

Well of Truth: A Folktale from Egypt

Written by Martha Hamilton and Mitch Weiss

ABOUT THE BOOK

GUIDED READING:

I

LEXILE LEVEL:

520L

CHARACTER TRAITS:

Citizenship
Fairness
Sharing

REGION:

Middle East

ISBN:

978-0-874838-80-0

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

NOTE:

Find correlating
Common Core
Standards at the
head of each activity
section.

Outcome

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the story through writing, discussing, and role-playing.

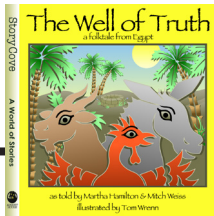
Overview

Students will read and explore a folktale from Egypt while utilizing interdisciplinary connections in language arts, social studies, science, dramatic arts, and character education.

Materials

General

- Book, *The Well of Truth World*
- Map or globe
- Picture books about Egypt
- Blackboard or whiteboard
- Chalk or dry erase markers
- Lined paper
- Pencils
- 1 Sentence strip per student
- Markers
- Scissors
- Paper plates
- Napkins



Well of Truth: A Folktale from Egypt

First Grade

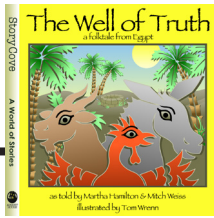
- An assortment of some of the following foods: dates, figs, pita bread, chick peas or fava beans, cucumbers, almonds, pistachio nuts, honey, pomegranates, grapes, raisins, dried apricots

Optional: Extension Activities

- Computer with Internet access
- Norfolk, Bobby and Sherry Norfolk. *Anansi and the Pot of Beans*. Atlanta: August House, 2006.
- Padma, T.V. *Growing Gold*. Atlanta: August House, 2008.

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First Grade

Introduction

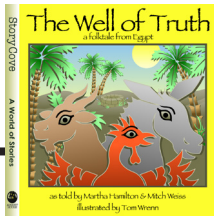
Introducing the Story

Materials:

- World map or globe
- Picture books about Egypt

Directions:

- Asks students what they know about Egypt.
- Helps students locate Egypt on a world map or globe.
- Points out surrounding countries and bodies of water.
- Shares the following facts about Egypt as appropriate:
 - Egypt is located in the northeast corner of Africa. The Nile River runs through Egypt. (Show on map or globe.) It is the longest river in the world and is the main source of water for the Egyptian people.
 - Most of Egypt is covered with dry, dusty desert. Most of the people in Egypt live near the Nile River. The soil near the Nile is very good for growing a variety of crops.
 - The winter runs from November to April when weather is very mild. Strong spring winds blow sand across the country in April. The very hot summer lasts from May until October.
 - Egypt receives very little rain in most areas, so the water from the Nile River is very important.
 - When people think about Egypt, many think about ancient Egypt, thousands of years ago. It is known as one of the birthplaces of civilization. Egypt's history goes back almost 5,000 years. Egypt is home to the only surviving wonder of the ancient world: the Great Pyramid at Giza. (Show pictures of Ancient Egypt including the pyramids and the Sphinx.)



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COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RL.1.5:

Text types

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RL.1.7:

Illustrations and details

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RL.1.10:

Text complexity

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RF.1.4.A :

Fluency

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RF.1.4.B:

Oral fluency

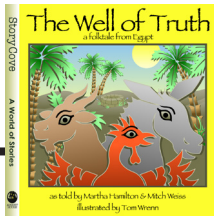
Teacher Reads the Story

Materials:

- Book, *The Well of Truth*

Directions:

- Tells students that they will be reading a folktale from Egypt.
- Shows students the cover of the book and reads the title.
- Asks students to predict what the story is about based on the cover illustration and the title.
- Asks students how they could tell the story takes place in Egypt, based on the cover illustration.
- Distributes books to students and reads the story to them or asks students to volunteer to read a page aloud.



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Discussion Questions

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RL.1.1:

Key details

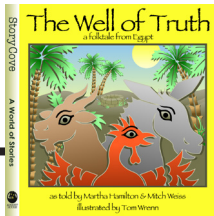
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RL.1.3:

Characters, settings,
events

For Assessing Comprehension

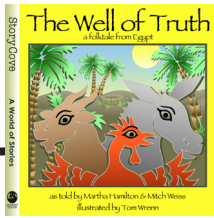
- Who is this story about?
- What is this story about?
- Where does this story take place?
- What did the characters plant?
- What were some of the things they did to plant and care for the clover?
- Why did Goat tell Donkey they should wait to eat the clover?
- The animals agreed to wait until the morning to eat the clover. Looking at the illustration on Page 11, what do you think the animals are doing? Do you shake hands when you make an agreement?
- The night before they were going to feast, Donkey could not sleep. What was he thinking about?
- What does it mean to feast? When have you had a feast?
- Did Donkey mean to eat all the clover? Have you ever started out just having a taste or a bite of something and then ended up eating much more than you planned?
- How did Donkey feel the next morning?
- What did Donkey tell Rooster and Goat when they wanted to go to the field to eat the clover?
- How did Rooster and Goat feel when they went to the field and saw that someone had eaten all the clover?
- How could they tell that Donkey had eaten the clover? (Donkey had a swollen belly.) What does it mean to have a swollen belly? Have you ever had a swollen belly after eating a large meal?



