the pot didn't move.
5. The woman tried to skin the cow, but the skin refused to come off the meat.

Part Three

Are these sentences true or false?

1. The two brothers stayed together in the forest.
2. The chief's daughter fell in love with the young man.
3. The young man fought for the chief against his enemies.
4. The chief's daughter had smallpox.
5. The young man's head grew bigger and bigger.

B. Who said these sentences?

Read the whole story again before you answer these questions.

1. "My dear children, soon I will die."
2. "If she doesn't give us food, what shall we do?"
3. "Go away. I haven't got anything for you."
4. "Why are you never hungry? And why do you go to the forest every day?"

5. "We don't do anything in the forest."
6. "Please, I'll die if I don't have some food."
7. "I know my brothers' secret."
8. "I want the cow that feeds your children."
9. "Let the pot come off the fire."
10. "Bring your husbands and your lovers here, so that I can see them all."
11. "He is brave and strong."
12. "Why are you all looking at me?"
13. "Look! It's growing! It's getting bigger and bigger!"
14. "Please let me marry this man."

C. Find the right word

Fill the gaps in these sentences with the right word from the list below.

1. "Our father's second wife us."
2. "We're Let us eat with you."
3. "I know my brothers'"
4. "You know that I'm and our new baby will soon be born."
5. He picked up his knife and cut the cow's"
6. Now, there was a between the villages at that time.
7. "Who is the who comes every night and fights beside me?"
8. So the chief told everyone to come to a"
9. He didn't want his daughter to marry a man with"
10. At once his head stopped growing and became the right again.

pregnant, size, war, hates, smallpox, throat, meeting, secret, hungry, stranger

D. What do you think?

If the children's stepmother only had enough food for her own children, was she right to send the first wife's children away?

There are many children who live on the streets of our cities and beg for their food. Do you give them money to buy food? Is that the right thing to do?

Are there organisations which help street children in the place where you live?

What is the best way to help street children?

[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

Answers to the Exercises

[[Click here to return to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to return to the story](#)]

A. How much did you understand?

Part 1 The right order of the sentences is 5, 3, 2, 1, 4.

Once upon a time there was a man who had two wives.

The mother died, and the two boys cried for many days.

So the two children went into the forest, and there they found a cow.

The children of the second wife could not understand it.

The older boy didn't want to tell his stepsister about the cow.

Part 2 The right order of the sentences is 3, 5, 1, 4, 2.

So her husband brought the cow from the forest and gave it to his wife.

The woman tried to skin the cow, but the skin refused to come off the meat.

The woman put the meat into the pot and tried to cook it, but the meat refused to cook.

When the meat was cooked, the woman tried to take the pot off the fire, but the pot didn't move.

Then the woman took the meat out of the pot, and ate it.

Part 3 Are these sentences true or false?

1. The two brothers stayed together in the forest.

False. They lost each other in the forest.

2. The chief's daughter fell in love with the young man.

True

3. The young man fought for the chief against his enemies.

True

4. The chief's daughter had smallpox.

False. The older brother had smallpox.

5. The young man's head grew bigger and bigger.

False. The chief's head grew bigger and bigger.

B. Who said these sentences?

1. "My dear children, soon I will die."

The man's first wife

2. "If she doesn't give us food, what shall we do?"

Her children/the brothers

3. "Go away. I haven't got anything for you."

The stepmother

4. "Why are you never hungry? And why do you go to the forest every day?"

The children of the second wife

5. "We don't do anything in the forest."

The brothers

6. "Please, I'll die if I don't have some food."

The younger brother/the little brother

7. "I know my brothers' secret."

The brothers' stepsister

8. "I want the cow that feeds your children."

The stepmother

9. "Let the pot come off the fire."

The two brothers

10. "Bring your husbands and your lovers here, so that I can see them all."

The chief

11. "He is brave and strong."

The chief's daughter

12. "Why are you all looking at me?"

The chief

13. "Look! It's growing! It's getting bigger and bigger!"

The people

14. "Please let me marry this man."

The chief's daughter

C. Find the right word

1. "Our father's second wife **hates** us."

2. "We're **hungry**. Let us eat with you."

3. "I know my brothers' **secret**."

4. "You know that I'm **pregnant** and our new baby will soon be born."

5. He picked up his knife and cut the cow's **throat**.

6. Now, there was a **war** between the villages at that time.

7. "Who is the **stranger** who comes every night and fights beside me?"

8. So the chief told everyone to come to a **meeting**.

9. He didn't want his daughter to marry a man with **smallpox**.

10. At once his head stopped growing and became the right **size** again.

Sunrise and Sunset
A Nuer story

Before you read

- What do you do at sunrise?
- What does your family do?
- What do you do at sunset?
- What does your family do?
- Which time do you like better, sunrise or sunset?

Now read the story.

Long ago, God was very near to his people. He talked to them and they talked to him. People asked God to help them, and he was kind to them and gave them everything. But some people wanted one thing, and some wanted another.

"Oh God," someone said. "It's very nice to sleep in the morning. Please make the sun rise an hour later today. Then I will have more time in bed."

"All right," said God. "You can sleep longer today. I'll make the sun rise later."

But other people were angry.

"We wanted to get up early," they said. "We wanted to do our work. Why did the sun rise late today? Please make it rise at the right time tomorrow."

The next afternoon, a man was out in the fields with his cows.

"Oh, it's very hot," he said. "Please, God, make the sun set early today. I want to rest."

"Very well," God said, and he sent the sun down early from the sky.

But a woman was on a journey. She was walking to her village and she was still far from home.

"Why is the night coming early?" she said. "Please, God, don't let the sun set now. I don't want to walk in the dark."

Soon, everyone was angry.

"God listens to some people, but not to others," they said. "It's not good at all."

Now the fox was the cleverest of all the animals.

"Things must change," he thought. "We can't go on like this."

Quickly, he ran to God.

"Dear God," he said. "You are very kind to all your people. You listen to them. You give them everything. But it's not good for the world. You are not a man. You are God. You must stay in heaven and shut your ears. Give us your blessing, but do not give people everything they want, because they will always want more than you can give."

