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The Three Billy Goats Gruff

LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.

Once upon a time there were Three Billy Goats Gruff. One day they decided to cross a bridge and eat some new grass. But there was danger! Under the bridge lived a mean, ugly troll.

Trip, trap, trip, trap, went the Littlest Billy Goat as he walked on the bridge. "Who's that crossing over my bridge?" roared the troll.

"It is only I, the Littlest Billy Goat. I want to go to the hillside to eat the new grass."

"I'm going to gobble you up!" screamed the troll.

"I am so very little. Wait for my brother and you will get more to eat!"

"Okay. Be off with you then," said the troll.

Trip, trap, trip, trap, went the Middle-Sized Billy Goat as he walked on the bridge.

"Who's that crossing over my bridge?" roared the troll.

"It is only I, the Middle-Sized Billy Goat. I want to go to the hillside to eat the new grass."

"I'm going to gobble you up!" screamed the troll.

"Oh, don't eat me!" answered the Middle-Sized Billy Goat. "Wait for my biggest brother and you will get more to eat!"

"Okay. Be off with you then," said the troll.

TRIP, TRAP, TRIP, TRAP, went the Biggest Billy Goat as he walked on the bridge.

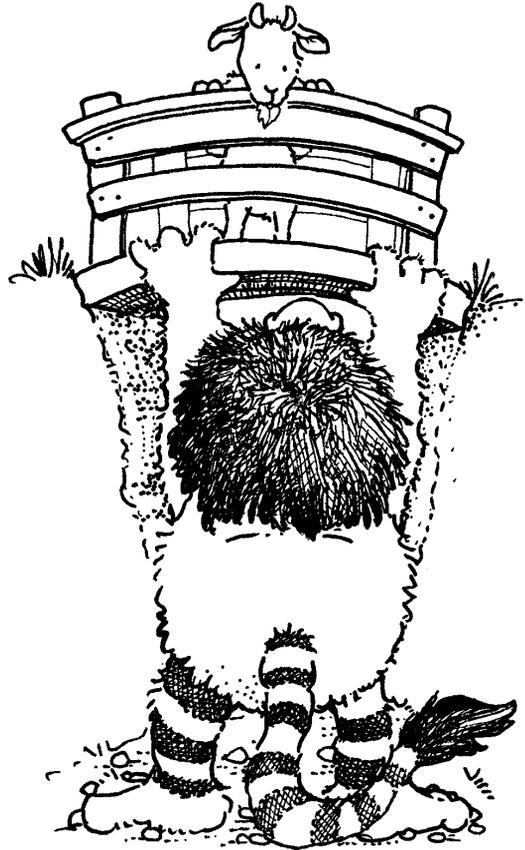
"Who's that crossing over my bridge?" roared the troll.

"It is I, the Biggest Billy Goat. I want to go to the hillside to eat the new grass."

"I'm going to gobble you up!" screamed the troll.

"You can't eat me! I am the Biggest Billy Goat." He lowered his head, stomped his feet, shook his horns, and charged at the troll. With one butt of his head he knocked the troll back in the water under the bridge.

And the third Billy Goat joined his brothers on the hillside to eat the new grass.



Retold by Mary Rose



Dear Parents,

Quite often teachers, as well as standardized tests, ask students to tell the difference between the main idea of a story and the supporting details. This is an important reading comprehension skill because it helps the reader to home in on major and minor concepts and to sort out the meaning of a story. In this story, the main idea is quite simple: the Three Billy Goats Gruff want to eat grass and the troll wants to eat them! Help your child understand this main message. All of the other information in the story is supporting detail.

Skill

Determining the Main Idea;
Identifying Supporting Details

We completed this assignment together.

(Child's Signature)

(Parent's Signature)

The Questions



The main idea of this story is that the Three Billy Goats Gruff want to eat grass and the troll wants to eat all of them. Everything else is a detail. Write five different details from the story of the Three Billy Goats Gruff.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

The Fire on the Mountain

LISTEN to
your child read
this story aloud.

