

## **Rikki-Tikki —Tucking the Fun Back into Kindergarten through Performance Arts**

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### **Introduction**

I've never minded being on recess duty. During recess, the kids forget themselves and regress to pure childhood. Watching kids on the playground can give me, as a teacher, a chance to pick up on their interests. Over the years, I have watched groups of kids stepping (a kind of group dance thing), pretending to be a favored sports figure, "battling" as ninjas (most recently as Ninja Turtles), stepping into the roles of countless superheroes, and playing family. Through the years the games have come and gone, changed, and returned again as pop culture moves along. The one thing all of these playground activities have in common is that they feature a performance. I work at Kathleen Wilbur elementary school in Bear, Delaware. Wilbur is a K-5 public school of almost 1,200 students, located just to the south of Wilmington, Delaware. The school draws students from a fairly wide stretch of geography in the Colonial school district. The 1,200 come from a variety of social and economic backgrounds. This naturally makes the pool of common background knowledge relatively shallow and I will be spending a fair amount of time developing a common background knowledge set for this unit. I currently teach kindergarten at Wilbur, though in the past I have spent years also working in the building at both the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade levels (this seemingly random bit of my background will figure into my plans and rationale). Class sizes for Kindergarten at Wilbur generally fluctuate between sixteen and twenty-two students. My current class consists of nineteen students. Of the nineteen, nine are girls and ten are boys. One student has an individualized education plan (IEP) for speech services. Another child is well on his way to gaining an IEP for behavioral concerns. Educationally, the kids are all at different starting points. Some can accomplish basic reading, most have some familiarity with letters and letter sounds, and others have no knowledge of letters at all. My goal is to take my kindergarten class on a journey to India through performances of portions of the story Rikki-Tikki-Tavi which is found in Rudyard Kipling's, The Jungle Book. Our explorations will include lessons and activities which address Common Core and Delaware state standards in reading literature, speaking and listening, and geography. Through the use of performance arts and Kipling's tale, we will also be addressing several important developing social skills which are another focus of our kindergarten program at Wilbur.

### **Background**

Ask many adults about their impressions of kindergarten and I would guess that concepts of play, snack, nap time, new friends, and story time would spring to mind. Most likely, the person answering the question would be thinking back fondly on their own kindergarten experiences. As for myself, I recall all of the concepts listed above but mostly I am reminded that kindergarten was a lot of fun. With the arrival of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) the focus of kindergarten has shifted. Now kindergarten seems to be mostly about “rigorous” lessons, common assessments, and proving growth with data. Not that there’s anything wrong with that (cue Seinfeld theme song), but it is hardly fun or conducive to making kids look forward to the upcoming school day. It is my belief that performance arts and dramatic storytelling are ways to infuse fun into the rigorous lessons required by CCSS and beloved by school administrators everywhere. When I saw the Delaware Teachers’ Institute seminar offering called “Stories in Performance: Drama, Fable, Myth, Legend, and the Oral Tradition” with Professor Leslie Reidel, I thought it sounded like it could help me add the missing fun back into my class. I have selected to test my belief in performance art by choosing a story (or portions of it) of a high reading level to share with and ultimately perform together with my class. This story will need to be something the children will be interested in and that they will want to experience. It would also be best if this story followed the dramatic structure often associated with mythic tales, fairy tales, or fables as this could aid in the teaching of story elements. I have selected the focus of my unit to be The Jungle Book by Rudyard Kipling. Many of my students will be familiar with Baloo the Bear and Mowgli the Man-cub thanks to the work of Walt Disney and his team of animators. However, within The Jungle Book there is an amazing and sadly, largely forgotten tale entitled Rikki-Tikki-Tavi. Rikki-Tikki-Tavi is the story of a mongoose that protects his adoptive family from a pair of cobras. This story should help me address three different areas of our curriculum: reading literature, social studies, and social skills. The drama surrounding the interactions of these animal characters should draw the children in and lend itself to performance. I also chose this story because it fits the calling of our seminar, “Stories in Performance: Drama, Fable, Myth, Legend, and the Oral Tradition”. Rikki-Tikki-Tavi is evocative of a land occurring both, a long time ago and far, far away. These qualities should allow the students to distance themselves from the story in a way that will support them losing themselves into the roles of the characters as we perform. The same qualities will also help to balance the playing field when it comes to the prior background knowledge of the kids. It will be a rare child indeed who comes to the unit with much if any knowledge of India back in the early 1900’s.

As previously stated, Rikki-Tikki-Tavi will be used to address three areas of our curriculum. When interacting with the text, the students’ understanding of the story and its elements should be deepened and strengthened by acting out scenes and stepping into the furry feet of its protagonist, the scaly slithering of the antagonists, or the roles of the other supporting characters. This should help cement the concept of character. We will also be exploring how setting affects the characters and events in the story. For example consider these questions; does the fact that a scene occurs at night help lead the

characters to feel a certain way? Would those characters feel and behave differently if it were daytime? Questions such as these are of a critical thinking nature. Considering my experiences as a 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher; students at those levels struggle mightily with critical thinking. It is extremely difficult for those students to empathize with characters. This makes it very challenging for them to make connections between themselves and the stories (an essential skill at those levels). It is my hope and thinking that by strengthening the skill of connecting with characters in the kindergarten class, upper level teachers may also benefit from this unit. As for social studies, Rikki-Tikki-Tavi can aid us in exploring cultures and regions beyond our own. It can open a window into the past. It can also let us see that we ourselves and the characters from the far off land share many similarities despite our differences. In our school, social skills are introduced with the AI's Pals program. A large part of this program revolves around identifying feelings within ourselves and others. I feel strongly that by acting out the story and donning the skin of our characters, we will be better able to identify feelings not only in the characters, but in our peers, and ultimately in ourselves as well.

## Concepts

### Rudyard Kipling

I have decided to include some background information about the author Rudyard Kipling. Well before radio or television, Rudyard Kipling was an exceedingly well known celebrity. In his day he was known as a master storyteller. He still is today. If there were an *Extra* or *National Inquirer* in the late 1800's, they would have been camped outside of Kipling's home hoping for a photo or bit of news. Pop culture wasn't a thing yet, but a verse or short story of his would invariably make the front pages of papers. In 1865, Kipling was an infant born to two British parents residing in Bombay, India. At this time in history India was a colony of the British Empire. His parents and many like them were settling in the colony as government administrators, or soldiers. Growing up in India, Kipling got along equally well with both the English and the Indians. His comfort level with both parts of society was not common to all the British living in Bombay, but it would serve Kipling very well when he grew a little older. He was very happy for his first five years.

