

Name: _____ Class: _____

The Three Little Pigs

By Joseph Jacobs
1890

Joseph Jacobs (1854-1916) was an Australian writer of folklore and literature. Some of his most popular versions of fairytales include Jack and the Beanstalk, Goldilocks and the Three Bears, and The History of Tom Thumb. Jacobs is credited for making story of The Three Little Pigs popular, though its earliest appearance in print seems to have been in The Nursery Rhymes of England by James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, which was published in 1886. As you read, take notes on the way that the events of the narrative hint at the ending.

Once upon a time when pigs spoke rhyme
And monkeys chewed tobacco,
And hens took snuff¹ to make them tough,
And ducks went quack, quack, quack, O!

- [1] There was an old sow² with three little pigs, and as she had not enough to keep them, she sent them out to seek their fortune. The first that went off met a man with a bundle of straw, and said to him, "Please, man, give me that straw to build me a house." Which the man did, and the little pig built a house with it.

Presently came along a wolf, and knocked at the door, and said, "Little pig, little pig, let me come in."

To which the pig answered, "No, no, by the hair of my chiny chin chin."

The wolf then answered to that, "Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in." So he huffed, and he puffed, and he blew his house in, and ate up the little pig.

- [5] The second little pig met a man with a bundle of furze,³ and said, "Please, man, give me that furze to build a house." Which the man did, and the pig built his house.

Then along came the wolf, and said, "Little pig, little pig, let me come in."



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1. powdered tobacco
2. an adult female pig
3. sticks

"No, no, by the hair of my chiny chin chin."

"Then I'll puff, and I'll huff, and I'll blow your house in." So he huffed, and he puffed, and he puffed, and he huffed, and at last he blew the house down, and he ate up the little pig.

The third little pig met a man with a load of bricks, and said, "Please, man, give me those bricks to build a house with." So the man gave him the bricks, and he built his house with them.

[10] So the wolf came, as he did to the other little pigs, and said, "Little pig, little pig, let me come in."

"No, no, by the hair of my chiny chin chin."

"Then I'll huff, and I'll puff, and I'll blow your house in."

Well, he huffed, and he puffed, and he huffed and he puffed, and he puffed and huffed; but he could not get the house down. When he found that he could not, with all his huffing and puffing, blow the house down, he said, "Little pig, I know where there is a nice field of turnips."⁴

"Where?" said the little pig.

[15] "Oh, in Mr. Smith's home field, and if you will be ready tomorrow morning I will call for you, and we will go together and get some for dinner."

"Very well," said the little pig, "I will be ready. What time do you mean to go?"

"Oh, at six o'clock."

Well, the little pig got up at five, and got the turnips before the wolf came (which he did about six) and who said, "Little pig, are you ready?"

The little pig said, "Ready! I have been and come back again, and got a nice potful for dinner."

[20] The wolf felt very angry at this, but thought that he would be up to the little pig somehow or other, so he said, "Little pig, I know where there is a nice apple tree."

"Where?" said the pig.

"Down at Merry Garden," replied the wolf, "and if you will not deceive⁵ me I will come for you, at five o'clock tomorrow and get some apples."

Well, the little pig bustled⁶ up the next morning at four o'clock, and went off for the apples, hoping to get back before the wolf came; but he had further to go, and had to climb the tree, so that just as he was coming down from it, he saw the wolf coming, which, as you may suppose, frightened him very much.

4. A turnip is a round white root that is eaten like a vegetable.

5. **Deceive (verb):** to cause someone to believe something that is not true

6. **Bustle (verb):** to move in an energetic or noisy way

When the wolf came up he said, "Little pig, what! Are you here before me? Are they nice apples?"

- [25] "Yes, very," said the little pig. "I will throw you down one." And he threw it so far, that, while the wolf was gone to pick it up, the little pig jumped down and ran home.

The next day the wolf came again, and said to the little pig, "Little pig, there is a fair at Shanklin⁷ this afternoon. Will you go?"

"Oh yes," said the pig, "I will go. What time shall you be ready?"

"At three," said the wolf. So the little pig went off before the time as usual, and got to the fair, and bought a butter churn,⁸ which he was going home with, when he saw the wolf coming. Then he could not tell what to do. So he got into the churn to hide, and by so doing turned it around, and it rolled down the hill with the pig in it, which frightened the wolf so much, that he ran home without going to the fair. He went to the pig's house, and told him how frightened he had been by a great round thing which came down the hill past him.