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- Why do you think Donkey told Rooster and Goat he hadn't eaten the clover? Was that a good choice or a poor choice?
- Where did they take Donkey to test him?
- Why did they jump over the well?
- What happened when Rooster jumped over the well?
- Goat swore the same oath as Rooster before he jumped over the well. What is an oath?
- What happened when Goat jumped over the well?
- How did Donkey feel when it was his turn to jump over the well?
- What happened when Donkey jumped over the well?
- How long did Donkey stay in the well?
- What lesson did Donkey learn?
- How do the illustrations show that the story takes place in Egypt?
- Based on the illustrations, do you think that the story takes place near the Nile River or in the desert?
- Could this story take place somewhere other than Egypt or is it specific to Egypt?



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Language Arts

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RL.1.6:

Narrator, point of view

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RL.1.2:

Retell stories, and key details

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

SL.1.1:

Collaborative conversations

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

SL.1.6:

Complete sentences

Point of View

Directions:

- Tells students that a story can differ depending on who is telling the story. For example, Goldilocks would tell the story of “The Three Bears” differently than the bears would.
- Asks students how the story would differ if each of the characters told it from their point of view.
- Divides class into groups consisting of three students.
- Tells students that each group member will pretend to be a different character from the story.
- Instructs students to retell the story from their character’s point of view.
- Leads a discussion about how the stories differed based on who was telling the story.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

SL.1.1:

Collaborative conversations

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RF.1.3.B:

Decode one syllable words

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RF.1.3.E: Decode two

syllable words

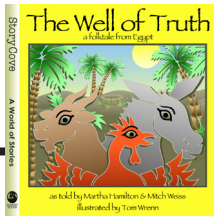
ABC Order

Materials:

- Blackboard or Whiteboard
- Chalk or dry erase markers
- Lined paper
- Pencils

Directions:

- Teacher reviews alphabetical order with students.
- Teacher divides the class into three groups.



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- Teacher writes the list for each group on the board.

Group A:

- Works with the teacher to complete the activity.
- Students write the list of words in alphabetical order.
- Words: goat, rooster, donkey, well, truth

Group B:

- Works independently to complete the activity.
- Students write the list of words in alphabetical order.
- Words: goat, rooster, donkey, well, truth, clover, jump, field

Group C:

- Works independently to complete the activity.
- Students write the list of words in alphabetical order.
- Note: Several words begin with the same letter, so the second letter in the word will be used to determine order.
- Words: goat, rooster, donkey, well, truth, clover, jump, field, grow, ready

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-
LITERACY.L.1.1.K:

Appropriate spacing

CCSS.ELA-

LITERACY.L.1.1.J:

Complete sentences

CCSS.ELA-

LITERACY.L.1.2:

Conventions of standard
English

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

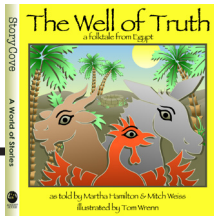
SL.1.1:

Collaborative
conversations

Scrambled Sentences

Materials:

- Blackboard or whiteboard
- Chalk or dry erase markers
- 1 Sentence strip per student
- Markers
- Scissors

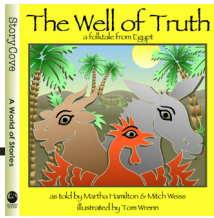


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First Grade

Directions:

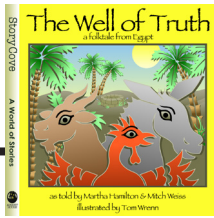
- Writes the following scrambled sentences on the board and reviews syntax with students as they rearrange the words to create sentences that make sense.
 - Fun. Reading is (Reading is fun.)
 - Go school. to We (We go to school.)
 - I grade! first love (I love first grade!)
- Reviews clues to help determine word order in the sentences (capital letters, punctuation, etc.).
- Writes the following sentences on the board. (Add or remove sentences as necessary so there is one sentence per student.)
 - three There animals. were
 - planted The clover. Animals
 - worked together. They
 - watered field. the They
 - weeds. They pulled the
 - They field. plowed the
 - Donkey clover. wanted eat to
 - wait. to Rooster said
 - Rooster more day. one said
 - sleep. not could Donkey
 - Donkey to field. went the
 - all ate Donkey the clover.
 - Goat Rooster mad. and were
 - Goat well. over jumped the
 - Rooster the jumped well. over
 - Donkey well. fell the in



