

ACTIVITIES with *Hana Saka Jiji*, a Japanese Folktale

Dear Teacher,

We have prepared some suggested activities that you can use as follow-up engagements to the live, interactive online storytelling of *Hana Saka Jiji*, a Japanese folktale.

Of course, you are not required to use any of our suggested activities. But we hope they will give you ideas of what you can do in your class.

Some teachers have asked for the script, a recording of the storytelling, and/or the illustrations. But unfortunately, these are a little more complicated to make generally available.

Regardless, we also hope that you will propose to us what kinds of activities you would like for us to create.



SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES with *Hana Saka Jiji*

- **Comprehension Questions**
 - **Discussion Questions**
 - **Playing with Opposites**
- **From Adjectives into Nouns**
- **Illustrations** (*as writing prompts*)

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What adjectives can you use to describe the neighbours of the kind old couple?
2. What kind of dog came to the village?
3. How did the neighbours treat the dog when it came to their house?
4. What did the kind old couple name the dog?
5. What did the dog bring back for dinner when he went hunting?
6. Why, one evening, did the dog suddenly bark and run into the forest?
7. How did the kind of couple's neighbours react to the dog's barking?
8. What did the dog lead the old man to in the forest?
9. What did the neighbours think when they heard about what the dog found?
10. How did the neighbours treat the dog when they borrowed him?
11. What did the neighbours think the dog would help them find in the forest?
12. What did the neighbours find when they dug in the spot the dog led them to?
13. How did the neighbours do to the dog for leading them to that spot?
14. What did the kind old man and his wife dream about?
15. In the dream, what did the dog ask the old man to do?
16. What grew from the spot where the dog was buried?
17. What did the kind old couple make from the pine tree?
18. What happened when they pounded the rice in the *usu*?
19. What came out from the *usu* when the neighbor used it? What did the neighbor and his wife see when they used the *usu*?
20. Why is the story titled *Hana Saka Jiji*?

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS for DISCUSSION

1. How did the presence of the kind old couple impact the atmosphere of the village? If they lived on your street or in your neighbourhood, how would they impact your community there?
2. What are some possible reasons why the neighbours initially mistreated the dog?
3. In what ways did Shiro demonstrate loyalty and intelligence throughout the story?
4. How did the discovery of the gold coins affect the relationship between the neighbours and the kind old couple?
5. What themes or messages do you think the story is trying to convey?
6. If you were in the shoes of the kind old couple, how would you have reacted to the neighbours' behavior?
7. What do you think motivated the neighbours to borrow Shiro from the kind old couple?
8. How did the kindness and generosity of the kind old couple contrast with the actions of their neighbours?
9. What role did dreams play in the story? How did they shape the actions of the characters?
10. What do you think the pine tree symbolizes in the story?
11. How did the presence of Shiro and the events surrounding him impact the dynamics within the village?
12. Do you believe the neighbours learned anything from their experiences with Shiro and the kind old couple? Why or why not?
13. What do you think the kind old couple learned from the whole situation? How did it affect them?
14. How would you describe the character development of the neighbours throughout the story?
15. If you were one of the neighbours, how would you have reacted to the discovery of the gold coins?
16. How does the story explore the themes of greed and generosity?
17. Can you identify any cultural or moral values embedded in the story?
18. Were there any instances in the story where you found the actions of the characters surprising or unexpected? Why?
19. How does the story explore the concept of trust and its impact on relationships?
20. Were there any instances in the story where you empathized with a particular character? Why?
21. How does the story portray the importance of communication and understanding between people?
22. What do you think the significance of the usu and its transformation is in the story?

23. How does the story explore the power of belief and superstition?
24. What emotions did the story evoke in you? Were there any specific moments that stood out?
25. If you could change one aspect of the story, what would it be and why?

PLAYING with OPPOSITES

In the story, *Hana Saka Jiji*, we meet a lovely old couple and another, their neighbours, who are not so nice. They seem like opposites, like *night* and *day*, *light* and *darkness*. Try and see if you can find the opposites of these given words:

	Virtues	Opposite of the word in the left column. (You may come up with more than one answer for each word in the left column.)
1	Kind	
2	Generous	
3	Humble	
4	Loving	
5	Gentle	
6	Helpful	
7	Wise	
8	Patient	
9	Honest	
10	Trusting	
11	Playful	
12	Loyal	
13	Grateful	
14	Understanding	
15	Sincere	

- Write a paragraph about someone you know or have observed who is, for example, **HONEST**. In your paragraph show what you have observed this person do. How did it make you feel? You can write about an incident in which this person wasn't even aware that you were watching.

From a descriptor (adjective) to an abstract noun

e.g.	Respectful	Asri always shows our teachers respect .
e.g.	Peaceful	She brings peace wherever she goes
1	Kind	
2	Generous	
3	Humble	
4	Loving	
5	Gentle	
6	Helpful	
7	Wise	
8	Patient	
9	Honest	
10	Trusting	
11	Playful	
12	Loyal	
13	Grateful	
14	Understanding	
15	Sincere	

Illustrations



Use one of the illustrations above and describe what you see. You can also use the illustrations together with the writing prompts below:

1. Describe your neighbourhood, the street on which you live, or the apartment complex you are in. Maybe these questions will help you
 - How is the place laid out?
 - What makes the place attractive to look at?
 - What do the people in your neighbourhood do together?
2. Write a story in which an animal saves the day.
3. Do you see stray animals on the street or near where you live? Imagine the life of this animal, and write about this animal and what it does from the time the sun rises and soon after it is dark.
4. Which couple would you like to have as your neighbours and why?
5. Imagine a magical day when plants in your garden or on your balcony or in your neighbourhood suddenly bloom, filling the place with colour. Describe the scene and what happens to your neighbours when they witness this unexpected and magical change.