

Jaws, Paws & Claws ~ Animal Wisdom Tales

By LuAnn Adams

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“The Storyteller LuAnn Adams is a bit of an alchemist herself, turning an ordinary room into a fantastical landscape as she relates her vivid tales.” - New York Times

Jaws, Paws & Claws – Animal Wisdom Tales

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Preparing your students for *“Jaws, Paws & Claws – Animal Wisdom Tales”*

Vocabulary:

Storyteller –In the early days, the storyteller was the keeper of history, culture and traditions. Storytellers were the bearers of news, the historians and the entertainers. Traveling storytellers went from village to village with tales, songs anecdotes, fables and news. They often created stories to reinforce and teach important lessons not only to children but to the elders and the entire village.

Folktale – A story or tale, often with a known cultural origin, but whose authorship is not known. Folktales are stories that have traditionally been told, rather than written down, passed orally from generation to generation.

Porquoi Tale – How/Why Folktale - Folktales with a clear explanation of how some phenomena of nature was created or came to be. The stories often have a distinct Beginning, Middle and End, and have a lesson or moral reason to be learned from the telling. Often the Middle of the tale involves a ‘magical’ cause and effect that transforms/creates the result that is stated in the title of the story.

Before/After the Performance Activities:

*** Read to your students a Porquoi How/Why Animal Explanation Folktale.**

“The Brave Little Parrot” Indian Folktale adapted by Rafe Martin

“Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People’s Ears” African Folktale adapted by Verna Aardema

** You can also download an animal pourquoi folktale from my CD*

“Jaws, Paws & Claws –Animal Wisdom Tales” by logging into CDBaby.com or itunes.

- Compare and discuss the animal’s physical appearance in the **Beginning** of the story with the animal’s appearance at the **End** of the folktale.

(Note: The Title and the End of the Porquoi Tale contain a true characteristic of the animal.)

- In the **Middle** of the folktale, there is a cause/ effect experience. The animal wants something, so he does something, and because of this action – something happens. In the story that you read aloud discuss each of these parts of the Middle of the t
- What do you think the creator of this folktale, wanted the audience to think about after hearing this story? Is there a lesson to be learned in the tale?

Why do you think that this story is still told/read today?

- As a class, (or in small groups) choose an animal and a physical characteristic.
- Then, create, write and illustrate your animal porquoi tale.

Jaws, Paws & Claws~

Animal Wisdom Tales

Notes from the Storyteller

This collection of wisdom tales is composed of folktales, parables and fables from several of the world's diverse and fascinating cultures. For centuries people have preserved and passed down their knowledge of the world encased in stories. Wisdom tales are often metaphorical stories. The tales can be simply enjoyed for the drama or more deeply considered for their subtleties. Whether comic or poignant, they provide useful insights into life's joys and sorrows while indirectly offering wise counsel for living harmoniously with oneself, the community and the environment.

Since the beginning of tale-telling, storytellers have endowed animals with the human characteristics of speech and personality, on order to teach lesson that by naming human persons, could result in painful consequences.

Animal characters also provided ready-made symbolism. And even if the animal characters did not behave exactly as the animals really do in the wild, what is more important for the story, is that they act the way the folk wisdom suggests and in the way the audience believes that they should behave.

A story can be a powerful teaching tool. In folktales, characters may gain wisdom by observing a good example, asking questions, or by discoveries they make on their own adventures in life. A story may inspire its listeners to reflect on personal choices, decision-making and their own behavior. A story can gently enter the imagination of the listener. Over time, the tale's message can take root and like a seed rich with meaning, blossom into new awareness and understanding. Animal wisdom talks often have a special appeal. They often offer unique opportunities for audience participation and have a sense of timelessness, even though the stories may have originated long ago and far away.

The stories in this collection contain simple truths, common sense and the hope-filled premise that we can benefit from the experience, the wisdom of past generations. World wisdom talks can remind us of our higher goals and provide the inspiration to soar the heights of our own possibilities.

LuAnn

"Stories offer us doorways into new ways of seeing and being in the world.

