

THE CLEVEREST THIEF

Second Grade

Outcome:

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the story through discussion, reading, writing, predicting, drawing, sequencing, evaluating, and role playing.

Overview:

Students will read and explore a folktale from India while utilizing interdisciplinary connections in language arts, social studies, math, dramatic arts, art, character education, and physical education.

Materials:

Book, *The Cleverest Thief*
World map or globe
Long sheets of paper
Crayons or markers
Pencils
Lined paper
Blackboard or Whiteboard
Copy of illustrator's sketches
Large sheets of paper
1 Large towel per student

Optional:

CD featuring soft, calming music
CD player
Padma, T.V. *Growing Gold*. Atlanta: August House, 2008.
Cleveland, Rob. *The Drum*. Atlanta: August House, 2006.
Forest, Heather. "A Monk with Heavy Thoughts." *Wisdom Tales from Around the World*. Little Rock: August House, 1996.
Computer with Internet access

Assessment Tools:

"Initial Blends" worksheet
"Sentence Completion" worksheet
"Half" worksheet
"Intonation" worksheet

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INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

Introduction:

Materials:

World map or globe

Directions:

Teacher:

- Asks students what they know about India.
- Helps students find India's location on a world map or globe.
- Asks students what they know about Buddha and Buddhism.
- Shares the following information with students as appropriate:
 - Buddha was a man who lived in India many years ago.
 - Buddha studied and meditated for a long time, attempting to determine the cause and cure of unhappiness. Teacher asks students what meditation is (spending time in quiet, deep, serious thought).
 - Buddha became a great teacher and taught that unhappiness is a natural part of life. The cure to unhappiness is to get rid of selfish desires. He said that we should think as much of others as we do of ourselves.
 - Buddha taught that we should not steal, cheat, or be angry. We should not repeat hurtful things and should not harm any living creature.
 - Some of Buddha's followers gave up all of their possessions and spent their time learning his lessons. Buddha's followers who live in a religious community and follow the rules of the order are known as Buddhist monks. Though some women are also called monks, most are called "nuns," and the term "monk" usually refers to a man. Other religions also have monks and nuns.
 - Monks may live alone or in a monastery. Teacher asks students what a monastery is (a building or group of buildings where a community of monks may live).
 - The robes worn by the monks have three parts. They are the colors of falling leaves on trees, as a reminder of letting go. Wise and/or elderly Buddhist monks usually wear orange robes.
 - Buddhist monks are allowed to own very few possessions. In addition to the three parts of the robes they wear, monks are given a bowl for food (begging/alms bowl), a belt, a razor, and a few other personal items. Many monks depend on gifts of food to live.
 - Buddhist monks spend their time meditating and learning Buddha's teachings. They teach others by their words and the example they set by how they live.
- Asks students how a Buddhist monk's life is different than their own lives.
- Asks students what they might see if they visited a monastery.

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Students Read the Story:

Materials:

Book, *The Cleverest Thief*

Directions:

Teacher:

- Informs students that they will be reading a folktale from India about Buddhist monks.
- Distributes copies of the book to students.
- Asks students for volunteers to take turns each reading one page aloud.
- Asks the students to stop reading after pages 8, 11, 13, and 19 and predict what will happen next.

Questions for Assessing Students' Comprehension:

- What is the setting of the story?
- If you were not told that it takes place in India, how might you figure it out?
- Who are the main characters in the story?
- What is the plot of the story?
- What does “clever” mean?
- What does “cleverest” mean?
- What is a thief?
- What stories or movies do you know that have a character who is a thief?
- What is a monastery?
- What is a monk?
- What is meditation?
- The great monk guided the other monks for more than half of his one hundred years. How many years is half of a hundred?
- Why do you think the author chose to write “half of one hundred” instead of fifty?
- What does “leading a life of peace and service” mean?
- Is it necessary to be a monk to lead a life of peace and service?
- What can you do to lead a life of peace and service?
- Why did the great monk need to choose someone to take his place as leader of the monastery?
- Why was this choice hard for him?
- How would *you* choose a leader?
- What test did the great monk use to choose a leader?
- Do you think the test was a good idea? Why or why not?
- How do you think the monks felt when they were told to steal something so that no one would know?
- How would you feel if you were asked to steal?
- What did each of the monks steal?
- When they met with the great monk, Dhammika was “empty-handed.” What does that mean?
- What reason did Dhammika give for not stealing?

