

## Analyze Folktales

**Folktales** are stories passed along by word of mouth from generation to generation. "Two Legs or One?" is a folktale that was shared as an oral tradition for a long time before it was written down. Folktales vary among cultures, but many teach life lessons. As you read, think about this folktale's message about values and behavior.

In some folktales, the main character is a **trickster**—a character who goes against acceptable behavior and attempts to fool another character, often for selfish reasons. Tricksters may succeed or fail, depending on whether their trickery is discovered.

## Analyze Humor

Like many folktales, "Two Legs or One?" features humor. Writers use **humor** to amuse readers. Readers and listeners of tales **infer**, or make guesses about what is humorous about a character's actions by connecting the actions to their own experiences. Humor may come from plot events, characters' words, or the language a writer uses to tell a story. These are some elements writers include to add humor to a story:

- surprising characters or events
- **exaggeration**, or extreme overstatements
- **irony**, a contrast in which reality is the opposite of what it seems to be

Humor can influence the mood and tone of a story. **Mood** is the feeling or atmosphere that a writer creates through descriptive words, imagery, and figurative language. **Tone** is how writers and tellers of tales express their attitude toward their subject.

As you read "Two Legs or One?" look for techniques the writer uses to create humor. Then, think about how those techniques influence the mood and tone of the story.

### Focus on Genre

#### ↳ Folktales

- are usually set in the past and are based on an oral tradition
- often show the importance of a cultural value or behavior
- often focus on a problem that needs to be solved
- may feature supernatural characters or events
- sometimes feature a trickster



WHOLE-CLASS READING: 1 day



**Selection Audio**

Use the Play Audio icon to access read-aloud audio, and select the More menu to turn on and off read-along highlighting that tracks with the audio. While the audio is playing, you can click on any portion of the text to control what is read aloud.



# Two Legs or One?

Folktale retold by Josepha Sherman

**A couple has a meaty disagreement.**

- 1 **O**ne day, a hungry man named Goha was walking in the marketplace, his mind on the dinner to come, when he chanced to pass a butcher's shop. There, hanging right in front of Goha's eyes, were two nice, meaty calf legs, every bit as tasty-looking to him as a good leg of lamb might be. He grew more hungry with every moment of looking, and at last bought them and scurried home.
- 2 "Wife, come, cook these as quickly as you can, and I'll go back to the market and buy some rice to go with them."
- 3 The calf legs cooked quickly indeed, and when Goha's wife took the lid off the pot, she saw that they were done wonderfully well—so wonderfully well that the **smell of them was sweeter to her than any rose.**
- 4 "I'd better taste one," she told herself. "Just to be sure they're done, of course. Just a taste."

**NOTICE & NOTE**  
As you read, use the side margins to make notes about the text.

**scurry**  
(skûr'ē) v. To scurry means to hurry along with light footsteps.

**ANALYZE HUMOR**

**Annotate:** Mark the example of exaggeration that appears in paragraph 3.

**Predict:** What do you think will happen next? Explain.

---



---



---

**DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION**  
**Scaffolding for English Learners**

**Understand Events in Sequence** Explain that the first paragraph of "Two Legs or One?" contains complex sentence structures and may be difficult to follow.

► **Substantial** Choral read paragraph 1 with students, stopping at any confusing words or phrases. Provide students with a sequence chart and have them write key words and phrases from the text in sequentially ordered boxes and draw or paste images that match the words and phrases (e.g., images of open markets). Repeat for paragraphs 2–4.

**Preview the Text**

Review with students the definitions of the word *meaty*. ("a bone with lots of meat on it"; "something substantial") Discuss what a meaty disagreement might be like.

**Vocabulary in Context**

**scurry:** Goha is anxious to take the legs home to eat, so he *scurries*.

**ASK STUDENTS** how the sentence would read differently if the word *walked* or *tiptoed* were used. (*Walked does not suggest a sense of urgency; tiptoed means he walked cautiously—it does not fit the tone of the story.*)

**Analyze Humor**

**Show How It's Done** Display this page in the Student Edition and use the question to model for students how to annotate details in the text to help them analyze humor.

