



# PRODUCTION GUIDE

2ND GRADE

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# Aesops Fables on Stage



*By Vivian and Larry Snipes*

*Originally produced by Lexington Children's Theatre, Lexington, KY.*

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MERRY-GO-ROUND PLAYHOUSE • Ed Sayles, Producing Director • Amy Simolo, Educational Theatre Coordinator

17 William St., Second Floor • Auburn, New York 13021 • Phone: (315) 255-1305 • Fax (315) 252-3815

email: [youthinfo@merry-go-round.com](mailto:youthinfo@merry-go-round.com) • [www.merry-go-round.com](http://www.merry-go-round.com)

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# Aesops Fables on Stage

Dear Teachers,

The Merry-Go-Round Playhouse is pleased to present *Aesops Fables on Stage* for you and your students as part of our Sequential Dramatics Program. The production experience consists of a live performance, a preparatory classroom workshop and this production guide. The Merry-Go-Round Playhouse’s programs are designed to assist you and your students in meeting the New York State Learning Standards. You will find the standards addressed by the components of this production experience notated at the rear of this guide.

The preparatory classroom workshop, or “prep,” is a unique opportunity for your students to gain additional value from the experience. During the prep, students are given the chance to explore the content and themes of the performance as well as relevant academic material with one of the actors in the production. **For your students to obtain the maximum benefit, we request your presence in the classroom through the entirety of the workshop.**

Time permitting, at the end of the performance, the actors will take a few questions from the audience. As often is the case, not every question can be answered. We invite you and your students to share your questions and comments by sending letters and drawings to our office. If you write to us, we will write you back!

We hope you and your students enjoy *Aesops Fables on Stage* and we look forward to visiting you soon.

Best wishes,

Amy Simolo  
Educational Theatre Coordinator



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# Aesop's Fables on Stage

## Summary



**Summary:** *Aesop's Fables on Stage* is a collection of some of Aesop's well known stories. Three actors will portray all the colorful characters and along the way impart some important lessons. They will use rap, rhyme and dramatic masks to help tell the tales. In between, they will discuss Aesop, his use of animals, and the morals of each fable.

When a poor woodcutter loses his rusty, wooden axe in a lake, the river god, Hermes, dives into the lake and returns with an axe made of silver and gold. When the honest woodcutter admits the beautiful axe is not his, Hermes rewards him by giving him the axe. When a greedy woodcutter learns the story, he lies to Hermes in order to receive a silver and gold axe. Hermes sees through his lies, and sends the greedy woodcutter home empty handed. The moral the greedy woodcutter learns is "honesty is the best policy."

After filling a bucket to the brim with milk from the cow, a young milkmaid is excited when her father tells her she can keep whatever money the bucket brings at market. She plans to buy eggs, which will hatch into chickens, which would lay more eggs, which she would use to buy beautiful clothing. In her excitement, she spills the pail of milk and consequently, her dreams. The milkmaid's father reminds her; "do not count your chickens before they hatch."

A poor farmer, against his wife's wishes, takes in a stray goose. When they find out the goose lays golden eggs, the farmer and wife are filled with joy. They now have all they ever wanted. One day, the wife gets too greedy and suggests they cut open the goose and get all the golden eggs at once, instead of just one at a time. Their plan fails, however, and they are no longer blessed with golden eggs. The farmer and his wife find out "greed doesn't pay."

When a sleeping lion is tickled by a pesky mouse, the lion tries to make the mouse his next snack. The mouse pleads with the lion, promising to help the lion if he is ever in need, in return for her freedom. The lion doesn't know how a mouse could ever be of help to him, but he lets her go anyway. When the lion is caught in a hunter's net, the mouse hears his cries and chews through the net to free the lion. Once he is free, the lion admits; "little friends may prove to be great friends."

A fox, spotting a bunch of grapes ripening in the sun, decides to pick the grapes for herself. She jumps and she stretches, but the grapes are always blown just out of her reach. The fox finally gives up, complaining that the grapes are probably sour to begin with. The grapevine calls after the fox, telling her "It is easy to despise what you cannot get."

A fox happens upon a crow with a big piece of cheese in its beak. The fox demands the crow give up the cheese, but the crow refuses. So, the fox decides to trick the crow. She begins to tell him how beautiful his feathers are, and how the fox would love to hear the crow sing. The crow is very flattered by this, and opens his mouth to sing, only to drop the piece of cheese. The fox grabs the cheese, and runs off. The crow learns the hard way, "do not trust flatterers."

