

Unit 6 Listening to a story: the hidden elements

Mood

The **mood** of a story is the **atmosphere** that the narrator creates while telling the story. Stories can be funny or tragic, serious or light-hearted. A story can make you feel happy or sad.

Tone

Both the narrator's words and his or her **tone** of voice contribute to the mood of the story. The narrator may use a sad tone of voice when telling a sad story or an amused tone of voice when telling a funny story.

Timeline

Most stories consist of a sequence of events. The narrator sets the scene in the **introduction**. In the **middle part** tension starts building. As the suspense or tension builds up, the reader wants to see how the story ends. The **end** may be sad or happy or funny. A good story keeps the listener interested until the end.

Irony twist

An **ironic twist** is a sudden change in the story or a surprising turn of events. The writer Roald Dahl, for example, gives an ironic twist to traditional fairy tales. His version of the well-known story "Little Red Riding Hood" ends with a totally unexpected scene. Everyone knows Riding Hood is a **naïve** girl who depends on others to rescue her. In Roald Dahl's story, however, she pulls out a revolver and shoots the wolf.

Activity 6.1 Listening to a story and interpreting mood, tone, timeline and irony twist: group work

30 minutes

- Before your teacher reads you a story, read through the questions below.

Listening to Hooting owls	
a) Does the story have an introduction that sets the scene?	(1)
b) Does the story create some suspense ? Explain your answer.	(2)
c) Is the mood created by the story sad or jolly?	(1)
d) Is the narrator's tone of voice serious, relaxed or humorous?	(1)
e) The end of the story has an irony twist. There is a surprising turn of _____. Explain your answer.	(3)

- Listen to your teacher reading you the story of the hooting owls. Then, in groups, answer the questions above.

Total: 8



Keywords

naïve: childlike, innocent

suspense: tension

Make summary in the book.

Discuss orally

The message

Pre-reading activity

You have been asked to take a parcel from Point A to Point B. There are several ways you can get there. Of course, you can walk, but it's quite far and you're feeling a bit relaxed and laid-back, and you think there are quicker means of transport to get you there. However, each time you try one, something happens and you can't get any further. So, you have to try another.

Write a story in the first person that uses all of this information. Dream up a good punchy ending.

When everyone in the class has finished, the teacher will divide you into small groups of four. Each person in the group reads her or his story to the others. Ask one person in your group to be your group's reporter when the whole class comes together for a report-back session. That person can give a brief summary of all four stories.

This is the story of Full Moon, Tick and Hare, and the message that Moon sent the people a long, long time ago.

This was no ordinary message! Indeed, it was a most important message. You see, Moon does not really die. She comes back again, as we see each time at full moon. Moon wanted the people to know this truth, "Just as I die and come alive again, so you also shall die and live again."

Moon decided that Tick should be the one to take this important message to the people. She knew that lazy Tick would just sit in the shade of a shrub and wait for a goat or goatherd to come past. Then he would jump on one of them and hitch a ride to the kraal where the fires were, and the message would reach the people in no time at all. So Tick was given the message to pass on.

Unfortunately, Tick was not only lazy – he also did not see very well. When Tick departed from Moon with the message, it was still night. He crept under the nearest **tuft** of grass and slept until the goats started grazing. There he awaited his opportunity.

As the first shadow fell across the tuft of grass, Tick crept out, crawled up the shinbone in front of him and held on tight, but, ohhh ... Tick had made a terrible mistake. As he kept repeating the message over and over to

himself, so as not to forget it, the earth disappeared from underneath him, and the tkau trees and the milk bushes grew smaller and smaller.

Only then did he realise this goat had feathers instead of fur! The sand-grouse **squawked** as she prepared to land on a far away bush. She shook her feathers vigorously, and Tick flew through the air and landed on a tuft of reeds.

That same evening, Moon **peeped** through the milk bushes on the far side, hoping to see the people dancing for joy at hearing the good news, but it was very quiet and the fires were burning low. From the weeping of the children, she could hear that someone was very ill. Then Moon realised that Tick had not yet delivered the good news to the people.