The secret is that the story door opens inward..." Elisa Pearmain

Jaws, Paws & Claws-

Animal Wisdom Tales

The Stories.....

How the Beaver Got Sharp Teeth	Salish Native American Folktale
How the Turtle Got Cracks	Cherokee/Native American Folktale
Why the Mouse Barked	Folktale from Cuba
Why Crocodile Does Not Eat Hen	Bankogo/African Folktale
Jumping Mouse	Plains Indian Native American Folktale

About the Stories.....

How the Beaver Got Sharp Teeth The Great Creator makes the animals & asks the Sun to keep them warm. When the Sun refuses the beaver is the most courageous of the animals & frees the sun.

How the Turtle Got Cracks A talkative turtle wants to fly south with the birds to the beach. He has a brilliant idea but makes an thoughtless choice to a crucial moment that forever changes his life.

Why the Mouse Barked A family of mice go to the beach for a picnic. Mama warns her 2 little ones not to play by the Cat. But they do! Trouble ensues & a very cleaver Mama Mouse saves her family & the day!

Why Crocodile Does Not Eat Hen Crocodile is hungry & sees a juicy hen & wants to eat her. Hen is clever & lets Crocodile know they are 'sisters'. A clever lizard helps Crocodile decide not to eat her sister!

Jumping Mouse A little mouse is determined to find the Sacred Mountains, a dream she holds in her heart. She embarks on a long journey, filled with risk, danger, hope & love. Her gifts transform her & she finds that the Holy Place she seeks in in her own heart.

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Discussion Questions/Some Things to Try!

How the Beaver Got Sharp Teeth Why do you think the Beaver kept chewing through the rope when her teeth, her gums were gone? Why do you think the Great Creator gave her the gifts he gave her? Have you ever challenged yourself to not give up? What gave you the courage to keep fighting? Tell your story & bring in any actual proof that supports how you fought over your own fear & doubts to 'win' in the end.

How the Turtle Got Cracks Why do you think the Turtle talked so much about himself? What was his good idea to fly to the beach with the birds? What do you think he was feeling when he opened his mouth & talked? What do you think he learned from his experience? Have you had an experience where you did something that caused you to 'think before your opened your mouth'? Write about your experience!

Why the Mouse Barked What did the little mice do that caused the problems for their entire family? Why do you think they teased the Cat? What did their Mom do that made the cat run away? Why did the Cat run away? Have you ever done something & your mom or dad needed to 'save' you from the consequences of your behavior choice(s)? Write your story, illustrate it & act it out! Ask your mom or dad to tell you a story of when they were your age & did something naughty & what their parents did!

Why Crocodile Does Not Eat Hen Why do you think Crocodile was surprised when Hen called her "sister"? Why do you think that Crocodile changed her mind about eating Hen? Can you think of other animals that are 'sisters'? Have you ever thought you did not have anything in common with someone & then discovered that you did? How did that realization change your relationship with that person?

Jumping Mouse Why do you think the Mouse started on her journey? What dangers did she meet on her way to the Sacred

Mountains? Why do you think she did not give up? Who helped her? Why? She gave gifts to other animals that were a part of herself – why do you think she did this? Why do you think Magic Frog changed her into an Eagle? Have you ever given a gift to someone that changed their life? Has anyone ever given you a gift that has changed yours?

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Excerpt from “Spotlight Pourquoi Stories : How & Why Tales from Nature” by Candice Miller
 “Pourquoi stories, named for the French word meaning ‘why,’ are legends that explain why things are the way they are. Also known as “how and why stories,” they relate how almost everything in nature was named, created or first took on a particular characteristic, color or resemblance to another object. Passed from generation to generation, these tales are prime example of the oral traditions power, most of these stories are older than written communication itself. Some pourquoi stories are instructive...they are much more instructive than casual tall tales. Each one is a complex invention, with layer upon layer of meant to be uncovered. ...People from the beginning of time have viewed the same things – the sun, the moon, the plants & struggled to make sense of them. Pourquoi tales teach lessons in a gentle nonthreatening way. In many, the animal characters & the setting provide a comfortable distance for getting a point across without offending the listener. Why have Pourquoi stories survived for so long? Because of their usefulness. Stories make lessons easier to remember through simple truths & justice without pointing a finger at anyone. They also satisfy a need to know -to make sense of the unknown & are our connection with people who lived thousands of years ago, who marveled at the same wonders of nature that we do. In sharing Pourquoi stories we ensure our link to the future through those who listen, the storytellers of tomorrow.”
 From the 1996 Jan. issue of Storytelling Magazine.

