



PRINTABLE LESSON

The Nagging Goose

A lesson in why saying it once works better than saying it ten times



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 Nagging Goose

Fable N from *Sing Me a Fable* — a lesson in why saying it once works better than saying it ten times

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 repeating a request makes people stop listening rather than start, and can practise saying something once and then waiting.

You will need

The fable, read aloud A small bell Poster N to colour The song (optional)

Before the story

4 minutes

Ring the bell once. Everyone looks. Then ring it thirty times in a row, fast.

Ask: “What happened to how much you noticed the bell, between the first ring and the last one?”

Read the fable

5 minutes

Read fable N aloud. The goose asks the same thing over and over, louder each time, until nobody responds at all — not because they don't care, but because the asking has become noise.

Read the repeated lines exactly as written, without shortening them. The repetition IS the lesson; feeling it matters more than being told about it.

Talk about it

10 minutes

1. The first time the goose asked, was it a reasonable question?
2. By the fifth time, had anything changed about what she was asking — or just how many times she'd said it?
3. If she'd asked once and then waited, do you think she'd have gotten an answer sooner?

Question 3 is the argument worth landing. This isn't about the goose being annoying — it's that asking once and waiting is actually the faster way to get heard, which is not obvious to a child who feels ignored.

Main activity: Once, then wait

12 minutes

1. Pair the class up. One child has a request to make of the other — something small and real, like wanting to swap seats.
2. **Round one:** they may ask as many times as they like, however they like.
3. Watch what happens to the listener. Most start tuning out by the third or fourth ask.
4. **Round two:** new rule — ask once, then count to ten silently before asking again.
5. Ask both children which round felt more likely to work.

Ask the class: “Which goose would you rather listen to — the one who asks once, or the one who asks all afternoon?”

Plenary

4 minutes

“Next time you really want something, what's one thing you could try instead of asking again and again?”



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/the-nagging-goose

UNLOCK WORDS

WAITING FOR

CHOICES

3, about 2 minutes of play

Level 1 · Speak to Friends



Her friends are at the pond and everything they do is slightly wrong. The child chooses what she says to each.

Gosling is last again

A "You're much too late! You're much too slow!"

B "Take your time. I don't mind waiting." ✓

Level 2 · Be a Word Catcher



Two balloons come down together, one kind and one scolding, and she can reach only one. Every unkind word takes water out of the pond.

Bunny is building a nest out of twigs

A "Your nest is a total mess!"

B "You worked hard on this nest!" ✓



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 · Will Friends Come Back?



The pond is empty. Three friends are peeping out from behind the willow, and what she says decides whether they come out.

What does she say?

A "Fine. Stay there. You don't like to play anyway."

B "Come over! We can swim, balance on the lily pads, or build a nest." ✓

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, **Once, then wait**, 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.



Once is a question. Ten times is noise.

Six requests. The words barely change — only how many times they're said.

SAID ONCE	SAID MANY TIMES	WHAT CHANGES
"Can I have a turn?"	"Can I have a turn? Can I have a turn? Can I have a turn?"	Nothing except patience.
"Are we there yet?"	Asked every two minutes, the whole journey.	The answer, not once.
"Can you help me with this?"	Repeated while the other person is still helping someone else.	Only the interruption.
"Please tidy your side."	Said five times in ten minutes.	The listener stops hearing it as words.

Point at the middle column and ask: did asking more times make the answer come faster? It almost never does — it just makes the person being asked want to walk away.

Why once actually works better

A single clear ask is easy to notice and easy to answer. By the fourth repeat, the listener isn't processing the words at all — they're just waiting for it to stop. Nagging trains people to ignore you, which is the opposite of what it's trying to do.

Watch for this

Some children nag because asking once has genuinely never worked for them — adults have taught them, without meaning to, that only repetition gets a response. Be careful not to make this only the child's problem to fix.

If that seems true of your class, the useful question becomes: what would make once enough?

Adapting for your class

Age 4 · Pre-K. The bell demonstration only. Ring it once, then many times, and ask which one they liked. Skip the paired activity entirely.

Ages 5–7 · K to Year 2. Run it as written. The paired activity works best with a request that's genuinely a bit annoying to repeat, so the listener's tuning-out is real, not performed.

Ages 7–8 · Year 3. Ask them to design a better way to ask for something important once and be sure it was heard — a note, a specific time to check back, rather than repeating.

Mixed ages: the older child plays the listener in round one, so they feel what tuning-out is like from the receiving end.

What children take away

- **Repeating something doesn't make it more true.** It just makes it easier to ignore.
- **Once, then wait, is a real strategy.** Not giving up — just spacing it out.
- **Being heard and being loud are different things.** The goose gets louder and heard less.

If you have more time

- **Colour the poster.** Ask how many times the goose has asked, by the point in the picture.
- **Sing it.** The fable's song with on-screen words runs about 90 seconds.
- **Play it.** The browser game lets the child choose what the goose says: every scolding sentence drains the pond, and every kind one fills it again.