

LEARNING TO LISTEN 3

REM 628

A TEACHING RESOURCE FROM...



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TO THE TEACHER

The purpose of the LEARNING TO LISTEN series is to improve comprehension skills through the use of short stories.

By purposefully listening as the stories are read to them, students may begin to develop an appreciation for literature.

Each unit in this series has eight stories accompanied by pre-reading activities, questions to check understanding, and ideas for extended activities.

Pre-Reading Activities:

- A. Vocabulary to Develop — Several words from the story are listed. It is suggested that you preview the story before reading it to the class. By doing this, you may note other words which your students may not be familiar with. A brief introduction to the words can help comprehension.
- B. Motivators — Topics for discussion for the purpose of stimulating interest before listening.
- C. A Reason to Listen — Suggestions for specific information to have students listen for.

Extended Activities:

Should you wish to extend learning beyond the listening activities, two or three ideas for doing this are included. The ideas vary in difficulty so that there is something for differing ability levels.

SOURCES FOR STORIES

The World's Best Fairy Tales, edited by Belle Becker Sideman, illustrated by Fritz Kredel. The Reader's Digest Association, Pleasantville, 1967.

Children's Classic Stories. Marshall Cavendish, Ltd., London, 1984.

Childcraft: Folk and Fairy Tales, Vol. 3. Field Enterprises Educational Corporation, Chicago, 1954.

Tricky Tales, edited by Nora Kramer, illustrated by William Morrison. Scholastic Book Services, New York, 1970.

THE SNOW MAIDEN

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES:

- A. Vocabulary to develop: *Russia peasant hut romp*
- B. Motivators (questions to stimulate interest and understanding):

Discuss with students:

1. People from different lands have collections of stories called folk tales. The stories are very old, and tell about the life in those lands. Sometimes, the tales show what the people believed about their land and even the changes in its weather. Once in awhile, a story would tell of magic and wishes that came true. Why would weather play such an important role in these tales? Why would magic be used to explore something about their land?
 2. Winter in the land of Russia is a season of cold, snow, and ice. Even though life is not easy, people often found ways to meet the problems of this harsh climate. What do you think they did to live in such a land? What would they do for fun in the snow?
- C. *Our story today is an old folk tale from Russia. Listen to find out how important it was to have a wish come true to find happiness in a land of ice and snow.*

EXTENDED ACTIVITIES:

1. Suppose you were able to ask the Snow Maiden three questions. Write the questions you would most like to ask her. Then, be the Snow Maiden and answer your questions.
2. When the Snow Maiden had to go way up north to the land of snow, what did she do there? Did she live with other people? What was her home like? What happened when she had to return to Ivan and Marie? Write a short paragraph telling your ideas. Draw a picture of her life in this other land.

THE SNOW MAIDEN

A long time ago, in the land of Russia, there lived near the forest a peasant named Ivan with his wife Marie. These two good people, though they loved each other dearly and had many friendly neighbors, were unhappy, for they had no children. They used to look out of the window and watch the children of their neighbors playing and laughing together and they wished with all their hearts that they, too, had a little child of their own.

One winter day, as they stood at the window of their little hut, they saw the neighbors' children playing in the snow. The children were having a good time romping, throwing snowballs at each other, and making a big snow man.

Ivan turned to his wife and said: "Look, Wife, the children are having a good time making a man out of snow. Let us go into the garden and make a snow man."

"That is a fine idea," said the wife, and the two good people went out into the garden.

Then Marie turned to her husband. "I've been thinking, Husband," she said. "Since we have no children of our own, let us make a little snow girl instead of a snow man."

"That is a fine idea," said Ivan, and they started to make a little girl out of snow. For so many years they had dreamed of having a little girl of their own that now they fashioned one with love and care — the prettiest maiden ever seen.

They rolled the snow together, and Ivan made a little body with dainty little hands and feet. Marie fashioned a beautiful head with eyes and nose and mouth and hair — all of snow. Then, very carefully, they placed the head on the shoulders of the little statue and looked at their little snow girl. Never had they seen anything so lovely and never had they wished more fervently for a real little girl of their own.

"Little snow maiden," Ivan said, "speak to me!"

"Yes, my darling," said Marie. "Come to life so you can play and romp and laugh like other children!"