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- Distributes one sentence strip and one marker to each student.
- Assigns each student to copy a different sentence from the board onto his or her sentence strip (or teacher can copy the scrambled sentences on sentence strips prior to the activity).
- Tells students to cut apart their sentence strips so that each word is separate, creating a sentence puzzle.
- Tells a student to go to the front of the class with his or her sentence puzzle.
- Asks additional students to help so that one student holds each word in the scrambled sentence puzzle for the class to see.
- Helps the class determine the correct order of the words in the sentence by moving the students so that the words they are holding will read in the correct order.
- Repeats activity for each sentence.
- Asks students to switch sentence puzzles with classmates and put the sentence puzzles in the correct order.



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Phonics

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RF.1.2.B:

Phonemes

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

SL.1.4:

Relevant details

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

SL.1.6:

Complete sentences

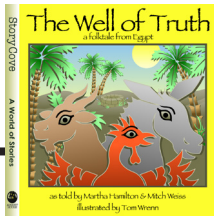
Blends

Materials:

- Book, *The Well of Truth*
- Blackboard or whiteboard
- Chalk or dry erase markers
- Lined paper
- Pencils

Directions:

- Teacher reviews blends with students. Reminds students that “th,” “sh,” “ch,” and “wh” are not considered blends because the individual sounds of the letters are not heard.
- Asks students to look through book and identify the words that begin with blends.
- Writes the words that begin with blends on the board.
 - Words: truth, try, grow, plant, clover, three, plowed, ground, sweet, pleaded, sleep, smelling, crowed, crack, stomachache, from, cried, swollen, stay, prove, swore, problem, spoke, slowly
- Asks students to volunteer to underline the blend after each word is written on the board.
- Ask students to copy one of the words from the board on their paper.
- Asks students to write at least one more word that begins with the same blend under the story word.
- Asks students to share the new words they have written.



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Science

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RL.1.1:

Key details

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RL.1.2:

Retell stories, key details

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

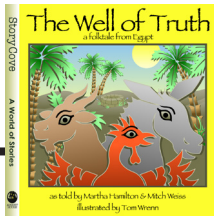
RL.1.3:

Characters, settings,
events

Animal Facts

Directions:

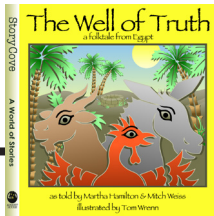
- Teacher tells students that they are going to play a game that involves listening to statements about goats, roosters, and donkeys and deciding whether the statements are true or false.
- Tells students they are not expected to know whether all the statements are true or false, but that they should take their best guess based on what they know and what they have learned from the story.
- Informs students that the point of the activity is to learn and share interesting facts about the animals in *The Well of Truth*.
- Gives the following activity directions:
 - Listen carefully to each statement.
 - If you think the statement is true, point your thumbs up. If you think the statement is false, point your thumbs down.
 - Stand up to begin the game.
 - If you guess incorrectly, sit down.
 - Optional: If a fact is false, the teacher may give a student who is sitting down a chance to specifically correct the fact, and if he or she does that, then he or she stands up again.
 - VThe last student standing is the winner.
- Reads the following statements aloud. (False statements include specific corrections to make the statements true.)
 - Roosters are male chickens. (T)
 - Donkeys belong to the horse family. (T)



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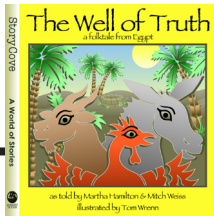
- The average donkey is 40 inches tall. (T)
- Donkeys have very short ears. (F—long ears)
- Goats eat tin cans and trash. (F—they eat almost any type of plant material but do not eat tin cans or trash)
- Roosters have a strict pecking order that tells which rooster in the group is in charge. (T)
- Roosters are mammals. (F—birds)
- Goats can be wild or tame. (T)
- A male donkey is called a “jack.” (T)
- A female donkey is called a “jill.” (F—jenny)
- Donkeys eat mostly insects and meat. (F—they mostly eat grasses and hay)
- Most male and some female goats have horns. (T)
- Goats are not very surefooted. (F—goats are surefooted)
- The smallest type of donkey is twelve inches tall. (F—32 to 40 inches tall)
- Roosters lay eggs. (F—roosters do not lay eggs; they are males)
- Young goats are called “kids.” (T)
- Donkeys can live to be 25 to 40 years old. (T)
- Goats live to be between eight years to fifteen years. (T)
- Roosters can live to be about 30 years old. (F—they live five to eleven years)
- Goats are closely related to sheep. (T)
- Donkeys can carry heavy loads over uneven ground. (T)
- Male goats are called “billies.” (T)



