About the Tale

For more than 2,500 years, the sly wit of Aesop’s fables have entertained children the world over. And the important lessons of these tales have seeped into the very fabric of our cultures, turning up in many expressions including “sour grapes,” and “slow and steady wins the race.” In The Tortoise and the Hare, a quick rabbit challenges a slow turtle to a race, convinced that he cannot lose. But the hare’s confidence leads him to take a long nap—a mistake that allows the plodding turtle to cross the finish line first! Besides being funny, this well-loved story serves as a great reminder to never give up.

Discussion Questions

1. Why does the tortoise win the race?
2. What do you think the author is trying to tell us in this story?
3. Would you rather be the hare or the tortoise?

Notable Retellings

★ Hare and Tortoise Race to the Moon by Oliver J. Corwin (Harry Abrams, 2002). Children will adore this updated tale in which the two rivals race to the moon.

★ The Tortoise and the Hare by Janet Stevens (Holiday House, 1985). This tried-and-true retelling features easy-to-read text and simple yet amusing illustrations.

★ The Tortoise and the Hare by Helen Ward (Millbrook Press, 1999). Don’t miss the stunning, detailed pictures in this contemporary classic.

Companion Reproducible

Focus Skills: Comprehension, Critical and Creative Thinking, Writing

Invite children to use the reproducible on page 50 to write a letter to the hare offering advice on what he should do—or not do—to win his new race with a snail.
Dear Hare,

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

_______________________________________________________

Your friend,
"How did you ever beat the hare?" asked the horse.
The tortoise grinned, "The hare may be fast, but slow and steady wins the race."

The hare, who was very fast, always teased the slow tortoise.
"Ha, ha, ha! Even a snail is faster than you!" he said.

But it was no use. The tortoise crossed the finish line first.
Once upon a time, there lived a tortoise and a hare.

After a while, the hare woke up. “Oh, no! The tortoise is winning!” he yelled. He jumped up and hopped along the path.

The tortoise did not like the teasing one bit. Finally, he decided to do something about it. “Let’s have a race,” he said.

“The tortoise won! The tortoise won!” all the animals cheered.

After a while, the hare woke up. “Oh, no! The tortoise is winning!” he yelled. He jumped up and hopped along the path.
"Ha, ha, ha! I can take a nap and still wake up in time to beat the tortoise," said the hare.

But as the hare napped, the tortoise walked. Slow, slow, slow. And guess what? By and by, the tortoise passed the hare!

The hare hopped. Fast, fast, fast.

The hare fell down laughing.

"OK, but you know I will win," he said.

"We will see," said the tortoise.

The tortoise walked. Slow, slow, slow.
On the day of the big race, all of the animals came to watch. “On your mark, get set, go!” said the fox.

So he did. Snore, snore, snore.

The hare hopped. Fast, fast, fast. The tortoise walked. Slow, slow, slow. Soon the hare was way ahead of the tortoise.
Making the Mini-Books

1. Make double-sided copies of the mini-book pages. (You should have two double-sided copies for each one.)

2. Cut the pages in half along the dashed line.

3. Position the pages so that the lettered spreads (A, B, C, D) are face up. Place the B spread on top of the A spread. Then, place the C and D spreads on top of those in sequence.

4. Fold the pages in half along the solid line. Make sure all the pages are in the proper order. Staple them together along the book’s spine.

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Book Badge Reproducibles

Let me read _______________________.

to you!

Let’s read _______________________.

together!