



Dave Clegg

PLAY

([HTTPS://STORYWORKS.SCHOLASTIC.COM/PAGES/TOPICS/PLAY.HTML](https://storyworks.scholastic.com/pages/topics/play.html))

The Elephants and the Mice

Kindness can have unexpected consequences.

By Spencer Kayden, based on an ancient fable from India. |

From the March/April 2020

(<https://storyworks.scholastic.com/issues/2019-20/030120.html>) Issue

Learning Objective: Students will compare and contrast two characters who differ in the way they treat others.

Guided Reading Level: R

DRA Level: 40

Featured Skill: Compare and Contrast
(<https://storyworks.scholastic.com/pages/topics/and-contrast.html>)

Common Core Standards

TEKS Standards

The Story

Resources

Lesson Plan

Bookmark & Share

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Text-to-Speech

Presentation View

Read the Story



UP CLOSE

Compare and Contrast

As you read, look for how Uma and Mohan, and their ideas about dealing with others, are different.

Add a knowledge-building pairing to this play! Listen to the *Storyworks* Learn More Podcast-and find a Skill Builder-in your Resources tab (<https://storyworks.scholastic.com/issues/2019-20/030120/the-elephants-and-the-mice.html#tab1>).

Characters

Choose the character you will play. *Starred characters have large speaking roles.

***Storytellers 1, 2, and 3**
(S1, S2, S3)

The Mice:

***Uma**

Rohit, Uma's son

Bina, Uma's daughter

***Mohan, Uma's neighbor**

Chandra, Uma's friend

All Mice, to be read by a group

The Elephants:

***Rama, the king**

***Mitali, the king's guard**

***Kumar, Mitali's son**

****Indicates large speaking role***

Scene One

S1: Long ago, in India, there was a village of mice.

S2: The village was a lively place, with mice scurrying to school, to work, and to market.

S3: Our story begins on a sunny morning as Uma and her children come out of their burrow.

Uma: Don't forget your lunches.

S1: Uma hands them each a tiny sack.

Rohit: Crickets, yum!

Bina: Thank you, Mummy!

S2: The children scamper down the road.

S3: Uma waves to her neighbor Mohan.

Uma: Good morning, Mohan.

Mohan (*grumpy*): What's good about it?

Uma: We are healthy. We have food and shelter. Life is good.

S1: Suddenly, a great rumbling sound is heard.

S2: The ground beneath them starts to tremble.

All Mice (*scattering*): Earthquake! Take cover!

S3: Uma runs after her children.

Uma: Bina! Rohit!

S1: The rumble gets louder. Uma sees huge figures crashing through the bushes.

Uma: It's not an earthquake! It's elephants!

S2: As the elephants charge toward them, cracks appear in the ground. Mice fall in.

All Mice: *Aaaaaaah!* Help!

S3: Other mice get trampled as the elephants stomp through the village and disappear.

S1: Then all goes quiet.

Scene Two

S2: The next day, the mice gather in the marketplace.

Uma: Chandra, how is your foot?

Chandra: It's just a sprain. I'll be OK.

Mohan: How many mice did we lose yesterday?

Uma: At least 20. And many more were hurt.

Chandra: The elephants never bothered us before. Why now?

Mohan: Because they are horrible creatures.

S3: They hear rumbling again.

Mohan: The elephants are back!

Uma: I'm going to find out what's going on.

Mohan: You better let me handle this.

S1: Uma and Mohan run toward the road as the elephants come from the other direction.

S2: Mohan shouts up to them.

Mohan: Hey! Hey, you!

S3: The elephants don't hear and keep going.

S1: Uma climbs onto the roof of a hut. She rolls up a large leaf to use as a megaphone.

Uma (shouting): Excuse me! EXCUSE ME!

S2: A small elephant stops.

Kumar: Yes?

Uma: Why are you coming through here?

Kumar: Our water hole dried up. Now we must drink from the lake nearby.

Mohan (shouting): You wrecked our homes!

Uma: Many mice were killed.

Kumar: Whoops. We didn't see you.

Mohan: Whoops? That's all you have to say?

Kumar: We didn't mean to hurt anyone.

Uma: Perhaps you could go around our village instead of through it.

Kumar: I'm sorry, but do you think thirsty elephants are going to take the long way? Besides, they won't listen to a puny elephant like me.

S3: Kumar trots off.



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Scene Three

S1: Weeks later, the mice call a meeting to talk.

Mohan: The elephants continue to destroy our village.

Chandra: More mice get hurt every time they come through.

Bina: I'm scared! It's not safe here anymore!

Rohit: What are we going to do?

Mohan: Let's get revenge. We'll go to their kingdom and chew up all their pillows.

Uma: That doesn't solve anything. Though you've given me an idea.

Mohan: What?

Uma: I will reason with the elephant king.

Mohan: Asking nicely won't get you anywhere. Elephants only listen to force.

Uma: I think kindness will get you a lot further than force.

Mohan: We'll see. I'm coming with you.

Uma (*sighing*): If you insist.

Bina: Be careful, Mummy!

Rohit: Come back soon!

