

Two Ways to Count to Ten

Liberian Fable Retold by Frances Carpenter

The Race Between Toad and Donkey

Jamaican Fable Retold by Roger D. Abrahams

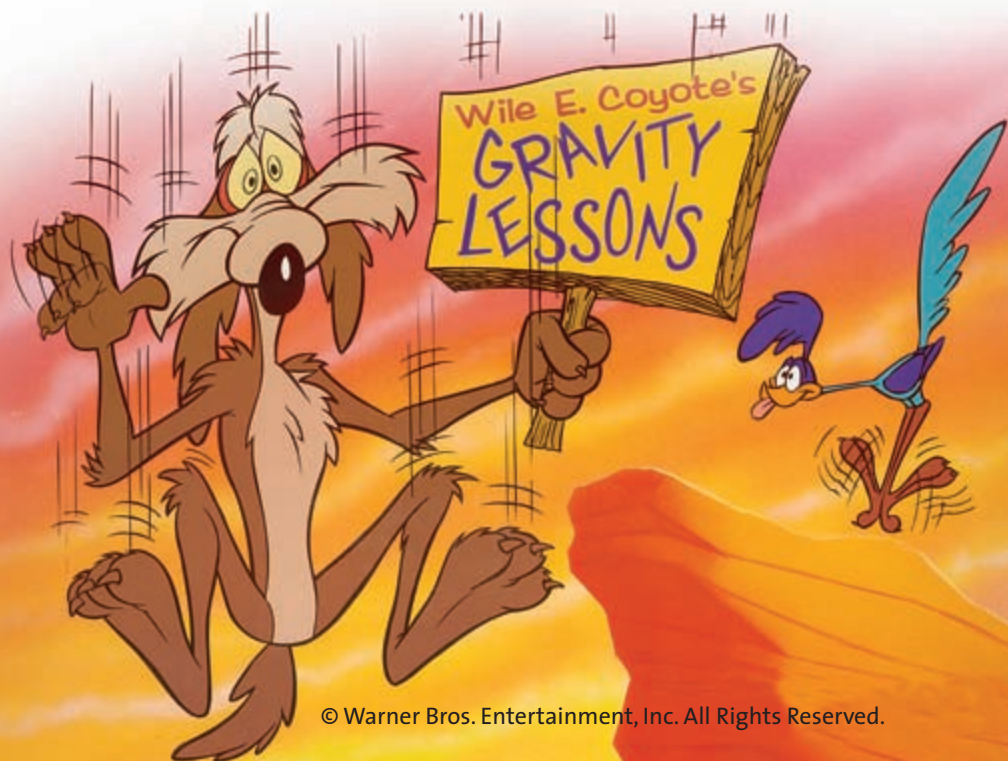
Would you rather be **CLEVER** or strong?

COMMON CORE

RL 1 Cite pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. **RL 2** Determine a theme of a text and analyze its development.

In every society, athletes come together to try to outrun, outthrow, and outjump one another. When it comes to sports, strength and speed seem to be the point of the game. Can sheer brainpower ever be enough to win such contests? The fables you're about to read explore this question.

QUICKWRITE Put yourself in the place of a professional athlete. What would you say it takes to win a championship? Spend a few minutes writing down what you think an athlete might say. Would the manager or coach of the team have the same answer?



Meet the Authors

● TEXT ANALYSIS: RECURRING THEME

Throughout the world, people speak different languages and have different customs—yet some feelings and experiences are remarkably similar. As a result, certain ideas are explored over and over again in a variety of stories. The selections you’re about to read offer a similar **theme**, or message about life. To identify this theme, pay attention to

- the characters and what traits they represent
- the contests
- who wins the contests
- how they win

When a theme appears in two or more works, it’s called a **recurring theme**. You can often find recurring themes in **fables**, which are brief stories that teach a lesson. As you read these two fables, notice that while they share the same theme, their stories are not identical. Each expresses the theme in its own way.