God listened to the fox, so, from that time on, the sun has always risen and set at the same time every day.

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

We use the word **BECAUSE** to explain **WHY** something happens. And we use the word **SO** to show the **RESULT** of an action.

These sentences tell the story again. Find the right ending for each sentence in the box below.

1. God was very kind.....
2. One person wanted more time in bed.....
3. Some people were angry when the sun rose late.....
4. A man in the field with his cows was very hot.....
5. The woman on the road was unhappy when the sun set early.....
6. Everyone was angry.....
7. The clever fox told God not to give people what they asked for.....
8. God listened to the fox.....

- a)so he asked God to make the sun rise later.
- b)so he gave people what they asked for.
- c)so now the sun rises and sets at the same time every day.
- d)so he asked God to make the sun set early.
- e)because she did not want to walk in the dark.
- f)because they always want more than God can give.
- g)because they wanted to get up early to work.
- h)because they thought God listened to some people and not to others.

B. What do you think?

Do you pray to God?

Does God answer your prayers?

What does this story tell us about God, and nature, and prayers?

[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

Answers to the Exercises

[[Click here to return to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to return to the story](#)]

A. How much did you understand?

1/b. God was very kind **so he gave people what they asked for.**

2/a. One person wanted more time in bed **so he asked God to make the sun rise later.**

3/g. Some people were angry when the sun rose late **because they wanted to get up early to work.**

4/d. A man in the field with his cows was very hot **so he asked God to make the sun set early.**

5/e. The woman on the road was unhappy when the sun set early **because she did not want to walk in the dark.**

6/h. Everyone was angry **because they thought God listened to some people and not to others.**

7/f. The clever fox told God not to give people what they asked for **because they always want more than God can give.**

8/c. God listened to the fox **so now the sun rises and sets at the same time every day.**

The Man from the River
An Anuak story

Before you read the story

- Do you know any stories about your ancestors?
- Do you know any stories about your people's traditions?

Now read the story.

One day, Achala and Ajulo went to the river. They wanted to catch some fish with their spears. A big fish swam past them. Achala speared it, but Ajulo pulled it out of the river. They began to fight.

"It's mine!" Achala said. "I speared it!"

"No! It's mine!" said Ajulo. "I took it out of the river!"

Achala caught the fish's tail and Ajulo caught the fish's head. They pulled it, and became very angry.

A man was hiding in a dead tree by the river. His head was covered with leaves, and he was catching fish with his harpoon.

"Don't quarrel," he called to the two girls. "Listen to me."

Achala and Ajulo were very surprised. They saw a man in the tree but they didn't see his face, because his head was covered with leaves. They began to pull at the fish again.

"Stop!" the man called out.

The girls looked round again. They couldn't see anyone.

"Who speared the fish?" the man called.

"I did," said Achala.

"You're right," said the man. "I saw you. The fish is yours."

"No!" said Ajulo. "I took it out of the river. It's my fish and I want to keep it."

"Oh please," said the man to Ajulo. "Don't quarrel. Drop the fish's head. Do it for me."

So Ajulo dropped the fish's head, but Achala could not hold the fish by the tail. It fell into the river and the water carried it away.

"Where's the fish now?" the man called out.

"I lost it," said Achala.

"Then catch another fish," said the man. "You must work for your food."

The girls went home and spoke to everyone in their village.

"We were quarrelling over a fish," they said, "and a strange voice called to us. A man judged our quarrel, but we didn't see him."

The next day, Achala and Ajulo went fishing again. This time, Ajulo speared a fish, but Achala took it out of the river. They began quarrelling again.

"It's mine!" Ajulo said. "I speared it."

"But I took it out of the river," Achala said.

Then Achala caught the fish's tail and Ajulo caught the fish's head. They both pulled it, and became very angry.

The man was hiding in the tree by the river again.

"Don't quarrel!" he called to the two girls. "Listen to me."

The girls looked round, but they couldn't see anyone.

"Who speared the fish?" the man said.

"I did," said Ajulo.

"Then the fish is yours," said the man.

"No!" said Achala. "It's my fish. I took it out of the river."

"Oh please," said the man. "Don't fight. Drop the fish's tail. Do it for me."

So Achala dropped the fish's tail. But Ajulo was holding the fish's head and she didn't drop it.

"Where's the fish now?" the man called out.

"I've got it," said Ajulo.

"Catch some more fish," said the man. "You must work for your food."

The two girls went back to their village.

"The strange man spoke to us again today," they said. "He judged our quarrel but we didn't see him."

The next day, the chief told everyone in the village to go down to the river to look for the strange man. After a while, they heard his voice.

"It's coming from the river bank," one person said.

"No, it's coming from behind that rock," said another.

"No, no! There's someone in the tree!" a third person said. "Look! There he is!"

Everyone looked up, and saw the man. They climbed up and pulled him down out of the tree.

"Let's take him to our village," they said.

So two men held on to the stranger's arms, and they all began to walk towards the village.

Suddenly, Achala shouted, "Look! He's not a man now! He's a bull!"

It was true. The man was not there now. In his place was a black bull.

Then Ajulo shouted, "Look! He's not a black bull now. He's white!"

It was true. The bull was white now.

The white bull tried to run away, but the men held him. He couldn't escape.

Then they felt something strange in their hands. The bull was changing again. He wasn't a bull now, he was a bush, with leaves and branches and fruits. Then, suddenly, the bush was not there. A beautiful woman was in its place.

At last they reached the village and the stranger changed into a man again. The people gave him food, but he refused to eat.

"He came from the river," they said. "Let's give him water to drink," so the chief's daughter brought him a gourd of water.

"Where's the mat to cover the water, and where's the stand for the gourd?" the man said. "I can't drink from an uncovered gourd."

So the chief's daughter brought him a mat to cover the water, and a stand for the gourd, and the stranger drank the water.

The people said to the chief's daughter, "He has drunk your water, so you must take him into your hut."

So the stranger stayed with the chief's daughter.

When the morning came, the stranger was not there.