A dog is very excited to have a bone all to himself. On his way home with the bone, he spots his reflection in the lake...is that another dog, with another bone? The dog wants the second bone as well. He growls at the other dog, but his reflection only growls back. The dog snaps at the water, trying to grab the other bone, and loses his bone in the process. The dog learns, "be happy with what you have."

A lazy grasshopper is enjoying a beautiful summer day, while an ant is busily working, finding food for the winter. The ant warns the grasshopper to store food before winter comes, but the grasshopper feels he has plenty of time, and he wants to enjoy the summer. One day, the grasshopper wakes up to find a blanket of snow on the ground, and no food to eat. He begs the ants to help him, but the food they stored is for the entire colony, and is not theirs to give. The grasshopper learns the hard way, "it is best to be prepared."

The actors end their adventure with perhaps the most well-known of Aesop's fables, The Tortoise and the Hare. The hare, while boasting of his speed, is challenged to a race by a tortoise. The hare accepts and the race begins. The Hare, noticing his large lead, decides to take a little nap before finishing the race. While he is sleeping, the tortoise slowly passes him by. The hare awakes to the sound of cheering, and he rushes to the finish line to find the tortoise has won the race. The tortoise imparts the "slow and steady wins the race" moral of the story in his own words; "that's one small step for Torty, one giant leap for tortoise kind."



# Aesop's Fables on Stage

Preparatory Workshop Outline, Who is Aesop? and the Evolution of Storytelling

## Preparatory Workshop Outline:

- I. The actor will discuss the use of stories through time, and explain that stories have a function other than entertainment.
- II. The actor will introduce the terms fable and moral, and discuss how fables differ from other types of stories such as fairy tales.
- III. The actor will introduce Aesop and some of his fables, and briefly describe the concept of the play.
- IV. The actor will explain that the fables in our play have been adapted. The students will act out a few of the fables they will see in the play, as they were believed to have been originally told by Aesop.
- V. The actor will remind students about good audience behavior.

**Please Note: Your presence is requested in the classroom through the entirety of the workshop.**

## Who is Aesop?

Aesop was believed to have lived in ancient Greece over 2,500 years ago. Not a lot is known about his life, but most scholars agree that he was born in Samos around 620 B.C., although some historians question whether Aesop even existed at all. It is believed he was born a slave, but, because he was so wise and witty, he was later freed by his master. He then spent his life traveling around Greece, learning and teaching. Although many fables are credited to Aesop, some of the stories predate Aesop's time, and may be credited to him merely because he was a popular fabulist.

## The Evolution of Storytelling:

The art of storytelling has and continues to evolve over time. In Aesop's time, stories were primarily told orally, or by mouth, and people would gather to listen to them. Some stories were written down by scholars, but most people in ancient times could not read or write. Books became more popular as storytelling tools after the invention of the printing press in 1440 made books much more accessible, which eventually allowed the majority of people to learn to read. Throughout time, people have also used pictures and artwork to tell stories. There is even proof of this from the days of the caveman; there are drawings on the walls of caves that tell very specific stories, such as what types of animals were hunted by man. In the scope of human history, it is only a relatively short period of time that any of today's modern storytelling and communication devices, such as the telephone, radio, television and internet, which combine all these methods: oral, written and pictorial, came into existence.

During Aesop's lifetime, very few people knew how to read or write. Since these people could not learn by reading a book, like you do in school, they would learn by listening to stories that taught a lesson. In fact, Aesop told many of his stories to entertain people while teaching them valuable lessons. The Ancient Greeks enjoyed gathering to hear the stories of Aesop and other story tellers so much that, in time, these gatherings played a part in the evolution of the first theatrical performances.