● READING STRATEGY: SET A PURPOSE FOR READING

When you **set a purpose for reading**, you choose specific reasons for reading one or more works. Your purpose for reading “Two Ways to Count to Ten” and “The Race Between Toad and Donkey” is to identify the recurring theme and to find similarities and differences in how the fables express it. As you read the first fable, begin filling in a chart like the one shown.

	<i>“Two Ways to Count to Ten”</i>	<i>“The Race Between Toad and Donkey”</i>
<i>Who are the characters?</i>		
<i>What is the contest and who declares it?</i>		
<i>Who wins the contest? How?</i>		
<i>What do the characters learn?</i>		

Frances Carpenter

1890–1972

World Traveler

When Frances Carpenter was young, she and her family traversed the world. Africa, where her geographer father traveled for work, was one of their destinations. Carpenter used the information gained on these trips in her writing.



Roger D. Abrahams

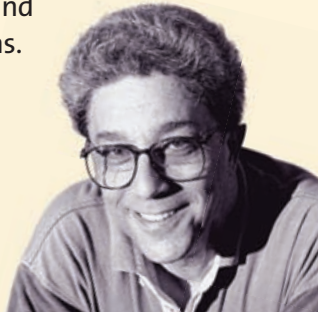
born 1933

Legendary Folklorist

Professor Roger D. Abrahams is one of the most respected scholars in the world of folklore. He has written many books about the folk tales and legends of Africans and African Americans.

Living Traditions

One place Abrahams collected folk tales is Jamaica. This island nation in the West Indies is home to a rich cultural tradition. Many Jamaicans are descendants of enslaved Africans who were taken to the island to work on plantations. The Africans brought their music, stories, and way of life with them. Jamaican life continues to reflect an African influence.



Complete the activities in your **Reader/Writer Notebook**.

Authors Online



Go to thinkcentral.com. KEYWORD: HML7-743

TWO WAYS TO COUNT TO TEN

Retold by
Frances Carpenter

“Old Tanko has come! The Teller of Good Tales is here!”
The news spread quickly through the Liberian village and in the faraway back country. Men, women, and children came running to the Palaver House, the big “talky-talk” hut which had room for them all. **A**

Everyone in that village knew Old Tanko, the Teller of Good Tales. Everyone there enjoyed his exciting stories. Whenever he wandered into their cluster of grass-roofed huts, they made him welcome.

“Ai, I’ll sing you a story,” Tanko said that day when he had finished the bowl of soup they set before him. “It will be a strange tale from the long ago.” He arranged his white robe and settled himself cross-legged on the earth floor.

The old man placed a very small gourd drum in his lap. And with his bony brown fingers, he began to tap lightly, lightly upon it.

“I had this tale from my grandfather,” he began. “He, too, was a great teller of tales.”

“What will the tale say to us, Tanko?” The headman of the village was speaking. He had squatted down on the ground, close to the old man.

“It will say there is more than one way to count to ten. It will also tell how, if you can guess the right way, you can even get yourself a king’s daughter for your wife.”

The people in the talky-talk house nodded to one another. They smiled. It was as if they were thinking, “This will be another good tale.” But no one spoke. In silence, they waited for Old Tanko to tell his story.

A THEME

What is the **setting** of this fable?

Analyze Visuals ▶

The animals in this tale are **personified**, or given human characteristics. What human traits are suggested by this picture of the antelope?



The little drum on the old man's knees soon began to whisper. "Tap! Tap! Tap-tap-tap!" And Tanko in his soft singing voice told this strange tale.

SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION



Liberia, a country on the west coast of Africa, is home to rain forests filled with elephants, chimpanzees, bush oxen, and antelopes. Leopards, once common there, are in danger of disappearing.

Language Coach

Oral Fluency Reread lines 45–46 and 62–63. The words *center* and *count* both begin with the letter *c*, but it is not pronounced the same. Pronounce the *c* in *center* like *s* in *sit* and the *c* in *count* like *k* in *kind*.