- In paragraph 3, highlight "the smell of them was sweeter to her than any rose."
- Explain that this exaggeration helps show that the meat is a powerful temptation.
- Work with students to analyze the humor in this exaggeration.

**Possible response:** *The temptation will probably create a problem that the characters in the folktale will need to solve.*

# Teach

## Analyze Folktales

Model for students how to identify characteristics of folktales.

- Point out the sentence “And suddenly there was nothing more to taste.”
- Help students understand the problem to be solved.
- Explain that although Goha is supposed to be the trickster, now it is his wife who is going to try to trick him.

**Possible response:** Students might suggest *running to the butcher to replace the calf leg, or just confessing and apologizing to Goha.*

## Vocabulary in Context

**procession:** People pause out of respect when a funeral *procession* passes by.

**ASK STUDENTS** how the sentence would change if *procession* were taken out. (*It would just say “funeral,” and we would have less of an idea about how big it was.*)

**dignified:** Goha is a trickster, so calling his funeral procession *dignified* is ironic.

**ASK STUDENTS** whether using another word like *sad* or *strange* would change the effect. (*Both would go against the story’s tone. The funeral is not described in sad terms, so we are prepared for a surprise. Strange would be disrespectful.*)

**upright:** To bolt *upright* means to quickly and unexpectedly come to a rigid vertical position.

**ASK STUDENTS** whether *up* or *upward* would have the same effect here. (*Up and upward would not have the same effect as upright.*)

### ANALYZE FOLKTALES

**Annotate:** Mark the detail in paragraph 5 that presents a problem to be solved.

**Connect:** Put yourself in the wife’s situation. How would you solve the problem?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**procession**  
(prə-ˈsɛʃən) *n.* In a *procession*, people or things move along in an orderly and serious way.

**dignified**  
(dɪˈɡnɪfɪd) *adj.* Someone or something that is *dignified* has or shows honor and respect.

**upright**  
(ˈʌpˈraɪt) *adv.* Someone or something that sits or stands *upright* is in a strictly vertical position.

5 Ah, but the meat was tender and perfectly cooked. She took a second taste, a third. And suddenly there was nothing more to taste. *She had eaten the entire calf’s leg!* The wife worried, “I can’t tell Goha how greedy I was! But what *am* I to tell him?”

6 Just then Goha returned. “I have the rice here, wife. Come and eat the calf’s legs, and let us eat!”

7 To his surprise, the dish his wife brought from the kitchen held one leg, and one leg alone. “Where is the second leg?” Goha asked.

8 “What second leg?” his wife replied. “Here is the only one!”

9 “There were two legs!”

10 “There is only one!”

11 “There were two!”

12 “One!”

13 “Two!”

14 “One!”

15 So there they were, arguing so loudly it frightened the pigeons off the roof. “I will prove to you that there were two legs!” Goha shrieked. “I’ll win this argument even if it means my very life!”

16 “There was one leg!” his wife shrieked back. “One leg!”

17 “There were two!” Goha shouted. But in the next moment he clutched at his chest, gasping, “My heart, oh, my heart...”

18 With that, Goha fell to the floor and pretended to be dead. His wife at first thought this must surely be another of her husband’s tricks. But when he remained so very still, she burst into tears and called the undertaker. Goha was carried from his house with great care. The funeral **procession** wound its slow, **dignified** way through the marketplace on its way to the cemetery, and everyone came running to see if the great and tricky Goha was, indeed, finally dead.

19 At last the procession passed the butcher shop. The butcher came out to see who had died, but by now such a crowd had gathered that he could see nothing.

20 “Who has died?” he asked loudly.

21 “Goha,” came the answer from several mouths.

22 “Goha!” the butcher exclaimed. “But how can he be dead? He only just bought a pair of calf legs from me!”

23 On hearing this, Goha sat bolt **upright**. “You see?” he cried to his wife in triumph. “There were two legs. I win our argument!”

## TURN AND TALK

With a partner, identify and discuss the folktale's humorous moments.



### ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

**What can blur the lines between what's real and what's not?**

Review your notes and add your thoughts to your Response Log.

## Assessment Practice

Answer these questions before moving on to the **Analyze the Text** section on the following page.

