

1.3 Little Girls Wiser than Old People



Count Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy or Leo Tolstoy was one of the greatest authors of all time. He authored many novels, short stories and philosophical works. His ideas on non-violence had influenced great men like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. Tolstoy wrote many stories for children. This is one of them. However, this has a message for grown-ups, too.

Warming up!



Children may discuss the reasons in English as well as their mother tongue. But the lists should be in English.

* Form groups of 4-6. Each member should write at least five reasons why fights occur. (Example : Two children want the same toy.) Put together the different reasons written by all group members to make a longer list.

Now, Group 1 will read out their list while other groups compare it with their list, mark the common items, and note down the new ones.

Repeat the procedure with all other groups reading out their lists. Now you will have a fairly long list of reasons.

Classify the reasons into 'trivial' and 'serious' ones using the table below.

Reasons	Trivial	Serious
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.....		
.....		
.....		
.....		



LITTLE GIRLS WISER THAN OLD PEOPLE

It was an early Easter. In the yards lay snow, and rills ran down the village. A large puddle had run down from a manure pile into a lane between two farms. And at this puddle two girls, one older than the other, had met. Both of them had been dressed by their mothers in new clothes. The little girl had a blue dress, and the elder a yellow one with a design. Both had their heads wrapped in red kerchiefs.

After prayers in the Church, the two girls went to the puddle, where they showed their new garments to each other, and began to play. They wanted to splash in the water. The little girl started to go into the puddle with her shoes on, but the older girl said to her:

“Don’t go, Malasha, your mother will scold you. I will take off my shoes, and you do the same.”

The girls took off their shoes, raised their skirts, and walked through the puddle toward each other. Malasha stepped in up to her ankles, and said:

“It is deep, Akulka, I am afraid.”

“Never mind,” she replied, “it will not be any deeper. Come straight toward me !”

They came closer to each other. Akulka said: “Malasha, look out, and do not splash it up, but walk softly.”

She had barely said that when Malasha plumped her foot into the water and bespattered

- Easter : a Christian festival and holiday that is celebrated in many countries. Easter is always a Sunday.

- rills : small streams of water

- pile : heap

Guess the meaning of :

- ⊗ puddle

- ⊗ kerchiefs

- ⊗ bespattered

Things to do :

- ⊗ Draw a map of the village using your imagination and the description given here.

- ⊗ Draw the new dress of any one of the two girls.

- ⊗ Find out how Easter is celebrated.

Listen and answer :

- ❁ Why did Akulka want to strike Malasha ?
- ❁ Why did Malasha run home ?



Akulka's new dress, and not only her dress, but also her nose and eyes. When Akulka saw the spots on her dress, she grew angry at Malasha, and scolded her, and ran after her, and wanted to strike her. Malasha was frightened and, seeing what trouble she had caused, jumped out of the puddle and ran home.

Akulka's mother passed by; she saw her daughter's dress bespattered and soiled.

“Where, accursed one, did you get yourself so dirty?”

“Malasha has purposely splashed it on me.”

Akulka's mother grasped Malasha and gave her a knock on the nape of her neck. Malasha began to howl, and her mother ran out of the house.

“Why do you strike my daughter?” she began to scold her neighbour.

- accursed one : bad child. A word used in informal speech to show anger
- nape of her neck : the back of the neck

List all the words that refer to ‘speaking’ in the story.

Examples : said, scold/scolded, replied



One word brought back another, and the women began to quarrel. The men, too, ran out, and a big crowd gathered in the street. All were crying, and nobody could hear his neighbour. They scolded and cursed each other; one man gave another man a push, and a fight had begun, when Akulka's grandmother came out. She stepped in the midst of the peasants, and began to talk to them:

“What are you doing, dear ones? Consider the holiday. This is a time for rejoicing. And see what sin you are doing!”

They paid no attention to the old woman, and almost knocked her off her feet. She would never have stopped them, if it had not been for Akulka and Malasha.