# Aesop's Fables on Stage

## Suggested Activities



### Pre-Performance Activities:

- I** Aesop often used animal characters to tell his Fables. Working in groups of 3 or 4, try coming up with an original fable. First, discuss what the moral will be. Then, decide what kind of person needs to learn that moral. If that person was an animal, what kind of animal would it be? (For example, a fire-breathing dragon for a fable about smoking, or a cawing crow for a fable about yelling or nagging.) Keep in mind: Who is the main character? Who will the main character come in contact with? How will the story be resolved (how will your animal learn its lesson?) Share your story with the class. Be sure to include pictures.
- II** One of Aesop's most popular fables is *The Tortoise and the Hare*. The moral of the story is, of course, "Slow and steady wins the race." But what if the moral was "Winning isn't everything?" In what ways would the characters and plot of the story need to change? Would they even have to change? As a class, re-write the story of *The Tortoise and the Hare* to illustrate this new moral.
- III** Thousands of years ago when Aesop was believed to have lived, talking face to face was the most common way to communicate. How do we communicate today? Make a list on the board of all the different ways to communicate. Which way do you use the most? Why? With all these ways to communicate, do you think face-to-face communication is still important? Why? Have a discussion with your class, then write an entry in your learning journal about your discussion.

### Post-Performance Activities:

- I** In the performance, you saw many different Fables. Which was your favorite? Why? Write a letter to one of the characters describing why their story is your favorite. Include a picture.
- II** In the beginning of the performance, the actors used a rap to introduce Aesop. In groups of 4, make up a rap about something you have learned recently in class (this could be from Math, English, Social Studies, Art, Physical Education, etc.) Once you have made up your "teaching" rap, use objects found around the room to create a beat (be creative!) Share what you have done with the class.
- III** In our performance, the actors talked about their favorite animals. Which of these animals do you like best: Lion, Fox, Hare, Mouse, Crow, Wolf or Dog? Research Aesop's Fables written about the animal you picked and make a list of all the lessons the animal learned or helped to teach. Then, create a collage of all the lessons your animal learns (or teaches) and the other characters your animal meets.



# Aesop's Fables on Stage

## Glossary & Additional Resources

### Glossary:

<b>Errant</b>	Behaving wrongfully, moving about without purpose. <i>He heard the tale of the <b>errant</b> ax that went splash.</i>
<b>Plight</b>	A bad condition or state. <i>This poor man's <b>plight</b> is very familiar I think.</i>
<b>Quiver</b>	To move with a slight shaking motion. <i>How my poor heart does <b>quiver</b>.</i>
<b>Weary</b>	Worn out, no energy. <i><b>Weary</b> from the day, the lion fell asleep.</i>
<b>Ghoulish</b>	Acting like an evil being. <i>I did not think the Fox so <b>ghoulish</b>.</i>
<b>Tedious</b>	Tiring, dull. <i>Leave your <b>tedious</b> gathering of peas.</i>
<b>Convey</b>	To communicate. <i>A simple thought I'd like to <b>convey</b>...</i>
<b>Lunacy</b>	Extremely foolish. <i>To race with me is <b>lunacy</b>!</i>

### Resources:

#### Websites

<http://coe.nevada.edu/jbanales/webquest> — Aesop's Fables Web Quest for Grades 1-2  
<http://www.childclassics.com> — Aesop's Fables in mp3 format  
<http://www.aesopsfables.com> — Hundreds of Aesop's Fables in one place.

#### Books

McKendry, John. Aesop: Five Centuries of Illustrated Fables selected by John H. McKendry.  
New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1964.

Paxton, Tom and Robert Rayevsky. Belling the Cat and Other Aesop's Fables Retold in Verse.  
New York: Morrow Junior Books, 1990.

Kheridan, David. Feathers and Tails: Animal Fables from around the world retold by David Kheridan. New York: Philomel Books, 1992.

#### Videos/DVD

these are available at <http://www.amazon.com>

*Bill Cosby: Aesop's Fables.* Warner Studios, 1997.

*The Golden Age of Cartoons: Aesop's Fables.* Van Beuren Studios, 2006.

# Aesops Fables on Stage

NYS Learning Standards



The workshop, performance and production guide for *Aesops Fables on Stage* build skills as defined by the Learning Standards indicated below:

## Preparatory Classroom Workshop

ARTS 1: Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts – THEATRE

ARTS 4: Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of the Arts – THEATRE

ELA 1.1: Language for Information and Understanding – Listening and Reading

ELA 1.2: Language for Information and Understanding – Speaking and Writing

ELA 2.2: Language for Literary Response and Expression – Speaking and Writing

ELA 3.2: Language for Critical Analysis and Evaluation – Speaking and Writing

ELA 4.1: Language for Social Interaction – Listening and Speaking

SS 2.1: World History - Understanding of social and cultural values, beliefs and traditions.

