



VERSION 2 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. **Characters** are the people or animals that we meet in a story. Who are the characters in the version of “The Grasshopper and the Ants” that we saw in the performance?

- The Big Ant (who believes in the importance of hard work).
- The Grasshopper (who wants to be lazy all the time).
- The Little Ants (who run away with the Grasshopper when they get tired of working for the Big Ant).

2. The **conflict** in a story is the problem that the characters have to solve. What’s the conflict in “The Grasshopper and the Ants”?

The lazy Grasshopper and Little Ants must convince the hard-working Big Ant to give them food and a place to live. Otherwise, they’ll freeze and starve during the cold winter months.

3. There are some differences between the version of “The Grasshopper and the Ants” that we saw in the performance and the “normal” version of the story that you’ve heard before. What parts of the story in the performance were the same as the “normal” version? What parts were different?

If younger students need a quick refresher on the classic story, show them the three-minute video found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ripQ9jJnw1c>.

Similarities

- Both the *Stories Alive!* version and the classic version of the story feature a Grasshopper who’s lazy all summer and Ants who work hard to store food for the winter.
- The Grasshopper ends up being cold and hungry during the winter, while the Ants have a warm place to live and plenty of food to eat.
- The moral of the story is that you must work hard now to prepare what you’ll need in the future.

Differences

- In the *Stories Alive!* version, the hardworking Big Ant is a drill sergeant (a soldier who’s in charge of other soldiers). In the classic version, the Ants work together without needing a “boss.”
- In the classic version, all of the Ants work hard. In the *Stories Alive!* version, the Big Ant works hard, but the Little Ants run away to join the Grasshopper in his lazy lifestyle.
- Instead of being stuck outside in the cold, the Grasshopper in the *Stories Alive!* version begs for food at the anthill. He’s allowed inside with the Little Ants on the condition that he’ll be the Big Ant’s servant all winter long.

4. The **protagonist** is the hero, or good guy, in a story. The **antagonist** is the villain, or bad guy. Who’s the protagonist in “The Frog Prince”? Who’s the antagonist?

The protagonist is the Frog. The antagonist is the Princess.

5. **In the “normal” version of “The Frog Prince,” the Frog and Princess get married after the Frog becomes a prince. In the *Stories Alive!* version, the Frog goes back to live in the pond because he feels like he can’t trust the Princess. Which ending do you think is better? Why?**

Allow students to share their thoughts freely.

6. **Stories usually have a *beginning*, where we meet the characters and discover the conflict; a *middle*, where the characters try to solve their problem; and an *end*, where we find out if the way the characters tried to solve their problem worked. What happens in the beginning, middle, and end of “The Frog Prince”?**

- At the *beginning*, we meet the Frog and the Princess. The Frog’s problem (the conflict) is that he wants to get a kiss from the Princess so that he can turn into a prince. However, the Princess won’t kiss the Frog because she thinks he’s ugly and gross. (Note: We don’t find out some the details of the conflict until later in the story.)
- The *middle* is where the Princess promises to let the Frog move into the palace and to give him a good-night kiss if he gets her ball out of the pond. However, the Princess refuses to keep her promise. The Frog goes to the palace and asks the Queen for help. The Queen forces her daughter to honor her commitment.
- At the *end*, the Princess kisses the Frog, who turns into a handsome prince! However, the Frog doesn’t want to marry the Princess because he feels like he can’t trust her. She was very unkind to him and broke her promise.

7. **At the end of the performance, George told a true story about learning to do magic tricks as “Magic George.” He felt like quitting when his classmates figured out the secrets to his tricks and made fun of him. Have you ever felt like quitting when something didn’t work out the way you hoped it would? Did you keep trying or did you give up? Tell us about it.**

Invite your students to share brief stories about times when they had the opportunity to persevere. Be prepared to offer verbal prompts to keep the narratives on track.

