

## Project- Animal Stories

Selected Reading ( The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame )

Age: 12- 13 years

### Objectives:

- ✓ students should reveal the realistic issues covertly expressed through the mask of anthropomorphization
- ✓ teacher should raise the students' awareness of the great impact friendship and hobbies have upon our lives
- ✓ students should provide relevant arguments in support of their statements
- ✓ students should enrich their vocabulary and use the new words and phrases in different sentences

THEY waited patiently for what seemed a very long time, stamping in the snow to keep their feet warm. At last they heard the sound of slow shuffling footsteps approaching the door from the inside. It seemed, as the Mole remarked to the Rat, like some one walking in carpet slippers that were too large for him and down at heel; which was intelligent of Mole, because that was exactly what it was.

There was the noise of a bolt shot back, and the door opened a few inches, enough to show a long snout and a pair of sleepy blinking eyes.

'Now, the VERY next time this happens,' said a gruff and suspicious voice, 'I shall be exceedingly angry. Who is it THIS time, disturbing people on such a night? Speak up!'

'Oh, Badger,' cried the Rat, 'let us in, please. It's me, Rat, and my friend Mole, and we've lost our way in the snow.'

'What, Ratty, my dear little man!' exclaimed the Badger, in quite a different voice. 'Come along in, both of you, at once. Why, you must be perished. Well I never! Lost in the snow! And in the Wild Wood, too, and at this time of night! But come in with you.'

The two animals tumbled over each other in their eagerness to get inside, and heard the door shut behind them with great joy and relief (....)

When at last they were thoroughly toasted, the Badger summoned them to the table, where he had been busy laying a repast. ( ..... ) After they had chatted for a time about things in general, the Badger said heartily, 'Now then! tell us the news from your part of the world. How's old Toad going on?'

`Oh, from bad to worse,' said the Rat gravely, while the Mole, cocked up on a settle and basking in the firelight, his heels higher than his head, tried to look properly mournful. `Another smash-up only last week, and a bad one. You see, he will insist on driving himself, and he's hopelessly incapable. If he'd only employ a decent, steady, well-trained animal, pay him good wages, and leave everything to him, he'd get on all right. But no; he's convinced he's a heaven-born driver, and nobody can teach him anything; and all the rest follows.'

`How many has he had?' inquired the Badger gloomily.

`Smashes, or machines?' asked the Rat. `Oh, well, after all, it's the same thing--with Toad. This is the seventh. As for the others--you know that coach-house of his? Well, it's piled up-- literally piled up to the roof--with fragments of motor-cars, none of them bigger than your hat! That accounts for the other six--so far as they can be accounted for.'

`He's been in hospital three times,' put in the Mole; `and as for the fines he's had to pay, it's simply awful to think of.'

`Yes, and that's part of the trouble,' continued the Rat. `Toad's rich, we all know; but he's not a millionaire. And he's a hopelessly bad driver, and quite regardless of law and order. Killed or ruined--it's got to be one of the two things, sooner or later. Badger! we're his friends--oughtn't we to do something?'

The Badger went through a bit of hard thinking. `Now look here!' he said at last, rather severely; `of course you know I can't do anything NOW?'

His two friends assented, quite understanding his point. No animal, according to the rules of animal-etiquette, is ever expected to do anything strenuous, or heroic, or even moderately active during the off-season of winter. All are sleepy--some actually asleep. All are weather-bound, more or less; and all are resting from arduous days and nights, during which every muscle in them has been severely tested, and every energy kept at full stretch.

`Very well then!' continued the Badger. `BUT, when once the year has really turned, and the nights are shorter, and halfway through them one rouses and feels fidgety and wanting to be up and doing by sunrise, if not before--YOU know!----'

Both animals nodded gravely. THEY knew!

`Well, THEN,' went on the Badger, `we--that is, you and me and our friend the Mole here--we'll take Toad seriously in hand. We'll stand no nonsense whatever. We'll bring him back to reason, by force if need be. We'll MAKE him be a sensible Toad.

## English- Romanian Vocabulary

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to stamp = a bate din picioare  
to shuffle = a târșâi picioarele  
down- at- heel = ponosit  
shoot back the bolt = a trage zăvorul  
snout = rât, bot  
blink = a clipi  
gruff = morocănos  
relief = ușurare sufletească  
toast = a se încălzi la foc  
repast = de- ale gurii  
cock up = a se ridica  
settle = laviță cu spetează înaltă  
bask = a se încălzi la  
smash- up = ciocnire cu o mașină , etc.  
steady = așezat, cuminte  
wages = leafă  
coach = diligență, poștalion  
account for = a lămuri  
fine = amendă  
assent = a consimți  
strenuous = care cere mult effort  
off- season = sezonul mort  
weather- bound = care nu poate pleca de acasă din cauza vremii  
fidgety = neastâmpărat  
nod = a da din cap  
sensible = rațional

### Preparatory Activity:

During the previous English class, students are provided with factual information related to the four animals ( the badger, the mole, the toad, the water rat ) involved in the plot of the book- The Wind in the Willows by Kenneth Grahame. Pictures with the four animals are displayed and a matching exercise is done. Each fact card will be matched with the corresponding animal.