Just then they noticed that the snow maiden's eyes began to quiver. A faint rosy color was creeping into her cheeks. At first they thought they were dreaming, but then they saw a real little girl with blue eyes and golden hair and rosy cheeks standing before them, where a moment before the snow figure had stood.

At first they were too astonished to speak and just gazed at the little girl. Then Ivan said: "Where did you come from? And who are you?"

"I came from the land of cold and snow," the child replied. "And I am your daughter, your own little girl."

She ran to Marie and Ivan and kissed them, and all three of them wept for joy. But soon they were talking and smiling again, for this was the happiest moment of their lives. They called to their neighbors in the huts nearby, who came over to see what was going on. Word soon got around of the couple's good fortune, and all the little girls of the village came to see the lovely little girl, the daughter of Ivan and Marie. Everybody stayed in the hut till late that night, laughing and singing and dancing to celebrate the glad occasion.

All that winter she played with the other boys and girls while Ivan and Marie would stand in the window of their little hut watching her. Now they were happy, for one of the children playing in the snow was their own child and, it seemed to them, she was the loveliest child of all.

“No child could be prettier than our little girl,” Ivan would say.

“Nowhere in the world is there a better child than she is,” Marie would add.

And Ivan would agree with her. “She is the best child of all,” he would say; “always good, always happy, always sweet.”

And indeed it was true. Everyone loved the little snow maiden. Everyone loved to hear her laughing and singing all day long, and they loved to watch her running and dancing with the other children. But when the first signs of spring appeared, when the air became warmer and the snows started to melt, the little girl didn't seem as lively as before. She always seemed tired now and unhappy.

One day she came to Ivan and Marie and sang a sad little song:

“The time has come for me to go

Away up North to the land of snow.”

These were the words she sang and, as she sang them, her eyes filled with tears. Her mother and father began to weep when they heard this song and Marie cried out, “Stay with us, my darling! Do not go away!”

Ivan jumped up and barred the door so she could not get out, and Marie put her arms around the little girl and held her tight. But even as she held her, the snow maiden started to melt away, and soon there was nothing left but her white fur cap and her white fur coat and her high white boots in a puddle on the floor.

Ivan and Marie wept bitter tears, and Marie folded away the little clothes, saying, “Maybe she will come back to us some day.”

All that summer they were sad and lonely, thinking of the dear little girl who had gone away. And then one night, when winter came, they heard a merry laugh outside their hut and they heard a happy voice singing,

“Mother! Father! Open the door!

The snow has brought me back once more!”

Ivan threw open the door and the snow maiden ran to the arms of her father and mother. All that winter she stayed with them and played with the other children of the village. But in the spring she had to go back North to the land of cold and snow. Ivan and Marie did not mind her going this time, however, for they knew that every winter, when it got cold and the snow began to fall, the little snow maiden would come back to Russia again and live with them until spring.

Name _____

THE SNOW MAIDEN



1. Why were Ivan and Marie unhappy?

2. What did they decide to build in the snow one day?

3. How did the snow maiden look after they finished?

4. What happened when they spoke to the girl?

5. How did the people of the village react to the good fortune of Ivan and Marie?

6. How did the snow maiden spend the winter?

7. What did Ivan and Marie think of their daughter?

8. What happened to the snow maiden when spring came?

9. When did the snow maiden return?

10. Why could the snow maiden only live where there was cold and snow?

WHY THE SEA IS SALT

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES:

A. Vocabulary to develop: *handmill* *gnome* *herring* *broth*

B. Motivators (questions to stimulate interest and understanding):

Discuss with students:

1. Storytellers of long ago sometimes used their stories to explain why something was the way it was. Why do you think they used stories? For whom were the stories probably meant?
2. What is the difference between acting wisely and acting foolishly? What might cause a person to act foolishly? What does it mean to act "greedy"?

C. *Our story today is about two brothers, one wise and one foolish. Listen to find out how each one behaved when they came to own a remarkable item, and how being greedy and foolish might have caused something in our world to become the way it is.*

EXTENDED ACTIVITIES:

1. What do you think the little handmill looked like? Choose one scene from the story when it was used by a character. Draw and color a picture of the mill working. Give your picture a title.
2. Suppose you and a friend came to own the mill. What would each of you want from the mill? Write your name and your friend's name on a sheet of paper. Under each, make a list of the things you and your friend might wish the mill would grind out for both of you. Then think up and write a way to make the mill STOP!