



Aesop and Reading First: A Great Partnership

The building blocks of Reading First provide a solid foundation for a lifetime of reading. These principles are scientifically based and researched to help students take their first steps into reading that goes beyond labored word recognition into the magic of language and storytelling.

The Reading First principles are:

1. **Phonemic Awareness:** the ability of students to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds in spoken language.
2. **Phonics:** the relationship between letters of the alphabet and phonemes.
3. **Fluency:** the ability to read text with accuracy and confidence.
4. **Vocabulary:** the ability to learn new words and then recognize them within text.
5. **Text Comprehension:** the ability to extract meaning from what has been read.

How can you best practice these principles in order to put that foundation in place for your classroom of beginning readers? One way is to use these principles in tandem with engaging stories that will allow students to look forward to reading.

Aesop's fables are stories that have had an appeal to children for centuries. We don't know very much about the historic Aesop, but we can gather that he was a tactful person with a good sense of humor. His tact is displayed through his use of animal characters, who teach the lessons embedded in the story without offending human listeners. His humor is evident in the many complicated situations in which his characters find themselves.

In *Aesop's Fables Updated*, these familiar and well-loved stories are re-told specifically with Reading First principles in mind. Groups of phonemes are introduced in each story and identified in the warm-up exercises. Funny dialogue and repeated thoughts allow students to gain fluency through expression and repetition. New vocabulary is introduced in each story and is then used again in subsequent stories. Question worksheets allow students to apply these principles and to show that they understand what they have read. All of these details will help you teach more easily with Reading First principles.





Repeated reading is one of the methods encouraged in the Reading First program. In this book, you'll find exercises which encourage teachers to model reading of selections to students. You will also find suggestions for peer reading, including the Peer Reading Rubric on page 6 that will help your students encourage each other to gain comprehension and fluency as they read in pairs.

A natural connection to the Aesop fables is character education. On the teacher page for each story you will find the original moral of the story. These fables create a natural springboard for talking about positive traits like caring for others, thinking before you act, liking yourself the way that you are, and being truthful.

Enjoy these new versions of time-honored fables as you guide your students through decoding, understanding, and savoring the world of reading!

