



ELA Virtual Learning

Creative Writing

May 1, 2020



Creative Writing Lesson: Fri., May 1

Objective/Learning Target: Today, students will study the form of the fable and write their own.



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Warm-up: Read [this fable](#) by Aesop. Then, in your journal, reflect on how the style differs from the style of other stories you've read. Does the writing seem to value action, characterization, or something else? What's the pacing like? The narration?



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Lesson: Fables, popularized by Aesop around 550 BCE, generally incorporate animals (often given human qualities like speech) and strive to teach a moral lesson. You may have noticed at the end of page the reduction of the tale to that moral: *If you try to please all, you please none.*



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Lesson: Many features of the fable continue to influence stories published today. Fabulism (or magical realism) takes the contemporary short story and infuses it with fantastic elements, like a lamp made from deer legs slowly coming to life (“Congress” by Joy Williams) or some young immigrants paid to hang in a front yard like decorative lights (“The Semplica Girl Diaries” by George Saunders).



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Practice: Write a 250- to 500-word short story that takes the form of either a fable (teaching a moral lesson) or a scene that is realistic except for its fabulist qualities (something magical or surreal that's treated normally by the story's characters).



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Additional Practice: Listen to the first short story in [“Fables,”](#) a collection of very short stories by Bennett Sims. This story seems less instructive (like a fable) than philosophical. Sims takes a moment in time and *explodes* it, searching for a different kind of truth than Aesop.



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Additional Practice (cont'd): Try your hand at this; imagine a mundane or normal moment, perhaps from your youth, and explore the complex thinking that goes through the character's mind (even in an instant). Incorporate as much detail as possible, using figurative language that reveals something about the character and the way he/she thinks about the world.



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Additional Resources/Practice:

Amber Sparks on [“Domestic Fabulism”](#) from *Electric Literature*