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- Female goats are called “nannies” or “does.” (T)
- Roosters can fly long distances. (F—short distances)
- Roosters eat mostly grain, seeds, fruit, leaves, worms, and insects. (T)
- Donkeys are often used to carry heavy loads. (T)
- Roosters like to sleep late in the morning. (F—they wake up very early, with the sun)



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Dramatic Arts

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

SL.1.1:

Collaborative
conversations

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

SL.1.4:

Relevant details

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

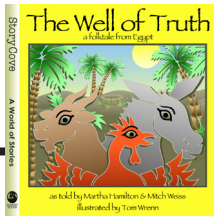
SL.1.6:

Complete sentences

Alternate Endings Skit

Directions:

- Teacher asks students how the animals determined that Donkey was not telling the truth.
- Tells students that the idea of a well with supernatural powers is a common theme in Egyptian folktales.
- Asks students what the animals could have done if there was not a *Well of Truth*.
- Helps students brainstorm alternate story endings and another way or object that could help Rooster and Goat find out if Donkey is being truthful. (Examples: they could try to make Donkey eat more, they could check his teeth for clover, or they could use another item of truth such as a bell of truth.)
- Writes alternate story ending ideas on the board.
- Divides the class into small groups.
- Tells groups to choose one of the ideas from the board to create a skit showing how Rooster and Goat could find out if Donkey was being truthful.
- Asks students to present their skits to the class.



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Character Education

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RL.1.2:

Retell stories, key details

CCSS.ELA-

LITERACY.W.1.6:

Recall information

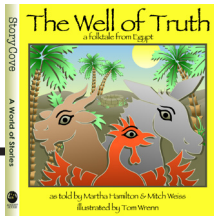
Apology Note

Materials:

- Blackboard or whiteboard
- Chalk or dry erase markers

Directions:

- Teacher tells students that the story teaches the character education traits of citizenship, fairness, responsibility, and sharing.
- Asks students to define these words.
- Asks students to tell personal experiences with the character traits.
- Asks how the story teaches these character traits.
- Asks how Donkey could have been a better friend to Rooster and Goat by thinking about these character traits.
- Works with students to write an apology note from Donkey to Rooster and Goat, expressing how Donkey could use the character traits to be a better friend.



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Cooking

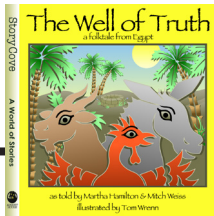
Egyptian Feast

Materials:

- Paper plates
- Napkins
- An assortment of some of the following foods: dates, figs, pita bread, chick peas or fava beans, cucumbers, almonds, pistachio nuts, honey, pomegranates, grapes, raisins, dried apricots

Directions:

- Note: Check for food allergies several days before beginning activity and avoid any foods to which students or workers in the school are allergic.
- Teacher tells students that they will be having an Egyptian feast and will taste foods that were popular in ancient Egypt and are still popular today. Reminds students that the land around the Nile River is very fertile and good for growing a variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Distributes various foods on each student's plate, encouraging students to try different items.
- Leads a discussion about the foods and why they may have been popular in ancient Egypt and are still popular today.



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Extension Activity

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

RL.1.9:

Compare and contrast

Technology Connection

Materials:

- Computer with Internet access

Directions:

- Teacher helps students access www.storycove.com.
- Students view the animation of *The Well of Truth*, narrated in tandem by the authors, Martha Hamilton and Mitch Weiss.
- Students think about how the storytellers' voices and expressions are an important part of telling the story.
- Students explore the animations and activities for other stories on www.storycove.com. Stories with strong compare and contrast opportunities with *The Well of Truth* include: *Growing Gold*, *Anansi and the Pot of Beans*, *Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail*, *Rooster's Night Out*, and *Anansi and the Sky Kingdom*.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.

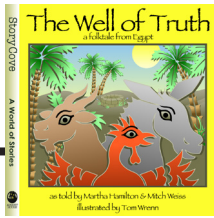
RL.1.9:

Compare and contrast

Compare and Contrast

Materials:

- Book, *Anansi and the Pot of Beans*
- Book, *Growing Gold*



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Directions:

- Read *Anansi and the Pot of Beans* by Bobby and Sherry Norfolk. This African tale tells of Anansi's visit to his grandmother's house. Before his grandmother leaves her house, she tells him not to eat the beans she is cooking. Anansi cannot resist smelling and then tasting the beans—only the beginning of his troubles. Students compare and contrast Anansi's behavior with Donkey's behavior in *The Well of Truth*.
- Read *Growing Gold* by T.V. Padma. This tale from India tells of three brothers who work together to grow wheat. Students compare and contrast this farming story with *The Well of Truth*.