

Musical Stories



Lesson – *The Tortoise and The Hare with Grieg*

Companion Video – *The Tortoise and The Hare with Grieg*

Suggested Grade Level

Grades 1-4

Objective

Through the story of *The Tortoise and The Hare*, students will explore the musical elements of tempo, dynamics and tonalities in selections from Grieg's *Peer Gynt* Suites 1 and 2 and *Wedding Day at Troldhaugen*, while learning musical vocabulary. They will make observations about the characters, action and resolution of the story and express their observations through movement and musical choices.

Suggested Materials

- The Tortoise and The Hare story (provided)
- BPO presentation video of *The Tortoise and The Hare with Grieg*
- Selections of Grieg's *Peer Gynt*, Suites 1 and 2 and *Wedding Day at Troldhaugen* (audio links are embedded in *The Tortoise and The Hare* story provided)
 - "Morning Mood" from *Peer Gynt* Suite No. 1
 - "Arabian Dance" from *Peer Gynt* Suite No. 2
 - "Solvieg's Song" from *Peer Gynt* Suite No. 2
 - "In the Hall of the Mountain King" from *Peer Gynt* Suite No. 2
 - "Peer Gynt's Journey Home" from *Peer Gynt* Suite No. 2
 - "Ingrid's Lament" from *Peer Gynt* Suite No. 2
 - *Wedding Day at Troldhaugen*
- White board/smart board or other classroom tool for recording
- Classroom instruments (optional)

New York State Arts Standards

MU:Pr4.3.1a-4a

MU: Re7.2.1a-4a MU:Re8.1.1a-4a

MU: Cn10.1.1d-4d

New York State English Language Arts & Literacy Standards

Reading, Standard 1, 2, 3 & 4

Writing, Standard 3

Speaking & Listening, Standard 1, 2, 4 & 6

Language, Standard 1, 2, 4 & 6

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Procedure

- 1) Music can help tell a story: Introduce the story of *The Tortoise and The Hare* and let students know that music will help illustrate the story. They will need to make some observations about the story while they are listening to it and help determine what type of music would be appropriate for each section.
- 2) Make a list of characteristics for each animal with students. For example, how does a tortoise move? What about a hare? What does each animal sound and look like?
- 3) Have students read through the beginning of the story. In the beginning we are introduced to the two characters in the story; the tortoise and the hare. Play the two YouTube recordings for these characters (links embedded in the story – “Solveig’s Song” and “Arabian Dance” from *Peer Gynt* Suite No. 2). Ask students to identify places in each piece during which the music sounds representative of the tortoise versus when the music sounds like the hare. What musical characteristics helped them make these choices?
- 4) Introduce Musical Vocabulary: TEMPO – how fast or slow the music sounds. The tortoise music is slow while the hare music is fast. These tempos reflect the different speeds of the two characters.
- 5) Continue reading the story through the middle section and then stop again for a discussion.
- 6) When the tortoise and the hare begin the race, what is happening? How are different points during the race reflected in the music? Play the beginning and the ending of “In the Hall of the Mountain King” from *Peer Gynt* Suite No. 1 (link embedded in story) for students and ask them to move with the music. What differences do they hear between the beginning of this music and the end? How does the music progress to illustrate the race between the tortoise and the hare? What musical characteristics are used to demonstrate how the race changes over time?
- 7) Introduce Musical Vocabulary: DYNAMICS – how loud or quiet the music sounds. The music in “In the Hall of the Mountain King” changes in both the tempo and the dynamics from beginning to end! Do students think this music fits the race part of the story? Why or why not?
- 8) Now have students read to the very end of the story. What mood would each of these characters feel at the end of the story? How do you think the hare feels after losing the race? How does the winning tortoise feel?
- 9) Play the two musical selections at the end (“Ingrid’s Lament” from Grieg’s *Peer Gynt* Suite No. 2 and Grieg’s *Wedding Day at Troldhaugen* – links embedded in story). Which music fits the tortoise’s mood best? How about the hare? Why did they make these choices?
- 10) Introduce Musical Vocabulary: TONALITY- the organization of pitches (or notes) that when played together can create different moods. These two musical selections use different tonalities. What instrument(s) does the composer use to create the moods of the tortoise and the hare at the end of the race? Why do you think the composer chose the specific instrument(s)?
- 11) Have students watch the BPO presentation of *The Tortoise and The Hare* with music from *Peer Gynt*, Suites 1 and 2.

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Extended Learning

Have students create their own musical story. This exercise can be done as a whole class or in small groups. Students can use classroom instruments, body percussion or familiar songs to create a musical story.

First students need to create a story by making the following choices:

- Setting – where does the story take place?
- Characters – who is in this story? Be sure to include one villain!
- Plot development – what happens in this story? How do the characters interact with the villain?
- Resolution - How do the characters resolve the conflict with the villain to end the story?

Alternatively, you can select a familiar story in which students can add their own musical selections.

Students can then create music to go with each section of the story using different tempos, dynamics and tonalities. Have students perform each story with their music for the class.