"Where is he?" everyone said. "Why didn't he speak to us before he went?"

The chief's daughter came out of her hut with something in her hand. It was a necklace made of cowries. She showed it to her father.

"The stranger left this under my cowskin," she said.

The chief was angry.

"He took you but he didn't pay for you," he said. "All he has given me is this necklace."

Nine months later, the girl had a son. No one knew the father's name so they called the boy Ony-ya, 'the son of the stranger'. Ony-ya ate and ate. He grew fast. He became very tall and strong. He became the king of the Anuak people.

And from that time to this, the king of the Anuak wears the necklace of cowrie shells when he is crowned. He takes the name of his mother, but the people call him, Ony-ya, 'the one who comes from the river'.

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

Read these sentences about the story. Some of them are true, and some are false. Which are true, and which are false?

1. Two girls were fishing, and they began to fight.
2. A man was hiding behind a rock.
3. The man judged their quarrel.
4. A week later, the girls went fishing again.
5. The girls didn't catch another fish.
6. Everyone from the village went to find the stranger.
7. They pulled him out of a hole beside the river.
8. The man turned into a red bull.
9. Then he turned into a beautiful woman.
10. When they reached the village, he turned into a man again.
11. The chief's daughter brought him a basket of food.
12. She took him into her hut.
13. Nine months later, the chief's daughter had a son.
14. They called the baby Ony-ya, which means 'the son of the chief'.
15. He became king of the Anuak people.

B. Where were they?

The characters in this story move from one place to another.

Answer these "where" questions. Read the story again if this is difficult.

1. Achala and Ajulo wanted to catch some fish. Where did they go?
2. Where was the tree where the man was hiding?
3. When Ajulo dropped the fish, where did it go?
4. Where did the girls go after they left the river?
5. Where did the girls go the next day?
6. Where did everyone go the day after that?
7. Where was the stranger when he changed into a black bull?
8. Where was the stranger when he changed into a man again?
9. Where did the chief's daughter take the man?
10. Where did the stranger leave the necklace of cowries?

C. The best reason

This story is an important one for the Anuak people.

Which of these reasons do you think is the best one?

1. The story shows that the Anuak people are good at fishing.
2. The story is about the ancestor of the Anuak kings.
3. The story shows why the Anuak king wears a necklace of cowries.
4. The story shows that people must work for their food.

D. Stories from the past

It is easy to forget the old stories about your family's past, or the past of your people. When the old stories are lost, this is sad. They are important. They help us to understand who we are. They teach us about our traditions.

Ask an old relative, or a person from your own people, to tell you the old stories. Write them down so that you do not forget them.

[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

Answers to the Exercises

[[Click here to return to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to return to the story](#)]

A. How much did you understand?

1. Two girls were fishing, and they began to fight.

True

2. A man was hiding behind a rock.

False. He was hiding behind a tree.

3. The man judged their quarrel.

True

4. A week later, the girls went fishing again.

False. They went fishing the next day.

5. The girls didn't catch another fish.

False. The girls did catch another fish.

6. Everyone from the village went to find the stranger.

True

7. They pulled him out of a hole beside the river.

False. They pulled the man out of a tree.

8. The man turned into a red bull.

False. The man turned into a black bull, and then a white bull.

9. Then he turned into a beautiful woman.

True

10. When they reached the village, he turned into a man again.

True

11. The chief's daughter brought him a basket of food.

False. The chief's daughter brought him a gourd of water.

12. She took him into her hut.

True

13. Nine months later, the chief's daughter had a son.

True

14. They called the baby Ony-ya, which means 'the son of the chief'.

False. Ony-ya means "the one who comes from the river".

15. He became king of the Anuak people.

True

B. Where were they?

1. Achala and Ajulo wanted to catch some fish. Where did they go?

They went to the river.

2. Where was the tree where the man was hiding?

Near the river.

3. When Ajulo dropped the fish, where did it go?

Into the river.

4. Where did the girls go after they left the river?

They went back to the village/they went home.

5. Where did the girls go the next day?

They went back to the river.

6. Where did everyone go the day after that?

Everyone went to the river.

7. Where was the stranger when he changed into a black bull?

On the way back to the village.

8. Where was the stranger when he changed into a man again?

In the village.

9. Where did the chief's daughter take the man?

Into her hut.

10. Where did the stranger leave the necklace of cowries?

Under her cowskin.

C. The best reason

We think that the best reason is 2:

The story is about the ancestor of the Anuak kings.

The Landlord and the Ostrich An Opo story

Before you read the story

Landlords are people who own land or other property. They often have other people working for them. They have power over other people.

A teacher in a school has power over his or her students.

Fathers and mothers have power over their children.

- How does a good head teacher behave?
- How does a bad head teacher behave?
- How does a good parent behave?
- How does a bad parent behave?

Now read the story

Once upon a time, there was a wicked landlord. He was very rich. He had many cows and donkeys and many serfs worked on his land.

This landlord liked to ride across his land on his donkey with all his guards behind him. He shouted at the poor serfs, "Work hard, or I won't give you anything to eat! Produce a good harvest, or I'll beat you!"

The landlord's friends were all the other landlords. They often met and ate and drank together. Every year, they had a competition. The landlord whose serfs produced the biggest harvest won the competition.

This landlord liked to win the competition. When he won, he was very happy. But when he didn't win, he was very angry, and he killed some of his serfs.

The serfs hated the landlord. One of them, a clever man, decided to do something.

He went to the landlord's hut and said, "My sorghum harvest was good this year and

I've made some beer. Come to my hut and drink some of it with me."

So the landlord sent a servant for his donkey and he rode off to the serf's hut. The serf walked beside him.

Now, the serf had tied a rope across the road. The landlord didn't see it. His donkey tripped on the rope and the landlord fell to the ground.

"Oh!" said the serf. "My lord, are you all right? Your donkey is stupid. Let him go home. Walk with me. My hut's not far."

So the landlord sent his donkey home, and he walked on with the serf. Soon, they came to the serf's home.