1. Read the excerpt from paragraph 3.

... when Goha's wife took the lid off the pot, she saw that they were done wonderfully well ...

Why does the author mention that the calf legs were done wonderfully well?

- (A) to introduce the problem that will shape the rest of the tale
  - (B) to reveal that Goha appreciates his wife's good cooking
  - (C) to explain why Goha needs to return to the marketplace
  - (D) to show that this story could not happen in real life
2. Select **two** pieces of evidence from paragraph 18 that support the idea that Goha has a habit of fooling people.
- (A) "With that, Goha fell to the floor and pretended to be dead."
  - (B) "His wife at first thought this must surely be another of her husband's tricks."
  - (C) "Goha was carried from his house with great care."
  - (D) "Everyone came running to see if the great and tricky Goha was, indeed, finally dead."
  - (E) "But when he remained so very still, she burst into tears and called the undertaker."



Test-Taking Strategies

# Apply



RESPOND: 2 days

## Analyze the Text

### FLEXIBLE GROUPING OPTION

Divide students into small groups. Assign half the groups questions 1–2 and the other half questions 3 and 5. Ask each group to report back on each of their questions. Work with the class to answer question 4.

#### Possible responses:

**1** **DOK 2:** The folktale is set in a town with a butcher shop, and everyone knows one another. These details help drive the plot because Goha sees the two calf legs hanging in the butcher shop. Later, the butcher remembers that Goha bought two calf legs, not one. The setting also explains why Goha's funeral would wind through town and all the villagers would come out to see if he is really dead. These details add drama and humor to the plot.

**2** **DOK 4:** Goha's wife fears that Goha will think she is greedy for eating the first calf leg, so she quickly attempts a deception.

**3** **DOK 3:** The repetition of the words two and one in paragraphs 8–14 makes the dialogue fast and lively; the repetition also adds humor to the argument between Goha and his wife.

**4** **DOK 3:** The characters' traits shape the plot of the folktale as follows: The conflict arises because both Goha and his wife love delicious food. The conflict intensifies because each of them has character flaws: Goha's wife would rather lie than confess the truth to Goha, and Goha is stubbornly determined to win the argument.

**5** **DOK 4:** The main lesson is about the value of truthfulness. When Goha's wife fails to be truthful, the result is a bitter argument and a trick that exposes her lie to the public. A less obvious lesson is that people should treat each other with openness and respect.

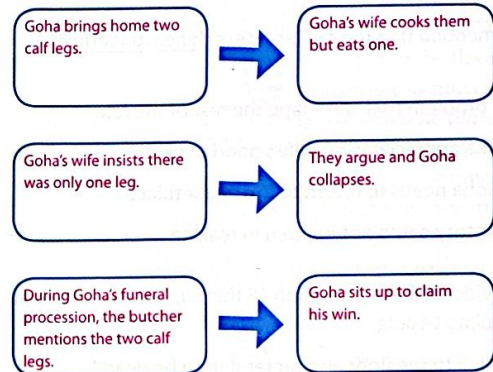
## Respond

## Analyze the Text

Support your responses with evidence from the text.

- 1** **ANALYZE** How does this folktale's setting help shape plot events?
- 2** **ANALYZE** In paragraph 5, what moment of discovery causes Goha's wife to lie to Goha about the calf's legs? Explain.
- 3** **ANALYZE** Reread the couple's argument in paragraphs 8–14. What impact does the author's repetition of certain words and phrases have on tone?
- 4** **DRAW CONCLUSIONS** How do the characters' traits shape the plot of this story? Fill out this cause-and-effect organizer to help illustrate your answer.

### CAUSE AND EFFECT



- 5** **EVALUATE** Identify two life lessons suggested by this folktale. Which is the main lesson, and which is secondary? Explain your answer.

## DI DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION When Students Struggle...

**Reteach: Analyze Folktales** Remind students that folktales are stories from the past that are passed down orally from one generation to the next. Sometimes the main character is a trickster, or a person who tries to fool someone. The trickery teaches a life lesson.

- Help students mark the detail in paragraph 15 that shows that Goha will do anything to win the argument. ("I'll win this argument even if it means my very life!")
- Then, have students mark the detail in paragraph 18 that shows that his wife is