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The Tortoise and The Hare

An Aesop's Fable

All musical excerpts are from Grieg's *Peer Gynt*, Suite No. 1 and No. 2, except for the last selection which is from Grieg's *Wedding Day at Troldhaugen*.

"Morning Mood" from *Peer Gynt* Suite No. 1 (Time Stamp: 0:40 to 4:50)

Once upon a time, there was a lovely wooded forest that was home to many animal friends. There were deer, a fox, a bear, many birds, a badger, and some mice. There was also a hare and a tortoise, who happened to be neighbors. Every day they would step outside their homes and say, "Good morning, Tortoise." "Good morning, Hare."

"Arabian Dance" from *Peer Gynt* Suite No. 2 (Time Stamp: 4:55 to 10:00)

While the tortoise was a mild mannered, slow moving animal, the hare was rather fast and he loved to boast about it. He was always bragging about how he could run faster than everyone else. "I'm faster than all the animals in the whole forest!" he would say to anyone who would listen.

The hare liked to tease the sluggish tortoise for his slowness. "Don't you wish you could be as fast as me?" he would say. Day after day this boasting went on. Finally, the tortoise got tired of the teasing and the bragging and answered back: "There's no denying you're swift, but even you can be beaten."

The hare squealed with laughter. "Beaten in a race? By whom? Not you, surely! I bet there's nobody in the world that can win against me, I'm so speedy. Why don't you try?" Annoyed by such bragging, the tortoise said, "Alright, I accept the challenge."

"Solvieg's Song" from *Peer Gynt* Suite No. 2 (Time Stamp: 10:05 to 11:50)

The hare was as surprised as anyone when the tortoise accepted the challenge to a race. The tortoise was the slowest moving animal he had ever seen. It took him an hour to eat his breakfast. It took him a day to get to Bear's home across the forest. And he spent more time than all the other animals washing up at the watering hole. His motto always seemed to be "There's no rush. Slow and steady wins the race."

The hare chuckled to himself, "Winning this race will be a breeze!"

"In the Hall of the Mountain King" opening from *Peer Gynt* Suite No. 1 (Time Stamp: 11:52 to 12:58)

Early the next day, the forest animals planned a racecourse and at dawn the hare and the tortoise both stood at the starting line. Fox gave the signal and the race began! The hare yawned sleepily as the tortoise started to trudge slowly off. When the hare saw how painfully slow his rival was, he decided, half asleep on his feet, to have a quick nap. "Take your time!" he shouted to the tortoise. "I'll have forty winks and catch up with you in a minute," and he laid down to rest.

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The tortoise steadily marched forward.

“Peer Gynt’s Journey Home” from *Peer Gynt Suite No. 2* (Time Stamp: 13:00 to 15:25)

The hare woke with a start from a fitful sleep and gazed around, looking for the tortoise. The sun was high in the sky. The creature was still in sight, having only covered about a third of the course. He hadn’t stopped to rest and was moving steadily forward along the path. Breathing a sigh of relief, the hare decided he might as well have lunch, and off he went to munch some cabbages he had seen in a nearby field.

All of the other forest animals were on the sidelines cheering them on. “Hare! Get going!” they shouted.

The hare sped off, darting and dashing over small stones and through forest branches. He leapt and bounded over small streams and through tall grass. But for all the hare’s swift efforts, every time he looked behind him, the tortoise was nowhere to be seen. “Tortoise is still miles behind me! He’ll never catch up!”

The heavy meal and the hot sun made the hare’s eyelids droop. With a careless glance at the tortoise, who was about halfway along the course, he decided to have another snooze before setting off.

The sun started to sink, below the horizon, and the tortoise, who had been plodding towards the winning post since morning, was scarcely a yard from the finish.

“In the Hall of the Mountain King” ending from *Peer Gynt Suite No. 1* (Time Stamp: 15:27 to 16:55)

At that very point, the hare woke with a jolt. He could see the tortoise as a small speck in the distance. Panicked, he jumped up and away he dashed. He leapt and bounded at a great rate, his tongue lolling, and gasping for breath, going as fast as he could. Just a little more and he’d be first at the finish! But the hare’s last leap was just too late, for the tortoise had beaten him to the finish line.

“Ingrid’s Lament” from *Peer Gynt Suite No. 2* (Time Stamp: 17:00 to 19:20)

Poor hare! Tired and in disgrace, he slumped down beside the tortoise. The hare was astonished. How could he have lost a race . . . to a tortoise! Sadly, he realized his mistakes too late. He was surprised, and sad, and so mad! How could he have slept so long? He thought he had plenty of time to relax and still beat the tortoise to the finish line. After all, he is one of the fastest animals in the forest!

Once boasting, but now embarrassed, the hare hung his head in shame and disappointment. “I have been sorely beaten,” said the hare. The agony of losing to such a slow creature was almost too much for the hare to bear! Sheepishly, the hare spoke, “Tortoise, you are slow but steady. You have won the race. I have learned my lesson and promise not to tease you

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anymore.”

The tortoise was triumphantly smiling at him. He proudly declared to the hare, “Slow and steady does it every time!”

Wedding Day at Trolldhaugen (Time Stamp: 19:24 to end)

The End