## *Aesops Fables on Stage* Performance

ARTS 1: Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts – THEATRE

ARTS 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources – MUSIC

ARTS 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources – THEATRE

ARTS 4: Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of the Arts – THEATRE

ELA 2.1: Language for Literary Response and Expression – Listening and Reading

ELA 4.1: Language for Social Interaction – Listening and Speaking

## Production Guide

*– standards addressed by the suggested activities*

ARTS 1: Creating, Performing and Participating in the Arts – THEATRE

ARTS 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources – MUSIC & THEATRE

ARTS 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art – THEATRE

ARTS 4: Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of the Arts – THEATRE

ELA 1.1: Language for Information and Understanding – Listening and Reading

ELA 1.2: Language for Information and Understanding – Speaking and Writing

ELA 2.2: Language for Literary Response and Expression – Speaking and Writing

ELA 3.1: Language for Critical Evaluation and Analysis – Listening and Reading

ELA 3.2: Language for Critical Evaluation and Analysis – Speaking and Writing

ELA 4.1: Language for Social Interaction – Listening and Speaking

ELA 4.2: Language for Social Interaction – Reading and Writing

MST 1.1: Analysis, Inquiry and Design – Scientific Inquiry

SS 2: Understanding of social and cultural values, beliefs and traditions.



# Aesop's Fables on Stage

Merry-Go-Round Creative Team

**Ed Sayles, Producing Director**, is recognized in the *Who's Who in American Theatre* for his many accomplishments over his career. One of the first pioneers of the youth theatre movement, Ed helped to create innovations in performances for children and has spearheaded youth theatre companies in both Ohio and his native New York. During his tenure at the Merry-Go-Round Playhouse, his leadership has seen the company gain national recognition for both its ground-breaking youth tour and artistically acclaimed summer musical theatre.

**James Cantu, Youth Tour Director**, graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi with a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts (acting emphasis) in 1999. James has toured across Virginia, West Virginia, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and New York State. He has performed on television and the MGR main stage. In 2002, James joined the Merry-Go-Round Youth Tour.

**Amy Simolo, Educational Theatre Coordinator**, holds a B.S. degree in Liberal and Professional Studies from Cazenovia College. Amy welcomes the opportunity to blend her love of theatre with her work in education, which includes a year-long stint as an environmental educator at a Hudson Valley nature center. Amy is currently pursuing a Masters in Curriculum Development at Suny Albany.

**Kevin Alves** is a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi where he received his BFA in acting. Some of his favorite roles include Clifford Anderson in *Deathtrap*, Whitey Hawkins in *Honey in the Rock* and Roy in *Lonestar*.

**Michael Antico** hails from Chicopee, Massachusetts and has been part of a number of productions leading up to his latest venture with MGR. Most recently, he played Cardinal Richelieu on a national tour of *The Three Musketeers* after having spent the summer of 2005 in Ferrum, VA with the Blue Ridge Dinner Theater. Some of his other credits include *Godspell* (Jesus), *Guys and Dolls* (Harry the Horse), and *Arsenic and Old Lace* (Teddy) as well as various singing and dance revues for Six Flags.

**Kim Boler** graduated with a BFA from the University of Southern Mississippi. She has recently worked at the Phoenix Theatre and Theatre West Virginia. Her most favorite roles include Snoopy, Hattie Herkimer, and Sarah McCoy.

**Dustin Eastwood**, originally from Boswell, OK, has a BA in Acting and Directing from Southeastern Oklahoma State University. A few of his favorite past experiences include roles in *Bubbles Big Top Adventure*, *The Emperor's New Clothes*, and *Anything Goes*. 2006 marks Dustin's debut with MGR and he is excited about this opportunity to perform and make new friends.

**Josh Fingerhut** is a graduate of the State University of New York at Fredonia with a Bachelor's in Music Performance. He's been performing for nearly a decade in chorus roles, title roles and everything in between.

Favorites include Don Quixote in *Man of La Mancha* and the Duke in *Big River*. He's performed with The Hillman Opera Co., the Syracuse Opera and most recently with the Diamond Circle Theatre in Durango, CO. Josh has also appeared on MGR's main stage. Josh is a big fan of model trains.