In the city of Addis Ababa lived Haptom Hasei. He was so rich that he was often bored. One night he called his servant, Arha. "How much cold can a man stand?" asked Haptom. "Can a man stand all night on the highest mountain in the coldest wind without a blanket or fire and not die?"

"I don't know," said Arha, "but wouldn't that be very foolish?"

"Perhaps, but what if there was a prize for doing it?"

"I am sure a brave man could do this, but I won't bet against you since I am a servant and I have nothing to bet."

"Well, I'll bet with you anyway. If you can stand among the rocks for an entire night without food or water or blankets or fire and not die, I will give you ten acres of farmland with a house and cattle."

Arha was so excited he agreed. The next morning he went to see Hailu, the wisest man he knew. Hailu said, "Tonight when you go to the mountain, I will build a fire here in the valley. All night long stare at it and think of its warmth. Your thoughts will keep you warm."

So that night Arha went to the top of the mountain. The servants of Haptom watched him to make sure he did not cheat. It was bitter cold and Arha was miserable. All night long he stood and stared at the fire in the valley.

The next morning he went to see Haptom. "You are a strong fellow," said

Haptom.

"How did you do this thing?"

"I looked at a fire in the valley," said Arha.

"Thinking of the fire made me warm."

"Then you have cheated," said Haptom.

"You used fire to live through the night. I will not give you the land."

Arha was very sad. He went to see Hailu, who promised to help his friend. Hailu held a feast at his house. He invited Haptom. It was a grand party, but Hailu would not serve the food. "Hailu, we are hungry. Why do you not feed us?" asked Haptom.

"Can you smell the food?" asked Hailu.

"Yes, we can smell it, but that smell does not make us full."

"It is the same as the distant fire that you can see, but not feel. If Arha was warmed by the fire in the valley, then you are fed by the smell of my food."

The people of the party all agreed. Haptom was ashamed and he gave the house, the cattle, and the ten acres of land to Arha.



Rewritten by Mary Rose

(Originally from *The Fire on the Mountain*
by Harold Courlander and Wolf Leslau)



Dear Parents,

An important reading skill is that of comparing and contrasting elements within a given text. There are two different ways that a reader is expected to compare and contrast. Sometimes, we ask students to go beyond the text and to make comparisons based on their own life experiences. But most state assessments focus on another version of this skill. These tests do not ask the child to make comparisons from his or her own background knowledge. Instead, they expect the child to recognize when the author has used compare and contrast in a piece of writing. Both forms of the skill are valuable. In this assignment we focus on the kinds of comparisons that are built into a text by the author.

Skill

Recognizing Compare and Contrast

We completed this assignment together.

(Child's Signature)

(Parent's Signature)

The Questions



Together write simple answers to the following questions.

Comparing Characters:

1. How are Haptom and Arha different at the beginning of the story?

2. How are Haptom and Arha the same at the end of the story?

Comparing Settings:

3. What is the setting in which Arha has to pass a test?

4. What is the setting in which Haptom has to pass a test?

Comparing Events:

5. What happens the night that Arha is being tested?

6. What happens the night that Haptom is being tested?



Answers

Answers to Questions on Page 17:

Answers will vary. Check that students have written details that were given in the story. Possible statements include: There was a Little (or Middle-Sized or Biggest) Billy Goat. They crossed a bridge. The Billy Goats talked the troll into waiting for the Biggest Billy Goat. The Biggest Billy Goat knocked the troll into the water.

Answers to Questions on Page 19:

1. Haptom is rich and is the master; Arha is poor and is the servant. 2. At the end of the story, they are both rich and (implied) Arha is no longer a servant. 3. Arha is on a mountaintop in the cold and freezing weather. 4. Haptom is at a party where dinner is being served. 5. The night that Arha is being tested, he passes the test because he can see the light of a fire. 6. The night Haptom is being tested, he realizes that smelling food does not make one full, just as seeing the fire didn't make Arha warm.