It was the practice of many of the British settled in India to return their children to England for formal schooling. Kipling was one of many sent for this schooling. For five years he lived with a foster family in England while he attended school. Unfortunately, for him, his experience was radically different from his early years in Bombay. The foster family he was to stay with was stern to the point of cruel. Kipling's main escape seemed to be retreating into books. When this retreat was discovered, young Kipling was separated from his reading material. Fortunately, his misery was found out by his mother and he was relocated to a boarding school. The school wasn't much for frills and extravagance, but Kipling was much happier in his new setting.

After schooling, Rudyard Kipling returned to Bombay at the age of sixteen. With his father's help and guidance, Kipling would acquire a position as a writer for a local British paper. During this time, Kipling explored the darker parts of Bombay, where a majority of British citizens did not visit. His comfort with the Indian natives made him an easy person to talk to and he was able to delve into life in India in an uncommon way. Kipling wrote of what he discovered and became a popular read. Additionally, through his writings Kipling also championed the English soldier writing very popular verses about the troops. He also became friends with Walcott Balestier, an American publisher. Walcott had a daughter named, Carrie. Rudyard and Carrie were very close until his travels separated the two. Sadly, he did not have much time for his most recent trip. He received a letter from Carrie relating the death of her father. Kipling returned to Carrie and the two were wed. Kipling and his wife moved to Vermont. Rudyard Kipling settled into life in America and was soon thrilled by the birth of his first child, Josephine. Josephine was followed by two siblings, Elsie and John. During these years in America, Kipling's fame grew and grew as he continued to publish. His works at this time included The Jungle Book. After growing problems with his in-laws, Kipling and his family resettled in Britain. Also during this time, Rudyard Kipling became the highest paid writer in the world.

During the winter of 1899 on a transatlantic trip back to America, both Rudyard and young Josephine became seriously ill with pneumonia. The press covered Kipling's health, as it was very much in the public's interest. Slowly, he recovers. Sadly, as he is regaining his strength, he was visited by his publisher who reported that Josephine had died. The light in Kipling's life faded. He promised to never again return to America. Even as he struggled personally, as a writer he flourished, earning the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1907. Dark times were not done with Kipling. At the onset of World War I, Rudyard Kipling once again championed the British soldier. He also urged his son, John to enlist. John agreed and went to war. In the fall of 1915, John went missing in battle. Kipling went to France to search for his son. Neither John nor his body were ever found or recovered. Mourning a second child, he returned to England. Rudyard Kipling spent his remaining years writing but eventually developed health issues. On January 18, 1936 Rudyard Kipling died from problems caused by an ulcer. Kipling was buried next to Charles Dickens in Westminster Abbey.<sup>1</sup> He is survived even to this day by his amazing writings, including one small tale entitled Rikki-Tikki-Tavi.

Francois Delsarte

One of the topics that we covered during seminar was the teachings of Francois Delsarte. I feel that relating Delsarte's ideas to the characters in my chosen story could be beneficial when acting out our parts even when kindergartners are doing the performing. Delsarte was a French singer in the 1800's. When he was no longer able to perform due to a loss of voice, he took to studying the scientific principles of expression.<sup>2</sup> What he

found was that basically the body has three energy systems. Each system leads to a different type of expression which can be picked up on by the viewer and used by the actor to deepen their performance. In the kindergarten we can use these principles to aid us in figuring out how our character's body language will appear. They could also help as a reminder of why characters act as they do. Now on to the three systems; the first system is associated with the head. This energy is known as cognitive. Characters from this system are brainy and always thinking. Their movements should seem precise and thought out. These movements appear to me full of fine motor control or somewhat fidgety looking. As a big fan of the Star Wars movies, I look at C3PO as a character who is very much rooted in cognitive energy. In a kindergartener, this system might look like someone who is attentive, whose pace of work is slow and full of thought or someone who asks questions and frequently has an answer prepared in case called upon. The second system is linked to the heart. This is emotional energy. Seminar Leader Reidel associated this sort of energy as the sigh of "aw" when something cute is unveiled or the sigh of "aw" at something sad. These type characters seem driven by the feelings that they are so much in touch with. They seem to act from the heart. They can either open wide the chest or cover it protectively depending on the general feeling of the scene. From Star Wars, I see Luke Skywalker as being a very emotional character. His driving motivation is to "feel the Force". In my students the emotional system looks about the same as Luke. These students may seem mopey, or quick to tears, they are also the sort who will laugh aloud and shake with excitement when they understand something for the first time. The third and final system is associated with the abdomen. This energy is called vital. To me the vital system seems characterized by big thrusting and swaying motions. These characters are driven by their instincts. Some would say animal instincts and in the case of Rikki-Tikki-Tavi with its anthropomorphized characters this would seem awfully appropriate. In Star Wars, I see Han Solo with his swagger and bravado as rather rooted in the vital energy system. In real life, all people are constantly switching from system to system depending on the circumstances. The most crotch grabbing and grunting kind of dude at times will tear up at a touching movie. I myself get all sniffle-y when Kevin Costner has a catch with his dad at the end of Field of Dreams. Not that I run around pelvis flying and grunting too often. Kindergarteners who I associate with the vital system are frequently some of my most challenging students. They often act without thinking. They dance when music is played and love to draw attention. Impulsivity is what I mostly associate with this energy. Go with your gut and don't let the brain or someone's feelings get in the way. All three energies are reflected at different times in every person. No one is purely cognitive, emotional or vital. We all take turns accessing each energy type. That being said, to simplify things for kindergarteners, I will be associating each character from Rikki-Tikki-Tavi with only their primary quality of cognitive, emotional, or vital.

### The Characters of Rikki-Tikki-Tavi

#### *Rikki-Tikki-Tavi*

Rikki is the protagonist of the story. The protagonist is in simplified terms the hero, or if not heroic, the main character that the story seems to follow. Rikki is a young mongoose who is swept away from his home in a flood. He washes up near the family bungalow. He is nursed back to health and stays with his new, adoptive family. I would definitely describe Rikki as a vital zone character. He moves through his new home and garden as if he owns the place. With lightening quick reflexes and courage to match not much can argue that he does not. Rikki is supremely confident in his abilities even though he is young, inexperienced, and facing off against multiple dangerous enemies. Rikki's movement will seem very energetic. He zips and hops about in battle dancing away from the strikes of his foes. He is very quick to anger. This anger is displayed in the story by his eyes shining red. Rikki-Tikki-Tavi is the hero and as such he has accepted the hero's call to action. More on that in the Joseph Campbell subsection.