Uma: I will, my dears. Don't worry.

Scene Four

S2: Uma and Mohan are in the forest.

Mohan: I can't believe you tricked that snake that almost ate us.

Uma: Everyone likes to show what they're good at. I simply asked if he could tie himself into a really tight knot.

Mohan: Then he got stuck and we escaped!

S3: They emerge from the forest to see a majestic city.

S1: In the distance is an ornate building with a large dome.

Uma: That must be the palace!

S2: They run toward it and slip in through the space under the doors.

S3: They are awed by the colorful tile floors and painted columns.

S1: Suddenly, huge shadows fall over them.

Mitali: What's this? Mice in our palace?

Kumar (*whispering*): Maybe they're spies.

Mitali: Oh, Kumar, my son, if only your body were as big as your imagination.

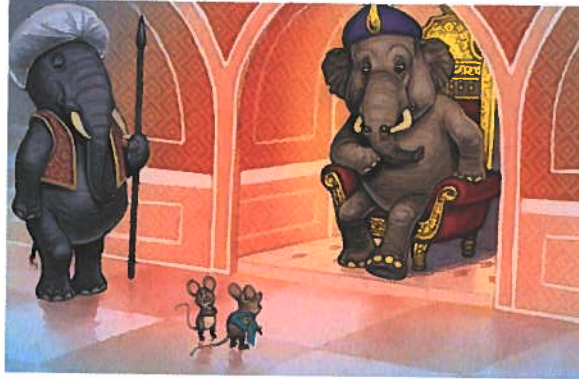
S2: Mitali scoops the mice up with his trunk.

Mohan: We demand to speak with your king.

Mitali: King Rama doesn't waste his time with vermin like you.

Kumar: Wait, you're the mice from the village.

Uma: Please take us to your king. It is a matter of life and death.



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Scene Five

S3: King Rama sits on a plush velvet throne.

Mitali (*suspiciously*): Your Majesty, these mice say they have a terrible problem. They claim only you can help.

Rama: Me? Help mice?

Mohan: It's the least you could do since you elephants ruined our lives.

Mitali: Watch yourself. I could crush you with my toenail.

Rama: What is the problem?

Uma: When elephants come through our village on their way to the lake, our homes are destroyed and mice are killed.

Rama: We need water. What else can we do?

Uma: We simply ask that the elephants take a different route to the lake.

Mitali: That would add miles to our journey.

Uma: I don't think you realize what an impact your actions are having on our lives. Put yourself in our tiny feet.

Kumar: What do you mean?

Uma: Picture an animal thousands of times larger than an elephant.

Kumar: That would be quite a huge animal.

Uma: Now imagine a herd of them comes crashing through your kingdom. Your friends and neighbors are crushed at random.

Rama: That is not a pleasant thought.

Uma: Yet it happens to us again and again.

S1: The king ponders this.

Uma: My mother always told me that the best quality a leader can have is compassion.

S2: The king smiles at Uma.

Rama: I will order the elephants to take a different route.

Uma: Thank you! I hope we can repay your kindness and help you someday.

Rama (*chuckling*): Mice helping elephants. That's a good joke.

Scene Six

S3: Many months later, the mice are living happily in their rebuilt village.

S1: The elephants take a different route to the water hole.

S2: Everything is peaceful, until . . .

S3: One day, King Rama and a group of elephants are walking through the forest.

S1: Rama steps in a trap, and a heavy rope cinches his leg.

S2: He tries to pull his leg free.

Rama: I'm tied to a tree!

S3: His guards carefully walk forward, but there are traps everywhere.

S1: Soon, all the elephants are tied to trees.

Mitali: Whenever I tug, the rope gets tighter!

S2: Kumar catches up and is shocked to see all the other elephants bound by thick ropes.

Kumar: Dad! King Rama! What happened?

Mitali: What does it look like? These are hunters' traps.

Rama: Imagine me, a king, trapped!

Mitali: Our freedom gone forever.

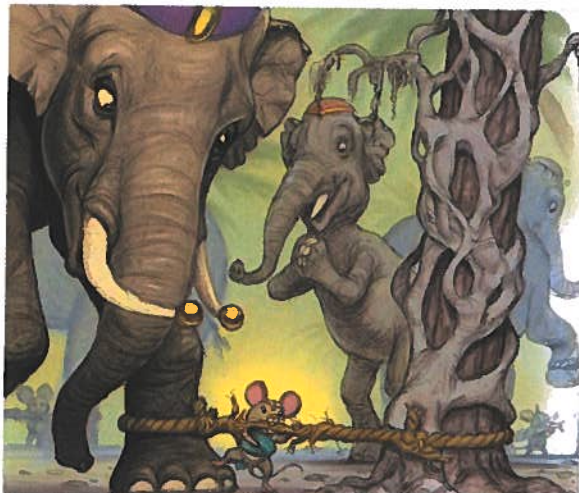
Rama: Kumar, you must get us out of here before the hunters return!

S3: Kumar looks around, searching for a way to help.

Mitali: Don't just stand there. Do something!