An ostrich lived in the serf's home. She knew him well, and she knew all the other serfs who lived nearby. She never made any trouble for them. But she didn't like strangers, and she always attacked them. The ostrich saw the landlord and she began to run after him.

"Help!" shouted the landlord. "Help me!"

The serf said nothing. He watched and waited.

The landlord tried to run, but the ostrich could run much faster. She caught the landlord and kicked him, and the landlord fell down and died. The serf looked down at his enemy.

"This wicked landlord sowed the seeds of hate," he said, "and now he has received his harvest."

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

In this story, the actions of the landlord and the serfs have many results.

Match the actions in these sentences with the results from the list below.

1. When the landlord won the competition.....
2. When the landlord didn't win the competition.....
3. The serfs hated the landlord, so one of them.....
4. The serf invited the landlord to come and drink some beer, so.....
5. The serf tied a rope across the road, so.....
6. The ostrich at the serf's house knew all the other serfs, so.....
7. The ostrich saw the landlord and she began to run after him, so.....
8. The ostrich kicked the landlord, so.....

- a)she never made any trouble for them.
- b)decided to do something.
- c)he fell down and died.
- d)the landlord ran away.
- e)the landlord sent his servant for his donkey.
- f)he was happy.
- g)the landlord's donkey tripped.
- h)he killed some of his serfs.

B. Who was speaking?

Read these sentences, and say who was speaking.

1. "Produce a good harvest."

2. "My sorghum harvest was good this year."
3. "Your donkey is stupid."
4. "Help me!"
5. "Now he has received his harvest."

C. What do *you* think?

At the end of this story, the wicked landlord died.

Do you think the serf was right to let the ostrich kill the wicked landlord?

Do you think the landlord's punishment was too great?

What is the best way to control a powerful person?

[[Click here for the answers to the exercises](#)]

Answers to the Exercises

[[Click here to return to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to return to the story](#)]

- 1/f. When the landlord won the competition **he was happy.**
- 2/h. When the landlord didn't win the competition **he killed some of his serfs.**
- 3/b. The serfs hated the landlord, so one of them **decided to do something.**
- 4/e. The serf invited the landlord to come and drink some beer, so **the landlord sent his servant for his donkey.**
- 5/g. The serf tied a rope across the road, so **the landlord's donkey tripped.**
- 6/a. The ostrich at the serf's house knew all the other serfs, so **she never made any trouble for them.**
- 7/d. The ostrich saw the landlord and she began to run after him, so **the landlord ran away.**
- 8/c. The ostrich kicked the landlord, so **he fell down and died.**

B. Who was speaking?

1. "Produce a good harvest." **The landlord**
2. "My sorghum harvest was good this year." **The clever serf**
3. "Your donkey is stupid." **The clever serf**
4. "Help me!" **The landlord**
5. "Now he has received his harvest." **The clever serf**

Achok goes Fishing
An Anuak story



Before you read the story

To "share" means to give some of what you have to another person.

For example, "There is only one piece of cake, so we will cut it in half and share it."

- Are you a greedy person?
- Do you share your things with other people? Why?
- Do you know any greedy children? What do they do?
- How do you teach little children to share?

Now read the story

One day, Achok went to the river to fish. He caught many fish, and he took them back to his uncle's house. He took out the sharp spines that grew on the fishes' backs, and cooked them.

Achok's uncle was sleeping, so Achok woke him up.

"Uncle, come and eat!" he said. "Look, I've caught some fish. I've cooked them for you."

"Oh," said his uncle happily. "I like eating fish."

He sat down and began to eat.

"They're delicious!" he said. "How did you catch them? I'll go tomorrow and catch some too."

"Ahha," thought Achok. "I'll fool my uncle. I'll play a trick on him."

"Well, uncle," he said. "I took some beer from the bottom of the pot and I threw it into the river. All the fish came up to drink the beer. Then I jumped into the river, the fish swam

to me and their spines ran into my body. I climbed out of the river and pulled the fish out of my body."

"Did it hurt you?" asked his uncle.

"Oh no!" laughed Achok. "Look at me, uncle! I'm fine!"

The next morning Achok's uncle took some beer from the bottom of the pot and went down to the river. He threw the beer into the river and all the fish came up to drink it. Then Achok's uncle jumped into the river. The fishes' spines ran into his back. He climbed out of the river, but he couldn't pull the fish out.

"Help me! Someone help me!" he shouted.

The olwaro bird heard him and ran to the river.

"Oh, please," said Achok's uncle. "Take the spines out of my back."

"Let me eat the biggest ones," said the olwaro bird. "Then I'll take them out."

"Oh no," said Achok's uncle. "I want to eat the biggest ones myself."

"Then I won't help you," said the olwaro bird, and he went away.

"Help!" shouted Achok's uncle again. "Come and help me!"

The pelican heard him and ran to the river.

"Oh, please," said Achok's uncle. "Take the spines out of my back."

"Let me eat the biggest fish," said the pelican. "Then I'll take them out."

"Oh no," said Achok's uncle. "I want to eat the biggest ones myself."

"Then I won't help you," said the pelican, and he went away.

"Oh, please! Please! Help me!" Achok's uncle shouted, louder than before.

The marabou stork heard him and ran to the river to find him.

"Take the spines out of my back," said Achok's uncle. "But I'm telling you now, I won't give you the biggest fish."

"Then I'll take the smallest ones," said the marabou stork.

Carefully, he pulled all the big fish out of Achok's uncle's back and ate them.

"Are you eating the big fish?" said Achok's uncle.

"Oh no," said the marabou stork.

He pulled out another big fish and ate it.

"Wasn't that a big one?" said Achok's uncle.

"No, it was the smallest," said the marabou.

At last, all the fish were out of Achok's uncle's back and the marabou stork flew away.

All the big fish were gone.

Sadly, Achok's uncle picked up the little fish and went home.

"Oh, my back! My fish! My back!" he was crying.

"What's the matter, uncle?" Achok said to him. "What happened?"

"You said, 'Take beer to the river and throw it in,'" his uncle told him. "'Then jump in and you'll catch a lot of fish.' So I did. But the spines hurt! And I couldn't get them out of my back! Why did you tell me to catch fish this way?"

