

Dear Family Member,

Welcome to our next unit of study, “Stories Teach Many Lessons.”

Unit 6 marks the beginning of the second half in the Benchmark Advance program. As with the previous units, I am providing activities you and your child can do together at home to build on the work we’re doing in class.

In this unit, we’ll read stories about characters who make poor decisions and the lessons we learn from their mistakes. For example, from reading “The Boy Who Cried Wolf,” students learn that if you lie, no one will ever believe you when you tell the truth. In addition to fables, the selections in this unit include pourquoi tales, animal fantasy, and realistic fiction.

The suggested activities provide an opportunity for you and your child to consider the messages of different stories, and to think about how they apply to your lives.

As always, should you have any questions about our reading program or about your child’s progress, please don’t hesitate to contact me.

Stories Teach Many Lessons

As we read the selections in this unit, we'll think about the characters and mistakes they make, and consider in depth the question "What can we learn from a mistake?" Here are some activities designed to encourage you and your child to explore the idea that stories teach lessons and to build on skills and concepts your child has learned in school. I hope you enjoy the conversations these activities will spark.

Topic Connection

Making the Most of Mistakes

Brainstorm favorite fairy tales together, and think about a mistake a character (either the main one or another) makes in each story on your list. For example, Little Red Riding Hood doesn't follow her mother's instructions and she talks to a stranger, the wolf. Challenge your child to uncover the mistake in each fairy tale on your list. Then, determine what we learn from that mistake.

Vocabulary Connection

Describe It!

Your child is learning new words related to story characters, including many adjectives. Write the adjectives your child is learning on index cards: **scary, peaceful, weary, shiny, bright, proud, selfish, sleek, frozen, plain, large, small, long, nice, huge**. Put them in a pile face down. Take turns selecting a card and thinking of something that goes with or has the characteristics of that word. For example, for **scary** you might say "monster" or for **frozen**, you might say "ice cube."

Comprehension Connection

Why oh Why

Several selections in this unit feature a cause-and-effect text structure to explain what happens to a character and why. For example, in "The Shepherd and the Wolf," the shepherd lies to his neighbors (cause), which results in the neighbors getting angry (effect). Recognizing cause and effect in a text is an important reading skill. Practice identifying cause and effect by pointing it out in daily life. For example, a traffic light turning red (cause) results in cars stopping (effect). Or, pedaling hard (cause) makes your bicycle go faster (effect).

Phonics Connections

Make-a-Word

In our phonics instruction, your child is learning to read words that have a long *i* sound and end with an *e*, as in *mice*. On separate index cards or small pieces of paper, write the letters *-ice, -ide, -ife, -ine, -ime, -ipe, -ite, -ive*. Shuffle the cards. Turn over the top card and say a word that ends with those letters. For example, for *-ide*, you might say *ride*. Next, your child says a different word ending with *-ide*. Continue back and forth until you can't think of any more words that end in *-ide*. Then turn over the next card.