

Momotaro



The old woman was sitting by the riverbank when a strange sight caught her eye. A giant peach was floating down the river! Stretching out, she caught the peach and dragged it to the riverbank. Amazed by how enormous it was, she began to carefully carry it back home.

Safely back home, the old woman revealed the incredible find to her husband. Wanting to know if the peach tasted as good as it looked, they began to cautiously cut into it. However, as soon as the first hole had been made, the peach started to cry!

Shocked, the couple peered through the small gap in the top of the fruit. What they saw was miraculous; curled in the centre of the peach was a beautiful baby boy. Carefully, the couple widened the gap and picked up the baby.



“We’ll call him Momotaro,” said the old man. “We shall love him and keep him safe.” From then on, Momotaro had everything that he could ever need.



Many years later, something terrible happened in Momotaro’s village. During the night, a group of ogres crept inside and stole all of the villagers’ treasure. The next morning, Momotaro promised to follow the ogres and find the treasure. The old couple proudly wished Momotaro good luck and gave him a bag of his favourite food: millet dumplings.



Not long into his journey, Momotaro met a large dog. “Can I have one of those dumplings?” the animal asked.

“Of course,” replied Momotaro and he removed a dumpling from his bag. After eating the dumpling, the dog offered to join Momotaro.

Momotaro and the dog continued along the path until they met a monkey. “Can I have one of those tasty dumplings?” it pestered.



“Of course,” replied Momotaro, passing a dumpling to the monkey. After eating, the monkey offered to join Momotaro and the dog.



As the three adventurers came close to the ogres’ land, they met a pheasant. “May I have a piece of that dumpling?” it asked.

Happy to share, Momotaro tore off a piece of dumpling and left it on the ground. The pheasant offered to join the group and the four continued their journey.



Finally, Momotaro and the animals reached the large gates that guarded the ogres’ land.

First, the pheasant flew up high and checked for danger. Then, the monkey climbed the closest wall, slipped through a window and opened the gates from the inside.

Safely inside, the group saw that the ogres were fast asleep. With the dog’s help, Momotaro tied thick ropes around each of the beasts. When the final knot had been tied, the ogres began to stir.



They thrashed and roared but they were unable to get free. Eventually, the giant creatures faced Momotaro and begged him to remove the ropes.

“I will remove the ropes,” explained Momotaro, “if you give me all of your treasure and if you promise that you will never hurt another human.” The ogres reluctantly agreed.

With his quest complete, Momotaro made his way back home. When he arrived at the village, he was greeted with cheers, applause and a plate heaped with millet dumplings!



Questions

1. Where was the old woman when she first saw the peach? Tick one.

- in the river
- by the riverbank
- behind her house
- in an orchard

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- The old man named the baby 'Momotaro'.
- Momotaro met a dog, a monkey and a pheasant.
- The couple began to carefully cut into the peach.
- The couple gave Momotaro a bag of millet dumplings.

3. Find and copy one word which tells you that seeing a baby inside the peach was **remarkable**.

4. What did the monkey do when the group reached the ogres' land?

5. Fill in the missing words.

When _____ had completed his quest, he returned home to cheers, applause and a plate heaped with _____ dumplings.

6. What do you think happened next to Momotaro? Explain your answer.

7. Using 20 words or fewer, summarise what happened when Momotaro reached the large gates that guarded the ogres' land.

8. Using evidence from the text, describe Momotaro's character.

Answers

1. Where was the old woman when she first saw the peach? Tick one.

- in the river
 by the riverbank
 behind her house
 in an orchard

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- 2** The old man named the baby 'Momotaro'.
4 Momotaro met a dog, a monkey and a pheasant.
1 The couple began to carefully cut into the peach.
3 The couple gave Momotaro a bag of millet dumplings.

3. Find and copy one word which tells you that seeing a baby inside the peach was **remarkable**.

miraculous

4. What did the monkey do when the group reached the ogres' land?

When the group reached the ogres' land, the monkey climbed the closest wall, slipped through a window and opened the gates from the inside.

5. Fill in the missing words.

When **Momotaro** had completed his quest, he returned home to cheers, applause and a plate heaped with **millet** dumplings.

6. What do you think happened next to Momotaro? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Momotaro handed the treasure out to the villagers and then went back home to eat his millet dumplings and to have a long, much-needed rest.