### *Nag and Nagaina*

Nag (the male) and Nagaina (the female) are a pair of mated cobras. In real life cobras are exceedingly dangerous. They can reach a length of seven feet and their fangs can inject powerful venom that can kill a human in less than thirty minutes. Nag and Nagaina are the main antagonists in the tale. The antagonist is the cause of most of the protagonist's troubles in a story. In Rikki-Tikki-Tavi the antagonists are a pair of characters, but in some stories an antagonist can be nature or some facet of the protagonist themselves. The pair of cobras have been making their home in the garden around the bungalow since before Rikki washed up on the doorstep. The cobras have feared nothing in their home and taken whatever they wished. They are deadly and unmatched until the mongoose arrives. Mongooses are predators and with their quick striking ability, Cobras, as powerful as they are, are definitely the prey.<sup>3</sup> Nagaina has also recently delivered a nest of eggs which will spew forth plenty of little cobras to keep the garden a very dangerous location. With the coming of Rikki, so too does fear enter the lives of Nag and Nagaina. Fear for their nest of precious eggs but also a justified fear for their very lives. I would also classify Nag and Nagaina as vital characters. Their movements will involve swaying the body in a slow and fluid manner. I doubt a kindergartener could pull it off, or a forty something not-an-actor teacher for that matter, but the movements could be seen as hypnotic.

I will take a few sentences to discuss some things of interest that I uncovered about cobras during my research for the unit. In western civilizations snakes (including cobras) are referred to as serpents and they are reviled by most people. This revulsion and fear seems to go back to the story of the Garden of Eden and man's fall from grace. It would be easy to see how an Englishman would author a story with serpents as the villains. As an aside, within the larger The Jungle Book story there is another villainous serpent by the name of Kaa who causes trouble for the protagonist there as well. This hatred of serpents is not worldwide. In eastern civilizations, like say India, cobras are viewed quite

differently. Serpents are sometimes referred to as nagas (from which the names Nag and Nagaina are no doubt derived). Nagas are viewed as rather powerful and beautiful. It is told that nagas are commanded by Brahma (the Creator) to only bite the truly wicked people. Nagas are ranked somewhere above humans and are linked to guarding treasure and acting as a go between for humans to God. I was left to wonder at Kipling's choice of the cobras as a villainous pair. While true that Kipling was an Englishman with Western sensibilities, he also grew up in Bombay where he developed a love of the eastern culture. I am not sure why he chose to vilify serpents in his stories. I assume (yes, make an "ass of u and me") that he selected his antagonists because his primary target audience would be British folks. Or it could just be that natural predators and prey in India like mongooses and cobras fit oh so nicely into a tale.

In my curious brain, I had a hard time shaking the idea that from a certain perspective Nag and Nagaina are the real victims of this story. This notion would then clearly put Rikki into the role of villainous destroyer. Think about this story flipped around. The cobras are just going about their lives doing as cobras do when a stranger shows up at their home. This stranger is frightening to them, and very, very clearly a great danger to them as well. As Rikki destroys the cobras (sorry, spoiler alert) it is easy to visualize that perhaps without my Christian upbringing and accompanying loathing of serpents I could perhaps sympathize with the scaly beasties. I don't think I will explore this idea at the kindergarten grade level but it seems like a wonderful philosophical chat.

### *The Human Family*

Into the middle of this natural war between predator and prey falls the British family residing within the bungalow. The family consists of the Father (referred to as the big man by the snakes), the Mother, and Teddy the young child. I feel that these characters particularly the Mother and Father are of the emotional sort. At times they are ruled by their feelings, most commonly the feeling of fear. At first, Mother is uncertain of Rikki. Father and Teddy are immediately willing to accept the mongoose as a member of the family. By the end of the story, the whole family holds Rikki up as a hero. Considering the events in the tale, Rikki certainly deserves the accolades.

### *Karait*

Karait is a small brown dust snake. He is considerably smaller than the cobras and is frequently underestimated. With his lesser bulk he is extremely fast and his venom is at least the equal of the cobras. The young Rikki fights and defeats Karait during his heroic journey. The victory gives Rikki great confidence which makes him a much deadlier adversary for Nag and Nagaina.

### *Darzee and his Wife*

Darzee and his wife are tailorbirds. Tailorbirds are a type of warbler named for the manner in which they use leaves to make a nest. Rikki comes across the pair as they are grieving the loss of one of their babies. Nag had eaten it after it fell from the nest. They become the eyes and ears for Rikki keeping him abreast of the snakes comings and goings. The two birds are emotional characters. They flit between grief, to sadness, to alarm, and elation. Darzee's wife is also particularly brave as she baits Nagaina during one portion of the story.

These two characters also paired with an unlikely source to help me overcome a major hurdle in performing this story with my class. One major challenge when performing as a class is this, whether teaching third grade, fourth grade, or kindergarten, unengaged pupils equals trouble. Students who are not actively engaged in a learning activity tend to find other considerably less desirable things to do to pass the time. Let me fall back to the love of Star Wars that I mentioned earlier and paraphrase the character of Yoda. Lack of engagement leads to boredom, boredom leads to distraction, distraction leads to trouble (try it in Yoda's broken, flipped out voice). The lion's share of my performance art experience has been using Reader's Theater. I won't mention what publisher's curriculum for Reader's Theater we were using at Wilbur Elementary but lets just say I've read higher quality literature on the label for my allergy pills. Besides the quality of the writing, the main problem was that there are usually between five to eight roles in any given play. With of class size of anywhere between sixteen and twenty-six kids, the signs point to disciplinary issues. Even if I swapped out roles every other page (I don't really recommend this as it destroys any sort of flow, which is suspect to begin with) at minimum eight kids are hanging out with little to do. It may be hard to believe but a directive of "pay attention to the story" is seldom effective. There are about ten characters in Rikki-Tikki-Tavi. At the outset of this Delaware Teaching Institute experience I saw this as a major red flag to the success of my unit. In preparation for seminar we were assigned a reading list of myths, stories, fairy tales, and books on theory to examine over the summer. One assignment pointed me to an answer to my conundrum, Seminar Leader Reidel assigned to us to explore One Thousand and One Arabian Nights. The folktales included in this collection are wonderful stories, but they really didn't seem to connect with Kipling's work. That is until I began reading The Seven Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor. I had a passing knowledge of these stories but had never read them before. The story is basically broken into seven (obviously) journeys taken by Sinbad. But, book-ending the collection are an introduction and conclusion in which Sinbad meets a man named Hindbad. He then invites Hindbad to seven dinner parties. At each party, Sinbad relates the details to one of his adventures. Here's the helpful part, Sinbad is telling his stories to a large table full of listeners. The listeners ooh and ah throughout the narratives. In my imagination I saw people cringing and jumping at appropriate spots in the story. I could see people covering their mouths in disbelief, and clapping at the portions that are joyous. With this idea of a communal audience watching Sinbad relate his story I thought back to mongooses and cobras. Specifically, I remembered the tailorbirds. The tailorbirds, safe above the action, watching from the nest and reacting