Then the little pig said, "Ha, I frightened you, then. I had been to the fair and bought a butter churn, and when I saw you, I got into it, and rolled down the hill."

- [30] Then the wolf was very angry indeed, and declared he would eat up the little pig, and that he would get down the chimney after him. When the little pig saw what he was about, he hung on the pot full of water, and made up a blazing fire, and, just as the wolf was coming down, took off the cover, and in fell the wolf; so the little pig put on the cover again in an instant, boiled him up, and ate him for supper, and lived happily ever afterwards.

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7. a region in the Isle of Wight, England

8. A churn is a machine or container in which butter is made by vigorously stirring milk or cream.

Text-Dependent Questions

Directions: For the following questions, choose the best answer or respond in complete sentences.

1. PART A: Which TWO of the following statements best capture the central themes of this story? [RL.2]
 - A. Angering one's enemies is not helpful and should be avoided.
 - B. Fear can encourage people to be particularly clever and practical.
 - C. The best way to deal with a bully is to confront him or her in a physical way.
 - D. Fear drives people to behave foolishly.
 - E. The best way to test a person's abilities is to see how he performs when left alone.
 - F. Hard work and serious effort will pay off.

2. PART B: Which TWO phrases from the story best support the answer to Part A? [RL.1]
 - A. "and as she had not enough to keep them, she sent them out to seek their fortune." (Paragraph 1)
 - B. "The little pig said, "Ready! I have been and come back again, and got a nice potful for dinner." (Paragraph 19)
 - C. "The wolf felt very angry at this, but thought that he would be up to the little pig somehow or other" (Paragraph 20)
 - D. "he saw the wolf coming, which, as you may suppose, frightened him very much." (Paragraph 23)
 - E. "he saw the wolf coming. Then he could not tell what to do. So he got into the churn to hide, and by so doing turned it around, and it rolled down the hill with the pig in it, which frightened the wolf so much, that he ran home without going to the fair." (Paragraph 28)
 - F. "Then the wolf was very angry indeed, and declared he would eat up the little pig" (Paragraph 30)

3. How does the following phrase help develop the plot of the story: "He went to the pig's house, and told him how frightened he had been" (Paragraph 28)? [RL.5]
 - A. It draws attention to the third pig's mean-spirited efforts to taunt the wolf and cause him harm.
 - B. It portrays the relationship between the wolf and the third pig, characterized by a friendly rivalry.
 - C. It shows that the third pig was able to forge a friendship with the wolf by showing him the error of his ways.
 - D. It demonstrates that the third pig was able to turn the tables on the wolf and actually cause him to be fearful.

4. Which statement best explains how the third pig responds to the wolf's first attempt [RL.3] to lure him outside of his house in paragraph 13?
- A. He attempts to outsmart him by arriving at the field of turnips before the wolf and leaving before the wolf could trap him.
 - B. The third pig realizes that the wolf is trying to lure him outside and smartly decides to remain indoors so he cannot be attacked.
 - C. He tries to be considerate by collecting the harvest for both himself and the wolf so that the wolf doesn't have to make the trip.
 - D. The third pig tries to trick the wolf by collecting the apples from the apple tree before he arrives.
5. Explain how the structure of the story contributes to the development of its [RL.5] [RL.2] theme. Cite evidence from the text in your response.

Discussion Questions

Directions: *Brainstorm your answers to the following questions in the space provided. Be prepared to share your original ideas in a class discussion.*

1. Why do you think it was important that there were three pigs in the story? How would the story have been different if the details about the first two pigs had not been included? Do the failures of others make our accomplishments more meaningful?
2. Think about a time when you learned from the example of others. Did seeing someone get in trouble for something or experience negative consequences for their actions encourage you to avoid doing the same thing? Were you motivated by fear?
3. Do you think the pig would have been wiser to avoid the places the wolf pointed out to him altogether? What are the benefits of risk-taking?
4. In the context of the story, what are the effects of following the crowd? Would the story have ended differently if each pig had built his house of the same materials and taken the same approach to dealing with the wolf?
5. In “The Three Little Pigs,” the third pig outsmarts the wolf despite being distressed over his fear of being eaten. In the context of this story, how does fear drive action? Cite evidence from this text, your own experience, and other literature, art, or history in your answer.