

# STEAM LESSON PLAN

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Grade Level Middle school (adaptable for lower and higher grades)

**THEME** Fable

**INSPIRED BY** Jehan Georges Vibert, *The Grasshopper and the Ant (Le Cigale et la Formi)*

## PROJECT TITLE: WORK HARD, PLAY HARD

### DRIVING QUESTION

What is the role of fables in my world?

**STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** Put these on the board or have students write them in a notebook/journal.

- *I will create a fable or a story with a lesson.*
- *I will respond to Aesop's fables and discover their morals.*
- *I will present a plan to help the minstrel "grasshopper."*
- *I will connect fables with my experiences.*

### CONTENT STANDARDS

[NEBRASKA CONTENT AREA STANDARDS](#)

[IOWA CORE STANDARDS](#)



Jehan Georges Vibert (French, 1840–1902), *The Grasshopper and the Ant (Le Cigale et la Formi)*, 1875, oil on canvas, 24 1/4 x 33 1/2 in. (61.6 x 85.1 cm), Joslyn Art Museum, Gift of Francis T. B. Martin, 1995.44

### THE FOUR C'S FOR STEAM CAREER READINESS SKILLS

- **Critical Thinking:** Students will study fables and determine their morals.
- **Creativity:** Students will demonstrate their creativity by writing and illustrating their own fable or story.
- **Collaboration:** Students will work together to develop a proposal for how the minstrel "grasshopper" can better plan for the future.
- **Communication:** Students will use their words and drawings to share a story.

**VOCABULARY:** character, fable, moral, symbols

**RESOURCES:** [Vibert Teaching Poster](#); [Vibert Pinterest board](#); [Nelson Teacher Resource Center](#)

- Video – [Disney's \(1934\) The Grasshopper and the Ants, ichi3ruki3](#)
- Video – [How to Draw Cartoon Animals || Very Easy Drawing Tips & Tricks 10](#)
  - Preview all videos before sharing with students.
- Resource – [Carlson Fable Collection, Creighton University](#)
- Lesson Plan – [Circuit Bugs, STEAM Powered Family](#)
- Website – [The Aesop for Children, Library of Congress](#)

**SUGGESTED MATERIALS:** drawing paper, pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, tablets, fables, and fable images

## **PROCEDURE**

**Overview:** Students will understand fables from reading them to creating their own story with a moral to exploring how to help a character in a fable.

**Engage:** Show students Jehan Georges Vibert's *The Grasshopper and the Ant* and see if they can determine which fable the artist is depicting before telling them the artwork's title. Have students research different fables or give them lines or sections of fables to help them get to the correct answer. Introduce (or review depending on grade level) the idea of a moral of the story and explain this fable's lesson.

**Ask students...**

- What is a moral? List as many as you can.
- What is your favorite animal? Why?
- What are the stereotypes of animals? (for younger students reference *Zootopia* characters)

**Deliverables:** Tell students they will...

- Write a fable feature a relatable character and illustrate their story
- Build "circuit bugs"
- Act as a financial advisor to help the grasshopper make better decisions

**Art Talk:** Turn to the history of fables covering Aesop and Jean de La Fontaine. Define what a fable is and review some of the popular fables.

**Ask students...**

- Why do you think Aesop used animals in his fables?
- Why do you think Vibert chose to interpret the fable with humans?
- How did Vibert render the humans with insect-like characteristics?

**Description of Activity:**

- Starting with their favorite animal, have students write out a description of the animal's characteristics and stereotypes. Students should consider their own characteristics – how are they similar or different to their favorite animal?
- Taking that animal, tell students they will transform into that animal and create a story starring themselves as the character. Help them brainstorm the story using real experience where they had to debate themselves to make a right or wrong decision. Perhaps something happened in their life where they learned a lesson.
  - Encourage students to consider the characteristics of the animal and make sure the moral aligns with it. Consider *The Grasshopper and the Ant*. Would it make sense if their roles were reversed? The grasshopper as the worker and the ant as loafer.
  - At this point, students may discover that their favorite animal does not work for their story so they may choose an animal better suited to tell their tale.
  - If students are struggling to come up with their own lesson, share some morals that may fit with their story or help them write it.

- Determine if stories will have a second or third character and have students add them to the story.
- With draft of the story complete, it is time to visually develop their character(s). Using illustrations from Aesop's and La Fontaine's versions as inspiration, have students sketch out their fable.
  - Discuss the symbolism found in Vibert's painting. Then talk about how symbols could be included in their visual interpretations to give their story an additional layer.
  - Option: In lieu of hand drawing their story, they could use a comic or cartoon creator app, create a video with perhaps their classmates playing the characters, or create an animation.
- Moving back to the featured fable, *The Grasshopper and the Ant*, have fun creating "Circuit Bugs" using a lesson developed by STEAM Powered Family. Students can create grasshoppers and ants – and perhaps the grasshopper circuit does not work, referencing the fable, of course.
- Now take a moment to talk about how they could help the minstrel "grasshopper" prepare for winter. Determine if the grasshopper is in the time of Vibert or present-day, and, working in pairs, students could take on the role of a financial advisor.
  - List the needs the grasshopper has to survive winter.
  - Decide how much money he will need to purchase items.
  - How he will earn that money (discuss different options he has for performing).
  - Propose a plan to not only make it through winter, but also save for the future.

**Closing:** Review the moral of *The Grasshopper and the Ant* and the morals they depicted in their own stories.

**Assessment:** Have students write down three ways they will prepare for the future or three morals they will follow and help others understand.

**STEAM LESSON PLAN** Joslyn Art Museum uses the Nebraska Department of Education's STEM Approach as a guide, but we took the liberty of adding the **"A"** to emphasize the **ARTS**.

NDE's STEM Approach reflects an integrated and interdisciplinary philosophy to teaching and learning that emphasizes collaborative school-based, work-based, family-based, and community-based experiences as a context for helping students to master key competencies within science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

Teaching and learning resources, experiences, and example activities included within NDE's STEM Approach serve as a standards-based framework for supporting the engagement of students in hands-on, authentic, and contextual learning experiences that provide students with the opportunity to learn STEM content while promoting essential career readiness skills, including communication, creativity, collaboration, and critical thinking.

NDE's STEM Approach strives for compatibility with all content-areas, all grade levels, and all career clusters, not just those traditionally defined as STEM.