with urgent calls for Rikki's attention, mournful wailings as Rikki is drawn down into the snake's den, and gleeful cheers when he emerges once again. I thought that perhaps I could tweak the story for my purposes. Instead of two tailorbirds, what if there was a tree full of the warblers? Perhaps even enough tailorbirds that every single student not currently portraying a character could actively engage in "watching" the drama unfold. Further what if each tailorbird/student were charged with reacting to the action much like Hindbad and the other dinner guests would react to Sinbad's unfolding adventure. Then there should be no student not engaged in the performance. The tailorbirds may have saved Rikki's life, but they and Sinbad may have also saved my unit.

### *ChuChundra*

Chuchundra is a muskrat. He lurks around the outskirts of a few scenes in the story. He is scared of Rikki but he is terrified of Nag and Nagaina. The cobras are much quicker than the muskrat so he cautiously and thoughtfully stays along the edges of the action and passes on information to Rikki. Chuchundra is a cognitive sort of fellow. Planning out his movements and staying away from both friend and foe alike. His would be creeping very careful and thought out kinds of movements as he relays details to Rikki but is always prepared to dart away at the drop of a hat, or the drip of venom.

### The Setting of Rikki-Tikki-Tavi

Social Studies is one of the curricular areas that this story will allow me to address. Specifically, I will be able to look at standards relating to different locations (regions) around the world and comparing and contrasting cultures around the world. Kipling's story takes place in the country of India. I am a forty something, educated man with a college degree. Somewhere in my undergraduate work I was required to take a social studies course on world history. Yet prior to delving into this unit I could, off the cuff, say what I know of India. It goes something like this. It's hot and crowded. The Taj Mahal is found there. Gandhi was from India. The early European explorers traveled there looking for spice and trade, and a character from the TV show The Big Bang Theory is supposed to hail from there. And, that is about it. Now I can with a lot of certainty state that barring the very rare student with an Indian background no student in my class knows anything about India. Zero! Nada! None! This is because at five or six years of age most of my class doesn't leave Delaware except to possibly visit a relative in a different state or if lucky hang out with Mickey in Florida. Kindergarteners, and in my experience third and fourth graders, have no idea that the rest of the world exists or that places with different climates, landforms, flora, fauna, or cultures are out there to be explored. A majority of my class cannot at this point differentiate between a country and a state. India will be a totally new concept for them. This unfamiliarity allows me to utilize The Jungle Book to really get at some of my geography standards.

India is located in Asia. It is home to a vast array of climates. The Jungle Book occurs in the southern portion of the country which has a tropical climate. Tropical climates are known to have large amounts of humidity and precipitation. The amount of water around leads to large amounts of vegetation. Such vegetation as can be found in a jungle. Dense vegetation also makes for a perfect hiding place for snakes, mongooses, and all other sorts of critters. My students will have a vague idea that a jungle is full of trees and vines. This knowledge will probably come from having seen Disney's The Jungle Book or Disney's Tarzan. A few Animal Planet fans could have watched Jeff Corwin seek out wildlife in a jungle as well. I will need to build a fair bit of background to help the children understand the setting of our story. Without the jungle setting there would not be a Rikki, Nag, or Nagaina. We can further link the climate to our story when we remember that Rikki was introduced as a half drowned flood survivor. Possibly from a monsoon or some sort of downpour far greater in scale than we typically have in Delaware. One part in the story that could bring out questions is the concept of a bungalow. My students are basically familiar with apartments, trailers, and American style single family homes. In India bungalows are an open form of house. The openness can help deal with the humidity and warmth. Kids may have a tough time accepting that snakes can just come and go into and out off the house. This can be common in areas of dense vegetation and homes designed to be somewhat open. I will need to develop an image of bungalow in their heads. This can be done simply with pictures (more on this in the lessons).

Another interesting facet of the story is that even though it occurs in India the family caught in the middle of Rikki's "great war", are British. Why would a story in an Indian bungalow star English people? The answer is found in the history of the Indian subcontinent. Rikki-Tikki-Tavi does not provide the reader with an exact date of when it happens. It is believed that it is somewhere near the end of the 1800's. At this time in history, India was a colony of Britain. Much as America was a century before. Some referred to India as Britain's crown jewel. Britain of course wished to protect its colony. Scores of administrators, hundreds of upper level soldiers, and support staff made their way from Europe to Asia and settled into bungalows, apartments, and towns.<sup>4</sup> Much like Kipling's own family, the big man's family in the story made this move to India.

Another geography standard we will address is about comparing and contrasting two different cultures. I will lead the children to discovering that even though our housing and clothes are different from people in India we still have much in common. For example, in both cultures we love our families. We also become upset if a member of our family is threatened and will protect them as best we are able.

## Joseph Campbell

Joseph Campbell was a teacher, writer, speaker, and scholar. Though he grew up catholic, at a young age he became enamored with Native American culture and beliefs. The catholic and Native American belief systems are pretty much at odds and this clashing of

belief systems helped lead Joseph to explore mythologies from around the globe.<sup>5</sup> His book, The Hero with a Thousand Faces (1949), was received with distinction. In the book Campbell explores the idea of the mythic hero. He surmised that the mythic hero follows a similar journey in myths from cultures found throughout the world. Campbell called this common heroic journey, the Monomyth. The Monomyth lays out a pattern of stages that most stories seem to follow<sup>6</sup>. Though individual heroes from stories may skip a stage or shuffle the order of stages a bit, most stories do fit the mold.