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LuAnn Adams Animal Pourquoi Storytelling Worksheet

Animal Chosen: _____

Characteristics of the Animal: _____

(i.e. Unique & Distinctive Physical Characteristic, Sound the animal makes...)

Title:

How/Why the _____ Got/Has _____
 (Animal) (Characteristic)

*The Title & The End of the Story are both True.

*The Beginning of the Story the Animal Characteristic is Not True & is the Opposite of the End:

i.e. In the Beginning the Turtle Had No Cracks on His Shell. In the End the Turtle Has Cracks on His Shell.

In the Beginning: the _____ had no _____.

In the Middle:

What does your Animal Want? _____

What does your Animal Do? (Cause) _____

What happens? (Effect is magical & quick) _____

Details: _____

In the End: the _____ has _____.

“And that is: How the _____ Got _____.”

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LuAnn's Picture Book (& Audio Story) Recommendations

Abiyoyo	retold by Pete Seeger
A Blind Boy Catches A Bird	recorded on "Brave Little Red & other Tales" by LuAnn Adams
Aliquipiso	The Girl Who Saved Her Tribe from "Women Warriors" pgs. 71-73
Amy's Letter	by Ezra Jack Keats
The Boy & the Ghost	retold by Robert San Souci
Brave Irene	by William Steig
The Butterfly	by Patricia Polacco
The Cherry Tree	by Daisaku Ikeda
Chicken Sunday	by Patricia Polacco
Crossing Bok Chitto	retold by Tim Tingle
The Empty Pot	retold by Demi
The Grain of Sand	recorded on "Brave Little Red & other Tales" by LuAnn Adams
Keep the Lights Burning Abbie	by Peter Roop
Maggie & the Pirate	by Ezra Jack Keats
Nadia the Willful	by Sue Alexander
Nomi & the Magic Fish	by Phumla M'bane
Number the Stars	Ten yr. old girl rescues Danish Jews, by Lois Lowry
Nyganara	from "Third World Voice for Children" pgs. 25-28
One Riddle, One Answer	by Lauren Thompson
Over the Deep Blue Sea	by Daisaku Ikeda
Pink & Say	by Patricia Polacco
The Rough Face Girl	retold by Rafe Martin
The Search for the Magic Lake	from "Wonder Tales from Around the World" pgs. 117-121
The Snow Country Prince	by Daisaku Ikeda
The Twelve Days of Diving	recorded on "The Tricky Caterpillar..." by LuAnn Adams

Jaws, Paws & Claws: Bibliography & Books for Teachers

- Children Tell Stories: A Teaching Guide By Martha Hamilton & Mitch Weiss
- The Power of Story: Teaching Through Storytelling By Rives Collins & Pamela J. Cooper
- Storytelling Games: Creative Activities for Language, Communication & Composition across the Curriculum By Doug Lipman
- Storytelling: Reading Aloud and Roleplaying with Children By Bob Barton & David Booth

30 Storytelling Tips For Educators:

Capture Your Students' Imagination! *By Julie DeNeen*

Storytelling has been around as long as humankind. It is one of the most effective ways to communicate an important truth to another person. It gives meaning, context, and understanding in a world that is often filled with chaos and disorder. If a teacher becomes an excellent storyteller, he or she can ensure that any concept they teach will be remembered for years to come. Stories can be used to illustrate scientific or mathematical processes as well. Stories bring information, knowledge, and truth to life.

1. Every Part Must Be Essential When you compose your storyline, be it a fictional story to teach a lesson, or a non-

fiction example, make sure that each part of the story is essential to the ending. Each character, point, or principle must somehow relate to the main point you are trying to drive home. Let's take for example, a story about the planets. You may be trying to help students memorize the order of the solar system. Any tale you concoct to help illuminate the facts must be related to the planets. Keep the main thing...the main thing.