8. **What does *perseverance* mean? How can you show perseverance today at school?**

Perseverance means that you keep trying even when you feel like quitting. Examples of perseverance include (a) working on a big project a little bit every day, (b) fixing mistakes on an assignment instead of turning in the wrong answers, (c) finishing your homework even if you feel bored, (d) asking for help when you can’t figure something out yourself, and (e) brainstorming different solutions to a problem when your first idea didn’t work out.

9. **George showed perseverance when he kept learning new magic tricks until he found some really good ones. How do you think George felt when he got to perform amazing tricks? How do *you* feel when you reach a goal that’s taken time and effort?**

George felt proud of himself because he learned to amaze and mystify his audience, just like the magicians that he admired when he was younger. When students achieve their goals, they may have feelings of pride, accomplishment, happiness, excitement, or satisfaction.

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

1. **Write a letter or draw a picture.**

We love mail! Assign your students to write letters (or draw pictures) about their experience with *Stories Alive!* Suggested topics include (a) your favorite part of the performance, (b) something you learned from the performance, or (c) one way that you’re going to show perseverance this week. We can’t respond to individual students, but we’ll reply to your class as a whole if we receive your letters within 30 days of your program. To ensure a response, please include your school’s address and tell us to whom the reply should be directed (for example, “Ms. Jones’ Second Grade Class”). Mail your letters to Drama by George, 1236 Lexington Road, Suite 102, Louisville, KY 40204-1164.

2. Write a true story about perseverance.

Challenge your students to think of a time when they successfully demonstrated perseverance — in other words, when they kept trying even though they felt like quitting. Depending on your students' ages and ability levels, you may want to assign students to write their own narratives, or you might work as a class to compose a single story, basing it upon one or more individual students' experiences.

- Each story of perseverance should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. At the *beginning*, we learn about the problem that the protagonist has to solve — in this case, the situation that makes the student author feel like quitting. *Example: A boy is struggling in math class. He knows math is important, but he's tempted to give up because it's so difficult for him.*
- In the *middle*, the protagonist tries one or more ways to solve his problem. *Example: The boy makes flashcards, gets after-school tutoring, and finishes all of his homework assignments, even when he struggles to understand them. He hopes that will be enough to earn a better grade on the next test.*
- At the *end*, the protagonist successfully overcomes the problem. *Example: When he takes the next test, he's really happy with his score. His studying pays off because his overall math grade goes up from a D to a C.*
- Encourage your students to finish their true stories of perseverance by telling what they learned from the experience. *Example: The boy learned that if he works hard, he can accomplish almost anything.*
- Allow student volunteers to share their finished stories with the class.

3. Play a game about perseverance.

You'll need (a) one copy of the image found at <https://unsplash.com/photos/mpVzB3421lk> (preferably in color) for every two students in your class, and (b) a blindfold for every two students. Before the lesson begins, cut each copy of the image into 6-10 pieces to make simple jigsaw puzzles.

- Divide your students into pairs and give each pair a disassembled puzzle. Their goal is to put the puzzle together to form a picture, but there are some special rules about the way it must be done.
- One teammate must don a blindfold. This student is the only one permitted to touch the puzzle pieces. The other teammate (who has the use of his eyes) will give directions to her blindfolded partner to assemble the puzzle, but is not allowed to touch the puzzle or her partner. *(With younger students, you may want to allow the sighted partner to gently guide her blindfolded teammate's hands. Otherwise, the activity might prove too difficult.)*
- Give the students a time limit of 3-5 minutes to correctly assemble the puzzle. When they're finished, have the blindfolded students remove their blindfolds to see how well the puzzle came together.
- This game gives students the opportunity to persevere in a challenging activity. However, don't let the lesson end there! Ask the following discussion questions to help students apply the lessons of the game to their lives.
- Were you able to complete the puzzle? How did you feel when you accomplished the goal?
- What strategies did you try that worked well? What didn't work so well?
- Did you try different ways of working together and getting the job done? Or did you keep doing the same thing over and over, even if it wasn't working?
- If you felt like giving up, how did you convince yourself to keep trying?
- What can this experience teach us about perseverance? How will you apply what you learned to real life today?



www.dramabygeorge.com | (502) 718-5090
Helping Schools Grow Students with Compassion & Character