

Why The Manatee...



Objectives

Students will use their creativity to create a fable about manatees.

Materials

- paper
- pencils

Action

1. Have your students brainstorm to create a list of things they know about manatees, such as they:
 - are slow swimmers
 - have very little hair on their bodies
 - eat aquatic grasses
 - have paddle-shaped tails
 - have a lifetime supply of molars
2. List all the items on a whiteboard.
3. Explain to your students that many cultures have stories that explain why certain animals look or act the way they do. Ask if anyone knows of a story that they might share with the class. If no one volunteers, share one of the following stories with them.
4. Ask students to choose one of the facts about manatees on the board and write a fable about it.

Deeper Depths

Have the students illustrate the fable they created.



Why the Leopard Hides His Food Up a Tree

(CA fable of the noble Ndebele people of Africa)

Long ago, the Leopard, the Hyena, and the Jackal were best friends. Whenever the Leopard killed an animal, he always shared the meat with his friends. One day, Leopard was too ill to hunt. He asked the Jackal to go out and bring back a meal, but the Jackal said he was so weary, he'd never catch anything. So Leopard asked Hyena to hunt for the trio, but the Hyena claimed he had a sore foot, and therefore couldn't hunt.

Leopard snarled at the pair, "I thought you were my friends, but now I see the truth. From now on, you will never share my catch again. When I have eaten my fill, I will carry what is left high into a tree where you can't reach it."

This is why you will always find leopards snacking high in a tree.

How the Camel Got His Hump

(adapted from a story by Rudyard Kipling)

When the world was brand new, there was a Camel who lived in the middle of the Howling Desert because he didn't want to do any work for his keeper. When anybody spoke to him he said "humph!" On Monday morning, the Horse approached the Camel saying, "Camel, come out and trot like the rest of us." "Humph!" said the Camel; and the Horse went away. Soon the Dog approached the Camel with a stick in his mouth, saying, "Camel, come and fetch and carry like the rest of us."

"Humph!" said the Camel; and the Dog went away.

Soon the Ox approached the Camel, with a yoke on his neck, saying, "Camel, come and plow like the rest of us."

"Humph!" said the Camel; and the Ox went away.

At the end of the day, the keeper called the Horse and the Dog and the Ox together, and said, "I'm very sorry for you; but the Camel in the Desert can't work, or he would have been here by now, so you must work double time to make up for it." This didn't make the three very happy.

Soon after the three told of their problem to the Djinn, the magician in charge of all deserts, who happened to be rolling by in a cloud of dust (this is the way Djinn's travel because it's magic).

When the Djinn heard this, he rolled himself up in his dust-cloak, and took a bearing across the desert, and found the Camel looking at his own reflection in a pool of water.

"My friend," said the Djinn, "what is this? Hear that you won't do any work?"

"Humph!" said the Camel.

"You've given other animals extra work ever since Monday morning," said the Djinn.

"Humph!" said the Camel.

"I wouldn't say that again if I were you," said the Djinn.

"Humph!" said the Camel again; but no sooner had he said it, when the Djinn called up his magic and there on the camel's back, growing and growing, was a great big hump!

"There," said the Djinn. "That's your very own hump that you've brought upon yourself by not working. Today is Thursday, and you've done no work since Monday. You'll be able to work for three days without eating, because you can live on your hump. Now come out of the Desert and go to work and behave!"

And from that day on, the Camel always wears a hump (but he has never learned how to behave)!