



PRINTABLE LESSON

The Bragging Swan

A lesson in what a boast stops you noticing



One complete lesson from The Sing Me a Fable Lesson Book

Ages 4 to 8 . Printable . 26 lessons in the full book

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The Bragging Swan

Fable B from *Sing Me a Fable* — a lesson in what a boast stops you noticing

AGE	LENGTH	SUBJECT	GROUP
4–7 (Pre-K to Year 2)	30–40 minutes	PSHE · SEL · Speaking	Whole class, then pairs

Learning objective

Children understand that a boast is a way of asking to be looked at, and that somebody busy looking at themselves stops seeing everybody else.

You will need

The fable, read aloud A hand mirror Six paper birds A shallow bowl of water Poster B to colour

The paper birds are the quiet swans. Stand them in a row behind the bowl, where the class can see them but a child holding the mirror cannot.

Before the story

4 minutes

Stand the six paper birds in a row and set the bowl of water in front of them. Give one child the mirror and ask them to look at their own face in it, and only that.

Ask: “What can you see in a mirror? And what can you not see while you are looking?”

Then: “Keep your answer. We will ask the swan the same thing at the end.”

Read the fable

5 minutes

Read fable B aloud. Every time the swan boasts, turn one paper bird to face away. The child with the mirror keeps looking at the mirror. Say nothing about it.

By the third stanza every bird has turned and the child with the mirror has not noticed. Somebody in the class always says so out loud, which is the moment.

Talk about it

10 minutes

1. The swan really did have a beautiful voice. So was he lying?
2. Nobody argued with him. Why did the other swans just glide away instead?
3. When he fell in and called out, why did nobody come?

Question 1 matters most, because a boast is usually true and children know it. The fable is not about lying. It is about what happens when the true thing is the only thing you ever say.

Main activity: The mirror and the birds

12 minutes

1. Stand the six paper birds facing the class again and hand the mirror to a new child.
2. Read a situation from the teacher's sheet. Each has a boasting answer and a plain one.
3. The class votes, hands up, boast or plain. The class decides, not you.
4. Plain: every bird stays facing forward. Boast: one bird turns away and stays turned.
5. After the third situation, ask the child holding the mirror what has changed behind them.
6. At the end, ask what the swan would have to do to turn one bird back.

Do not steer the vote. And take the last question seriously: turning a bird back is slow and takes more than an apology, which is worth a class working out for itself.

Plenary

4 minutes

“The swan told the truth every single time. So why was he alone in the water?”



Play it together

Put the game on the board. At every choice, stop, let the class vote, then press the card they chose.



Scan to play

OPEN IT

singmeafable.com/arcade/sebastian-the-bragging-swan

UNLOCK WORDS

WAITING FOR

CHOICES

6, about 2 minutes of play

Level 1 · The Lakeside Opera



Trumpeting Loud

A Flap your wings and honk in her face.

B Tuck your wings in and bow politely. ✓



The Lakeside Scene

A Laugh at your silly hat and glide with him. ✓

B Turn your back and brag to the frogs.

Level 2 · The Swamp Fall



Pride's Deep Spell

A Tilt your head back and ignore the noise.

B Step back onto solid ground. ✓



Into the Swamp

A Wipe your eyes and ask politely for help. ✓

B Order the birds above to rescue you.



The last level, and what to ask

The tick marks the choice that earns the stars. Keep this page to yourself while the class votes.

Level 3 · The Humble Heart



Gliding By

A Climb up and complain about your feathers.

B Climb up gently and thank them. ✓



The Peaceful Pond

A Sing softly in harmony with them. ✓

B Shout one huge note to prove you are best.

Ask at every choice

Before pressing: “Which card would you press, and why?”

After it plays out: “What changed because of that choice? What would the other card have done?”

How it joins the lesson

The main activity, **The mirror and the birds**, takes the same lesson off the screen and into the room. Play the game first, so the class has already watched both kinds of choice play out before they make one themselves.

Every choice plays out and nothing is timed, so a wrong vote is something to talk about, not a failure. Stars at the end of each level show how many right choices the class made.



Six situations to vote on

Read the left column aloud only. The right column is what plain sounds like.

THE SITUATION, AS THE CLASS HEARS IT	WHAT PLAIN SOUNDS LIKE
You sang the solo and everybody clapped.	"That was fun. Your bit was the hard bit."
You have new shoes and nobody has noticed yet.	"I got new shoes. Do you like them?"
You won the race by a long way.	"Good race. You nearly caught me at the end."
You built the tallest tower on the table.	"Mine went high. How did you do that roof?"
You know all the words to the song and they do not.	"I can teach you the tricky line."
Your painting got put on the wall.	"They put mine up. I liked yours better."

Every plain answer still lets the child say the good thing about themselves. Modesty is not pretending you did badly, and children spot that instantly.

The line, in one sentence

A boast is true, and it is still a door closing.

Give the class that sentence at the end, never at the beginning.

Adapting for your class

Age 4 · Pre-K. Three situations, and use a real mirror the whole class can see rather than paper birds.

Ages 5–7 · K to Year 2. Run it as written.

Ages 7–8 · Year 3. Add the hard case: how do you tell somebody you did well without boasting? The difference is usually whether there is a question at the end of it.

Mixed ages: pair an older child with a younger one and give the older one the job of asking, not answering.

What children take away

- **A boast is a request.** It means look at me, and children recognise the feeling behind it.
- **It is usually true.** Which is why being told not to lie does not help.
- **Nobody argues with a show-off.** They go quiet and drift, and that is much harder to notice.
- **Asking a question undoes it.** One question at the end turns a boast back into a conversation.

If you have more time

- **Colour the poster.** While they work, ask what the swan could have said instead, in one sentence.
- **Sing it.** The fable's song with on-screen words runs about 90 seconds.
- **Play it.** In the browser game the child chooses whether the swan brags or listens, and sees what follows.

Where this fits

One of twenty-six lessons, one for each letter and one character trait each. A week at a time, the set covers a school year. All twenty-six songs and the printable posters are free at singmeafable.com.

Curriculum links. PSHE and SEL: modesty, friendship, noticing others. Speaking and listening: justifying a choice, asking questions. Literacy: letter recognition, traditional tales, cause and effect.