As I read about the Monomyth, I was able to see how Rikki-Tikki-Tavi, the mongoose, was on a heroic journey of his own. Rikki-Tikki-Tavi is closer to a fable than a myth but still, as with most quality stories, it fits at least portions of the pattern. I will now detail the areas where my chosen story dovetails nicely with Campbell's Monomyth. A stage of the Monomyth is "The Call" or "Call to Action". In this stage the protagonist receives a summons to leave their everyday life and do something extraordinary. This is when Rikki hears and investigates the crying tailorbirds. Darzee tells Rikki about the cobras and explains how the snakes had eaten one of their babies. Another stage of the Monomyth is called "Crossing the Threshold". This happens when the protagonist actually leaves their comfortable, known world and enters a dangerous and unknown place. In Rikki-Tikki-Tavi, the crossing coincides with the call. Rikki leaves the familiarity of the bungalow and ventures into the garden as he is meeting the tailorbirds. The garden is the domain of Nag and Nagaina. It is unsafe and unfamiliar to Rikki. At that point Campbell's hero embarks on "The Road of Trials". In this portion of the story the sequence of events acts as hammer and anvil to temper and forge the character into somebody who has the skills and attitude to become a proper hero. For Rikki, this forging is the vast majority of the events in the story. Rikki is ambushed by the cobras but survives. Rikki fights and defeats Karait. Rikki fights and defeats Nag. Rikki destroys the cobra nest. Rikki rushes to protect his family. Rikki faces off with Nagaina. As Rikki overcomes each of these hurdles he is strengthened and grows closer to becoming a hero. In the Monomyth the hero then goes "Into the Abyss. This is typically where the *hero to be* enters the heart of darkness. It could be Luke Skywalker flying into the Death Star Trench in Star Wars or Theseus entering the maze of the Minotaur in Greek Mythology. For our mongoose *hero to be*, it is when he follows Nagaina down into the snake den for their final battle. Following this clash of protagonist and antagonist "The Transformation" takes place. The transformation is when Rikki rises from the snake den and informs the garden the Nagaina will not return again. Rikki is now the hero of the garden and the bungalow. He is praised by the birds and creatures of the garden and the family in the bungalow alike. In Campbell's monomyth the Hero then goes through "The Atonement" and "The Revelation". These stages are when the hero is at peace with his new identity and he/she then comes to understand and accept his/her new outlook on life. Rikki doesn't really do too much of this beyond accepting the heightened stature granted him by the other characters in the story. Finally, "The Return" occurs. This is when the hero returns to everyday life. In his return, Rikki goes back to safeguarding the garden and bungalow and never allows cobras to settle back into *his* domain.

One skill that is important for elementary students of all ages is making connections to a story. There are three primary ways to connect a story. The first way is to connect themselves to the story. The second way would be to make a connection between the story and some actual happening in the world today or in the past. The final way is to connect two stories together. In the classroom making these connection usually sounds like “this story reminds me of...” Since the Monomyth is common to so very many stories it would be a fantastic tool to arm the kids with early on. If I can get kindergarteners to understand the basic ideas of the Monomyth they should be able to easily connect a multitude of tales. This is one of the areas where if I can begin laying the groundwork in kindergarten, the payoff in comprehending stories should be seen in the upper grades as well. I don’t image teaching the Monomyth to the children will be all that difficult either. Kids are drawn to stories like Batman, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, The Avengers, Frozen, Tangled, Brave, Shrek, and the list is endless. All of these stories fit the pattern of the Monomyth. With all the connections the class will be able to make, these stories will stick together like flies in a spider’s web.

#### Dramatic Structure of Rikki-Tikki-Tavi

Seminar Leader Reidel spent much of our seminar time discussing the importance of dramatic structure. One might think that dramatic structure is a blueprint for making good stories. The opposite is actually the truth. Examining good stories for commonalities developed the concept of dramatic structure. It seems logical that great storytellers would tell great stories. Note that I did not say great writers. From the dawn of humanity, stories have been told. Writing our stories down is relatively new. Literacy is a blink of the eye when compared to the timetable of human existence. All good storytellers can read their audience. They can tell when the audience is hungry for more excitement, or when a laugh is needed. They know whether an audience is satisfied or bored, on the edge of their seat, or let down by an ending. Great storytellers (and yes, now-a-days writers, and moviemakers too) have learned what conventions to follow in order to satisfy their audience. The general conventions have been diagramed, broken into steps, and labeled. I will now share these steps and labels as I apply dramatic structure to Kipling’s story.

The steps as described in seminar begin with “The Introduction”. This is where we meet the protagonist, are exposed to a bit of the setting, and can peek into the characters’ lives. In Rikki-Tikki-Tavi this is when the narrator helps us meet Rikki, Darzee, and Chuchundra. Rikki is also described in appearance and temperament. Additionally, we meet the family and are given the back story on how Rikki came to the bungalow. After the introduction, the story moves to the “Inciting Incident”. This is the point at which the ball gets rolling. That means it is when the problem is introduced into the tale. In Star Wars this is when Luke receives the cry for help from Princess Leia. In Frozen this is the point when Elsa’s parents tell her to hide her abilities. In Rikki-Tikki-Tavi it is when Rikki ventures into the garden, hears of Darzee’s sorrow, and learns of Nag and Nagaina.

Following the inciting incident, we begin the “Rising Action” step of the story. Rising action loosely aligns with Campbell’s stage called “The Road of Trials”. In Kipling’s short story it perfectly aligns with “The Road of Trials” (Detailed above in the Joseph Campbell section). It starts with meeting Nag, being ambushed by Nagaina, and includes all of the tension-increasing events up to when Rikki squares off against Nagaina in the family’s veranda. During the rising action, the tension in the story rises and rises until it reaches a point where something must break. That breaking of the tension is called “The Crisis”. This is the tipping point where protagonist and antagonist face off. For Rikki it is when he follows Nagaina underground into the snake hole for the final confrontation. “The Climax” follows. The climax is the part of the story for which the audience has been waiting. Depending on the type of story the climax can be joyous, triumphant, hysterical, or possibly thought provoking, tear inducing, or emotionally draining. In a good story the climax should illicit an emotional response from the viewers. In Kipling’s story, the climax occurs when an exhausted Rikki pulls himself victorious from the lair of Nagaina and declares her dead. At this point the story is almost done. All that remains is “The Resolution”. The resolution ties up loose ends and establishes the new normal for the character. In Rikki-Tikki-Tavi the resolution is when the birds sing the praises of Rikki’s victory and the garden is shown to now be Rikki’s domain.