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Questions for Assessing Students' Comprehension cont.:

- What did the great monk mean when he said, "...you may hide your actions from the world, but never from yourself"?
- Why did the great monk choose Dhammika to be the next leader?
- What did the great monk mean when he told Dhammika, "You, alone, stayed true to yourself and my teachings"?
- What were the great monk's teachings?
- How did the great monk feel about choosing Dhammika?
- How did Dhammika feel about being chosen as the next leader? How can you tell?
- What lesson does this story teach?
- Look at the illustration on page 32. What objects do you see? (an alms bowl with grains of rice and a gold coin, an orange sash or belt, a staff, prayer beads, an outer layer of a robe, a straight razor, and a toothpick)
- Look at the illustrations of the leaves throughout the story. What is the significance of the falling leaves? (As noted in the introductory activity, Buddhist monks wear robes that are the color of falling leaves, as a reminder of the importance of not clinging and letting go. Also, the life cycle of the leaves mirrors the leadership cycle of the monks. The leaves are dying and falling when the great monk's leadership is ending, and they are green when a new leader is chosen.)

Language Arts:

- **Make a Timeline**

Materials:

Book, *The Cleverest Thief*

Long sheets of paper

Crayons or markers

Pencils

Directions:

Teacher:

- Asks students to review the story, paying attention to the sequence of events.
- Instructs students to choose the five most important events and create a timeline showing those events in order.
- Instructs students to write and illustrate the events.
- Asks students to share their timelines with the class.

- **Point of View**

Directions:

Teacher:

- Explains that a story will be different depending on who is telling the story.
- Asks students to pretend to be the great monk, Dhammika, the monk who stole the necklace, or the monk who stole the grain of rice.
- Asks students:

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Language Arts cont.:

Point of View cont.

- How would each character retell the story?
- Why would their versions of the story differ?
- Instructs each student to retell the story from the chosen character's point of view.

• **Writing With a Partner**

Materials:

Lined paper

Pencils

Directions:

Teacher:

- Divides the class into pairs.
- Asks students to brainstorm how they could change the characters and the setting.
- Asks student to work with a partner to rewrite the story with new characters and setting.
- Asks students to read their new stories to the class.

• **Initial Blends**

An activity for differentiated learning

Materials:

“Initial Blends” worksheet

Pencils

Lined paper

Directions:

Teacher:

- Informs students that the word “cleverest” starts with a /cl/ blend. There are several words in the book that begin with blends.
- Divides the class into three groups.
 - Group A: Review the story and find at least one word that begins with the blends on the “Initial Blends” worksheet. Write the words in the spaces provided.
 - Group B: Complete the “Initial Blends” worksheet as per directions for Group A. Write one sentence for each word.
 - Group C: Complete the “Initial Blends” worksheet as per directions for Group A. Create a word search puzzle or a crossword puzzle using at least 6 of the words.

• **Sentence Completion**

Materials:

“Sentence Completion” worksheet

Pencils

Directions:

Students read each sentence and choose the appropriate word(s) from the word bank to complete each sentence.

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Language Arts cont.:

Sentence Completion cont.

1. The story takes place in the country of _____.
2. The _____ lived in a _____.
3. Quiet, deep thinking is called _____.
4. The great monk gave a _____ to help him choose the next leader.
5. He told the monks to _____ something so that no one could name the _____.
6. One monk stole a _____.
7. One monk stole a _____ of _____.
8. Dhammika did not steal anything because he could never keep his actions a _____ from himself.
9. Dhammika stayed _____ to himself and the great monk's teachings.
10. Dhammika was chosen as the new _____.

Word Bank: monastery, test, thief, leader, India, grain, secret, monks, meditation, necklace, steal, rice, true

• **True Or False**

Materials:

Lined paper

Pencils

Directions:

Students:

- Write eight true or false statements about the story.
- Exchange papers with a partner and determine if each of the sentences are true or false.