"Who? Me?" laughed Achok. "I never said that! I said, 'Go to the river and take the fish out carefully, with your hands.' That's what I said, uncle!"

[Click here to listen to the story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

There are different characters in the story: Achok, his uncle, the olwaro bird, the pelican and the marabou stork.

Which character said each of these sentences? And who was he speaking to?

1. "Come and eat. Look, I've caught some fish. I've cooked them for you."
2. "I took some beer from the bottom of the pot and I threw it into the river."
3. "Let me eat the biggest ones. Then I'll take them out."
4. "Take the spines out of my back. But I'm telling you now, I won't give you the biggest fish."
5. "Then I'll take the smallest ones."
6. "Oh, my back! My fish! My back!"
7. "What's the matter? What happened?"

B. Who and what?

Fill in the gaps in these sentences from the words in the list below.

1. Achok caught many fish and took them to the house of his
2. Achok took the sharp out of the fishes' backs.
3. "I took some beer from the bottom of the, " said Achok.
4. Achok's uncle threw some beer into the
5. Achok's uncle couldn't pull the spines out of his
6. The marabou stork pulled all the out of Achok's uncle's back.
7. "I told you to take the fish out carefully, with your" said Achok.

back, river, pot, spines, hands, uncle, big fish

C. Make a play

Make a play out of the story. Choose people to act the parts of Achok, his uncle, the olwaro bird, the pelican and the marabou stork.

[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

Answers to the Exercises

[[Click here to return to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to return to the story](#)]

A. How much did you understand?

1. "Come and eat. Look, I've caught some fish. I've cooked them for you."

Achok was talking to his uncle.

2. "I took some beer from the bottom of the pot and I threw it into the river."

Achok was talking to his uncle.

3. "Let me eat the biggest ones. Then I'll take them out."

The olwaro bird was talking to Achok's uncle.

4. "Take the spines out of my back. But I'm telling you now, I won't give you the biggest fish."

Achok's uncle was talking to the marabou stork.

5. "Then I'll take the smallest ones."

The marabou stork was talking to Achok's uncle.

6. "Oh, my back! My fish! My back!"

Achok's uncle was talking to Achok.

7. "What's the matter? What happened?"

Achok was talking to his uncle.

B. Who and what?

1. Achok caught many fish and took them to the house of his **uncle**.

2. Achok took the sharp **spines** out of the fishes' backs.

3. "I took some beer from the bottom of the **pot**," said Achok.

4. Achok's uncle threw some beer into the **river**.

5. Achok's uncle couldn't pull the spines out of his **back**.

6. The marabou stork pulled all the **big fish** out of Achok's uncle's back.

7. "I told you to take the fish out carefully, with your **hands**," said Achok.

Ngap and Nyakwi
A Nuer story

Before you read the story

- Are you the oldest, the youngest, or the middle one in your family?
- Are you like your brothers and sisters, or are you different from them?
- Do your parents have a favourite child?
- What are the good things about having brothers and sisters?
- What are the bad things?

This story is long. There are three parts to it. Answer the questions to each part before you read on.

Part One

Once upon a time, there were two sisters called Ngap and Nyakwi. They lived in their parents' home under an old mango tree in the forest.

Ngap was a beautiful girl but she was lazy and selfish. She never carried the fish home from the river for her father. She never brought water for her mother. Every morning, she stood at the edge of the river and looked at her beautiful face in the water. Every afternoon, she lay down on a cowskin under the mango tree.

"I'm hungry!" she called out to her sister Nyakwi. "Bring me a mango. I'm thirsty! Get me something to drink."

The girls' parents loved Ngap.

"Oh Ngap," they said. "You are very beautiful. One day you'll marry a rich man. Come here, my darling, and sit beside me."

Poor Nyakwi did all the work in the house.

"Nyakwi!" her parents always said. "Go to the river and bring some water! Put some wood on the fire! Where's our dinner? Haven't you cooked it? Be quick, you lazy girl!"

One day, the girls' father went to catch fish.

"Come to the river this afternoon," he said to Nyakwi. You can help me bring the

fish home."

That afternoon, Nyakwiy began to walk to the river.

"Where are you going?" her mother shouted. "You lazy girl! You want to go and play with your friends! Come back here. Sweep the floor. Bring wood for the fire. Help your sister to comb her hair."

"But my father said..." began Nyakwiy.

"Be quiet," said her mother, "and do your work."

The sun began to go down and the girls' father came back from the river. He was angry.

"Where's Nyakwiy?" he said.

"Here I am, father," said Nyakwiy.

"You lazy girl," said her father. "Why didn't you come to the river and help me? Look at all this fish! I needed you to carry it home."

"But my mother said..." Nyakwiy began.

"That's enough!" her father shouted. "I don't want to hear another word from you. Bring me a knife. We must cut up the fish."

"I'll help you," said Nyakwiy quickly.

Ngap was watching them. She was frowning.

"Don't cut the fish on the ground," she said. "I don't want any dust on my fish."

"You're right, my darling," her mother said. "Nyakwiy must be the table. Lie down, you stupid girl. I'll cut the fish on your back."

So Nyakwiy lay down with her face in the dust. Her mother put the fish on her back and began to cut it. The knife was sharp. Sometimes it went through the fish and cut into Nyakwiy's back. Her blood ran down into the dust. Tears fell from her eyes, but she didn't say anything.

"Look at her," Ngap said. "She doesn't feel the knife. She doesn't feel the blood. What a stupid girl!"

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

Read these sentences from Part One of the story. Who is speaking?

1. "Bring me a mango. I'm thirsty! Get me something to drink."
2. "Come here, my darling, and sit beside me."
3. "Where's our dinner? Haven't you cooked it?"
4. "Come to the river this afternoon."
5. "Come back here. Sweep the floor. Bring wood for the fire."
6. "But my father said..."
7. "Why didn't you come to the river and help me?"
8. "Don't cut the fish on the ground."
9. "Lie down, you stupid girl."
10. "She doesn't feel the knife. She doesn't feel the blood."