**Hillary Ford** comes to Merry-Go-Round from Paducah Kentucky (the quilt capitol of the world) and has a degree in Theatre Performance and Mass Communications from Missouri Valley College. Her first big break in theatre was as Princess #3 in a local production of *The King and I*. Hilary recently worked for Prairie Fire Children's Theatre and has an extensive background in performing with and for children.

**Michelle Foytek** graduated from the University of Central Florida with a Bachelor's of Fine Art. Past credits include *Amelia Bedelia* for the Orlando Repertory Theatre, a Mexican version of *Jack and the Beanstalk* for the Orlando Shakespeare Festival as well as roles in *Laundry and Bourbon*, *Bus Stop*, and *Homeward Angel*.

**Chris Haulter** hails from Indiana and holds Bachelor and Master's Degrees from Indiana University! He has done several stints with children's theatres throughout the Midwest and Southeast. He spent last summer on the Connecticut shoreline working with the illustrious River Rep at Ivoryton. Some favorite roles include: *Oklahoma!* (Jud Fry), *My Fair Lady* (Doolittle), *Funny Thing...Forum* (Pseudolus), *Proof* (Hal), and *Into the Woods* (Baker). When not on the road, he enjoys reading, watching sports, attending theatre and working those ever-addictive Sudoku puzzles!

**Kathryn Holmes** has spent most of her life in Birmingham, AL. When she's not acting, she loves to read, especially Harry Potter books. She has also been playing the piano almost forever (well, since she was five, to be exact). When she grows up she wants to act, write children's books, and teach.

**Joshua Katzker** has been acting since he was eleven. He was born in Ft. Lauderdale, FL and has acted all over the country, most recently in Ohio. Josh has appeared in many different plays and musicals including *Guys and Dolls*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *The Threepenny Opera*, and *Arsenic and Old Lace*. When he isn't acting, you can find Josh cheering on his beloved Chicago Cubs. He also enjoys writing songs, playing guitar and singing.

**Christopher Scott Leith** is from the upper peninsula of Michigan where it is very cold in the winter. He has been acting and directing for several years, has a BS in theater and is seeking graduate education in directing. He enjoys working with children because he so often feels like one. He believes in the three "L's"; living, laughing, and loving.

**Kara Minute** comes to Merry-Go-Round Theatre from Rochester NY, where she just finished performing in *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*, as Woman 1 and in *Water Coolers* as Brooke with the Downstairs Cabaret Theatre. She also taught theatre in DCT's Summer Education Program for Young Performers. Kara holds a BFA in acting from Adelphi University on Long Island.

While living there, she was blessed with the opportunity to direct *Oklahoma!* at Carey High School. Some of Kara's favorite roles include: Miranda in *The Tempest* and Cinderella in *Into the Woods* (because she got to be a princess and talk to birds)!

**Lisa Myers** hails from Minneapolis, MN, and is thrilled to be making her East coast debut with Merry-Go-Round Playhouse! In addition to performing in and around the Minneapolis area for 17 years, Lisa has taught theatre and dance classes to students of all ages, as well as written and directed original productions. She recently graduated from Concordia College in Moorhead, MN with a BA in theatre arts. When Lisa is not on stage, she loves working with power tools and spending time with her family, friends and her fish.

**Stephanie Ouellet** gallantly leaps into the fold of Merry-Go-Round's Youth Theatre. She has appeared in numerous stage productions, starting at the tender age of seven with *The Three Little Pigs*. She brilliantly portrayed the pig with straw. In May, she will officially graduate the University of Central Florida with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Acting. In the future, she aspires to work in England and fulfill her dream of teaching at Oxford University.

**Jason Pikscher** is extremely excited to be joining Merry-Go-Round for the fall tour. He is graduate of Bradley University where he received a BS in Theatre Performance. Originally hailing from the suburbs of Chicago, he comes directly from the Kentucky Shakespeare Festival where he was an instructor for their Camp Shakespeare, teaching 8-14 year olds how to perform the works of the Bard. He has recently performed in Ohio, Kentucky, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois. His favorite roles including Costard (*Love's Labour's Lost*), Renfield (*Dracula*), and Matt Galloway (*The Laramie Project*).

**Katie Swimm**, a native of Central New York, grew up watching the Merry-Go-Round Youth Tour Company, and is thrilled to be joining them! She recently graduated from Niagara University with a BFA in Theatre Performance and a BA in English. Her favorite roles at NU included Mama Rose in *Gypsy*, Flora in *Flora the Red Menace*, and Hannah in *The Spitfire Grill*. In her free time, Katie loves to read and do crossword puzzles, and can also be found indulging in the occasional evening of reality TV. Many thanks to Mom, Dad, and friends.