S1: Suddenly, Kumar takes off running.

Mitali: Kumar! Don't leave us! Come back!



Scene Seven

S2: Kumar runs to the mouse village. When he gets near, he slows down to a walk so he doesn't rumble the ground.

S3: Uma and Mohan see him.

Kumar (*breathless*): King Rama and others are trapped by hunters' ropes.

Mohan: So? I haven't forgotten all the trouble you elephants caused us.

Uma: And I haven't forgotten how your king helped save so many of our lives.

Kumar: Can you help us?

Uma: Most definitely.

S1: Uma whistles and all the mice come running.

Uma: The elephants need our help!

S2: Kumar bends down to his knees.

Kumar: Everyone climb on.

S3: The mice scamper onto his back.

Mohan (*annoyed*): Uma, why are you always so nice?

Uma: Just like the sun melts ice, kindness makes bad feelings soften and slip away.

Mohan: I'll have to try it sometime.

Scene Eight

S1: Kumar sprints through the forest with the mice clinging to his back.

Rohit: *Wheeeeeee!*

Mohan: I think I might be sick!

S2: Kumar skids to a stop when he sees the trapped elephants.

Mitali: Kumar! I thought you'd run away.

Kumar: Never. I went to get friends.

Uma: Mice, slide down and start chewing!

S3: The mice gnaw at the ropes like they haven't eaten in months.

Mitali: I'm sorry I doubted you, Kumar. Your body might be small, but your brain and your heart are giant.

Kumar: Thank you, Father.

S1: Soon, all the elephants are free.

Rama: Thank you, dear mice. Thank you!

Mohan: Turns out we're not so useless after all.

Uma: That's Mohan's way of saying, "You're welcome, King Rama."

Mohan: I'm still learning about this whole kindness thing.

Rama: Me too, little mouse. Let today remind us to always choose kindness. For your compassion may be rewarded in unexpected ways.

Write to Win

This fable shows examples good and bad ways to treat others. Write an essay explaining two instances of each. Include details about characters' words and actions. Send it to "Elephant Contest (/content/dam/classroom-magazines/storyworks/issues/2019-20/030120/elephants-and-the-mice/STORYWORKS-030120-Play-Contest.pdf)" by May 1, 2020. Ten winners

Name: _____ Date: _____

Finding the Theme

Directions: The theme of a story is the big, important idea you take away from reading it. Answer each of the questions in the chart below about *The Elephants and the Mice*. Then respond to the questions that follow.

	At first	By the end of the story
1. How does Uma treat the elephant king?		
2. How does Mohan treat the elephants?		
3. How do the elephants' actions affect the mice?		

4. How do King Rama and Uma show compassion by the end of the play?

5. Write one sentence that states the theme, or big idea, of the play.

Name: _____ Date: _____

Comparing Characters

Directions: Answer the questions in the chart below to help you compare the characters of Uma and Mohan. Then answer the questions that follow about each character.

	Uma	Mohan
1. In Scene 3, how do Uma and Mohan each want to stop the elephants from destroying their village?		
2. In Scene 4, what happens when Uma and Mohan first meet the king's guard?		
3. In Scene 5, how do Uma and Mohan each ask King Rama for help?		

4. How do Uma and Mohan act differently to stop the elephants from destroying their village? Which character solves the problem? Why is this solution successful?

5. Uma and Mohan show different ways of problem-solving. What do you think is the best way to solve a disagreement you might have with a friend?

The Elephants and the Mice Quiz

Directions: Read the play *The Elephants and the Mice* in the March/April 2020 issue of *Storyworks*. Then fill in the bubble next to the best answer for each question below.

1. **What big problem do the mice face at the beginning of the play?**
 - (A) an earthquake
 - (B) grumpy neighbors
 - (C) elephants drinking their water
 - (D) elephants stomping through their village

2. **In Scene 2, Kumar believes the other elephants won't listen to him because he's _____.**
 - (A) Mitali's son
 - (B) tied to a tree
 - (C) too small
 - (D) friendly with the mice

3. **In Scene 4, when Mohan talks about how Uma tricked the snake, you can infer that Mohan _____ Uma.**
 - (A) admires
 - (B) dislikes
 - (C) loves
 - (D) scares

4. **In the sentence "In the distance is an ornate building with a large dome," ornate means very _____.**
 - (A) plain
 - (B) decorated
 - (C) roomy
 - (D) round

5. **Which is true about both Uma and King Rama?**
 - (A) They have many children.
 - (B) They are leaders of their communities.
 - (C) They are always kind.
 - (D) They are trapped by hunters.

6. **In Scene 8, why do the mice gnaw the hunter's ropes?**
 - (A) The mice are very hungry.
 - (B) The mice want to scare the elephants.
 - (C) The elephants need help getting free.
 - (D) The elephants ruined the mice's village.

Constructed Response

Directions: On a separate piece of paper, write your answer to each question in a well-organized response. Make sure you support your answers with details from the play.

7. **Compare Mohan's way of dealing with the elephants with Uma's.**
8. **What is a moral (big lesson) of this story? Include details from the play in your answer.**