



Task 3: The Star-crossed Lovers

Mrs Wood would like you to practise writing a modern fable by rewriting the Greek myth *Pyramus and Thisbe*. In Part A, you will listen to the second part of the Teen Time programme, which is on the Greek myth *Pyramus and Thisbe*, and complete a note sheet. In Part B, you will fill in a fable-writing plan using the notes taken. In Part C, you will write a modern fable based on Pyramus and Thisbe's love story. You are encouraged to provide an ending different from the original story.

Part A: Note-taking

Pre-listening Activity: Matching Activity

Both column A and column B contain expressions that provide clues to the Greek myth *Pyramus and Thisbe*. With a partner, match the expressions in column A with those in column B. Then write a brief summary of your prediction on the plot of the myth in the box provided.

Column A	Column B	Answer
1. Another similar story	A. Pyramus and Thisbe	1. _____
2. A lion	B. Disapproval by their parents	2. _____
3. Pyramus wrongly believes that Thisbe is killed	C. Through a crack	3. _____
4. Whispers to each other	D. Under a fruit tree in the country	4. _____
5. Plan to run away	E. Romeo and Juliet	5. _____
6. Two lovers	F. Scares Thisbe away	6. _____
7. Kept apart	G. He kills himself by his sword	7. _____
8. If they cannot be together in life	H. They would rather die	8. _____

A brief summary of the story





Task: Note-taking

Listen to the second part of the Teen Time programme, which is about Pyramus and Thisbe's love story. Take notes and answer all the questions on the note sheet.

Note sheet – Pyramus and Thisbe

1. Why is Pyramus and Thisbe's story famous?

2. How do Pyramus and Thisbe "meet"?

3. Why is it difficult for Pyramus and Thisbe to meet and see each other?

4. What kind of conversation do Pyramus and Thisbe have through the wall every morning?

5. How do Pyramus and Thisbe express their fear that their parents will hear them when they "talk"?

6. Arrange the following 10 incidents in chronological order. The first and the last incidents have been identified for you.

- 1 Pyramus and Thisbe decide to run away.
- _____ Later Pyramus turns up, sees the cloak, and thinks his darling, Thisbe, has been killed by a lion.
- _____ They make a date to meet in the countryside under a fruit tree near a famous temple.
- _____ She flies to him, and throws her arms around him, kisses his cold lips and begs Pyramus to look at her.
- _____ As she runs, she drops her cloak, and the lion rips the cloak to pieces.
- _____ The lion eats a deer and has blood in his mouth. Some of the blood goes on Thisbe's cloak.
- _____ And then Thisbe comes back and finds him lying in blood.
- _____ Thisbe gets there first, but she sees a wild lion and runs away.
- _____ Pyramus thinks Thisbe has been killed by a lion and is so unhappy that he plunges his sword into his side.
- 10 After Pyramus has died, Thisbe moans that "If we cannot be together in life, I shall follow you into death." Then she takes the sword from Pyramus' hand, and plunges it into her own side.





Part B: Planning for Fable-writing

Fill in the fable-writing plan using the notes you have taken in Part A. To help you complete the task, Mrs Wood has given you the following for reference:

- Notes on “What is a Fable?”;
- An Aesop’s Fable “The Man, the Boy, and the Donkey”; and
- Steps on Writing a Fable.

Notes on “What is a Fable?”

What is a Fable?

A fable is a brief, succinct story, in prose or verse traditionally, that features animals, plants, inanimate objects, or forces of nature that speak and act like human beings. It aims to illustrate a moral lesson which may be expressed explicitly at the end in a concise proverb or saying.

Example morals

Appearances can be deceiving.
One man’s trash is another man’s treasure.
Haste makes waste.
Look before you leap.
You can’t judge a book by its cover.
Pride leads to a fall.





Sample Aesop's Fable

An Aesop's Fable The Man, the Boy, and the Donkey

A Man and his son were once going with their Donkey to market. As they were walking along by its side, a countryman passed them and said: "You fools, what is a donkey for but to ride upon?"

So the Man put the Boy on the Donkey and they went on their way. But soon they passed a group of men, one of whom said: "See that lazy youngster, he lets his father walk while he rides."

So the Man ordered his Boy to get off, and got on himself. But they hadn't gone far when they passed two women, one of whom said to the other: "Shame on that lazy lout to let his poor little son trudge along."

Well, the Man didn't know what to do, but at last he took his Boy up before him on the Donkey. By this time they had come to the town, and the passers-by began to jeer and point at them. The Man stopped and asked what they were scoffing at. The men said: "Aren't you ashamed of yourself for overloading that poor donkey of yours and your hulking son?"