B. Describe the girls' characters

From the list below, choose which words show Ngap's character, and which words show Nyakwiy's character.

lazy

hard-working

selfish

quiet
loud
beautiful
unselfish

C. What do *you* think?

Is it easier to love people who are beautiful?
Is it easy for beautiful people to become selfish?

[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

[Click here to read Part Two of the story]

Answers to the exercises

[[Click here to return to the exercises](#)]

[[Click here to return to the story](#)]

A. How much did you understand?

1. "Bring me a mango. I'm thirsty! Get me something to drink."

Ngap

2. "Come here, my darling, and sit beside me."

The girls' parents

3. "Where's our dinner? Haven't you cooked it?"

The girls' parents

4. "Come to the river this afternoon."

Nyakwiy's father

5. "Come back here. Sweep the floor. Bring wood for the fire."

Nyakwiy's mother

6. "But my father said..."

Nyakwiy

7. "Why didn't you come to the river and help me?"

Nyakwiy's father

8. "Don't cut the fish on the ground."

Ngap

9. "Lie down, you stupid girl."

Nyakwiy's mother

10. "She doesn't feel the knife. She doesn't feel the blood."

Ngap

B. Describe the girls' characters

Ngap

lazy, selfish, loud, beautiful

Nyakwiy

hard-working, quiet, unselfish

Part Two

But Ngap and Nyakwi had an older sister. She was married to an ogre and he lived far away in the forest. One day, a messenger came to the house.

"Your oldest daughter sends her greetings," the messenger said to the girls' father. "She wants one of her sisters to visit her."

"I don't want to walk for miles through the forest," said Ngap. "I don't want to go to that ugly ogre's house."

"Of course you can't go, my love," said her mother. "There are leopards in the forest, and snakes, too. It's not safe. Nyakwi can go. We don't want her here, at home."

So the next morning, Nyakwi left her home and began her journey. She took a little water and a small bag of food.

"I can't give you any more," her mother said. "Your sister will feed you. Now go."

It was a long way to her sister's house. Nyakwi walked quickly. Once, she heard a leopard in the trees. Once she saw a snake on the path. But she walked on and on.

Evening came. Nyakwi was tired and hungry. Then, at last, she smelled the smoke of a fire. She followed the smell to her sister's hut.

Everyone was pleased to see her. Her sister's children kissed her. They wanted her to play with them. They were good and sweet. Nyakwi loved them at once.

Soon, Nyakwi's brother-in-law, the ogre, came home. Nyakwi helped her sister to cook his food. The ogre's teeth were long and he had big red eyes, but he smiled at Nyakwi.

"You are welcome in my house," he said.

Nyakwi worked hard at her sister's house. She brought the water from the river. She cooked the food. She told stories to the children. The weeks went past quickly. Nyakwi was very happy. Her sister's family loved her and she loved them too.

But one morning, her sister said to her, "Nyakwi, my dear, you must go home now. You have been with us for many months. You must go back to our parents."

Everyone was sad. The children asked for one last story. Nyakwi's sister gave her a delicious breakfast and plenty of food for the journey.

"You must eat," she said. "It's a long way to our parents' house. I don't want you to be hungry."

"Where's my brother-in-law?" said Nyakwi. "I must say goodbye to him."

"Oh, he's gone hunting," her sister said. "Now goodbye, little sister. Goodbye."

Nyakwi began to walk down the path. She was sad. She didn't want to leave her dear sister's house.

Suddenly, she heard a noise in the trees above. A white bird was sitting there. It watched Nyakwi go past. Then it flew away. But it wasn't a bird at all. It was Nyakwi's brother-in-law, the ogre.

Nyakwi walked on. Then she heard a noise on the path in front. A little bushbuck was running away through the trees. But it wasn't a bushbuck at all. It was Nyakwi's brother-in-law, the ogre. He watched Nyakwi walk on down the path. Then he ran away.

Suddenly, Nyakwi stopped. On the path in front of her was a beautiful tree. Red fruits were on its branches. Its leaves were made of gold. A lovely smell came from it.

"Nyakwi! Nyakwi!" said the tree. "Come here and eat my fruit!"

Nyakwi put out her hand and nearly took a fruit. Then she remembered her sister.

"Thank you," she said, "but my kind sister gave me a delicious breakfast and plenty of food for my journey. I'm sad because I've left her, and her good husband and children. I don't want anything to eat. I'm not hungry."

She walked slowly past the tree. She didn't want to break its beautiful branches. Then she walked on down the path. The tree changed into the ogre again. He smiled.

The journey was long. Nyakwi was tired. Suddenly, she saw a beautiful plate on the path. A delicious dinner of fish and butter was on it, and a lovely spoon lay beside it.

"Nyakwi! Nyakwi!" said the plate. "Come and eat my dinner."

Nyakwi wanted to eat the dinner, but then she remembered her sister.

"Oh no," she said. "Thank you very much, but I'm not hungry. This morning I left my dear sister and her good husband and children. They gave me plenty of food to eat. I don't want any more."

She went on down the path. The plate changed into the ogre again. He smiled. Then he turned into a leopard and ran back to his home.

The evening came. It was nearly dark. At last, Nyakwi arrived at her parents' house. Her parents were happy to see her.

"You always went to get the water," her mother said, "but your sister never helps me. I'm glad you've come home again."

"You always carried my fish back from the river," her father said, "but your sister never helps me. I'm glad you're back at home."

"Oh, there you are," said Ngap. "Come here, and comb my hair."

Nyakwi was surprised. It was better at home now. She worked hard, but her parents were kind to her.

"You're a good girl, Nyakwi," they said.

That evening, Nyakwi's family asked her about the ogre and his wife. Nyakwi told them everything.

"They were very kind to me," she said. "Perhaps my brother-in-law is an ogre, but he is a good man. The children are very sweet. My sister is happy."

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

Are these sentences true or false?

1. Nyakwi took lots of food to eat on the journey.
2. Nyakwi was happy at her sister's house and everyone loved her there.
3. Nyakwi's brother-in-law was an ogre with a handsome face.

