Small Helpers, Big Changes

Compare how small characters change events in three traditional tales.

RL.4.9 "Compare and contrast themes, topics and patterns of events in stories, myths and traditional literature from different cultures."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Circle the smallest helper in each tale, then underline the event that lets that helper change the ending so you can compare the stories.

Three Tales of Small Helpers

1. In a tale from ancient Greece, a lion caught a mouse that had run across his paw. The mouse begged to go free and promised to help someday. The lion laughed but opened his paw. Later, hunters trapped him in a rope net. Hearing his roar, the mouse hurried over and gnawed through the ropes. The lion walked away free, saved by the tiny animal he had spared.

2. In a traditional story from India, a herd of elephants marched through the homes of mice, crushing their tiny houses. The mice asked the elephants to take another path, and the elephants agreed. One day, hunters caught the elephants and tied them with strong ropes. The mice heard their cries and rushed to help. They chewed the ropes until the elephants could escape. The herd never forgot its small neighbors.

3. In a traditional Russian tale, a farmer grew a turnip too large to pull from the ground. His wife took his hand and pulled with him, but the turnip stayed put. A girl, a dog, and a cat joined the line, one by one. At last, a mouse grabbed on behind the cat. Everyone pulled together, and out came the turnip. The smallest helper made the team strong enough.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How do the Greek and Indian tales follow a similar pattern of events?

2. How does the mouse's part in the Russian tale differ from the mouse's part in the Greek tale?

3. Compare the problems in the Indian and Russian tales. Why is a small helper needed in each?

4. What idea do all three tales share? Use events from two tales to support your answer.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a new four-sentence tale about a tiny helper and a large challenge. Then write one sentence explaining how its pattern of events is like one tale on this page and one sentence explaining how it differs.

ANSWER KEY

Small Helpers, Big Changes

GRADE 4 · RL.4.9

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Circle the smallest helper in each tale, then underline the event that lets that helper change the ending so you can compare the stories. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How do the Greek and Indian tales follow a similar pattern of events?	**A large animal first helps a small animal or group of animals. Later, the small animals free the large animal from a trap.**
2	How does the mouse's part in the Russian tale differ from the mouse's part in the Greek tale?	**The Russian mouse joins a group already working together to pull a turnip. The Greek mouse acts alone to free a lion from a net.**
3	Compare the problems in the Indian and Russian tales. Why is a small helper needed in each?	**In the Indian tale, mice chew ropes to free trapped elephants. In the Russian tale, a mouse adds the pull needed to lift a turnip.**
4	What idea do all three tales share? Use events from two tales to support your answer.	**Small helpers can make a big difference. A mouse frees the lion by chewing a net, and another mouse helps the group pull up the turnip.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A giant tortoise could not roll a fallen log off the path. A beetle noticed a loose stone under one end. She asked the tortoise to push while she dug the stone away. The log rolled aside, and both animals crossed the path. Like the Greek tale, a small animal helps a larger one solve a problem. Unlike the Greek tale, the larger animal does not help the smaller one first.

Accept other supported comparisons, including the different ways the small helpers act. For Your Turn, look for four story sentences and two accurate comparison sentences.