



## THE NEW JERSEY ITALIAN HERITAGE COMMISSION



# The Cunning Shoemaker

**Grade Level:** Kindergarten and First Grade

**Subjects:** Language Arts / Character Education

**Categories:** Arts and Sciences

**Standards:**

Please see page 7 of the lesson plan for complete New Jersey Student Learning Standards alignment.

**Objectives:**

Students will be able to:

1. compare the fairy tale to modern characters, such as Bugs Bunny.
2. identify the genre of the story as a Fairy Tale.
3. demonstrate their comprehension of the Fairy Tale.
4. determine the character of the people in the tale.

**Abstract:**

Most students are familiar with the Bugs Bunny cartoons. No matter who tries to challenge Bugs, Bugs always outwits his adversary. Many Italian fairy tales offer similar plots. The hero is usually an underdog who has to face a superior adversary. The hero uses his quick wit against his opponents by appealing to their greed or desires. In this story of the “Cunning Shoemaker” an astute cobbler befuddles a group of dangerous robbers, by appealing to their avarice and exploiting their obvious lack of intelligence. Students will develop reading comprehension while appreciating the advantage of industrious behavior and a quick wit.

**Key Terms:**

Crown piece	A silver coin worth 5 shillings
Florins	A gold coin first issued at Florence, Italy, in 1252. A coin worth two shillings.
Pence	plural of penny; as in “pennies.”
Shilling	A coin used in the United Kingdom, worth one twentieth of a pound, 5 new pence, or 12 old pence prior to 1971.

### **Background:**

Most students are familiar with the Bugs Bunny cartoons. No matter who tries to mess with Bugs, Bugs always outwits his adversary. The cunning rabbit often uses his opponents' weaknesses and vices against him. Elmer Fudd, Yosemite Sam, the Martian, the Monster, among others, are often left a babbling mess each time they try to confront the "Wiley Wabbit."

Many Italian fairy tales offer similar plots. The hero is usually an underdog who has to face a superior adversary. The hero uses his quick wit against his opponent's by appealing to his greed or desires. In this story, an astute cobbler befuddles a group of dangerous robbers, by appealing to their avarice and exploiting their obvious lack of intelligence.

### **Procedure:**

- I. Ask students whether they have ever watched Bugs Bunny on TV.
  - a. Remind them how Bugs always outsmarts his adversaries, such as Elmer Fudd, Yosemite Sam, the Martian, or the Monster.
    - i. He uses his wit to stop his adversaries, right in their tracks.
  
- II. Tell students that you are going to read an Italian Fairy tale, called "The Cunning Shoemaker."
  - a. As you read the story, you will stop and ask the students some questions to check for understanding.
    - i. You can also use this opportunity to discuss some character issues.
  
- III. Download the Fairy Tale from:  
<https://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/lfb/pi/pifb21.htm>
  - a. Read to the 12<sup>th</sup> paragraph to students.
    - i. Ask the students:
    - ii. **What does the shoemaker traveling to Mascalucia tell you about his character?**
      1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
      2. You may point out that he must have been an industrious fellow.
        - a. He and his wife were starving, and he figured that he could trade in other towns to raise the necessary money.
      3. You might also point out that this man would do what he had to do to fulfill his responsibility to provide for his wife.
    - iii. **Why would the shoemaker buy a donkey?**
      1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
      2. Tell the students that the shoemaker was thinking ahead.
        - a. A donkey could take him from town, so he could make more money and he and his wife would not starve again.
  - b. Read the 13<sup>th</sup> paragraph to the 20<sup>th</sup> paragraph to students.
    - i. **When the shoemaker saw robbers in the distance, what did he do with the donkey?**

1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
  2. The shoemaker put five florins into the donkey's mane to set up the conditions to trick or con the robbers into leaving him alone and paying him for the donkey.
- ii. **What did the shoemaker use to defend himself from the robbers?**
    1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
    2. The shoemaker used his quick wit.
  - iii. **How did he know that the robbers would fall for the trick?**
    1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
    2. The shoemaker realized that the robbers were so greedy that if he offered them an opportunity to get more money, they would leave him alone.
    3. He also realized that robbers usually were not very intelligent.
- c. Read from the 21th paragraph to 28<sup>th</sup> paragraph to students.
- i. **After buying himself a good dinner, what did the shoemaker buy?**
    1. The shoemaker bought a vineyard.
  - ii. **What does the shoemakers' purchase of a vineyard, tell you about his character?**
    1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
    2. The shoemaker was an industrious fellow.
      - a. He knew that he could make a good living with land and a vineyard.
      - b. He and his wife would not have to go hungry again.
  - iii. **After the captain of the robbers realized they had been tricked, why didn't he tell his men and instead, he allow them to find out for themselves?**
    1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
    2. Because of pride, he didn't want his men to realize he had been taken by the shoemaker?
  - iv. **What does that tell you about the captain's character?**
    1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
    2. The captain was a weak leader and had very little self-confidence if he was afraid to show his men he had made a mistake.
    3. He had very little regard for his men since he allowed them go through the same foolish exercise.
  - v. **When the shoemaker saw robbers in the distance, what did he tell his wife to do?**
    1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
    2. The shoemaker told her to fill a bladder with blood and bind it around her neck.
      - a. He told her to pretend to argue with him.
      - b. He would stab the bladder and she would pretend to fall dead.
      - c. When she heard him play his guitar, she was to get up and dance.