In kindergarten we do not break a story into so many parts. Kindergarteners will sometimes struggle figuring out the three that they are taught. Those three are the beginning, middle, and end. For my purposes the beginning of a story will align with the introduction and the inciting incident. The middle will consist of all the rising action and the crisis as well. The end of course will include the climax and the resolution. In kid friendly terms we often say the beginning is when we meet the main character and find out the problem. The middle is all the stuff that happens as the character deals with or tries to solve the problem. The end is how the problem is solved and sometimes how the main character is changed (though that last piece is exceedingly tough for them). When looking at the beginning, middle, and end of a story in kindergarten we also ask the students to place events in sequence. I think that during this sequencing it would be a great time to talk a bit about the stage of rising action. Specifically, it could be an opportunity to talk with the kids about tension. Asking which events are “bigger” or “more exciting” should help us figure out the order of the events. I know that many of my male students are fans of World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE). They regularly come in talking about who John Cena beat last week or how awesome Rey Mysterio was on the show. WWE is a scripted performance. The writers and booking agents are no fools. They understand dramatic structure very well. It should be easy and engaging for my wrestling fans to put the matches in order for a WWE broadcast. They will naturally feel that tension will rise if you start with your weakest match, then escalate the excitement as you move through the under card only to hit your peak with the championship match between two superstars. It’s all dramatic structure, and in terms many children will understand and be strongly drawn to.

## Objectives

### Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

RL.K.2 with prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.

In kindergarten students are frequently asked to retell a familiar story. This is not a simple task for many. I expect to find much greater student success with this skill after they have the opportunity to “live out” the story through performance art.

RL.K.3 with prompting and support, identify characters, setting, and major events in a story.

Being able to identify characters, setting, and other story elements is an essential skill for kindergarteners to learn. I feel that by having students act in the roles of the characters and visualize the backgrounds (settings) for our performances that these characters and settings will more likely become memorable to the students. Our performances should aid in cementing these concepts into the minds of the children.

SL.K.6 Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.

Any practice speaking in front of others is invaluable when addressing this standard. I especially would like to focus on the volume of the child’s speech, as it is frequently very low and difficult to hear.

### Delaware State Social Studies Standards – Kindergarten

K.G.3.1 students identify how people live in different locations around the world.

In the course of establishing background knowledge for the story we will touch on how the characters in the story live their daily lives. As Rikki-Tikki-Tavi occurs in India in the far past, the class will see that life there can be very different than what we are used to living in Delaware. These discussions will include how things like climate, region, and landforms could affect how the people (characters) live.

K.G3.2 students identify how cultures are similar or different.

As we read the story and discuss background we will find examples of how the Indian culture is similar and different from our own. I would use a Venn Diagram to record and display our findings.

Al’s Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices

Students will be able to express feelings appropriately and students will be able to regulate their own feelings and behaviors.

This is the area I am most excited to explore through performance. Throughout the story, characters will feel an array of emotions. Scared, excited, angry, and sad will all be felt by the characters. I envision asking the students how they think their body and face will look from the outside when they are feeling an emotion. We can then further the lesson by discussing how we feel on the inside during that emotion. An example would be that when we feel anger, on the outside it would look like a frown and downward-sloping eyebrows. On the inside we might feel hot in our face and our muscle may feel tense. These discussions will help us further our understanding of our emotions as well as enhance our performance.

### **Essential Questions**

What details can I include to make a retelling better?  
How does the setting affect how the characters feel?  
How are we similar or different from people of a different culture or time?  
How can I better understand a character by understanding myself?  
How can I better understand myself by understanding a character?  
How can I “bring a story to life” through performance?

### **Strategies**

#### Listening Comprehension

In kindergarten the students cannot read a story. They are asked to comprehend stories. This takes the form of listening comprehension. As the teacher reads a story, students are expected to follow along paying special attention to details from the text and the pictures that accompany the words. Some of the details that I could specifically ask probing questions about are the characters, the setting, and the events from the beginning, middle, and end of the story.

When we discuss characters, students should know what the characters are. Are they human, animal, robot, talking plants, cars, toys come to life, or any other such thing? Students could be asked to draw an image of the characters. This is really quite tough in the beginning of the year but they do improve as we practice.

Setting is also questioned. I teach setting as broken into the following two parts; where and when. Students should be able to describe where a setting is and what the setting is like. As kindergarteners are just beginning to learn writing skills, this description will be given verbally or as a detailed (such as they can) drawing. They should also be able to discuss when the story takes place; winter, summer, day, night, time of day, day of week,

a long time ago, in the future, something along these lines. They may be asked to justify their responses by explaining their thinking. “I think it is in the past because people are riding horses and wagons” would be a super answer.

### Sequence of Events

The plot will also be explored. In kindergarten we can ask questions along the lines of what happened first, or right after *fill in the blank* happened, what happened next. Sometimes this skill takes the form of putting picture cards of the story in sequence.

One way we can assess if a child comprehends a story is by asking them to retell the story using details. This is an easy way to determine if a student was paying attention. It is also valuable anytime we can get children to speak aloud. For some it is a natural and easy thing to do for others finding a proper volume, speaking rate, or demonstrating fluency is a challenge.

### Close Reading

Another strategy that I will use is close reading. Close reading essentially boils down to reading a story multiple times. Each read through is with a different purpose in mind. This repeated reading allows the students to more thoroughly digest the tale. As for reading with different purposes, it could go like this; during the first pass we will be looking for new and challenging vocabulary. This is where the bulk of the building background will occur. The second read though could be about considering the characters’ feelings at different points in the story. The third read through could be to pick out critical details about characters, setting, sequence of event, etc. I could do as many readings as I feel would be beneficial to my students and with different goals for each read through boredom should be eliminated.

### Making Connections

Earlier I mentioned making connections to stories. This is a great comprehension strategy. I regularly ask kids to tell me what the story reminds them of. This is also not easy particularly in the fall and winter. It is essential to model this strategy for the kids. Modeling is of course just doing the required activity yourself first while talking through your thinking aloud for the kids to hear. But beware, whatever you model, you will get parroted back at you. I always try to connect a story to some event that I know the kids won’t be able to connect to themselves. For example, that part of the story reminded me of when I first drove a car... Giving an answer like that shows them what I want them to do but it also keeps them thinking as no five or six year old can convincingly say they drove a car. I would probably hear a lot of answers about riding bikes though.