In the long, long ago, animals were not so different, one from the other. Oh, they had different shapes, just as they do today. But they lived together in friendship and peace. Like people, those of one animal tribe sometimes took their wives from those of a different tribe. Like you and me, in those times beasts could talk. And, like people, they had a king to rule over them.

In the place of this story, the leopard was king. Rich he was, beyond telling. Mighty was he in his power over the other beasts. All the animals obeyed him.

"Whom shall I name to rule after me when I shall die?" King Leopard said one day to his pretty daughter. "I must find one who is wise enough so that he can rule well. Yes, my dear daughter, I must seek out the cleverest beast in our jungle land. I shall make him a prince. He shall have you for his bride. And to me he shall be a son."

King Leopard was pleased with his idea, and he planned a great feast. His royal drums carried word of it far and wide through the jungle. And all the animals came.

There were good things to eat. There was plenty to drink. The drums beat. And the guests at King Leopard's feast danced for three days.

At last the king called them to make a huge circle. Stepping into its center, he called his pretty daughter to come to his side. Then he spoke in a loud voice.

"Listen to my words, friends!" he cried. "Someday I must die. Someday another king must rule in my place. I will choose him now from among you, so that he will be ready."

There was a murmur of wonder all through the crowd. The King had to order them to be quiet.

"I shall seek the cleverest among you, for your king must be wise. I shall name him Prince. He shall be to me a son and to my dear daughter a husband. He shall share all my riches. And when I die he shall be your king."

Shouts came from the eager guests at the King's feast. No doubt each animal hoped that the good fortune would be his.

Then King Leopard held up his hunting spear. "Look at this, my people! Watch!" And he flung the spear far up into the air.

"With this spear will I test you," he went on. "He who would be our prince must throw the spear toward the sky. He must send it so high that he can count to ten before it drops down to earth again." **B**

B THEME

Why is King Leopard setting up a contest? In your chart, write down how the contest works.

There was a buzz of talk among all the animals then. This would not be so hard to do, they thought.

One after another, they came forward to try their skill. Each jungle beast danced before King Leopard and his pretty daughter. Each one sang a song that told how well he would rule, if he were chosen.

First to try his luck was the elephant. He was so big that he could push
70 all the other beasts out of his way.

“I must be first,” he said to himself. “This task is too easy. Almost any one of us can do it.”

The elephant danced clumsily. He was very big and his body was heavy. Then, with his trunk in the air, he trumpeted all the fine deeds he would perform if he were prince. **C**

The great beast threw King Leopard’s spear up into the air.

“One! Two! Three!” he began counting. But he spoke slowly, as he did everything else. An elephant cannot easily hurry, you know.

Before the elephant had said, “Four!” the King’s spear had dropped
80 to earth. The proud beast hung his head so low that the tip of his trunk dragged on the ground. He knew he had failed.

Next came the bush ox. His wide gray horns swept the other beasts to the side.

“I’ll throw the spear up to the sun,” the huge animal sang while he danced. “I’ll be a strong husband for King Leopard’s daughter.” **D**

The bush ox picked the spear up in his mouth. With a mighty toss of his great head, he flung it far, far above his spreading horns.

“One! Two! Three! Four!” the bush ox counted more quickly than the elephant. But he, too, was slow. Before he could say “Five,” the spear was
90 down on the ground. He went off, ashamed, into the deep jungle.

The chimpanzee was third. He jumped up and down in a merry dance, and King Leopard’s daughter laughed at his antics. He beat his hairy chest with his two fists, and he sang of how much he would like to be king in the leopard’s place.

The young ape rose up straight on his hind legs. He held the spear in one hand, just like a man. With a twist of his long arm, he threw it up toward the sky.

“One-two-three-four-five-six-seven!” He chattered as fast as he could. The watching animals held their breaths. Surely, with such a quick
100 tongue, the chimpanzee would make the count.

But he did not! He had not even said, “Eight!” before he had caught the spear once more in his hand.

One by one, other animals tried to count to ten while the spear was still up in the air. One by one, they all failed.

C THEME

In fables, animal characters often represent human traits. What trait might the elephant represent?