The Man and the Boy got off and tried to think what to do. They thought and they thought, till at last they cut down a pole, tied the donkey's feet to it, and raised the pole and the donkey to their shoulders. They went along amid the laughter of all who met them till they came to Market Bridge, when the Donkey, getting one of his feet loose, kicked out and caused the Boy to drop his end of the pole. In the struggle the Donkey fell over the bridge, and his fore-feet being tied together he was drowned.

"That will teach you," said an old man who had followed them:

Moral: "Please all, and you will please none."

Source:



http://www.pagebypagebooks.com/Aesop/Aesops_Fables/The_Man_the_Boy_and_the_Donkey_p1.html (The fable of *The Man, the Boy, and The Donkey*)





Steps on Writing a Fable

1. Choose a moral lesson

All fables have a moral lesson, which is usually placed at the end of the fable.

2. Create characters

Many fables have animal characters. You can choose to use animals, people, or anything you like. Animal and object characters should be personified.

3. Find a setting

Your fable can happen anywhere or anytime in a real or an imaginary place.

4. Create a plot

Think of a plot and the things that will happen to your characters, the conflicts and their actions, other characters' reactions and the lesson they will learn.

5. Think of a suitable moral that fits the fable

Morals teach us lessons that are true of all time. You should think of one which can be a well-known saying or something you make up of your own.

6. Write the first draft

a) Introduce the characters and setting

Use adjectives to describe your characters' personalities, looks, actions, thoughts, etc. for readers' imagination. Then describe the setting so that the readers know where the fable will be taking place.

b) Explain the plot

Write the actual story of what the characters do, what happens to them and how they respond.

c) End the story

This part shows what your characters learn from their lesson and you should end your fable with the moral you planned in Step 1.





Fable-writing Plan Worksheet

Based on the Greek myth *Pyramus and Thisbe*, discuss the following questions with your group mates and complete the plan:

1. Think of a title for this modern fable.

2. Think of some possible lessons we can learn from this tragic story and consider if you agree with what Pyramus and Thisbe decide to do – to elope (i.e. run away) for love.

3. Did this kind of story happen in Hong Kong or elsewhere as far as you know? Research the news archive and find similar stories if you can. Write the summary of one or two stories below and share what you have learnt from these news stories.

4. Plan the following details.

Who will be the main characters in your modern fable and what will each of them be like? Name them below and write a brief description of each of the characters. You can add more characters in the fable.

Main Character

Who the character is like

A _____

Pyramus

B _____

Thisbe





C _____

The Lion

D _____

5. What are the desires of Characters A and B?

6. Do you think Pyramus and Thisbe think about the feelings and reactions of their parents before they make their decision to run away? Why? Why not?

7. Can you think of any other ways to deal with their dilemma of not being able to see each other and yet loving each other deeply? If you were Pyramus or Thisbe in the present time, what would you do?

8. What kind of actions will Characters A and B take in order to satisfy their desire? What will Characters C and D do in response to what Characters A and B do?

Actions	Character C's reaction	Character D's reaction
Character A _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Character B _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____





Part C: Modern Fable-writing

Based on your ideas in the fable-writing plan, rewrite the Greek myth *Pyramus and Thisbe* into a modern fable in the space provided. End the fable with a moral expressed in the form of a statement. After you have completed the fable, fill in the assessment form on the following page and improve the fable based on your own assessment of it.

A large, empty rectangular box with rounded corners and a grey border, intended for writing a modern fable. A horizontal line is drawn near the top center of the box. The bottom right corner of the box is curled up, suggesting it's a page from a notebook.



Assessment Form

Assessment Form Pyramus and Thisbe Modern Fable-writing Rubric					
Rubric for Fable-writing	Excellent (4)	Good (3)	Fair (2)	Poor (1)	Score
Setting	Contains vivid description of setting	Contains description of setting	Contains minimal information about setting	Contains no information about setting	
Characters	Contains good descriptions of appearance, actions, and thoughts of characters	Contains good description of appearance and actions of characters	Contains fair description of the appearance of characters	Contains no description of characters	
Plot	Contains a logical beginning, middle, and end which enhance the significance of the moral	Contains a logical beginning, middle, and ending	Incomplete plot as either the beginning, middle, or ending is missing	Contains no story	
Moral	Stated at the end of the fable and matches the story well	Implied, not stated explicitly	Stated at the end of the fable but does not match the story	Contains no moral	

This rubric can serve as an assessment form for your work. It can be used for self, peer and/or teacher assessment.