Fact card number one:

Name	
Lives in	burrows in tropical forests, plains, woodlands, mountains and prairies
Size	13- 31 inches ( 33- 79 cm) long and a short tail 4- 7 inches ( 10- 18 cm ) long
Weight	it weighs up to 37 pounds ( 17 kg )
Features	it has gray fur, black legs, flat feet with long curved claws, and a striped face
Diet	both animals and plants ( rodents, frogs, snakes, small mammals, worms, insects, fruits, roots

Fact card number two:

Name	
Lives in	underground, in a variety of habitats, including fields, woodlands, swampy land, riverbanks, deserts
Size	2- 9 inch ( 5- 23 cm ) long with a 1- 9 ( 3- 23 cm ) inch long tail
Weight	it weighs from 65 g to 120 g
Features	shovel- shaped, five- toed, thick- clawed feet; tiny eyes and virtually blind; it finds prey mainly using its sense of touch
Diet	it eats its own weight in food each day; it eats insects, earthworms, mice, fish, frogs and other small animals

Fact card number three:

Name	
Lives in	early part of their lives under water ( as eggs and tadpoles ) and the remainder on land; all over the world except polar environment and Australia
Size	over 8 inches ( 20 cm long )
Weight	it weighs from 10 g to 100g
Features	it has poison glands behind its eyes, a chubby body, shorter legs; it has no teeth and its body is warty
Diet	insects, small animals ( catching them with its long, sticky tongue

Fact card number four:

Name	
Lives in	Burrows excavated within the banks of rivers, ditches, ponds and streams
Size	5- 9 inches long and a 3- 6 inch long tail
Weight	It weighs 160- 350 g
Features	It has a rounder nose than a rat, deep brown fair, a chubby face, short fuzzy ears, paws and ears coved with hair
Diet	Grass and plants near the water; fruits, bulbs, buds, and roots

### Vocabulary Questions:

- 1) Give another meaning for the word toast .  
Give examples in sentences.
- 2) What part of speech is fine in the text ?  
What is the meaning of the word fine as an adjective ?
- 3) Find adjectives in the text related to the verb to sleep ?  
What is the difference in meaning between the two adjectives ?  
Give examples in sentences.
- 4) Find a synonym in the text for the adjective impatient .
- 5) Which of the following words denote ways of walking: shuffle, stamp, tumble
- 6) What are the antonyms for: hopelessly, moderately, gloomily ?
- 7) Find synonyms in the text for the following words: in spite of, cordially, fully, very, calmly.

**Comprehension Question:**

- 1) Who are the four characters involved in the plot ?
- 2) What season is it ? Find relevant arguments in the text.
- 3) Who are the badger's unexpected quests ?
- 4) What do most animals do during winter ?  
Find relevant arguments in the text.
- 5) What kind of person does the badger typify ?
- 6) Who is the mutual friend the three animals are talking about ?
- 7) Why are they worried about ?
- 8) What is the Toad's harmful hobby ?
- 9) What damage did it cause to him ?
- 10) Is the animals' behaviour human- like or animal- like ?

**Follow- up Activities :**

- 1) Role- play the text.
- 2) Write a composition in which to explore the theme of friendship and hobbies in an imaginary setting with anthropomorphized animals.

## Possible answers ( vocabulary questions ) :

- 1) toast = bread that has been heated  
= a salutation, a few words of congratulations, good wishes etc to a person uttered before drinking
- 2) fine ( noun ) = money that you have to pay as a punishment  
( adjective ) = in good health, OK, bright and not raining ( weather ), delicate ( features )
- 3) sleepy = tired and ready to sleep  
asleep = antonym for awake
- 4) fidgety
- 5) shuffle = to walk very slowly and noisily, without lifting your feet off the ground  
stamp = to walk noisily by putting your feet down hard onto the ground
- 6) hopefully, immoderately, happily
- 7) regardless, heartily, thoroughly, exceedingly, patiently

## Possible answers ( comprehension answers ):

- 1) the badger, the toad, the mole and the water rat
- 2) winter ....
- 3) the mole and the water rat
- 4) hibernate
- 5) the hermit- the reclusive, wise person
- 6) the toad
- 7) they are worried because of the dangerous hobby the toad is crazy about
- 8) house- drawn caravans, car- races
- 9) he was hospitalized three times, he had a lot of accidents and considerably diminished his fortune

10)their behaviour is human- like ( anthropomorphized animals ), they wear clothes, they have table manners, they have hobbies etc and mostly they have feelings, thoughts, worries