

THE SCHOLAR'S MOTHER TONGUE

Class IV, Unit VII: Prose

Introduce 'Akbar' and 'Birbal' to the students. Ask them whether they have heard of any stories about Birbal. If any of the students know an Akbar-Birbal story, ask him/her to narrate it to the class.

If not, the teacher can do any of the following:

- Narrate an Akbar-Birbal story
- Give an Akbar-Birbal comic story to read
- Play the video of an Akbar-Birbal story
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nghgrQbwNJw> (The video is to give the students an idea about the characters Akbar and Birbal)

Through any of the above activities, the teacher can establish the main characters in the Akbar-Birbal stories (Akbar, Birbal, courtiers) and the general setting (court, palace, etc.).

At the end of the activity, elicit and write the following words on the blackboard through interaction:

“Akbar”, “king”, “Birbal”, “wise”, “courtiers”, “court/palace”.

Interaction

What do you see in the video?

Who are the characters?

Where is the scene taking place?

Who all will be staying in the court? (elicit the word “courtiers” through code-switching method)

Now, tell the students that they are going to listen to another Akbar-Birbal story.

Narration

There lived a Pundit in a faraway land. He could speak many languages fluently. He was very proud of himself.

One day, he decided to visit the court of Akbar.

“I will show them that I am a learned man. I will get lots of gifts,” thought the Pundit.

A few days later, he arrived at Akbar’s court. King Akbar was seated on his throne. All the courtiers were sitting in front of him. The Pundit entered the court and walked towards Akbar.

“Your Majesty, I come from a faraway land. I am a learned man. I can speak many languages fluently. No one can guess what my mother tongue is.”

“Welcome to my kingdom, Pundit. I am honoured to have a learned man here. But, my courtiers are very clever men. They can easily find out your what is your mother tongue,” replied Akbar.

“I challenge every one of you here. I bet no one can find out my mother tongue.”

“*Tum kahaan se aa rahe ho* [Hindi: Where do you come from?]?” asked one of the courtiers. “*Mein bahut door se aaya hoon* [I come from a faraway land.],” replied the Pundit.

Interaction

Which language did the courtier and the Pundit speak?

Do you think it is the mother tongue of the Pundit?

Narration

“Your Majesty, the Pundit speaks Hindi fluently. I think his mother tongue is Hindi.

“No, Hindi is not my mother tongue,” replied the Pundit.

“*Sooryan ano chandran ano valuth* [Malayalam: Which is bigger, sun or moon?]?” asked another courtier.

“*Sooryan anu chandranekkal valuth* [Malayalam: The sun is bigger than the moon.],” replied the Pundit.

Interaction

Which language did the courtier and the Pundit speak this time?

Do you think it is the mother tongue of the Pundit?

Narration

“Your Majesty, the Pundit speaks Malayalam fluently. It is his mother tongue,” cried out the second courtier.

“No, Malayalam is not my mother tongue,” replied the Pundit.

Many other courtiers tried different ways to find out the Pundit’s mother tongue.

But, each one of them failed.

“You are a scholar. My courtiers have failed to find out what your mother tongue is. I think I will have to accept defeat,” said Akbar.

“Please wait, your Majesty. Give me a day’s time. I will find out the scholar’s mother tongue,” said Birbal coming forward from behind the courtiers.

“Hahaha ... You can try and fail,” teased the Pundit.

“We shall wait for one day. Let Birbal try. If he fails, I will accept my defeat,” declared Akbar.

Reading

Read the first two paragraphs of the lesson (From “**A learned Pundit once...**” to “**...was taken up by Birbal**”).

Follow reading protocols (individual reading, group reading, and reading aloud by the teacher).

Interaction

Do you think Birbal can find out the scholar's mother tongue?
If you were Birbal, what would you do?

Picture Interaction

Show the following picture to the students. Ask them the questions that follow.



1. What is the Pundit doing?
2. What is there in Birbal's hand?
3. What is he doing with it?

Narration

That night, Birbal **quietly** went to the Pundit's room. The Pundit was sleeping.

Birbal **whispered** something in the Pundit's ears.

He then **tickled** the Pundit's ear **with a feather**. It irritated/disturbed the Pundit.

"Dayacēsi nannu campavaddu. Dayacēsi nannu campavaddu [Telugu: Please don't kill me. Please don't kill me.]," cried out the Pundit.

Interaction

1. Can you guess what the Pundit said?
2. Which language is it?
3. Is it the mother tongue of the Pundit?

[Write the highlighted words in the narration on the blackboard as subtext.]

Narration

The next day, Birbal came to the court and announced, “The Pundit’s mother tongue is Telugu!”

The Pundit was surprised and accepted that his mother tongue was indeed Telugu.

King Akbar asked, “How did you find that?”

Birbal answered, “**In times of difficulty, a person speaks only in his mother tongue.**” He then told the king how he had gone to the Pundit’s room at night to find out the truth.

Reading

Read the rest of the lesson from the textbook.

Follow the reading protocols (individual reading, group reading, and reading aloud by the teacher).

Video

Play the following video of the story.

https://youtu.be/VIn_mqb0RZQ

Group Discussion

The teacher can initiate a discussion pertaining to the different languages that are officially used in various states of India and explain how we are united despite the language diversity. The teacher can also talk about the languages that are used in Pondicherry. The value of being “polite” and not “showing off one’s knowledge” can also be discussed.

Fun Activity

The teacher can introduce to the students how to say “Welcome” in different languages, such as Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, Hindi, etc.

Drama

A drama of the story can be enacted in class. The teacher can assist the students in making the king’s crown, the minister’s hat, and other simple props using paper.