The Boy Who Cried “Wolf”
(A Fable by Aesop)

Reading With Expression

Writers use punctuation marks so readers know how the characters in a story are speaking. If the characters are simply making a statement, the writer will use a comma (,) or a period (.)

“*It is raining,*” said Tom.

Tom said, “*It is raining.*”

The writer shows that a character is asking a question by using a question mark (?)

“*Did you bring an umbrella?*” asked Mary.

If a character is yelling or showing strong feelings, the writer will use an exclamation point (!)

“*Bring a bucket quick! The roof is leaking!*” cried Tom.

Here are some of the characters’ lines that you will read in the fable “The Boy Who Cried ‘Wolf.’” Decide how the speakers are saying these lines and add the correct punctuation.

“Wolf Wolf Help ”

“Where is the wolf ”

“I played a trick on you ”

“Why didn’t you help me when I called for you ”

“Once you tell a lie, no one will believe you can tell the truth”
Reading the Story

Once there lived a young boy whose job was to watch sheep. Every day he would lead his sheep to the fields of green grass outside his village. The boy would sit in the shade all day watching his sheep eat grass. He often grew very bored with his job. He wanted some excitement in his long day.

One day he decided to have some fun by playing a trick. After he led his sheep to the pasture, he called out loudly, “Wolf! Wolf! Help!” When the people in the village heard his cry, they came running to help the boy and to save his sheep. But when they arrived at the field, there was no wolf.

“Where is the wolf?” they asked. “We left our work to help you.”

The boy began to laugh. “There is no wolf,” he said. “I played a trick on you.” The people shook their heads. They did not think the trick was very funny. Then they went back to the village.

A few days later, the young boy decided to play his trick again. He waited until it was hot in the afternoon and then called, “Wolf! Wolf! Help!”

Again, the people in the village left their jobs and ran to help the young boy. They reached the field, hot and out of breath.

“Where is the wolf?” they asked.

“I tricked you again!” the young boy laughed.

This time the village people were angry. “You should not call for help if you do not need help,” they said as they began the walk back to the village.

The next day while the boy was resting in the shade and watching his sheep, a wolf appeared. It began chasing the sheep. The young boy was very afraid. He knew that he could not protect his sheep from the wolf. “Wolf! Wolf! Help!” he cried.

But when the people in the village heard his call, they said, “That boy is trying to trick us again.” The people went back to their work and did not go to help the boy. The hungry wolf ate all of his sheep.

The boy returned to the village and told everyone what happened. “Why didn’t you help me when I called for you?” he asked.

“Once you tell a lie,” the people said, “no one will believe you can tell the truth.”
Thinking About What You Read

1. The boy in the story had to sit out in the fields all day doing nothing but watching his sheep. He was bored. Was this a good reason to play a trick on the people in his village? Why or why not?

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2. If the boy had played the trick only one time, do you think the people would have come to help him when the wolf really did come? Why or why not?

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3. Do you think the people of the village will ever believe the boy can tell the truth? Why or why not?

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4. From this story has come the expression “Don’t cry ‘wolf.’” What does it mean if someone tells you “Don’t cry ‘wolf’”?

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Answers will vary.