

Guided Reading

Read this selection. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Wolf and the House Dog

You have probably heard fables by Aesop, the ancient Greek storyteller. Each brief story teaches a lesson about life. This play is based on one of Aesop's best-known fables.

Characters

Narrator

Wolf

House Dog

Narrator. Once there was a Wolf who never got enough to eat. Her mouth watered when she looked at the fat geese and chickens kept by the people of the village. But every time she tried to steal one, the watchful village
5 dogs would bark and warn their owners.

Wolf. Really, I'm nothing but skin and bones. It makes me sad just thinking about it.

Narrator. One night the Wolf met up with a House Dog who had wandered a little too far from home. The Wolf
10 would gladly have eaten him right then and there.

Wolf. Dog stew . . . cold dog pie . . . or maybe just dog on a bun, with plenty of mustard and ketchup . . .

Narrator. But the House Dog looked too big and strong for the Wolf, who was weak from hunger. So the Wolf
15 spoke to him very humbly and politely.

Wolf. How handsome you are! You look so healthy and well fed and delicious—I mean, uh, terrific. You look terrific. Really.

ELEMENTS OF DRAMA

Some plays include a narrator, who gives the audience information that is not presented in the dialogue, or the conversation between characters. The narrator's speech in lines 1–5 explains why it is so difficult for the Wolf to find food.

TEKS 5

- House Dog.** Well, you look terrible. I don't know why
 20 you live out here in these miserable woods, where you
 have to fight so hard for every crummy little scrap of
 food. You should come live in the village like me. You
 could eat like a king there.
- Wolf.** What do I have to do?
- 25 **House Dog.** Hardly anything. Chase kids on bicycles.
 Bark at the mailman every now and then. Lie around the
 house letting people pet you. Just for that they'll feed
 you till you burst—enormous steak bones with fat
 hanging off them, pizza crusts, bits of chicken, leftovers
 30 like you wouldn't believe.
- Narrator.** The Wolf nearly cried with happiness as she
 imagined how wonderful her new life was going to be.
 But then she noticed a strange ring around the Dog's
 neck where the hair had been rubbed off.
- 35 **Wolf.** What happened to your neck?
- House Dog.** Oh . . . ah . . . nothing. It's nothing, really.
- Wolf.** I've never seen anything like it. Is it a disease?
- House Dog.** Don't be silly. It's just the mark of the
 collar that they fasten my chain to.
- 40 **Wolf.** A chain! You mean you can't go wherever
 you like?
- House Dog.** Well, not always. But what's the difference?
- Wolf.** What's the difference? Are you kidding? I wouldn't
 give up my freedom for the biggest, juiciest steak in the
 45 world. Never mind a few lousy bones.
- Narrator.** The Wolf ran away, back to the woods. She
 never went near the village again, no matter how hungry
 she got.
- All Together.** Nothing is worth more than freedom.

SENSORY LANGUAGE

Writers use language that appeals to the senses. In lines 28–29, the phrase “enormous steak bones with fat hanging off them” shows you what the House Dog eats and helps you see more clearly the contrast between the lives of the two characters.

TEKS 8

ELEMENTS OF DRAMA

In drama, new problems often arise just when the character's struggle, or conflict, appears to be over. Before the Wolf hears the Dog's explanation of the ring around his neck, she thinks her conflict might be solved. Notice how new information in lines 35–39 complicates her decision.

TEKS 5

THEME

The theme or message of a literary work might be directly stated, or it might be implied. In this play, the theme is stated in the last line of dialogue, which is spoken by all of the characters together.

TEKS 3A

Use *The Wolf and the House Dog* (pp. 22–23) to answer questions 1–5.

1 From the description of the Wolf as “skin and bones” in line 6, you can tell that —

- A wolves are naturally thinner than dogs
- B the Wolf will be forced to eat the House Dog
- C wolves are not meant to live in the wild
- D the Wolf has had a hard life

2 The narrator alone tells the audience —

- F what the House Dog gets to eat
- G why the Wolf does not make a meal of the House Dog
- H what happens to the House Dog after the play ends
- J the moral of the play

Name _____ Date _____

3 If the Wolf had not seen the ring around the House Dog's neck, she would have —

- A remained friends with the House Dog
- B attacked the House Dog
- C moved to the village
- D stayed in the woods

5 Based on what the House Dog says throughout the play, what does he value more than freedom?

- A Independence
- B Loyalty
- C Security
- D Justice

4 Which of the following is an example of hyperbole in the play?

- F *Once there was a wolf who never got enough to eat.*
- G *Just for that they'll feed you till you burst....*
- H *It's just the mark of the collar that they fasten my chain to.*
- J *Nothing is worth more than freedom.*

