

Filipino Folktales for Children

Activities and Notes on the Stories

Dear Readers,

Reading folktales is a wonderful and illuminating experience. If a child finds delight in the stories, or if a character or event sparks their curiosity, this opens up an opportunity to discuss and appreciate the story's message. We have designed activities and included notes on each of the seven stories in the collection for this purpose, to use at home or in the classroom. There are three types of activities: **pre-reading activities** that prepare young readers to engage with the text; **reading activities** that deepen their understanding as they read; and **post-reading activities** that expand their thinking. These simple activities are best used together for a holistic reading experience.

In any form of learning, questions are unending and imagination is unlimited. I have included my email address and welcome your questions and other feedback you may have.

Thank you for reading and journeying with me!

Zarah Gagatiga, Author 😊
zarah.gagatiga@gmail.com

Malakas and Maganda

The Philippines is made up of 7,100 islands divided into three main island groups: Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. This creation story offers an imagined beginning for the land that is now populated by diverse communities who speak different languages and tell varied stories of their ancestors and beliefs.

This creation story begins with a bird that witnesses the chaos of sea and sky. From this conflict, earth surfaces and life emerges. Plants and animals spring to life, and from a mighty bamboo stalk, Malakas and Maganda emerge and have children who populate lands near and far.

Before reading	<p>Unlock the Tagalog words Malakas and Maganda by referring to the Glossary at the end of the book. Use them in simple sentences that you say out loud. Write these sentences down.</p> <p>These descriptive words are used as the names of the main characters in this story: Malakas for the male character and Maganda for the female character.</p> <p>What could their relationship be?</p>
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During reading	<p>Using the table below, write down the actions and character traits of Malakas and Maganda.</p> <table><tr><td></td><td>Malakas</td><td>Maganda</td></tr><tr><td>Actions</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>Traits</td><td></td><td></td></tr></table>		Malakas	Maganda	Actions			Traits		
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After reading	<p>Draw your favorite scene from the story.</p> <p>Discussion Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What other creation stories do you know?2. Look at a map of the Philippines. Notice how scattered the islands are. Identify the country’s three major islands.3. Who could the bird be? What could it represent?									

The First Fisherman

This cautionary tale from the Visayas is about knowing your strengths and weaknesses before challenging the gods or other unknown forces. This version of the story looks at doubt, faith and the consequences of our actions.

Before reading	<p>Make a list of things you are good at or talents you are proud of.</p> <p>How can your skills and talents give joy or help others?</p>
During reading	<p>Make a list of Pandaguan's skills and talents. How does he use them to help others?</p>
After reading	<p>Discussion Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the role of doubt? Should doubts guide our actions? 2. Why is it important to be aware of your emotions? How do you respond to them?

Why Chickens Scratch the Ground

Chicken borrows Lawin the hawk's ring and loses it. Lawin extracts revenge by preying on Chicken's babies. A pourquoi ("why") tale, this version explores the changes in a friendship when a promise is broken.

Before reading	Use the table below to compare a chicken and a hawk.		
		Similarities	Differences
	Chicken		
	Hawk		
	What can break a strong bond of friendship?		
During reading	Discuss the agreement between Chicken and Lawin. Think about different ways the story might end.		
After reading	Based on the story, add to your chart comparing chickens and hawks. Discussion Questions 1. If you were Lawin, how would you respond when Chicken lost the ring? 2. What can come between friends?		

The Carabao and the Snail

Lowly Snail outsmarts pompous Carabao in a race. This is a fable that is popularly traced to the Tinguian community. Also known as the Itneg, they live in Abra, a province in the northern part of Luzon.

The fable of Carabao and Snail is a modern retelling, to which I have added elements of the trickster tale. Often, the small and the quiet are looked down upon by the huge and the loud. In all versions of this story, the former end up triumphant while the latter become the victim of their own conceit.

Before reading	<p>A carabao is a water buffalo native to the Philippines. A snail or <i>kohol</i> is a common mollusk that inhabits rivers and seas of the Philippine archipelago. In this fable, pompous Carabao challenges Snail to a race.</p> <p>Use a table to compare and contrast the two animals.</p> <p>How do you think a snail could win a race with a bigger animal like a carabao?</p>
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During reading	Draw the line of snails by the riverbank that is unseen by the carabao.
After reading	<p>Add to your drawing, connecting and coloring the snails all the way to the finish line</p> <p>Discussion Questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is Carabao's weakness? 2. What is Snail's strength? 3. How did Snail outsmart Carabao? 4. If you were to give Carabao or Snail a piece of your mind, what would it be? Write or draw your answer.

Maria Makiling and the Golden Ginger

Maria Makiling is a *diwata* who stops blessing the community with gold and bountiful harvests because of people's greed and cruelty. This is the most common version of the story, and connects with growing concerns about the environment and climate change.

Before reading	<p>Unlock the word <i>diwata</i> by referring to the Glossary at the end of the book. List the different ways it could be translated into English.</p> <p>If Maria Makiling is a <i>diwata</i>, how do you think she will use her power for people and the land?</p>
During reading	Write down Maria Makiling's physical attributes, attitudes, and behavior toward people, animals and the environment.
After reading	<p>Think about the cause-and-effect relationships in the story, listed below. Talk about solutions.</p> <p>Poverty => Hunting, Begging, Stealing Disrespect => Suffering Generosity => Abundance</p>

The Monkey and the Turtle

This beloved trickster tale holds great historic value to the Philippines because it was the first retelling by the beloved national figure Jose Rizal to be published abroad, in England in 1889. Versions of the fable can be found in the folklore of many peoples of the northern provinces. In the Visayas and Mindanao, the trickster is portrayed as a mouse-deer known locally as *pilandok*.

There are many versions of the tricks that Monkey plays on Turtle and his other animal "friends." In all versions, however, the message is one of survival: we can beat even the most cunning opponent by using our wits. This is what Turtle is able to do—a message that Jose Rizal emphasized in his retelling.

Before reading	<p>Read about the Philippine hero Jose Rizal: https://www.britannica.com/biography/Jose-Rizal</p> <p>Rizal retold the Tagalog trickster story “The Monkey and the Turtle” in English as a present for his nephews and nieces. He drew illustrations and sent the story to the Philippines while he was studying in Europe.</p> <p>Use a table to compare and contrast monkeys and turtles.</p>
During reading	<p>Write down three lines from the story that show Monkey tricking Turtle:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. <p>Write down three lines from the story that show Monkey has been outsmarted by Turtle:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3.
After reading	<p>Discussion Question</p> <p>If you encountered a real-life trickster, what would you do?</p>

The Mayor with Two Horns

A community leader abuses his power and resorts to violence, only to bring about his own downfall. This tale has been used as an allusion to the story of dictatorship in modern Philippines.

Before reading	<p>Make an idea map or word web of leadership traits.</p> <p>How can ordinary people help the leaders of their communities?</p>
During reading	<p>Using the illustrations, describe the transformation of the mayor into a two-horned monster.</p> <p>What caused horns to grow on the mayor’s head?</p>
After reading	<p>Discussion Question</p> <p>What do the words of the barber at the end of the story mean to you? <i>“We will remember. We will tell the story.”</i></p>