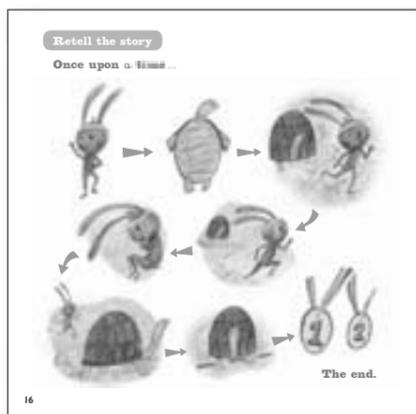


Children as storytellers

As well as helping children to become independent readers, *Oxford Reading Tree Traditional Tales* can also help children develop their storytelling skills.

Retelling a story

Learning to tell traditional stories is an important part of understanding them. At the back of each storybook is a story map with pictures of key scenes from the story, which can be used as a prompt for children's own retellings. Using the story maps will help children to focus on the most important aspects of the story, rather than attempting to recall every single detail, and supports them to retell events in the correct order. Young children often find it difficult to summarise or retell a story in their own words, because it isn't necessarily obvious to them which details are important and which are less so. Using a story map helps children to see the most important parts of the structure. There are notes in the back of every storybook to help you and the children get the most out of the story maps and retelling experience.



Watching professional storytellers

The storyteller videos are also very important in helping children understand how to tell a story effectively. The videos provide excellent models of oral storytelling, and allow children to look at features such as body language, movement, facial expression and eye contact, which are important in storytelling but not often obvious on the printed page!



Becoming a storyteller

Once children have become comfortable retelling stories for themselves, and have been exposed to rich story language and expressive retellings, they will be able to start writing their retellings. They will also develop the skills to create their own variations on well-known traditional stories, drawing on the plots and language of familiar stories. Eventually, they will be able to use the structures and language of these stories when producing their own original creative writing – it's easier to write a story with a clear beginning, middle and end if you already know lots of stories with a clear structure.



Building strong relationships between teachers and parents

Advice written by Pam Dowson, former Deputy Head Teacher

It is well-known that good home-school relationships are important, and that those children with positive, informed support from home make the best progress in school.

Part of our role as teachers is to enable parents to provide the right kind of help and guidance for their child, based on a mutual desire for children to achieve and be happy.

Bear in mind that not all parents are confidently literate – some may have had negative experiences with school, others may not have English as their first language, and so may find it difficult to help with reading and writing. You will need to tailor your approaches to suit different parents.

Everyone has a story to tell, including their own versions of well-known tales, and this could be just the hook you need to encourage reluctant parents to begin to help their child with reading. Emphasise to parents the universal culture, appeal and importance of storytelling, giving them the opportunity to enjoy telling stories to their child, confident in the knowledge that by doing so they are supporting the work done in school.

Tips for building strong relationships with parents and carers

Here are some suggestions that you may find useful:

- Send home updates and information about reading and post them on the school website.
 - Stress the importance of focusing on pleasure and understanding as well as decoding.
 - Have a fun section on the school website, with links to www.oxfordowl.co.uk, and other reading games, book-based sites and author home-pages.
 - Suggest related reading material to support the child's current *Oxford Reading Tree* book. There are some suggestions included in this Handbook.
 - At parents' evenings, display a range of books for parents to browse through.
 - Enlist parents to help as library volunteers.
 - Have one morning a week when parents and pre-school siblings can come in at the start of the day for a 15-minute reading together slot.
 - Open the school library one evening a week after school for parents and children to browse books together. Include a storytelling session too.
- Invite parents in to watch you teach reading.
 - Have parents' workshops where you explain how you teach reading, how you use the *Oxford Reading Tree* and other books, with displays of the books for parents to see. Include a Q & A session, and give them a checklist of guidelines for how to help at home.
 - Send home our sample letter (page 13), making any changes necessary to fit your own situation.
 - Create a display in a public area of the school – invite parents to comment on their own favourite children's books and display copies of them where you can.

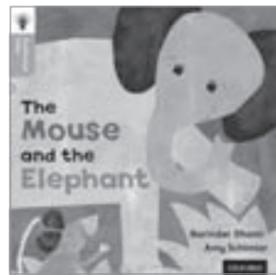


The Mouse and the Elephant

Extended story

This story is from the Panchatantra, a collection of Indian fables.

Page references for this story have been included should you wish to read this extended story alongside the storybook illustrations.



Page 2

Once upon a time a little mouse was walking through the Indian jungle. The little mouse was very hot and very thirsty. Then he saw a watering-hole near a tree. The water looked cool and clear.

Page 3

But the mouse was very little and couldn't reach the water.

Suddenly, the ground began to shake. A big elephant had come to drink and was splashing the cool, clear water with his trunk.

Splash! Splash! Splash!

'Please help me!' the little mouse called.

Page 4

The big elephant saw that the little mouse needed help.

So the big elephant picked the little mouse up with his trunk and held him close to the cool, clear water.

The mouse had a lovely long drink.

The elephant put the mouse down. 'Thank you, elephant!' the mouse said. 'One day I'll help you, just like you helped me.'

The elephant laughed. 'How can a little mouse like you help ME?' he said.

Pages 6-7

The big elephant waved his trunk at the little mouse and said 'Goodbye!' Then he walked off through the jungle.

The elephant could see a monkey swinging through the trees. He could hear the birds singing sweetly. He could smell the brightly coloured flowers. He could feel the warm sun on his big ears.

But the elephant did not see that there was something very dangerous right in front of him.

Page 8

Suddenly a net fell down from a tree. It landed on top of the big elephant and wrapped itself around him. The poor elephant couldn't move. 'The elephant is trapped in the hunter's net!' the monkey shouted.

Page 9

The big elephant was very frightened. He tried to escape from the net, but he was all tangled up. Then he saw the little mouse walking through the jungle.

'Please help me!' the big elephant called.

Page 10

The little mouse began nibbling through the net with his sharp white teeth.

He was making a hole so the big elephant could escape.

'The hunter is coming!' the monkey shouted.

The other animals ran to hide.

Page 11

Soon the big elephant was free.

He picked the little mouse up with his trunk and they ran away from the hunter.

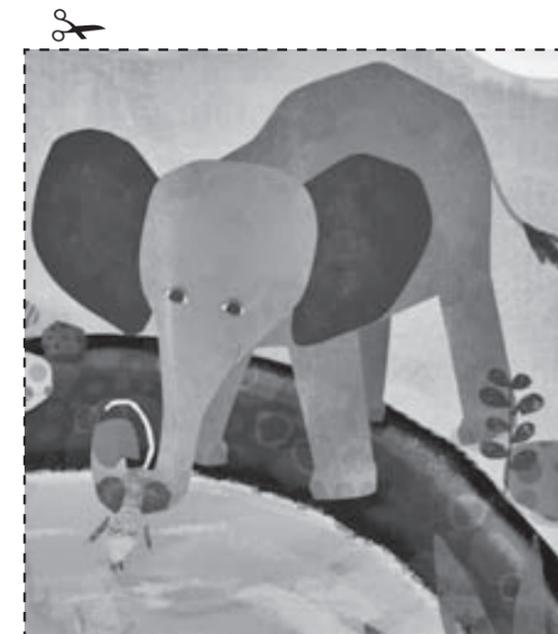
'Thank you for helping me, little mouse,' said the elephant. 'Now I know that big isn't always best!'

Written by Narinder Dhama

Stage 1

The Mouse and the Elephant

Cut out the pictures. Stick them in the right order to tell the story.



Children cut out the scenes and stick them in the right order. They can use the pictures to help them retell the story to a partner.