LESSON PLAN

The Philosopher the Ants and Mercury

GRADES	TIME	READING LEVEL
5–8	50 min	4

Lesson flow



5 min

Opening Hook

Start with a humorous anecdote or a light-hearted story with a moral to engage students and introduce the theme of moral-based storytelling.

15–20 min

Story Exploration

Read the story aloud or have students take turns reading. Pause to ask questions about the characters and plot to ensure comprehension.

15 min

Analysis Exercises

Break students into small groups to discuss the philosopher's actions and Mercury's intervention. Ask them to create a list of similar injustices they observe in everyday life.

10 min

Application/Reflection

Have students write a short reflection on a time when they judged someone unfairly. Encourage them to relate their experience to the moral of the story.

5 min

Assessment Strategy

Use a quick exit ticket where students write one lesson they learned from the story and one way they will apply it in their lives.

STORY OVERVIEW

- **Title and moral/theme**: The Philosopher, the Ants, and Mercury; One should not judge the actions of Providence while committing similar injustices against others.
- **Plot Summary**: A philosopher witnesses a shipwreck and criticizes Providence for allowing innocent lives to be lost due to one criminal's presence. Amidst his lament, he accidentally kills a colony of ants, prompting Mercury to remind him of his hypocrisy.
- **Key Characters**:
  - **The Philosopher**: Represents human judgment and the tendency to overlook one's own flaws.
  - **The Ants**: Symbolize the innocent beings affected by the philosopher's actions, highlighting the consequences of hypocrisy.
  - **Mercury**: Acts as a divine messenger, emphasizing the moral lesson by pointing out the philosopher's contradiction.

LESSON FUNDAMENTALS

- **Learning Objectives**:
  - Students will identify the main characters and their roles in the story.
  - Students will analyze the moral implications of the philosopher's actions.
  - Students will discuss the relevance of the story's moral in contemporary contexts.
  - Students will create their own examples of similar moral dilemmas.
- **Discussion Questions**:
  1. What does the story reveal about human nature and our tendency to judge others?
  2. How can we apply the moral of this story in our everyday lives?
  3. In what ways do humorous stories with moral lessons, like this one, affect our thinking?
- **Required Materials**:
  - Copies of "The Philosopher, the Ants, and Mercury"
  - Whiteboard and markers
  - Paper for reflections