• **Illustrator's Insight**

Materials:

Copy of illustrator's sketches

Directions:

Teacher:

- Shows students the copy of the illustrator's sketches. Teacher informs students that the illustrator, Baird Hoffmire, researched Buddhist monks and made preliminary sketches to help him illustrate the book. As he researched, he wrote notes about things he wanted to make sure he put in the illustrations.
- Asks students to show how the illustrator used these sketches in the book's illustrations.
- Asks students to find:
 - The names for the three parts of the monks' robes.
 - Where he practiced drawing hands, arms, legs, and feet.
 - The colors of the cloaks and their significance.
 - The colors of the cloaks from different regions of the world.
 - Where he practiced drawing Dhammika.
 - Where he practiced drawing the great monk.
 - A note to himself about much detail he wanted in each illustration.

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Math:

• **Half**

Materials:

“Half” worksheet

Pencils

Directions:

Teacher:

- Reminds students that for more than half of his one hundred years, the great monk guided the other monks. Teacher asks how much “half of one hundred” is.
- Shows students a pattern for numbers ending in zero. (Example: 40; Take half of 4 → 2. $20 + 20 = 40$.)
- Calls out several even numbers up to twenty and multiples of ten up to one hundred and asks students to say half of each number.
- Distributes worksheets and asks students to write the numbers that is half of the number listed on the left side of the page.

Drama:

• **Pantomime**

Directions:

Teacher:

- Informs students that they will pantomime the story. Teacher asks students what “pantomime” is (entertainment presented without words, by using gestures, body movements, and facial expressions).
- Divides the class into groups of 4-6 students.
- Instructs each group to create a pantomime of the story and present it to the class.

• **Intonation**

Materials:

“Intonation” worksheet

Directions:

Teacher:

- Explains that the meaning of a sentence changes depending on which word or words in the sentence are emphasized.
- Demonstrates by reading the following sentences, stressing the words in bold.
 - The **great** monk had to choose someone to take his place.
 - The great monk had to **choose** someone to take his place.
 - The great monk had to choose **someone** to take his place.
- Asks students how the meaning of the sentence changed each time it was read with a different word emphasized.
- Asks students to read aloud each sentence on the “Intonation” worksheet several times, emphasizing a different word each time.
- Asks students to analyze how the meaning of each sentence changes as a different word is emphasized each time it is read.

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Social Studies:

• **Monks**

Materials:

Book, *The Cleverest Thief*

Directions:

Teacher:

- Informs students that:
 - One of the few possessions a monk owns is his three-part robe. These robes are the colors of falling leaves. Wise and/or elderly Buddhist monks usually wear orange robes.
 - Monks are given a begging/alms bowl, a belt, a razor, a staff, and a toothpick. These items along with the three-part robe are called the Eight Requisites. Some orders of monks have small differences in what these eight items are. (Some may include a water strainer, needle and thread, or other necessary item.) The items always include the three-part robe, the bowl, and the razor.
- Asks students to review the illustrations in the book and find these items.
- Asks students to name the objects and discuss the usefulness of the objects in the illustrations on page 32 (alms bowl with grains of rice and a gold coin, an orange sash or belt, a staff, prayer beads, an outer layer of robe, a straight razor, and a toothpick).
- Asks students to name eight requisites for living they would *need*, if those were their only possessions.
- Asks students to name eight items that they would *want*.
- Leads students in discussing want vs. need.

Character Education:

• **Resourcefulness, Responsibility, and Trustworthiness**

Directions:

Teacher:

- Asks the students what the moral of *The Cleverest Thief* is (be true to yourself).
- Informs students that the book emphasizes the character traits of resourcefulness, responsibility, and trustworthiness. Teacher asks students to define each word and tell how the story illustrates each character trait.
- And students discuss examples of the character traits in their lives.
- Instructs students to work in small groups to create a skit illustrating one of the character traits.
- Asks students to present their skits to the class.

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Art:

• **Draw a Poster**

Materials:

Large sheets of paper

Crayons or markers

Directions:

Teacher:

- Informs students that they will draw a poster to advertise the book, *The Cleverest Thief*.
- Asks students what information they need to include on the poster (book title, author, illustrator, why someone should read the book, descriptive and persuasive language, etc.).
- Instructs each student to create a poster to convince others to read the book.
- Asks students to share their posters with the class.

