



PRINTABLE LESSON

The Squabbling Badgers

A lesson in what an argument costs both sides



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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QUARRELSOMENESS · AND THE COOPERATION THAT ANSWERS IT

The Squabbling Badgers

Fable Q from Sing Me a Fable – a lesson in what an argument costs both sides

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

Learning objective

Children recognise that in an argument about who is right, both sides usually lose while the argument lasts, and can name what each side actually wanted underneath it.

You will need

The fable, read aloud

One length of rope or a scarf

A jigsaw or a heavy box

Poster Q to colour

The song (optional)

Before the story

4 minutes

Give one end of the rope to a child, the other end to another, and ask them both to bring it to you. Say nothing more.

Then ask: “Why isn’t it moving? Neither of them is doing anything wrong.”

If they immediately cooperate and walk it over together, say so out loud – then ask what would have happened if they had both just pulled.

Read the fable

5 minutes

Read fable Q aloud. Ned and Ted argue while the work waits. Read both badgers with the same voice; neither is the bad one, and the moment a teacher makes one of them the villain the fable stops working.

Talk about it

10 minutes

1. While Ned and Ted were arguing, what was happening to the thing they were arguing about?
2. Which badger was right? – and does it matter, if neither of them got what they wanted?
3. They stopped in the end and it worked. What made them stop? Nobody made them.

Question 2 usually splits the room, which is the point. Let them argue about who was right for a minute, then ask what they have all just been doing.

Main activity: One rope, two ends

12 minutes

1. Two children, one rope, one end each. The task: get the rope across the room.
2. **Round one.** Tell each of them privately, so the other cannot hear, that they must get it to their own side.
3. Let it go nowhere for a while. Then stop it.
4. **Round two.** Same two children, same rope. This time the task is simply to get it across the room – either side counts.
5. Swap in a heavy box or a jigsaw and repeat. Two people carrying a box must agree which way to walk before either one moves.

Ask: “In round one, who was winning?”

Nobody. That is the answer you want, and children arrive at it faster with a rope in their hands than with any amount of explaining.

Plenary

4 minutes

“Think of an argument you had this week. What did you want, and what did the other person want? Were they actually the opposite?”

Often they were not. Two children both wanting the swing want the same thing, not opposite things – and that is solvable in a way – that being right is not.



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-squabbling-badgers

UNLOCK WORDS

WAITING FOR

CHOICES

6, about 2 minutes of play

Level 1 · The den divide

**Drawing the Line**

A "I am gonna paint your whole face!"

B "Come on, I will wipe your face, I was joking, sorry." ✓

**The Dinner Table Tug-of-War**

A "I'll bite your nose till you drop it!"

B "Let's slice it so we can eat both!" ✓

Level 2 · The berry patch

**The Giant Watermelon Heist**

A "I will push you against that tree!"

B "I will roll it with you, into the den!" ✓

**The Blanket Battle**

A "Pull till it rips!"

B "Share the cover as two smart brothers." ✓



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 sneaky fox heist



The Bread Warehouse Argument

A "Throw a loaf at his head to prove a point!"

B "Stop arguing! Look behind you—THE FOX IS STEALING THE BREAD!" ✓



Protecting the Feast

A "No, I wanna pull it first!"

B "One... two... three... pull together!" ✓

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, **One rope, two ends**, 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.



What did each of them actually want?

Six squabbles. Underneath most of them, the two sides want the same thing.

THE SQUABBLE	WHAT ONE WANTS	WHAT THE OTHER WANTS
"I had it first!" "No, I did!"	A turn	A turn
"You're doing it wrong." "No I'm not."	It to work	It to work
"Move over." "You move over."	More room	More room
"That's mine." "It was on the floor."	To keep it	To use it
"You never let me play." "You always cheat."	To join in	A fair game
"I'm not talking to you." "Fine."	To be asked back	To be asked back

Read the left column only. Let the class fill in the other two. The first three rows are identical on both sides, and children notice that themselves – usually with some indignation.

The three that are different

Rows four and five have genuinely different wants, and those are the ones with a real solution: work out who needs it when, or fix the rules of the game.

Row six is the saddest and the most common. Both badgers want exactly the same thing and the quarrel is the only thing stopping them having it.

Watch for this

Do not let the class decide who was right in the fable. If they settle it, they have learned that arguments are won, which is the opposite of the moral.

If a child insists on judging, ask them what the badgers got out of the argument – not who deserved to win it.

Adapting for your class

Age 4 · Pre-K. The rope alone, twice. Four-year-olds understand a rope that will not move far better than a table of wants. Skip page two entirely.

Ages 5–7 · K to Year 2. Run it as written. The first three table rows will produce genuine surprise, which is worth waiting for.

Ages 7–8 · Year 3. Give them row six and ask how it ends. Then ask who has to move first, and why that feels so hard. Seven-year-olds can hold both – that going first is right and that it costs something.

Mixed ages: pair them on the rope. An older child usually stops pulling first, and can be asked afterwards why.

What children take away

- **While you argue, nothing moves.** The rope stays where it is. So does the work, the game, and the afternoon.
- **Being right is not the same as getting what you want.** Both badgers can be right and both still go without.
- **Most quarrels are about the same want.** Two people wanting a turn are not opposites, and that is solvable.

If you have more time

- **Colour the poster.** Ask what the badgers are each holding, and what would happen if one let go.
- **Sing it.** The fable's song with on-screen words runs about 90 seconds.
- **Play it.** The browser game puts the two badgers on either side of the same jobs, and nothing gets done until the child stops taking sides.