4. Nyakwi went home after many months.
5. Nyakwi's brother-in-law chased a little bushbuck.
6. Nyakwi kicked the beautiful tree with red fruits.
7. Nyakwi didn't eat the delicious dinner she found on the path.
8. Nyakwi's parents were pleased to see her.

B. Where and what?

Answer these questions

1. Where did Ngap and Nyakwi's older sister live?
2. What wild animals lived in the forest?
3. What did Nyakwi take with her on her journey?
4. What did Nyakwi smell?
5. What did Nyakwi's sister give her for her journey home?
6. Where was the white bird that Nyakwi saw?
7. What were the leaves of the beautiful tree made of?
8. What was on the beautiful plate lying on the path?
9. Where did the ogre go, when he turned into a leopard?

C. What do you think?

People who have "good manners" are always polite to others. Nyakwi had good manners. People who have "bad manners" are rude. Ngap had bad manners. Do you think that it is important to have good manners?

[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

[Click here to read Part Three of the story]

[Click here to return to the exercises]

[Click here to return to the story]

A. How much did you understand?

1. Nyakwiy took lots of food to eat on the journey.

False. Nyakwiy took only a little water and a small bag of food.

2. Nyakwiy was happy at her sister's house and everyone loved her there.

True.

3. Nyakwiy's brother-in-law was an ogre with a handsome face.

False. He was an ogre with long teeth and big, red eyes.

4. Nyakwiy went home after many months.

True.

5. Nyakwiy's brother-in-law chased a little bushbuck.

False. Nyakwiy's brother-in-law turned into a bushbuck.

6. Nyakwiy kicked the beautiful tree with red fruits.

False. Nyakwiy walked slowly past the tree.

7. Nyakwiy didn't eat the delicious dinner she found on the path.

True.

8. Nyakwiy's parents were pleased to see her.

True.

B. Where and what?

1. Where did Ngap and Nyakwiy's older sister live?

Far away in the forest

2. What wild animals lived in the forest?

Leopards and snakes

3. What did Nyakwiy take with her on her journey?

A little water and a small bag of food

4. What did Nyakwiy smell?

The smoke of a fire

5. What did Nyakwiy's sister give her for her journey home?

Plenty of food

6. Where was the white bird that Nyakwiy saw?

In the trees above

7. What were the leaves of the beautiful tree made of?

Gold

8. What was on the beautiful plate lying on the path?

A delicious dinner of fish and butter

9. Where did the ogre go, when he turned into a leopard?

He ran back to his home

Part Three

The next day, Ngap said, "I want to go and see my sister. It's boring here at home."

"But there are leopards and snakes in the forest," her mother said.

"It's a very long way," said her father.

"Don't try to stop me," Ngap said rudely. "I want to go."

Her mother gave her a big bag full of delicious food.

"Go with her half the way," she said to her husband. "Now goodbye, my darling.

Come home again soon."

Ngap and her father began to walk through the forest. Once they heard a leopard in the distance.

"He won't come near us," her father said.

Once, they saw a snake on the path.

"Wait here. I'll kill it," said her father.

In the afternoon, Ngap walked on alone. She was tired and thirsty. At last she came to her sister's house.

Her sister was very pleased to see her. Her little nephews and nieces tried to climb into her arms and kiss her. But Ngap pushed them away.

"I'm tired," she said. "Leave me alone. Get me something to eat and drink."

Her brother-in-law came home from hunting. Ngap didn't smile at him. She didn't greet him.

The days passed slowly. Ngap never went to get the water. She never helped to cook the food. She shouted at the children. She fought with her sister. She was rude to her brother-in-law. She ate all the nicest pieces of food.

"Send her back to her parents," said the ogre. "I don't want her here in my house."

Back in her parents' house, Nyakwiy was happy. Her parents loved her now.

"You're better than your sister Ngap," her mother said. "You always work hard. You always help me."

"You're a good girl," said her father. "I'm going to find you a good husband."

One day, Nyakwiy's father came home and said, "I've found a husband for you, Nyakwiy, my dear. He's a good man, and he has many cows. You will be very happy."

"Thank you, father," Nyakwiy said. "But my sister Ngap will be angry. She wanted to get married first."

"Your sister Ngap must wait," her father said.

Ngap didn't know about her sister's wedding. But on the morning of Nyakwiy's wedding day, she decided to go home. Her oldest sister was happy.

"There'll be peace in my house at last," she thought.

She didn't love Ngap, but she made her a delicious breakfast, and she gave her food for the journey. The children didn't like their aunt at all. They didn't try to kiss her goodbye.

"Where's my brother-in-law?" Ngap said angrily. "Why doesn't he come to say goodbye to me? I don't like your husband, sister. He's a bad man."

"Oh, don't wait for my husband," her oldest sister said. "He's gone hunting."

At last, Ngap began her journey. She heard a noise above her head, and looked up. A white bird was sitting in the trees. It was the ogre. He watched Ngap go down the path.

Then Ngap heard a noise on the path in front. A little bushbuck was running away through the trees. It was the ogre. He watched Ngap walk on down the path. Then he ran away.

Suddenly, Ngap stopped. On the path in front of her was a beautiful tree. Red fruits were on its branches. Its leaves were made of gold. A lovely smell came from it.

"Ngap! Ngap!" said the tree. "Come here and eat my fruit!"

Ngap ran up to the tree and took the biggest fruit.

"I need this," she said. "I've been in my sister's house. She's married to a horrible ogre. He has dirty brown teeth and his mouth smells bad. They didn't give me any nice food. They weren't kind to me at all."

She put the fruit into her mouth. The juice ran down her chin. She picked some more. Then she kicked the tree with her foot.

"Get out of my way," she said, and she went on down the path.

The tree changed into the ogre. He was very angry.

"You'll pay for this!" he said.

Ngap walked on and on. It was late now and the sun was going down. She was happy.

"Soon I'll be at home," she thought. "Everyone will be very pleased to see me."

