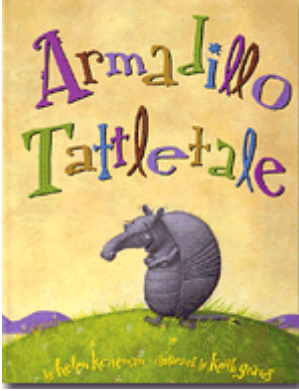


Armadillo Tattletale

By: Helen Ketteman



In *Armadillo Tattletale*, Armadillo's habit of eavesdropping and then misreporting what he hears makes the other animals so angry that they find a way to keep him from overhearing their private conversations. This unique folktale emphasizes the importance of minding one's own business, sometimes.

Before Reading:

Activating Strategy: All children enjoy playing the game "Telephone," and it is a great pre-reading activity. Start off by having everyone sit in a big circle, and the teacher says something in the ear of a student. The student then turns to the person next to him or her and whispers what they heard to the next person. When it gets all the way around, the last person says what they heard. It more than likely will be completely wrong from what was originally said.

This game illustrates what can happen when people start gossiping or changing an original story, which is what happens in Armadillo Tattletale.

Explain that *Armadillo Tattletale* is a "Porquoi" story which explains why something is the way it is. In this case, the reader finds out how the armadillo got small ears.

Armadillo Facts:

Contrary to popular belief, the nine-banded armadillo **can not** roll itself into a ball to escape predators!! Only one of the twenty-odd varieties of armadillos — the three-banded armadillo (*Tolypeutes tricinctus*) — is able to roll up. The other types are covered with too many bony plates to allow them to curl up. Other armadillos have to rely on their armored shells for defense while they scuttle away through thick, thorny brush or dig themselves a hole to hide in. Armadillos are not blind, but they do have poor eyesight. They rely on their ears and noses more than their eyes to detect food or predators. (When your food is never farther away than the end of your tongue, you don't really

need spectacular vision to find it, do you?) If you are close to an armadillo, and you stay quiet and stand still, the chances of it not noticing you are there are fairly good.

Difference between Predictions and Inferences:

Predictions: Are confirmed or contradicted at the end of the story

Inferences: Are often more open-ended and may or may not be solved at the end.

Look at the picture on the first page of the story. It is of the armadillo with huge ears. Write down the predictions that the students have about what may happen in the story. The ears are a HUGE hint! As you picture walk through the book, help the kids notice the pictures where the ears are sticking up from behind the bushes and trees. Discuss what might happen in the story, looking at the faces of the animals. Write down all of the predictions and infer what the big ears might be signaling. Say, "I can tell by looking at the picture that...."

Characteristics of a Folktale: Remember to review the characteristics of a folktale. Some of them include animals taking on human characteristics, magical happenings, and good verses evil, happily ever after, lesson or moral to the story, things happening in groups of three.

During Reading:

Vocabulary: When words are *explained* while reading a book, more of these words are retained than when books are read without word explanation?

Work on using context clues with these vocabulary words:
eavesdropping, murky, scraggly, humongous,

If there are any other words that might give them trouble, be sure to discuss their meanings while reading.

Inferring Theme: Themes are the underlying ideas, morals and lessons that give the story its texture, depth and meaning. Themes may make us mad, angry, sad, joyful etc. The theme of a story is

rarely written out in the story. Examples of theme may be selfishness, thoughtlessness, self-respect friendship etc.

As you are reading the book, look for evidence of a theme running throughout the book. When you are done reading, ask the kids what they think and make a list of words, pictures or sentences that support your theme. (Theme of this book might be lack of self-control, friendship, and fairness)

Big Idea or Theme	
Evidence	

After Reading:

Go back over the predictions that you made at the beginning, and look at your theme board with the inferences to decide what the main theme is for this story.

Figurative Language lesson:

Onomatopoeia: (Sound Words) Words, whose sound suggests their meaning like buzz, click, snap, chop.

In this story there are many examples of onomatopoeia. As you re-read the story, have the students listen for those words that actually sound like their meaning. Make a list of the words so that they can use some of them when writing.

Here are some examples from the book: scrounged, squalled, bawled, squawked, rattled, hiss, whick-whacked, slogging, shuffled, gnashed, gawked