2. You Must Have a Hook In Your Opening You hook the listener in by presenting a problem that encourages them to keep listening. You can use this tactic in any lesson. For example, if you are teaching the concept of photosynthesis, start your story by imagining a world in which all the flowers didn't have leaves. You create a problem that the story (in this case photosynthesis) solves. In many cases, students don't realize how many principles they take for granted (gravity, light, etc.) Creating a world in which it is taken away reveals the ultimate importance of the process you are describing.

3. Draw a Theme Out of Your Story Stories have a depth of meaning when there is a theme. However, it isn't always easy to write a story with a theme in mind. Rather, write the story first- with all the points you want to cover. When you've finished, stand back from the story for a moment to see if you can draw out a theme.

4. Keep It Simple If your audience is young, simple is best. Scientific principles like gravity and electricity can be difficult for young minds. Using analogies can help. For example, to explain an electrical circuit, describe how a train can only move along tracks that are connected to each other. A broken track means the train must stop and electricity is the same way.

5. Maintain Eye Contact Eye contact is most important. It not only helps keep a student's attention, but it also conveys a sense of confidence and truthfulness. Always look directly into your student's eyes. You will connect with them and keep their attention longer.

6. Use Vivid Language That Kids Can Understand Some psychologists argue that telling stories is one of the primary ways humans learn. Even if you are teaching science or math concepts, pick a word or two that your students haven't heard of before. Describe and define the word first, and then use it throughout the story. For example, if you are talking science, identify the word "energy" and then use it several times during your story. By the end of the story, they will have learned the concepts of the tale plus some vocabulary.

7. Use Movement As the storyteller, you can paint pictures with your body- using your hands, feet, legs, and head. Similarly, you can ask the students to perform movements during certain parts of the story. This will help activate their memory and keep their attention focused on what you are communicating.

8. Use Dramatic Pauses People often talk more quickly than the brain can process. If you pause at crucial moments in the story, you give your students the chance to think critically about the piece of information you have just given. Don't be afraid to pause, especially at a tense moment.

9. Change Your Voice With Different Characters It helps to make characters more memorable when you give them personalities. Part of that includes changing your voice with each character. Without visual props, the voice is one of the best ways to bring the character to life.

10. Make Your Ending Strong With an Important Take Away Point The ending is the last thing your students will hear. Whatever points and/or principles you think are most important, put them at the end. If you can make the ending one sentence, this is even better. Use alliteration, repetitive words, or a singsong cadence to help make it memorable.

11. Tell The Truth, Even When It's Difficult Adults are tempted to lie to children when the situation seems too complex or mature for younger audiences. However, telling the truth is always preferable, even if you have to adapt some of the details and adjust your language for younger audiences.

12. Make The Character Relatable The main character of your story must be relatable to your students. You want them to "root" for the character's choices and decisions. One way to do this is to make the character "feel" real. He or she shouldn't be perfect, but have weaknesses and talents just like we all do. Student's love to root for the good guy in a story. Keep in mind; it doesn't have to be human. For example, when you talk about pollution, make recycled paper the good guy, and aerosol cans the enemy. Anything can have a good and evil counterpart.

13. Have Your Story Provide An Answer To a Problem Every story has theme or meaning. When you can tell a tale that provides a solution to a problem, there is higher likelihood that the story will take on a deeper meaning when it solves a problem in real life. When you are trying to communicate facts (like multiplication facts for example) perhaps create a story in which a character must know those facts in order to divide her gifts up among her family members.

14. Know Your Ending Before You Begin Before you tell a story, know the ending. Good storytellers, when they begin to formulate their story, start at the end and work backwards. As you prepare, pick the ending first. Then think about the point that comes right before the end, then the point that comes before the point that gets to the end. Keep working backwards until you arrive at the beginning of your story.

15. Appeal To The Senses When preparing your story, activate as many senses as possible. The more a story activates the senses, the more memorable it becomes. For a lesson in geography, you can use a visual map first. Add a song to help memorize the countries or cities. Use props that the students can hold. Maybe you can offer a food from each locale, to activate touch and smell.