The second night, a few drops of rain fell, so the sand around Tick was humming with springbok and gemsbok **gambolling** for joy. A shadow fell across the tuft of reeds where Tick sat waiting and Tick thought, "This is it," and he clambered on.

Oh no, but this was not a goat to whose shinbone Tick was attached! By the time Tick realised this, the gemsbok was already galloping past the kraal, along the trail of raindrops yonder, in the direction of the sunset.

When the gemsbok stopped to graze in the late afternoon, Tick realised that another day had gone by without the message having been delivered. And now the kraal lay beyond the ridge that was beyond the furthest ridge still.



A while later, when Moon peeped through the milk bushes, she saw that the fires were even smaller than on the previous evening and she heard the people wailing. Someone was very, very ill indeed, and Moon realised that Tick had still not delivered her message of joy to the people.



On the third day, while Tick was sitting on a **sorrel** plant, Hare came to nibble the juicy leaves. And Tick told him about his problem.

Hare, who was terribly **inquisitive**, immediately wanted to know what the message was, and Tick rattled off: "Just as I, Moon, die but come alive again, so shall you also die and live again."

"This is an important message," thought Hare to himself. "If I can deliver it to the people, I shall be in favour with Moon." At once he offered to take Tick to the kraal.

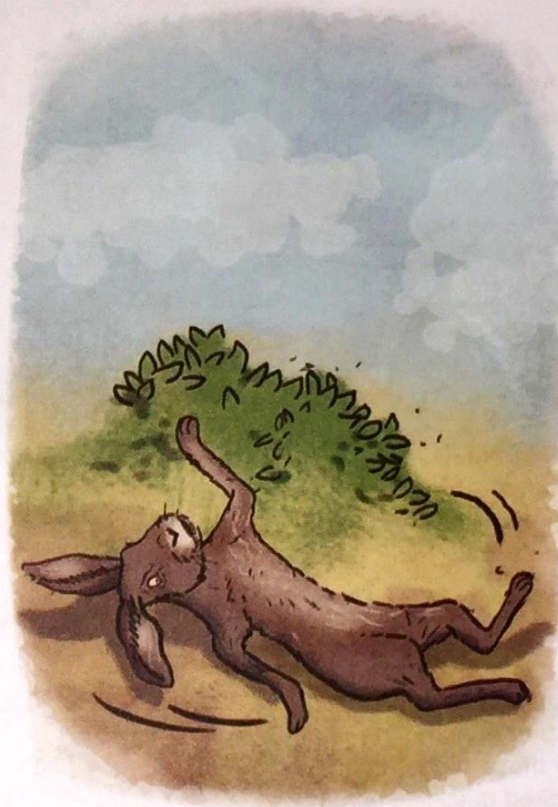
They hardly reached the nearest milk bushes when Hare gave his **kaross**, his furry blanket, a good shake – and Tick flew through the air. In the blink of an eye, Hare called, "Out of my way!" and hot-footed it to the kraal, to deliver the message to the people.

However, whereas Tick was near-sighted, Hare was short-sighted. All he thought about was the fame and fortune he would receive for delivering the important message. He did not keep repeating it to himself, as Tick had; he hot-footed it so that only his ears and fluffy white tail could be seen over the pebbles and tufts of grass.

Folktales: The message

When he arrived at the kraal, all out of breath, Hare could not quite remember the message as Tick had told it to him. He kept repeating it, but the more he repeated it, the more the words were scrambled and the more confused he became.