D THEME

Why does the bush ox think he would make a good husband?

“It seems I must look somewhere else for a prince to rule when I am gone,” King Leopard spoke sadly.

Then out from the crowd stepped an antelope.

Beside the elephant, the bush ox, and even the chimpanzee, the young deerlike antelope seemed puny and weak. His legs were long, yet so slender that it was almost a wonder that they would hold up his body.

But the antelope spoke bravely.

“Let me try to throw your spear, O King,” he cried. “I would like well to marry your pretty daughter.”

“Ho! Ho!” The other animals burst into laughter. How could such a weak creature fling the King’s spear high enough to say more than two or three words? However could he hope to count up to ten? **E**

But the antelope would not be turned aside.

“I wish to try,” he insisted. And King Leopard nodded his head. He had promised a fair trial for all who wished to take part in this contest.

120 “Who can say what any creature can do until he has tried?” The King spoke to the crowd. “The antelope may throw the spear.” So the other beasts were moved back to give him room. **F**

When the antelope, on his slender legs, danced before the King, the leopard’s daughter cried out with pleasure. No one could deny that his steps were more graceful than those of the elephant, or of the bush ox, or the chimpanzee.

Then the antelope threw the spear. With a toss of his head, he flung it far up into the air. Before it could fall to earth, the clever beast called out two words. “Five! Ten!” he cried. “I have counted to ten. King Leopard
130 did not say how the count should be made.”

The leopard laughed then. He nodded his royal head.

“No, I did not say how the count was to be made,” he agreed. “And as everyone knows, one can count by fives as well as by ones. The antelope has won the contest. He has proved he is the cleverest of you all. He shall wed my dear daughter. He shall be king when I am gone.”

The other animals stared stupidly at the winner. They did not understand yet what had happened. But they could see that the antelope had outwitted the King.

At the wedding feast that King Leopard gave for his daughter, they all
140 cheered for the antelope, their new prince.



Id Tanko put his drum down in his lap.

“Remember this tale, friends,” he said to the crowd in the talky-talk hut. “Do not forget that it is not always the biggest nor the strongest, but sometimes the cleverest who wins the prize.”

E THEME

Why do the other animals laugh at the antelope?

F THEME

Reread lines 118–122. What do you learn about King Leopard based on his treatment of the antelope?

Comprehension

- 1. Recall** To whom does Old Tanko tell the fable?
- 2. Clarify** Why does King Leopard want a clever husband for his daughter? Describe the contest he creates to find the husband.
- 3. Summarize** Summarize what happens when each of the following animals competes: the elephant, the bush ox, the chimpanzee, and the antelope.

COMMON CORE

RL 1 Cite pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. **RL 2** Determine a theme of a text and analyze its development.

Text Analysis

- 4. Identify Characteristics of Fables** Which character in the fable do you think represents wisdom, or good judgment? Which character represents cleverness, or quick, original thinking? Cite evidence from the fable to support your answer.
- 5. Analyze Theme** Sometimes the theme of a selection must be inferred. Other times, as with this selection, the theme is directly stated. What lines state the theme? Restate the theme in your own words.
- 6. Make Judgments** Was King Leopard’s contest a good way to find the next king? Explain why.

Comparing Recurring Themes

- 7. Set a Purpose for Reading** Finish filling in the chart column under “Two Ways to Count to Ten.” Add information that helped you understand how the fable expresses its theme.

	<i>“Two Ways to Count to Ten”</i>	<i>“The Race Between Toad and Donkey”</i>
<i>Who are the characters?</i>	<i>Old Tanko, King Leopard, King Leopard’s daughter, the elephant, the bush ox, the chimpanzee, and the antelope</i>	
<i>What is the contest and who declares it?</i>		
<i>Who wins the contest? How?</i>		
<i>What do the characters learn?</i>		

The Race Between Toad

and Donkey

Retold by
Roger D. Abrahams

One day, Master King decided to have a race and he would give a big prize to whoever won. Both Toad and Donkey decided to enter, but Toad got Donkey angry with all his boasting about how he'd win.