Suddenly, she stopped. On the path in front of her was a beautiful plate. And on the plate was a dinner of fish and butter. A lovely spoon was beside it.

"Ngap! Ngap!" the plate called out. "Aren't you hungry? Come here and eat your dinner."

Ngap didn't answer. She ran to the plate, and began to eat. The food ran down her chin.

She finished the last bit and stood up.

"That was nice," she said. "I'm so hungry. I was staying with my sister and her naughty children. Her food is very bad. She can't cook nicely. And her husband eats in a very bad way. I don't like to see him. He puts all the food in his mouth and it runs down his chin."

She kicked the plate with her foot, and went on down the path. The plate changed at once into the ogre. He was very, very angry. His eyes were red and his mouth was open.

"You'll be sorry for this," he said. "I'm going to eat you up."

Then he jumped on Ngap and began to eat her. He ate, and he ate. He ate her arms and her legs and her body. But he didn't eat her head.

Ngap's head rolled down the path. It rolled on and on. At last it came to her father's house. A big crowd of people were there. They were guests at Nyakwiy's wedding.

Ngap's head stopped at last in front of Nyakwiy. The singing stopped. The dancing

stopped. The guests all ran away.

Then Ngap's mouth opened and it began to sing.

"Once I was Ngap and now I'm dead.

Look, look at my poor little head.

Oh sister Nyakwiy, you are a bride,

But I have nothing. I have died.

I'll come and haunt you for evermore,

I'll sing in your roof and cry at your door.

So catch my head and bury it deep.

Then I'll be at peace. Then I'll sleep."

So Nyakwiy caught Ngap's head and buried it. And Ngap never came back to haunt her.

And Nyakwiy and her husband lived happily together. They had many children and everyone loved them.

[Click here to listen to the whole story]

Exercises

A. How much did you understand?

Put sentences 1, 2, 3 and 4 in the right order.

1. Ngap never went to get the water.
2. Once, they saw a snake on the path.
3. Her mother gave her a big bag full of delicious food.
4. "Send her back to her parents," said the ogre.

Put sentences 5, 6, 7 and 8 in the right order.

5. "You're better than your sister Ngap."
6. "But my sister Ngap will be angry. She wanted to get married first."
7. "I'm going to find you a good husband."
8. Ngap didn't know about her sister's wedding.

Put sentences 9, 10, 11 and 12 in the right order.

9. She ran to the plate and began to eat.
10. Ngap ran up to the tree and took the biggest fruit.
11. Then she kicked the tree with her foot.
12. "I don't like your husband, sister. He's a bad man."

Put sentences 13, 14, 15 and 16 in the right order.

13. The plate changed at once into the ogre.
14. And Nyakwiy and her husband lived happily together.
15. The dancing stopped. The guests all ran away.
16. Ngap's head rolled down the path.

B. Fill the gaps in the sentences

Fill the gaps in these sentences from the list of words below.

1. "You're than your sister Ngap," her mother said.
2. "I'm going to find you a husband," said her father.
3. "But my sister Ngap will be, " said Nyakwiy.
4. Then Ngap's mouth opened and it began to

5. So Nyakwiy caught Ngap's head and it.
6. Nyakwiy and her husband lived together.

angry, buried, better, happily, sing, good

C. What were they feeling?

Imagine what the characters in this story are feeling. Choose words from the list below to complete these sentences. You will need to use some words more than once.

1. When her mother cut Nyakwiy's back, she was feeling
2. When Nyakwiy arrived at her sister's house, she was feeling and
3. At her sister's house, Nyakwiy was very
4. When Nyakwiy arrived home, her parents were
5. The tree changed into the ogre. He was very
6. "Ngap! Ngap!" the plate called out. "Aren't you"?

tired, hungry, angry, happy, sad

D. What do you think?

What do you think is the best moral of this story?

Choose one of these sentences, or think of one of your own.

Beautiful people are always loved.

Good people are happy in the end and selfish people are unhappy.

Parents should not have a favourite child.

Sisters should be kind to each other.

D. Make a play

The story of Ngap and Nyakwiy can make a wonderful play. Choose different people to take the parts of the three sisters, their parents and the ogre. Use the words of the story, but make up other words yourselves.

[Click here for the answers to the exercises]

[Click here to return to the exercises]

[Click here to return to the story]

A. How much did you understand?

The right order of the sentences is 3, 2, 1, 4

Her mother gave her a big bag full of delicious food.

Once, they saw a snake on the path.

Ngap never went to get the water.

"Send her back to her parents," said the ogre.

The right order of the sentences is 5, 7, 6, 8

"You're better than your sister Ngap."

"I'm going to find you a good husband."

"But my sister Ngap will be angry. She wanted to get married first."

Ngap didn't know about her sister's wedding.

The right order of the sentences is 12, 10, 11, 9

"I don't like your husband, sister. He's a bad man."

Ngap ran up to the tree and took the biggest fruit.

Then she kicked the tree with her foot.

She ran to the plate and began to eat.

The right order of the sentences is 13, 16, 15, 14

The plate changed at once into the ogre.

Ngap's head rolled down the path.

The dancing stopped. The guests all ran away.

And Nyakwi and her husband lived happily together.

B. Fill the gaps in the sentences

1. "You're **better** than your sister Ngap," her mother said.
2. "I'm going to find you a **good** husband," said her father.
3. "But my sister Ngap will be **angry**," said Nyakwi.
4. Then Ngap's mouth opened and it began to **sing**.
5. So Nyakwi caught Ngap's head and **buried** it.
6. Nyakwi and her husband lived **happily** together.

C. What were they feeling?

1. When her mother cut Nkakwi's back, she was feeling **sad**.
2. When Nyakwi arrived at her sister's house, she was feeling **tired** and **hungry**.
3. At her sister's house, Nyakwi was very **happy**.
4. When Nyakwi arrived home, her parents were **happy**.
5. The tree changed into the ogre. He was very **angry**.
6. "Ngap! Ngap!" the plate called out. "Aren't you **hungry**?"

D. What do you think?

We think that the best moral for the story is:

Good people are happy in the end and selfish people are unhappy.