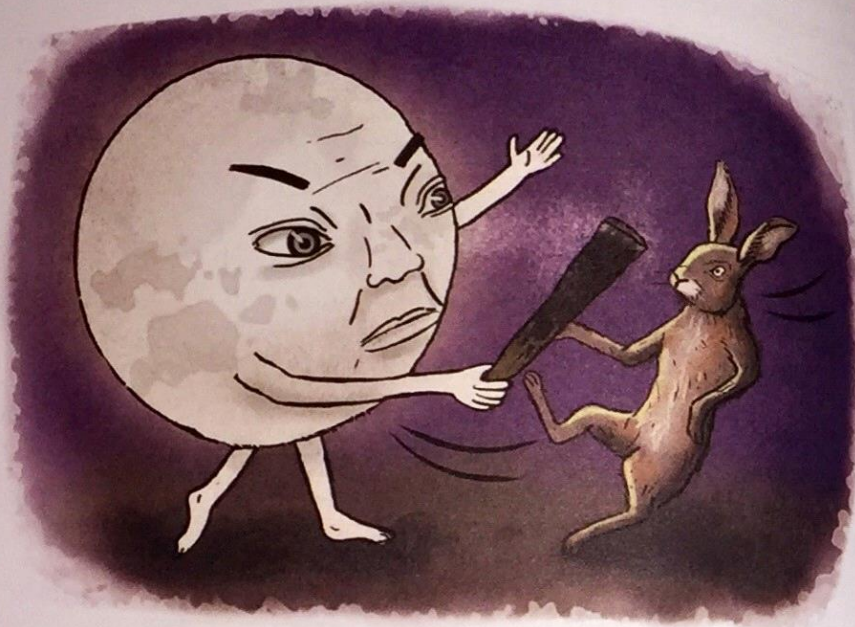
Dusty and pale, he collapsed on the ground and delivered the following message: "Just as I die, and remain dead, so shall you die and perish."



All the people of the kraal began wailing and covering themselves in sand and ash, and at that very moment, the very, very, very sick man breathed his last.

That night, when Moon peeped through the milk bushes, she did not see a single live coal. The kraal was deserted. The people had all left. There was no sign of life. When she looked closely, she did not see Tick anywhere, but Hare was still at the fireplace, repeating the scrambled message in a daze.

Moon was furious. She grabbed a log of burnt-out wood and hit Hare across the face with it. Hare got such a fright that he dropped the kaross into the fireplace. Then he snatched it back and hit Moon in the face with it.



Since that day, Hare has had a **cleft-palate**, and the pale ash-dust is still visible on Moon's face.

Folk tale: Leila Larimer: "The message" from *Madiba Magic*: Tafelberg, an imprint of NB Publishers, Cape Town (2002)

Vocabulary

tuft – a clump or bunch

squawked – made a harsh noise or cry

peeped – looked quickly, secretly

gambolling – moving about playfully

sorrel – sharp-tasting plant used in salads

inquisitive – keen to know

kaross – blanket made of animal skin

cleft-palate – gap in the roof of the mouth (perhaps what Hare has is a cleft-lip, where the lip is divided in the middle)

Folktales: The message

Activity

1. What two-part message did Moon want to give to the people? Put it in your own words, starting: "The two-part message Moon wanted to give the people was that ..."
(2)
2. If Moon thought Tick was lazy, why did she give this important message to him to give to the people?
(1)
3. Instead of saying "There he awaited his opportunity", you could use two words instead of the slightly outdated "awaited". Fill in the two words: "There he — — his opportunity."
(1)
4. What was Tick's first "terrible mistake"?
(1)
5. "He clambered on" is not the same as "he climbed on" or "he hopped" on. It sounds more difficult. When you "clamber on", do you do it:
(1)
 - a) easily
 - b) awkwardly
 - c) light-footedly?
6. "The gemsbok was already galloping ..." in which direction?
(1)
 - a) North
 - b) East
 - c) South
 - d) West
7. Which verb (doing-word) tells you that Tick gave the message to Hare very quickly?
(1)
8. You make "scrambled eggs" by mixing eggs and perhaps some milk, and then cooking them in a pan, stirring all the time. But, what is "a scrambled message"? In other words, what happened to the words of the message?
(1)
9. How many days does the story cover from start to finish?
(1)

Total: 10

Core Reader answers

Module 1: Folklore

1. The message

Core Reader page 11

1. The two-part message Moon wanted to give the people was that, just as she dies and then comes alive again, so human beings will die and then come alive again. (1)
2. She gave lazy Tick the message because she knew he would hitch a ride on an animal and so get the message to the people sooner. (1)
3. There he waited for his opportunity. (2)
4. Tick's first mistake was to crawl up and hang on to the shinbone of a bird. (1)
5. **b)** awkwardly (1)
6. **d)** West – "in the direction of the sunset" (1)
7. "rattled off" (1)
8. The words of the message became mixed up and in the wrong order. (1)
9. Three days (1)

Total: 10