While the women exchanged words, Akulka wiped off her dress, and went back to the puddle in the lane. She picked up a pebble and began to scratch the ground so as to let the water off into the street. While she was scratching, Malasha came up and began to help her. She picked up a chip and widened the rill.

Guess the meaning of :

- ⊗ ‘One word brought back another.’

In what sense are the words used here?

- ⊗ crying
- ⊗ holiday
- ⊗ knocked her off her feet

Listen and answer :

- ⊗ Did the people stop fighting?
- ⊗ What did Akulka do?
- ⊗ What did Malasha do?
- ⊗ What was the old woman trying to do?

Listen and answer :

- ⊗ Did the girls forget their quarrel?
- ⊗ How can we say that?
- ⊗ Why did the men feel ashamed?

Things to do :

- ⊗ Enact the whole story without using words.

Discuss :

- ⊗ Are children wiser than grown ups? In what ways?
- ⊗ Should grownup people get involved in children's quarrels? If yes, when? If not, why?

The peasants had begun to fight, just as the water went down the rill toward the place where the old woman was trying to separate the men. The girls ran, one from one side of the rill, the other from the other side.

“Look out, Malasha, look out !” shouted Akulka.

Malasha wanted to say something herself, but could not speak for laughter. The girls were running and laughing at a chip which was bobbing up and down the rill. They ran straight into the crowd of the peasants. The old woman saw them and said to the peasants:

“Shame on you before God, men ! You have started fighting on account of these two girls, and they have long ago forgotten it: the dear children have been playing nicely together. They are wiser than you.”

The men looked at the girls, and they felt ashamed. Then they laughed at themselves, and scattered to their farms.

- *Count Leo N. Tolstoy*
(Adapted from a translation
by *Leo Wiener*)



ENGLISH WORKSHOP

1. Read aloud with proper intonation.

- Don't go.
- I am afraid.
- Never mind!
- Look out!
- Shame on you!

2. Spot the names of body parts from the story. Add three other names on your own.
3. List the characters in the story and write their approximate ages.

Characters :					
Approximate age					

4. Write the stages in which the fight began and got worse. (You may show as many stages as you like.) Then write how and when the people stopped fighting.

The fight :

- Akulka’s mother hit Malasha.
-
-
-
-

How the fight came to an end :

-
-

5. Now choose any one of the reasons you have listed in the activity on page 10. Write down and enact a quarrel based on that reason and also show how it was resolved.
6. Change the words in the coloured boxes to make other meaningful sentences.
 - I’ll take off my shoes and you do the same.
 - This is a time for rejoicing .
7. Read, remember and write :

(a)

dress - dressed	start - started	want - wanted
walk - walked	jump - jumped	pass - passed
grasp -	pick -	gather -
laugh -	look -	scatter -

(b)

run – ran

say – said

get – got

begin – began

reply – replied

bring – brought

sing –

try –

fight –

meet –

come –

give –

take –

see –

eat –

- Use any two of these pairs in a pair of sentences.

Example : Run – ran : My dog runs very fast. Yesterday, it ran after a cat.

Language Study

Types of Nouns

We have seen earlier that a noun is a word that is used to name a person, an animal, a place, a thing, an idea etc. The names given to particular persons, animals, places etc. are known as proper nouns and the rest are common nouns.

Nouns

Common Nouns

girl boy city mountain
table river book building
ruler table etc.

Proper Nouns

Akulka Malasha Sangeeta
Anand London Mumbai
Sahyadri Narmada etc.

- * Write at least 5 common nouns and 5 proper nouns each.
Note that proper nouns always begin with a capital letter.

When you choose a name for your pet dog or cat,
you are giving a proper noun to a common noun!

- * Choose any 5 suitable common nouns and invent interesting names for them.
Examples : a river – River Speedy, a magazine for children – Mitra (Friend),
a building : Ace Towers.



TOW

Two minutes of Oral Work

Give as many examples of the following as possible within two minutes.

- Animals • Birds • Vegetables • Body parts • Musical instruments

(Use two minutes per word.)