### Graphic Organizers



As a teacher, a standard go to strategy is to have the students use graphic organizers. There are graphic organizers for everything from sequencing events to comparing and contrasting two characters. I will be using a t-chart and venn diagram to record our ideas about Rikki-Tikki-Tavi. A large variety of graphic organizers can be found online by using a search engine. One site that is good for finding graphic organizers is [www.fcrr.org](http://www.fcrr.org).

### Building Background

As indicated earlier, I will need to spend time developing background for Rikki-Tikki-Tavi. I do for most stories the class will be spending time with. A powerful tool for building background is using technology. Specifically, I use my smartboard. Oh sweet smartboard! The smartboard, if you are unfamiliar, is a large whiteboard that replaces the outdated blackboard. It plugs into a computer and projects the image from the monitor on the screen. It is also touchable and interactive. It is like a giant I-Pad. I regularly use this tool if I am discussing something my kids may not be familiar with. I can show pictures of anything that could be confusing or foreign to the students. I can also play sound effects or music that may enhance students' understanding of a concept. I can also use a search engine to find videos which go along with our topics.

Building background is also a fantastic time to practice making connections. Relate something occurring in this story to something the kids can recall from a previous story and you can develop a concept and practice a valuable skill at the same time. That's double dipping! But not in a chips and dip kind of bad way (cue Seinfeld again). What'll be funny is that in a few years if this lesson is still around, I may have to build background just to explain that joke.

A great source for building background is the kids themselves. Every child comes with their own unique set of knowledge. I would be remiss not to at least give the children a chance to share their ideas when we are talking about new topics. Sometimes, they will make connections that I would not think of myself. The connections that they may come up with could be just what some other child needs to clarify the idea we are discussing. You won't know what you are missing out on if you don't give the kids a chance to share their thoughts. It's important!

### Performance Art

Hey, it's right in the title of the DTI seminar. Of course I'm going to use it. Listening to a story is pretty passive. Your ears and sense of hearing are working just fine as are your eyes and sight but that's about it. If I get kids up to act out their story they are still using those two senses but they must also use their bodies and feel the action from the story.

They are adding their voices to the sound of the story. The more senses and modalities that we can incorporate in a lesson, the more unforgettable the experience will be.

One of my objectives is to help the kids be able to identify feelings. I think performance art and trying to “get into character” will be a valuable opportunity to explore how feelings can make physical changes in our bodies and on our faces.

### **Classroom Activities**

Lessons One, Two, and Four will include a reading of the story. Each read through will have a different focus for the students. In this way, the majority of this unit is one giant close read. The goal of close reading is to delve deeper into a story by repeatedly reading the text. Each read through will have a different goal in mind. This will help keep students focused and engaged on the story. Lesson 3 is not a part of the close read process. While we will be exploring things we have learned during our readings, we will not actually reread the tale in lesson 3.

**Lesson One: Building Background:** To engage the students immediately, I will read aloud the first sentence from the story, “This is the story of the great war that Rikki-Tikki-Tavi fought single handedly, through the bathroom of the big bungalow in Segowlee Cantonment”. I will then be asking students to make predictions (but with the kids, I’ll call them guesses) as to what this “great war” is all about. I will then record responses on the smartboard (though chartpaper would work just as well).

At this time, I will introduce a graphic organizer depicting a story map. The map should include sections for characters, setting, and plot which will be broken into beginning, middle, and end. The map will be filled in as the class progresses through the text. I can create this graphic organizer ahead of time on large chart paper and will be posting it somewhere in the room near where the reading will take place. After that, I will introduce the character of Rikki-Tikki-Tavi. To help the children visualize this strange character I will share pictures or even videos of a mongoose. I can find these images readily by searching for the animal by name online. Then, I’ll add Rikki to the story map under characters. With kindergarten students, extended group instruction time can be challenging. It may be wise to take a short break here in which children can have a few minutes to return to their seats and create a picture of Rikki. After about ten minutes the class can return to the carpet and I’ll continue the lesson.

The class can then be led in a discussion of whether mongooses are native to Delaware. Students should rather quickly decide that they are not native. It could be expected that children may confuse a mongoose with a ferret or weasel, which do show up in Delaware or local pet stores. It can be explained that these common animals are related to a mongoose much as a house cat is related to a lion. But, mongooses are different from weasels or ferrets. This understanding that mongooses are not native to

Delaware can then springboard us into a discussion of “what does this help us figure out about the setting”. I can now guide the class into determining that this story does not occur in Delaware. Now is the time to introduce the country of India as the setting. I will add this new information to the story map. I will now be building background on India. I will be sure to include information about the climate (hot and wet) and landforms (jungle). To reinforce these concepts it would be helpful to display pictures of a monsoon and the vegetation of a jungle. It might also be engaging for the students to listen to sounds of the jungle. Again these images and sounds can be easily found online using a search engine.

With this basic background established it is appropriate to begin reading the story. I think a good first day will extend through the introduction and the inciting incident. This covers the beginning portion of the story map and should include everything from the first page until Rikki meets Darzee and his wife and hears about their lost child. Before ending the day, I’ll add Teddy, Mom, the Big Man, Darzee, and his wife to characters and fill in the problem in the story on the map under “beginning”.

I will start day two by building background about the bungalow. A T-chart would be a great way to compare and contrast the bungalow to a home in Delaware. I will make sure to point out the veranda (a dining room that is open to the outdoors to allow a breeze) and a bathroom with a sluice (an opening in the base of the tub to allow water to drain to outdoors). Again pictures of this sort of home would enhance student understanding.

I can introduce Nag by sharing pictures and videos of cobras. Afterward, we will discuss the relationship between predator and prey. I’ll start with something very familiar like a cat and mouse. Then I’ll ask students which would be the predator, a mongoose or a cobra. We will watch the “cobra vs. mongoose” video (link found in bibliography). I also need to introduce Chuchundra the muskrat with pictures. This would be a good break time where children can return briefly to their seats and make a picture of Nag.

Upon returning to group time, I’ll read the first part of the middle of the story. This covers the story from meeting Nag until Nag is killed. Be sure to add Nag, Nagaina, Karait and Chuchundra to story map. Also I will begin including plot details to the “middle” section of the map. I plan on stopping instruction for the day at this point.

