What is a fable?

A fable is a short story that features animals, legendary creatures, plants or inanimate objects that are given human qualities (such as talking). Each story contains a particular moral lesson; sometimes these are explicitly stated at the end of the fable.

Are a fable and a parable the same?

A fable differs to a parable as a fable includes animals, plants or inanimate objects that are given human qualities; however, a parable still contains a moral lesson.

Who was Aesop and why are they often referred to as Aesop’s fables?

_Aesop’s Fables_ (or the _Aesopica_) is a collection of fables credited to Aesop. Aesop is believed to have been a slave who lived in ancient Greece between 620 and 564 BCE. His stories were originally aimed at adults, and contained political, social and religious themes. They were designed to be told orally.

**Aesop’s fable: The Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing**

A Wolf found great difficulty in getting at the sheep owing to the vigilance of the shepherd and his dogs. But one day it found the skin of a sheep that had been flayed and thrown aside, so it put it on over its own pelt and strolled down among the sheep.

The Lamb that belonged to the sheep, whose skin the Wolf was wearing, began to follow the wolf in the sheep’s clothing; so, leading the Lamb a little apart, he soon made a meal of her, and for some time he succeeded in deceiving the sheep, and enjoying hearty meals.

**Moral:** Appearances are deceptive

**Tasks**

1. Answer the questions below in relation to the fable _The Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing_.
   
   a) What are the main elements of this fable? Consider what animals have been chosen and why this might be.
   
   b) What is the moral lesson? Was this message portrayed clearly throughout the fable?
   
   c) Is this moral lesson still relevant today? Consider how you might relate this moral to a situation in your life.

2. In pairs or individually, choose another of Aesop’s fables. Use the questions above to write an analysis of the fable. Many of these fables have been made into cartoons, which can be found on YouTube. Challenge yourself by choosing one that is unfamiliar to you or does not have the moral lesson explicitly stated. You may need to look up unfamiliar words.
3. Share the fable you chose with the class. Read the fable aloud and then explain what the moral lesson of the fable is.

4. Write your own fable.

Consider:

- Where is your fable set?
- What animals will you use to convey your message? How will you describe them?
- What will your moral lesson be?
- Remember that fables are short, so it is important to edit your work carefully to ensure that it is succinct.
- You may also like to include illustrations, or add your fable to a presentation (PPT) and include multimedia elements such as voice-over narration and images.