Physical Education:

• **Meditation**

Materials:

1 Large towel per student

Quiet, peaceful environment

Optional: CD featuring soft, calming music

Optional: CD player

Directions:

Teacher:

- Reminds students that after a night of deep meditation, the great monk decided he would use a test to help him choose the next leader.
- Reminds students that meditation is a quiet time of relaxation, concentration, and deep thinking.
- Sets up a quiet, comfortable environment for students.
- Speaks in a soft, slow, and relaxed voice and asks students to lie down on their towels, close their eyes, and relax.
- Directs students to focus on their toes and to tighten and tense them, and then relax them.
- Directs students to tense and then relax their calves, knees, thighs, stomach, back, shoulders, arms, hands, neck, and head.
- Asks students to relax and concentrate on their breathing:
 - Breathe in through the mouth for the count of three, hold the breath, and then breathe out through the nose for the count of three.
 - While breathing in, think of energy, peace, and happiness.
 - While breathing out, think of sadness, anger, and tiredness leaving the body through the nose.
- Asks students to see themselves on a very big movie screen. Looking at the screen, they should see themselves as being very calm, quiet, and relaxed. Next, they should see themselves being a patient, loving, person. Then, they should see themselves as a good friend and good student.

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Physical Education cont.:

Meditation cont.

- Asks students to slowly start thinking about their body again. They should start feeling their body parts, starting with their toes. They should stay relaxed as they wiggle their toes, roll their ankles in both directions, and then progressively wiggle all of their body parts individually. They should end by gently rolling their head from side to side.
- Asks students to slowly open their eyes and take a few slow, deep breaths.
- Asks students to sit up slowly.
- Asks students to share how they feel after their meditation experience.

Extension Activities:

• Compare and Contrast

Materials:

Book, *Growing Gold*

Book, *The Drum*

Book, *Wisdom Tales from Around the World*

Directions:

Teacher and students read:

- *Growing Gold* by T.V. Padma. Students compare and contrast this story from India by the same author with *The Cleverest Thief*.
- *The Drum* by Rob Cleveland. Students compare and contrast this folktale from India with *The Cleverest Thief*.
- “A Monk with Heavy Thoughts” on page 39 of *Wisdom Tales from Around the World* by Heather Forest. Students compare and contrast the wise Japanese monk in this story with the monks in *The Cleverest Thief*.

• Technology Connection

Materials:

Computer with Internet access

Directions:

- Teacher helps students access www.storycove.com.
- Students view the animation for *The Cleverest Thief* narrated by the author.
- Students explore the animations and activities for other stories on www.storycove.com.

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Name _____ Date _____

Initial Blends

Directions: Review the story and find at least one word that begins with the blends listed below. Write the words in the spaces provided.

br _____

cl _____

gr _____

pl _____

sl _____

sp _____

st _____

tw _____

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Name _____ Date _____

Sentence Completion

Directions: Read each sentence. Choose the appropriate word(s) from the word bank to complete each sentence.

1. The story takes place in the country of _____.
2. The _____ lived in a _____.
3. Quiet, deep thinking is called _____.
4. The great monk gave a _____ to help him choose the next leader.
5. He told the monks to _____ something so that no one could name the _____.
6. One monk stole a _____.
7. One monk stole a _____ of _____.
8. Dhammika did not steal anything because he could never keep his actions a _____ from himself.
9. Dhammika stayed _____ to himself and the great monk's teachings.
10. Dhammika was chosen as the new _____.

Word Bank: monastery, test, thief, leader, India, grain, secret, monks, meditation, necklace, steal, rice, true

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Name _____ Date _____

Half

Directions: Look at each number below. Write the number that is half of that number in the space provided.

Half of 100 is 50.

1. Half of 60 is _____
2. Half of 8 is _____
3. Half of 10 is _____
4. Half of 6 is _____
5. Half of 20 is _____
6. Half of 80 is _____
7. Half of 50 is _____
8. Half of 12 is _____
9. Half of 14 is _____
10. Half of 40 is _____
11. Half of 16 is _____
12. Half of 4 is _____
13. Half of 30 is _____

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Name _____ Date _____

Intonation

Directions: Read each sentence several times, emphasizing a different word each time. Discuss how the meaning of the sentence changes when different words within the sentence are emphasized.

1. The great monk was very old.
2. "One of you must take my place."
3. "I want each of you to steal something."
4. "You must steal it gently so no one knows how it was stolen."
5. Each monk wanted to become the next leader.
6. "How could you ask us to steal?"
7. "Why are you empty-handed?"

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Copy of Illustrator's Sketches