I’ll start day three by exploring snake eggs as this part of the story features these eggs. Most kindergarteners will only associate eggs with birds or maybe turtles. I’ll begin the day by showing images of snake eggs and explaining that snakes have young by laying eggs. With this bit of information passed along, we will read the remaining of the middle from the story. This covers the fallout from the death of Nag and continues until Rikki follows Nagaina down the snake hole. This is a great time to invite the students to predict

how the story will end. Of course I'll finish the day by completing the middle section of the story map.

On the fourth day I'll finish the story and add details to the end portion of the story map. The students should then be directed to draw a detailed picture of a favored scene from the text. To complete background building, I'll use some of these student pictures in a sequencing game. I'll have the class work together to discuss which picture would go first, second, third and so on.

Lesson Two: The Statue Game: I will start lesson two by introducing the idea of tableau to the students as "the statue game". Tableau is a pause (freeze like a statue) during a scene in a story. In kindergarten we will focus this pause on displaying the emotions felt by the characters at these pivotal moments. Students will begin exploring the statue game by freezing while playing a well-known character in a common scenario. Choosing this character will be determined by my knowledge of the class. An example might be "show me a statue of Squidward when Spongebob is pestering him.

For day one I'll have the students play the statue game in small groups where students portray different characters. Suggested scenes from the beginning of the story would be "Rikki on Teddy's pillow at bed time". Students would listen to the passage and take turns portraying Teddy, Rikki, Mother, and the Big Man. A second scene would be "Rikki meets Darzee and his wife". Students would be statues of Rikki, Darzee, and Darzee's wife.

I intend to wrap up the day by making connections. Have students connect the feelings of the characters to times that they may have felt a similar way. Students can also connect the events from this part of the story to similar events in other stories with which they are familiar.

We will return to playing the statue game the following day. Today's suggested scenes would include, "Rikki meets Nag" in which students will take turns portraying Nag and Rikki. Students can portray Nag and Rikki again during the scene directly following the "failed sneak attack". Another interesting tableau to explore would be "Karait is killed", in which student take turns being statues of Rikki, Mom, Teddy, and the Big Man. Finally, students will get a chance to be Chuchundra and Rikki in the scene when the two meet.

Making connections will again finish the day. My focus will be on connecting character emotions to emotions the students have felt as well as tying events from Rikki-Tikki-Tavi to events in other tales.

When we revisit the game the next day there will be two good opportunities to practice tableau. The first is When Rikki, Darzee, and his wife, discuss Nagaina and her nest.

Students will be able to step into the roles of these three characters. The final tableau from the story will be the showdown in the veranda. Students can take turns being the Big Man, Mom, Teddy, Nagaina, and Rikki.

As the class finishes playing the statue game with the story, my students will have another chance to make connections to their emotions and to events in other familiar stories.

Lesson Three, Compare and Contrast: I'll guide my students to find similarities and differences between the characters from the story and their own families, friends, and possibly pets. Probing questions like "how does Teddy's family eat meals?" and "does anyone else's family do it like that?" can help get the ball rolling. I will use a Venn diagram as it would be a great way to record the class's ideas in this area. This will relate to the social studies standard about finding similarities between people from different cultures.

Lesson Four, Performance: This final lesson will take about three days. As we read through the story a third time, I can pause at pivotal scenes and invite children to form small groups and act out the events of the scene. The difference between the performance and tableau is that characters will not be static. Rather they will be portrayed as moving and speaking beings. I will remind the students to show emotion like in the statue game as they pretend to be the characters from the story. I will also model the first scene with a few volunteers. I'll be certain to demonstrate proper volume and rate while saying lines. I will also model how to take the text and turn it into lines or dialogue. It can be simply done by having students relate the gist of what is said by characters in the text. As I am monitoring the student groups carefully, I can choose groups that are doing well to perform in front of the whole class. An extension of this activity may be to assign groups different scenes and allow them to perform in front of a neighboring class.

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## **Appendices**

Appendix A Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts for Kindergarten:

### Reading Literature Standards

#### *Key Ideas and Details*

1. With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details
2. With prompting and support, identify characters, setting, and major events in a story.

### Speaking and Listening Standards

#### *Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas*

1. Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.

Appendix B Delaware State Standards for Social Studies for Kindergarten:

### Geography Standards

1. Students identify how people live in different locations around the world.
2. Students identify how cultures are different or similar.

### Appendix C AI's Pals: Kids Making Healthy Choices

1. Students will be able to express feelings appropriately and students will be able to regulate their own feelings and behaviors.

## Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> <http://www.biography.com/people/rudyard-kirpling.9365581> (accessed November 7, 2014).
- <sup>2</sup> [www.contemporary-dance.org/francois-desarte.html](http://www.contemporary-dance.org/francois-desarte.html) (accessed November 7, 2014).
- <sup>3</sup> <http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/cobra-vs-mongoose-predation?source=searchvideo> (accessed November 7, 2014).
- <sup>4</sup> Sinharaja Tamminta-Delgoda, *A Traveller's History of India* 3rd Edition
- <sup>5</sup> <http://www.JCF.org> (accessed October 26, 2014).
- <sup>6</sup> Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*



Curriculum Unit  
Title

*Rikki-Tikki-Tucking the Fun Back into Kindergarten through  
Performance Arts*

Author

Joseph Parrett

**KEY LEARNING, ENDURING UNDERSTANDING, ETC.**

Understanding the structure of a story can help me find meaning within the story, myself, and the world.

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S) for the UNIT**

How can understanding the elements of a story help me to connect myself with a story of another culture?

**CONCEPT A**

Narrative Elements

**CONCEPT B**

Cultures and Regions

**CONCEPT C**

Making Connections

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS A**

What details can I include to make a retelling of a story better?

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS B**

How are we similar or different from people of a different culture and time?

**ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS C**

How can I better understand a character by understanding myself?

**VOCABULARY A**

Character  
Setting  
Plot  
Mongoose  
Cobra

**VOCABULARY B**

Compare  
Contrast  
Bungalow  
Veranda

**VOCABULARY C**

Connection  
Tableau

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/MATERIAL/TEXT/FILM/RESOURCES**

"Cobra vs. Mongoose" National Geographic Videos : <http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/cobra-vs-mongoose-predation>

*The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling

"Tableau in the Classroom" by Kassie Misiewicz <http://cied.uark.edu/KMisiewiczTableauInTheClassroom.pdf>

All pictures, sound clips, and videos can be easily found through the use of an online search engine.