16. The Story Should Be "Trustable" Don't offer coincidences that magically solve the problem. Whatever

world or situation your character is in, don't break its rules just to end the story.

17. Invite Interaction Depending on the subject, you may want to enlist your student's help in solving the problem. Perhaps you could tell the first half of the story and ask them to brainstorm an ending that solves the problem. Students can work in groups and learn from others who may have chosen to solve the story a different way. It helps students understand the idea that stories have multiple solutions.

18. Make The Stakes High Against The Goal Stories with a happy ending must first overcome obstacles. Before you get to the end of the story, you want to create dramatic tension that makes the listener think, "Will the character reach his or her goal?" A good story knows how to use tension. Whatever the hero wants, make it difficult for him or her to get there.

19. Use Props Almost any story can benefit from props, no matter what subject you are teaching. You can ask a student to hold the prop or even let students use the prop(s) in ways that create another problem in the story. Magicians often do this in their show. They ask someone to come to the front and help with juggling. Then, the magician allows the helper to "accidentally" break the plate that the magician plans to put together. This can work well in math. If you have a student manipulate a prop (like for example breaking several pretzels), you can then showcase the mathematical principles of fractions and division.

20. Create The Extraordinary Out of The Ordinary A story doesn't have to be dramatic in order to highlight a point. In many cases, taking a mundane event and looking at it from a different angle is just as profound. For example, if you are talking about accepting other cultures, try this. Pick a common ritual (like men shaving their faces), and tell the story from the angle of a character from another world that has never seen such a thing. Better yet, treat the students like they are from another world. "Did you know that I saw someone put a knife to his face the other day?!" Use different vocabulary words (like knife versus razor). "Then, he smeared this unknown substance all over his face and used the sharp edge of the knife to rub it off!" Your students might be shocked when you reveal that you were simply talking about shaving. Then you can go into the idea and philosophy behind prejudice and discrimination against other cultures that are unfamiliar.

21. Set The Scene It is crucial to create an environment for your story. Are you in the woods, on the beach, in a little apartment in the city, or on a different planet? Describe the surroundings, the weather, or the pre-existing conditions. Use rich detail so the students can picture the environment in their imaginations. Field trips are such a fantastic way to get into a different environment, but it isn't always possible. Words, descriptions of smell, sounds, and sights will make the story more meaningful.

22. Use Music Music is an excellent way to learn. If you are teaching the fifty states, a song with a catchy rhythm will help solidify the memorization process. Songs have long been used throughout history to help cultures preserve traditions and historic events.

23. Create Fun Sound Effects If it is a stormy night, enlist the help of your younger students by asking them to each be in charge of a "sound effect". Adding 'sounds' is fun to make a story participatory!

24. Have Your Students' Retell It Back To You Once you are done with your story, have the students form groups and re-tell the story in a different way. Perhaps, you can assign them the task of summarizing the story in a sentence. The important part about this concept is to get the student's involved in an active way. They've spent some time listening; now it is time to put it into action.

25. Draw Real Life Connections If your story teaches abstract concepts, find real life examples that make the information more meaningful. If you are trying to teach a history lesson, put the events in a different context. Imagine it now in the present day, with present situations. How would the scene play out in 2021 versus 1914? All of a sudden, history will feel much more "real" and alive.

26. Use Repetition This tip works well with younger students. Oftentimes, storybooks have a repeated phrase throughout the story (i.e. "I do not like green eggs and ham. I do not like them Sam I am). Do this when you start, in the middle, and at the end. Pick an important concept and repeat it over and over. You can describe the same concept with different words if you wish.

27. Write Your Story In One Sentence Before You Begin In order to keep your story simple and focused on what's important, narrow it down to one sentence. Start with the beginning, and then add the middle, and the end. In the sentence, you should get the main purpose of the story, as well as the competing concept that threatens the story's goal. Some people might think, "I can't narrow down my story to one sentence!" Yes you can. It will force you to iron out the most crucial points. Once you do this, expand the sentence into a paragraph. Then expand each sentence in the paragraph to its own paragraph. Continue onward until your story is complete.

