



MEDIA
AWARENESS
NETWORK

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Level: Grades 5-7

About the Author

Adapted from *wolves, stereotypes and bias* created by media educator Julia Robinson, of the Media Action Council of Indiana

Lesson Plan

Stereotyping and Bias: The Three Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf

Overview

This lesson helps students recognize and understand stereotyping and bias in literature and film by looking at representations of wolves. The lesson begins with a discussion about storytelling and an introduction to the many different versions of the fairy tale: The Three Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf. Students then analyse depictions of wolves in popular film and compare these story and film renditions to real facts about wolves. Once students have separated fact from fiction, they will share their findings through a series of group activities.

Preparation and Materials

A collection of children's literature and films about wolves is needed for this unit. Suggested resources can be found in the *Wolf Unit Bibliography*. Contact your local school or public librarian regarding the availability of these books and your school board's Video Resource Library for videos.

You will need:

- Three or four different versions of *The Three Little Pigs*
- Preview one or two films and videos featuring wolves, such as *Beauty and the Beast*, *White Fang* and *Never Cry Wolf*
- For a realistic depiction of wolves, obtain the National Film Board of Canada's (www.nfb.ca) film *Wolf Pack*, a twenty-minute documentary of the habits of wolves
- Download *Wolf Questions* master sheets
- Photocopy group assignment *Wolf Story Analysis Sheet*

The Lesson

Daily Activities

The following activities can be conducted during the course of this unit:

- Daily grammar: sentences written on the board containing information about wolves
- Weekly spelling and vocabulary regarding wolves
- Science activities looking at topics such as animal behavior, habitat and food webs

Activity One: Media Concepts

This lesson introduces students to the following concepts: point of view; message; stereotype; and bias.

Begin the lesson with a general background on storytelling:

- Storytelling was a pre-printing press way of teaching lessons or warning about dangers.
- Stories would be passed down from generation to generation.
- The message and story might change depending on the storyteller (use example of argument on playground, students involved each have a different point of view).
- Discuss the messages that appear in religious myths, fairy tales and advertising. (Show examples of ads from *Sports Illustrated for Children* or other child-oriented magazines. Ask students about the messages in these ads and how they differ from the messages in religious myths and fairy tales.)
- Talk briefly about the role of wolves in fairy tales. (You might point out the *Brer Rabbit Tales*, *Aesop's Fables* and Native legends as examples of the strong presence of wolves in fairy tales and mythology.)
- Introduce the different versions of *Three Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf*. The original version of this story is English, but it has been adapted to suit different cultures. For example, the German version of this story has houses made of mud, cabbage, and brick; the Appalachian version has houses made of chips, cornstalks, and bricks; the Italian version uses goslings instead of pigs; the African American slave version has 5 pigs with houses of brush, sticks, mud, plants, and rock; and the Hungarian version has 1 pig and 10 wolves.
- Read four or five versions of this story to your students such as
 - Claverie, Jean. *The Three Little Pigs*
 - Rounds, Glen, *Three Little Pigs and the Big Bad Wolf*
 - Lowell, Susan. *The Three Little Javelinas*
 - Celsi, Teresa. *The Fourth Little Pig*
- When choosing your versions of this story, try to include adaptations that are told from the wolf's perspective, such as Jon Scieszka's *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs* and Eugene Trivizas' *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*.

After looking at how wolves are depicted in these versions of *The Three Little Pigs*, compare and contrast the messages from these stories to the stereotyping, bias and messages in the stories of *Red Riding Hood* by Christopher Coody and *Lon Po Po* by Ed Young.

- Have students read more children's literature about wolves in small groups and have each group complete a *Wolf Story Analysis Sheet* for their story.
- Have each group present their findings to the class.

Activity Two: Film Facts

- Integrating films or videos into this unit might be done in two ways:
 - After previewing and "bookmarking" pertinent scenes, show your students video clips from films such as *Beauty and the Beast*, *White Fang* and *Never Cry Wolf*. (**Note to teachers:** Copyright laws in Canada permit you to copy and show excerpts of films to your class without infringing copyright laws.)

Wolf Questions Generated From Videos

(Videos used: *Beauty and the Beast*, *White Fang*, *White Fang 2*, *Never Cry Wolf*)

1. What do wolves eat?
2. Why do wolves attack?
3. Do they or don't they attack people?
4. Why do they protect each other?
5. How do Inuit or First Nation peoples feel about wolves?
6. Why aren't wolves afraid of bigger animals?
7. Is it true that one wolf can scare off a bear?
8. Are they smarter than most animals? Are they smarter than humans?
9. Can a wild wolf be tamed? How would you tame it?
10. Can a wild wolf bond with a human? How would you know he has bonded?
11. How would a wolf react if it was tied up?
12. Is it true wolves are always hungry? Why?
13. Are wolves good diggers? Do they ever dig to get food? What makes them good diggers?
14. Will wolves take humans in their pack? How can a human get accepted into a pack?
15. How good is wolves' sense of smell? What do they use their sense of smell for?
16. Why are wolves so loyal to their pack? Does the pack let new members join?
17. Do wolves have a good memory? How good?
18. Is there an age that is best to train a wolf? Is a wolf ever too old to be trained? Will wolves go back to the wild once they are tamed?
19. What kind of powers do Indians believe wolves have and why?
20. Do wolves turn on members of their own pack? Why?
21. How does a wolf become dominant male or female?
22. Are females or males the food gatherers for the pack?

Wolf Story Analysis Sheet

Name: _____

Stereotypes are fixed ideas that we have about people or animals. What stereotypes about wolves appear in your group's story?



What **bias** exists in your story? Which characters are protagonists (the "good guys"), and which characters are antagonists (the "bad guys")? Whose **point of view** is the story told from?



What is the **message** of your story?