**Sarah Beth Tanner** is originally from a small town in Northern Alabama. Sarah Beth joins Merry-Go-Round straight from Beckley, West Virginia, where she played Dorothy in Theatre West Virginia's summer production of *The Wizard of Oz*. She holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Musical Theatre from Birmingham-Southern College. When Sarah Beth is not in front of an audience, you might find her flinging a Frisbee on a disc golf course or behind a fiery torch making lamp-worked glass beads. She is excited about spending this year in New York, and plans to develop a life-long career in the arts.

Production guide created by Amy Simolo & Designed by Beth Culver, Coburn Design

Ed Sayles, Producing Director • Amy Simolo, Educational Theatre Coordinator

17 William St., 2nd Floor • Auburn, New York 13021 • Phone: (315) 255-1305 • Fax (315) 252-3815

email: youthinfo@merry-go-round.com • www.merry-go-round.com





# Aesop's Fables: *On Stage*

## Student Activity Sheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Word Search

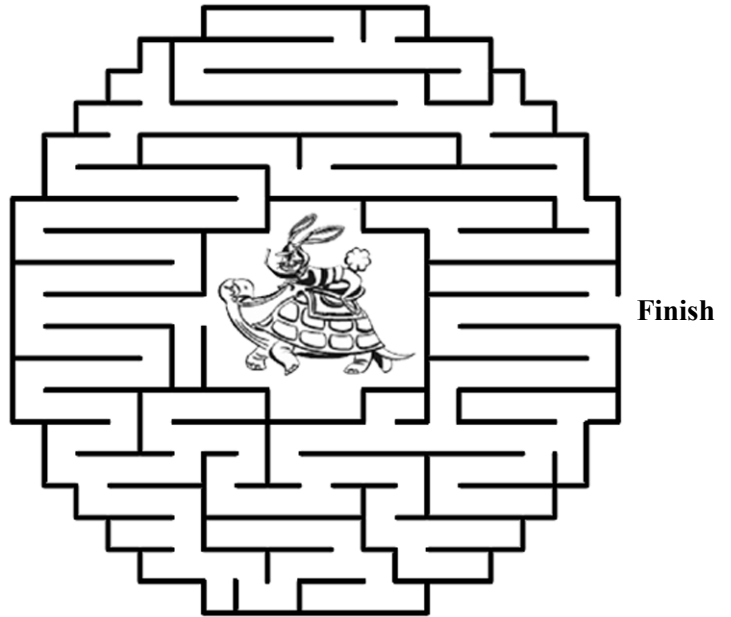
Find the names of Aesop's favorite animal characters listed in the word bank below.

P X L A N R G O I T H  
 A U H W N E D O E N A  
 V O P U S P U S O A R  
 S M S Y C P I X S S E  
 D C L W V O W V U C E  
 W J O G T H V O R A Z  
 L V K R Q S I O S I I  
 D W O E A S W T H J K  
 U T Q C C A X K D C V  
 M O U S E R N O I L E  
 I Z Z Q M G J P F N V

ANT	GOOSE	LION
CROW	GRASSHOPPER	MOUSE
FOX	HARE	TORTOISE

### Aesop's Maze

Help Torty and the Hare escape the maze!



### ULTIMATE BRAIN BUSTERS!

Aesop liked to use fables to entertain and teach lessons. Riddles are also an entertaining way to learn math, science, and reasoning skills. See how you do on these brain busting riddles.

#### Seen Outside

I am mostly seen outside.  
 I will brighten up your day.  
 Sometimes I will even hide  
 or chase away the grey.

What am I?

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Seeing is Believing

There is a place,  
 Oh yes, it's true,  
 Where you can see yourself,  
 But yourself can't see you

What am I?

\_\_\_\_\_

#### Cat & Mouse

Five mice - Mindy, Marty, Muriel, Mabel, and Mike - were nibbling the cheese on the kitchen table, but Whiskers the cat chased them back into their hole. Muriel Mouse made it back just before Mike, and Mike Mouse was fourth. Mabel Mouse was after Mike, and Marty Mouse was not second.

Who was first and who was last?

First - \_\_\_\_\_

Last - \_\_\_\_\_