28. Avoid Detours Simplify, simplify, simplify. Cut out characters, scenes, and information that do not somehow work towards the goal of the story. If you aren't sure if something is crucial or not, tell it to a friend or fellow teacher, and remove the parts in question. If the story still flows well and has meaning, then it wasn't necessary.

29. Create a Timeline Write a timeline of events for you to keep track of the order. You can even put up an empty timeline on the board, and as you tell the story- add the important events as they happen. Combine the idea of props and interaction into your timeline. When you are done, the timeline will be filled out, and act as a visual prop for your students.

30. Don't Give Away Too Much! When you tell a story that has some mystery, you invite the listeners to try to figure out the solution for themselves. When they do, chances are- it will be more memorable and long lasting. The key is to give enough information so the student can solve the problem, but not so much that it is obvious. If you leave no trail of hints and clues, then it will be frustrating and impossible to solve. Invite your students into the storytelling process. Give them enough to understand and follow along, but not so much that you are spoon-feeding. Add drama, props, effects, and set the scene, so the listeners are drawn into the story; its characters, problem, and ultimately, the solution.

*"Tell me a fact and I learn.
Tell me a truth and I'll believe.
But, tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever." - Native American Proverb*

LuAnn Adams

is an award-winning storyteller, recording artist, actor & author. She tells stories for children & adults at schools, theaters, libraries, museums, zoos, aquariums, wildlife centers, festivals, hospitals & special-needs learning centers across the United States—as well as in Vietnam, Cambodia & Egypt. Each storytelling performance inspires young people to discover their courage, explore the healing power of dialogue for creating choices & embrace their hope-filled dreams for a peaceful world.

LuAnn has performed at & received 23 touring grants from the Cincinnati Playhouse to create & perform multicultural storytelling programs for children & families in schools in the Ohio & Kentucky. Her animal storytelling programs have delighted visitors at national wildlife centers, zoos & aquariums New York & New Jersey for more than 15 years. LuAnn conducted storytelling master classes at Northwestern University in Chicago for five years. She has performed in Elementary & Middle Schools & for the Clark County School Librarians Association (CCSLA) annual meetings in Las Vegas. LuAnn has created, performed & conducted storytelling residencies extensively in NYC & East Coast schools for more than 25 years. For the past 5 years she has performed Civil War stories for History Re-Enactment Festivals in Minnesota, sharing stories with more than 20,000 Middle & High School students.

LuAnn created & performed *"The Rabbit in the Moon & other Marvelous Tales of the Night Sky"* at the Abrams Planetarium in East Lansing Michigan in March 2020. This is her 2nd performance series for the Wharton Center, she performed *"Jaws, Paws & Claws – Animal Wisdom Tales"* at the Pasant Theater in January 2017.

LuAnn is a member of the National Storytelling Network, New York Storytelling Center, Actor's Equity Association & SAG-AFTRA. She has a BA in Theater Arts & Child Psychology from Macalester College & an MFA in Acting from the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University. Her award-winning storytelling CDs may be found in schools, libraries & homes all over the world.

"The storyteller LuAnn Adams is a bit of an alchemist herself, turning an ordinary room into a fantastical landscape as she relates her vivid tales." - New York Times

Watch LuAnn's Storytelling:

www.luannadamsstoryteller.com

LuAnn's CDs are available for download & purchase at CDBaby.com, Amazon.com:

"Jaws, Paws & Claws – Animal Wisdom Tales" Won: *The National Parenting Publications (NAPPA) Gold Award*

"Tipingee, Brer Rabbit & The Mouse That Barked" Won: *The National Parenting Publications Gold Award*

"The Tricky Caterpillar & other Tales" Won: *The Parents' Choice Silver Honors Award & The National Parenting Publications Honors Award*

"Brave Little Red & other Tales" Won: *The Parents' Choice Recommended Seal & The National Parenting Publications Gold Award*

*"These excellent collections of well-told tales deserve a place in every library with an audio storytelling collection."
- School Library Journal*

