



Critical Reading: Fall Short Stories

Target Objectives: Inferences,
Figurative Language, drawing conclusions, reading comprehension
Vocabulary and Grammar.



The Anxious Leaf

From: The Child's Garden Story

Once upon a time a little leaf was heard to sigh and cry, as leaves often do when a gentle wind is about. And the twig said, "What is the matter, little leaf?" And the leaf said, "The wind just told me that one day it would pull me off and throw me down to die on the ground!"

The twig told it to the branch on which it grew, and the branch told it to the tree. And when the tree heard it, it rustled all over, and sent back word to the leaf, "Do not be afraid. Hold on tightly, and you shall not go till you want to."

And so the leaf stopped sighing, but went on nestling and singing. Every time the tree shook itself and stirred up all its leaves, the branches shook themselves, and the little twig shook itself, and the little leaf danced up and down merrily, as if nothing could ever pull it off. And so it grew all summer long, till October.

And when the bright days of autumn came the little leaf saw all the leaves around becoming very beautiful. Some were yellow and some scarlet, and some striped with both colors. Then it asked the tree what it meant. And the tree said, "All these leaves are getting ready to fly away, and they have put on these beautiful colors because of joy."

Then the little leaf began to want to go, too, and grew very beautiful in thinking of it, and when it was very gay in color it saw that the branches of the tree had no bright color in them, and so the leaf said, "O branches! Why are you lead-color and we golden?"

"We must keep on our work-clothes, for our life is not done - but your clothes are for holiday, because your tasks are over," said the branches.

Just then a little puff of wind came, and the leaf let go, without thinking of it, and the wind took it up and turned it over and over, and whirled it like a spark of fire in the air, and then it dropped gently down under the edge of the fence, among hundreds of leaves, and fell into a dream, and it never woke up to tell what it dreamed about.

Fall Language Activities 2012.

Short stories found at: www.apples4theteacher.com
Questions Created By: Speech Language and Beyond, LLC



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Answer the questions below carefully. Be sure to refer back to your passage when necessary to find the correct answers.

1. What figurative language technique is being used throughout this short story (hyperbole, personification, simile, or metaphor)? How do you know?

2. Read the following statement below and tell what figurative language technique was used here? What is being compared?

Just then a little puff of wind came, and the leaf let go, without thinking of it, and the wind took it up and turned it over and over, and whirled it like a spark of fire in the air.

3. What does it mean when the branch says, “We must keep on our work clothes for our life is not done.”

4. What changed little leaf’s mind and made him decide to fall off the tree branch?

5. What happened to little leaf once he fell on the ground?

Vocabulary and Grammar

6. Underline 5 adjectives found throughout the short story.

7. Circle at least 3 past tense verbs found in the short story.

8. What word in the story is the antonym for “rough”?

9. What word in the story is the synonym for “fall”?

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The Three Apples

By: adapted from Ovid

The old apple tree stood in the orchard with the other trees, and all summer long it had stretched out its branches wide to catch the rain and the sun to make its apples grow round and ripe. Now it was fall, and on the old apple tree were three great apples as yellow as gold and larger than any other apples in the whole orchard. The apple tree stretched and reached as far as it could, until the branch on which the three gold apples grew hung over the orchard wall. There were the three great apples, waiting for some one to pick them, and as the wind blew through the leaves of the apple tree it seemed to sing:

"Here in the orchard are apples three,
Who uses one well shall a treasure see."

And one morning Gerald came down the lane that passed by the orchard wall. He looked longingly at the three gold apples, wishing, wishing that he might have one. Just then the wind sang its song again in the leaves of the apple tree and, plump, down to the ground, right at Gerald's feet, fell one of the three gold apples.

He picked it up and turned it round and round in his hands. How sweet it smelled, and how mellow and juicy it was! Gerald could think of nothing so good to do with such a beautiful ripe apple as to eat it. He put it to his mouth and took a great bite of it, then another bite, and another. Soon there was nothing left of the apple but the core, which Gerald threw away. He smacked his lips and went on his way, but the wind in the apple trees sang, sorrowfully, after him:

"Here in the orchard are apples two,
But gone is the treasure that fell for you."

And after a while Hilda came down the lane that passed by the orchard wall. She looked up at the two beautiful gold apples that hung on the branch of the old apple tree, and she listened to the wind as it sang in the branches to her:

"Here in the orchard are apples two,
A treasure they hold for a child like you."

Then the wind blew harder and, plump, an apple fell in the lane right in front of Hilda.

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She picked it up joyfully. She had never seen so large and so golden an apple. She held it carefully in her clasped hands and thought what a pity it would be to eat it, because then it would be gone.

"I will keep this gold apple always," Hilda said, and she wrapped it up in the clean handkerchief that was in her pocket. Then Hilda went home, and there she laid away in a drawer the gold apple that the old apple tree had given her, closing the drawer tightly. The apple lay inside, in the dark, and all wrapped up, for many days, until it spoiled. And when Hilda next went down the lane and past the orchard, the wind in the apple tree sang to her:

"Only one apple where once there were two,
Gone is the treasure I gave to you."

Last of all, Rudolph went down the lane one fine fall morning when the sun was shining warm and the wind was out. There, hanging over the orchard wall, he saw just one great gold apple that seemed to him the most beautiful apple that he had ever seen. As he stood looking up at it, the wind in the apple tree sang to him, and it said:

"Round and gold on the apple tree,
A wonderful treasure, hanging, see!"

Then the wind blew harder, and down fell the last gold apple of the three into Rudolph's waiting hands.

He held it a long time and looked at it as Gerald and Hilda had, thinking how good it would be to eat, and how pretty it would be to look at if he were to save it. Then he decided not to do either of these things. He took his jack-knife out of his pocket and cut the gold apple in half, straight across, and exactly in the middle between the blossom and the stem.

Oh, the surprise that waited for Rudolph inside the apple! There was a star, and in each point of the star lay a small black seed. Rudolph carefully took out all the seeds and climbed over the orchard wall, holding them in his hand. The earth in the orchard was still soft, for the frost had not yet come. Rudolph made holes in the earth and in each hole he dropped an apple seed. Then he covered up the seeds and climbed back over the wall to eat his apple, and then go on his way.

But as Rudolph walked down the lane, the orchard wind followed him, singing to him from every tree and bush,



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**"A planted seed is a treasure won.
The work of the apple is now well done."**



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Answer the questions below carefully. Be sure to refer back to your passage when necessary to find the correct answers.

- 1. What figurative language technique is being used throughout this short story (hyperbole, personification, simile, or metaphor? How do you know?**
- 2. Based on the information given in the story, how did the old apple feel about the three golden apples?**
- 3. How would you describe Hilda's and Gerald's attitude about the golden apples they had? How did the old tree feel about what they did with their apples?**
- 4. Why do you think the old tree valued the three golden apples so much?**
- 5. Why was what Gerald did with his apple important?**
- 6. What do you think would have happened if Gerald would have acted unwisely with his apple?**

Vocabulary and Grammar

- 7. Underline four irregular past tense verbs used in this short story.**
- 8. What does blossom mean?**
- 9. Circle at least five adjectives used in this short story.**
- 10. What are the multiple meanings for "fall", "back", and "star"?**