Now, the race was to be for twenty miles. So when Donkey looked at Toad he wondered out loud how any animal so small and powerless could hope to keep up with him. "I have very long legs, you know, as well as long ears and tail. Just measure our legs, and you'll see why you can't possibly hope to win this race." But Toad was stubborn—and he was smart, too—and he said that he was going to win the race. That just got
10 Donkey more vexed. **A**

Analyze Visuals ▶

On the basis of this image, which character would you **infer** is the cleverer of the two? Why?

A THEME

Note the character who will compete with Donkey. Why does Donkey think he'll win the race?



So Donkey told the king that he was ready to start, but the king said that he had to make the rules first. At each mile every racer had to sing out to indicate he had gotten that far—for the king wanted to know what was happening in the race, you know.

Now Toad is a smart little fellow, and he said to the king that he needed a little time to take care of business, so would he let him have a day or two. And the king said to the two of them, “You must come here first thing tomorrow.” Donkey objected, for he knew that Toad was a very trickifying creature, but the king wouldn’t listen. **B**

20 Now the toad had twenty children, and they all looked exactly alike. And while Donkey was sleeping, Toad took his twenty children along the racing ground, and at every milepost Toad left one of them. He told them that they must listen for Mr. Donkey, and whenever they heard him cry out, they should do so too. And Toad hid one of his children there behind each of those mileposts. **C**

So the race began the next day. Donkey looked around, and he was so sure in his heart that he was going to beat Toad that he sucked his teeth, *Tche*, to show everyone there how little he thought of Toad. “That little bit of a fellow Toad can’t keep up with me. I’ll even have a little time to
30 eat some grass along the way. *Tche*.”

So he just went a little way down the road and he stopped and ate some grass. He poked his head through the fence where he saw some good-looking sweet-potato tops and had a taste of some gungo peas. He took more than an hour to get to the first milepost. And as he got there, he bawled out, “Ha, ha, I’m better than Toad.” And the first child heard this, and he called, like all toads do:

Jin-ko-ro-ro, Jin-kok-kok-kok.

The sound really surprised Donkey, who of course thought he had gotten there first. Then he thought, “I delayed too long eating that grass. I must
40 run quicker this next mile.” So he set off with greater speed, this time stopping only for a minute to drink some water along the way. And as he got to the next post, he bawled out:

Ha! Ha! Ha! I’m better than Toad.

And then the second child called out:

Jin-ko-ro-ro, Jin-kok-kok-kok.

B THEME

Why does Donkey object to Toad’s request for more time?

C THEME

How does Toad plan to win the race? As you read, notice how Toad’s plan affects Donkey.

Language Coach

Antonyms Antonyms are words that have opposite meanings. Reread line 26 and lines 31–32. Which word in line 31 is the antonym for the word *began* in line 26?

And Donkey said, “Lord, Toad can really move, for sure. Never mind, there are a lot more miles.” So he started, and when he reached the third milepost, he bawled:

Ha! Ha! Ha! I'm better than Toad.

50 And the third child sang:

Jin-ko-ro-ro, Jin-kok-kok-kok.

Now Donkey got very angry when he heard Toad answer him, and he started to smash the toad, but Toad, being a little fellow, hid himself in the grass.

Donkey was then determined to get to the next milepost before Toad, and he took his tail and he switched it like a horsewhip and he began to gallop. And he got to the fourth milepost and he bawled:

Ha! Ha! Ha! I'm better than Toad.

And out came the answer from the fourth child.

60 When he heard that, he stood there and began to tremble, and he said, “My goodness, what am I going to do? I’m going to have to run so fast I really kick that hard, hard dirt.” And he galloped off faster than he ever had before, until he reached the fifth milepost. And now he was very tired, and out of breath. He just barely had enough wind to bawl:

Ha! Ha! Ha! I'm better than Toad.

And then he heard:

Jin-ko-ro-ro, Jin-kok-kok-kok.

