

Aesop's Fables: Fitting In

The Miller, His Son, and Their Donkey

One day, a miller and his son set off to sell their donkey at a fair. Their donkey carried their luggage, and they walked beside him. Soon they met some women.

"You're walking? How silly! You could ride!" one said. So the miller made his son ride the donkey.

Then they met some old men. One said, "See that lazy boy ride the donkey? His poor old father has to walk!" So the son got down and the miller rode the donkey.

Then they met some women and children. "Why, you mean old man!" one woman shouted. "Your poor little boy has to run to keep up with you on your donkey!" So the miller told his son to ride, too.

When they were almost at the fair, they met a judge. He said, "Your poor old donkey has to carry you *and* your luggage? Why, you two could carry *him* easier than he can carry *you*."

So the miller and his son got down. They tied the donkey's feet together. They put a pole between his legs and turned him upside down. Then they carried their own donkey on the pole!

As they crossed a bridge, a crowd gathered to laugh at the silly sight. The laughter made the donkey angry. He broke free from the pole—and fell into the river. So the old miller went home. By trying to please everybody, he had pleased nobody. And he lost his donkey, too.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Exercise A: Detail Check

1. Where were the miller and his son taking the donkey?
2. Why were they going there?
3. List the people that the miller and his son met.
4. What did the miller and his son do after they talked to the judge?
5. How did the donkey wind up in the river?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Exercise B: Deeper Meanings

1. Was the miller a kind man? How can you tell?
2. Why do you think the miller kept doing what people said?
3. Was it smart to keep doing what each group said? Why or why not?
4. Do you think the people liked the miller because he did what they said?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Exercise D: Simply Imagine

1. Imagine if the miller and his son met someone *else*. What *new* crazy idea could the person give them? Would the miller and his son do it?

2. What if someone tied you to a pole and carried you upside down across a bridge? What would that be like? Would you enjoy it?

3. What if the miller met all the different people *at the same time*? What would he do?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Exercise E: Taking It with You

1. What does a miller do? (Use a dictionary for help.)
2. Have you ever tried to make everyone happy at once? What happened? Did it work?
3. The miller tried to make *everyone* happy. Which people do you try to make happy? Your parents? Your friends? Someone else?
4. When it would be better *not* to make someone happy?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Exercise F: Word Search

Find each word and cross it out. Words can be vertical or horizontal.

Z V W V K X Q Z X B
B M I L L E R G F Y
S O N S N W Y F G C
L C D O N K E Y Q F
Z R T W H G F Y M R
D K X B M W P O L E
A B R I V E R G Y R
N D H T N S N L Q R
C F R O O F P H T N
E V Z W M T I L E S

MILLER	DONKEY	RIVER	ROOF
SON	DANCE	POLE	TILES

Name: _____

Date: _____

Aesop's Fables: Fitting In Answer Key

Exercise A

1. To a neighboring fair to sell him.
2. a well
3. a group of women
a group of old men
a group of women and children
a judge
4. Got off the donkey, turned him upside down, tied his legs together, and carried him on a pole.
5. When the crowd laughed at him, the donkey didn't like the noise or the strange handling, and tried to get away.

Exercise B

Examples may vary.

1. Yes. He put his son on the donkey first, instead of getting up himself.
2. He wanted them to like him.
3. No. He wound up losing his donkey.
4. Answers vary.

Exercises C and D

Answers vary.

Exercise E

A miller grinds grains into flour. Other answers vary.

Exercise F

.....
.MILLER...
SON.....
..DONKEY..
.....
D.....POLE
A.RIVER...
N.....
C.ROOF....
E.....TILES

A Note on the Text:

The fables used here are a revised version of the translation by George Fyler Townsend, an edition of which was published in 1880. This translation is provided courtesy of Project Gutenberg (www.gutenberg.org).