- vi. **Why did the shoemaker employ such an outrageous plan?**
  - 1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
  - 2. He knew that the more outrageous the trick, the more the gullible robbers would believe him.
- vii. **What did the shoemaker use to defend himself from the robbers?**
  - 1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
  - 2. The shoemaker used his quick wit.
- viii. **How did he know that the robbers would fall for the trick?**
  - 1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
  - 2. The shoemaker realized that the robbers were so greedy that if he offered them an opportunity to more thoroughly control their wives, they would pay him and then leave him alone.
  - 3. He also realized that these robbers really lacked any intelligence.
- d. Read from the 29<sup>th</sup> paragraph to the end paragraph to students
  - i. **After the captain of the robbers realized he had been tricked and had killed his wife, why didn't he tell his men and instead, he allowed them to kill their wives and find out for themselves?**
    - 1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
    - 2. Because of pride, he didn't want his men to realize he had been taken by the shoemaker?
  - ii. **What does that tell you about the captain's character?**
    - 1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
    - 2. The captain was a weak leader and had very little self-confidence if he was afraid to show his men he had made a mistake.
    - 3. He had very little regard for his men since he allowed them go through the same foolish exercise and unintentionally kill their wives.
  - iii. **When the shoemaker saw robbers in the distance, what did he do?**
    - 1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
    - 2. When the shoemaker saw the robbers, he told his wife to tell them he was in the vineyard.
      - a. She was to send the dog after him.
      - b. He then hid in a barrel.
  - iv. **What did the shoemaker use to defend himself from the robbers?**
    - 1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
    - 2. The shoemaker used his quick wit.
  - v. **How did he know that the robbers would fall for the trick?**
    - 1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
    - 2. The shoemaker realized that the robbers were so greedy that if he offered them an opportunity to get this intelligent dog, they would leave him alone.
    - 3. He also realized that robbers very, very dimwitted.

- vi. **After the captain of the robbers realized he had been tricked a third time, why didn't he tell his men and instead allow them to find out for themselves?**
  - 1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
  - 2. Because of pride, he didn't want his men to realize he had been taken by the shoemaker?
- vii. **What does that tell you about the captain's character?**
  - 1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
  - 2. The captain was a weak leader and had very little self-confidence if he was afraid to show his men he had made a mistake.
  - 3. He had very little regard for his men since he allowed them go through the same foolish exercise.
- viii. **What did the robbers do, once they figured out they had the shoemakers had conned them for a third time?**
  - 1. They captured him and put him into a sack.
    - a. They told him they would throw him into the sea and he would drown.
- ix. **What did the shoemaker do when the robbers went into a church to cool off?**
  - 1. The shoemaker heard a swine herder whistling merrily.
  - 2. He called out, "I won't, I won't, I say."
  - 3. He told the swine herder that he was being kidnapped to marry the king's daughter.
- x. **How did the shoemaker know the swine herder would switch with him?**
  - 1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
  - 2. The shoemaker knew that many men are greedy and would sacrifice what they have for the chance of something they think is better.
- xi. **What happened to the swine herder?**
  - 1. The robbers threw him into the sea, thinking he was the shoemaker.
- xii. **What did the shoemaker use to defend himself from the robbers?**
  - 1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
  - 2. The shoemaker used his quick wit.
- xiii. **How did he know that the robbers would fall for the trick?**
  - 1. Entertain the various answers the students will offer.
  - 2. The shoemaker realized that the robbers were so greedy that if he offered them an opportunity to get a herd of pigs, they jump into the sea.
  - 3. He also realized that robbers very, very dimwitted.

#### IV. Closing Activity

- a. Have the students come up with a moral to the story.
  - i. E.g., Be happy with what you have and not what you don't, or use your brains, not your brawn, etc.
- b. Ask students to illustrate their moral by creating a picture on a poster board.

**Assessment:**

Each fairy tale has a moral lesson. Teachers check for understanding by asking students to state the moral lesson of each story.

**Extension:**

Ask students to come up with their own story of a person using his quick wit to defeat adversaries.

# New Jersey Student Learning Standards

## Social Studies

*America in the World* – All students will acquire knowledge and skills to think analytically about how past and present interactions of people, cultures, and the environment shape the American heritage. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions that reflect fundamental rights and core democratic values as productive citizens in local, national, and global communities.

6.1.4.D.12 Explain how folklore and the actions of famous historical and fictional characters from many cultures during different historical periods.

## English Language Arts

RL.1.9 Compare and contrast the adventures and experiences of characters in stories.

RL.1.3 Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.

RL.1.2 Retell stories, including key details, and demonstrate understanding of their central message or lesson.

RF.1.4 Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.