This time he was really angry, and he raced on harder than ever. But at each milepost he bawled out the same thing, and at each he heard the
70 same answer. And Donkey got so sad in his mind that he just gave up after a while, sad because he knew he had lost that race.

So through Toad’s smartness, Donkey can never be a racer again. **D**
Jack Mandora me no choose one.¹ 🐸

SOCIAL STUDIES CONNECTION



Many Jamaicans speak Creole, which combines elements of English, Spanish, French, and a variety of African languages.

D THEME

Restate the lesson or theme of the fable in your own words.

1. **Jack Mandora me no choose one:** Traditionally, Jamaican storytellers make this statement at the end of a tale. In Creole, it means “Don’t blame me for the story I’ve just told.”

Comprehension

1. **Recall** What are the rules of the race between Toad and Donkey?
2. **Clarify** What do Toad's children do to help him?

Text Analysis

3. **Identify Characteristics of Fables** What human abilities or traits does Donkey represent? What traits does Toad represent? Give examples from the story to support your answers.
4. **Make Judgments** In your view, did Toad win the contest fairly? Explain.
5. **Analyze Theme** Recall the theme you identified for this fable. Then think of another fable or story in which this same message appears. Why do you think this theme is repeated in different fables or stories?

COMMON CORE

RL 1 Cite pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. **RL 2** Determine a theme of a text and analyze its development.

Comparing Recurring Themes

6. **Set a Purpose for Reading** Now that you have read both fables, finish filling in your chart. Then state the recurring theme the selections share.

	<i>"Two Ways to Count to Ten"</i>	<i>"The Race Between Toad and Donkey"</i>
<i>Who are the characters?</i>	<i>Old Tanko, King Leopard, King Leopard's daughter, the elephant, the bush ox, the chimpanzee, and the antelope</i>	<i>Master King, Toad, Donkey, Toad's 20 children</i>
<i>What is the contest and who declares it?</i>		
<i>Who wins the contest? How?</i>		
<i>What do the characters learn?</i>		
<i>What's the recurring theme?</i>		

Would you rather be **CLEVER** or strong?

Have you ever won a championship using your wits?

Writing for Assessment

1. READ THE PROMPT

In writing assessments, you will often be asked to compare and contrast two works that are similar in some way, such as the two fables with a similar theme.

While the fables “Two Ways to Count to Ten” and “The Race Between Toad and Donkey” communicate the same recurring theme, they express this theme in different ways. In four or five paragraphs, compare and contrast the ways in which the fables convey their message. Cite details from the fables to support your response.

◀ STRATEGIES IN ACTION

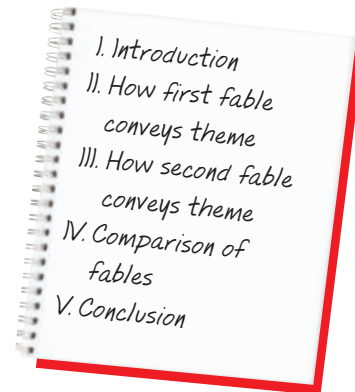
1. I have to make sure I understand the message both fables share.
2. I need to identify the similarities and differences in how the fables express the message.
3. I should give examples from the fables to help explain my ideas.

2. PLAN YOUR WRITING

Using your chart, identify the ways each fable conveys the theme. Then think about how you will set up your response.

- Do you want to focus on each fable in a separate paragraph and then write a paragraph comparing them, as shown in the sample outline?
- Do you want to compare each element—characters, contests, and theme—in a separate paragraph and then point out the differences between the stories in another paragraph?

Once you have decided, outline the order of your paragraphs.



3. DRAFT YOUR RESPONSE

Introduction Introduce the fables and tell what recurring theme they share. Then state your main idea, which should include an overview of the similarities and differences in the ways the fables convey the theme.

Body Use your chart and outline as guides to the key points of your comparison. If you’re using an outline that’s similar to the sample, make sure you discuss the characters, contests, and theme for each selection.

Conclusion Wrap up with a restatement of your main idea and a reminder about how different stories can have the same theme.

Revision Make sure your sentences vary in structure.