7. Using 20 words or fewer, summarise what happened when Momotaro reached the large gates that guarded the ogres' land.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The animals worked together to open the gates and trap the ogres. Momotaro freed them in exchange for the treasure.

8. Using evidence from the text, describe Momotaro's character.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Momotaro is brave because he doesn't get scared when the ogres start to stir. He is also kind because he promises the villagers that he will return their treasure when it has been stolen by the ogres. The villagers like him because they are cheering when he returns.

Momotaro



An old woman sat by the riverbank, swirling a basket of clothes in the cool, fresh water. Suddenly, a strange sight caught her eye; a giant peach was floating down the river! The woman stretched out and caught the peach with her basket. Using the damp clothes to obscure it from view, the woman made her way back home.

As soon as she got home, she placed the remarkable peach on the kitchen table. When her husband arrived home, they both stared at the fruit before eventually deciding to see whether it tasted as good as it looked. Carefully, the old woman began to cut through the flesh. However, when the peach began to cry, she jumped back in shock.

Peering through the small gap in the top of the peach, the couple saw something miraculous: curled in the centre — where the stone should have been — was a beautiful baby boy.



The couple warily opened up the peach and picked up the child. “We shall name him Momotaro,” announced the old man. “We shall love him and raise him as our son.” As promised, Momotaro had everything that he could ever need. Each day, the old man taught the young boy everything that he knew while the old woman cooked incredible dishes for Momotaro to enjoy.

Years later, when Momotaro was almost fully grown, a group of ogres stormed the village that the family lived in, stealing every piece of treasure that they could find. When he discovered what had happened, Momotaro promised to track down the villagers’ treasure. Proud of their brave son, the old couple wished Momotaro good luck and sent him away with his favourite food: millet dumplings.



Not long into his journey, Momotaro was approached by a large dog. “Can I have one of those dumplings?” the animal enquired.

“Of course,” replied Momotaro and he threw a dumpling towards the dog. After finding out where Momotaro was heading, the dog offered to join him. So, Momotaro and the dog continued along the path until they were interrupted by a monkey.

“Those dumplings look tasty — can I have one?” it pestered.

“Of course,” replied Momotaro, passing a dumpling to the monkey. Like the dog, the monkey also offered to join Momotaro on his quest. As the three adventurers neared their destination, a pheasant stopped on the path ahead.

“May I have a piece of that dumpling?” questioned the pheasant.

Unable to disagree, Momotaro tore off a small piece of dumpling and left it on the ground for the pheasant. The pheasant immediately offered to join the group and they continued towards the ogres’ lair.



Finally, Momotaro and the animals reached the large gates that guarded the ogres’ land. Flying up high, the pheasant scouted the area. Then, the monkey climbed the closest wall and quietly dropped down before opening the gates from the inside.

The group walked inside and saw the large, sleeping ogres.



With the dog close by for protection, Momotaro swiftly tied thick ropes around each of the beasts. When the final knot had been tied, the ogres began to stir.

It was immediately clear that the ropes were going to hold. The ogres thrashed and roared but they were unable to get free. Defeated, the grotesque creatures turned to Momotaro and they begged for him to remove the ropes.

“I will release you,” began Momotaro, “if you give me all of your treasure and if you promise that you will never harm another human.” Reluctantly, the ogres agreed.

With a cart full of treasure, Momotaro made his way back home. Arriving at the village, he was welcomed with cheers of delight, open arms and a plate of his favourite millet dumplings!



Questions

1. **As soon as she got home, she placed the remarkable peach on the kitchen table.**

The word remarkable shows that the peach was... Tick one.

- round
- marked
- dented
- incredible

2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- Momotaro completed his quest.
- The pheasant offered to join Momotaro.
- The old couple wished Momotaro good luck.
- Momotaro met a large dog.

3. How did Momotaro trap the ogres?

4. **Defeated, the grotesque creatures turned to Momotaro...**

What does the word **grotesque** mean in this sentence?

5. What is Momotaro's favourite food?

6. Do you think that Momotaro will go on another adventure in the future?

Fully explain your answer.

7. Compare Momotaro at the beginning of the story to Momotaro at the end of the story. How is he different?

8. Explain how the author has shown that time has passed since Momotaro was discovered.

9. Imagine that you are Momotaro. Describe what is going through your mind as you approach the large gates.

Answers

1. **As soon as she got home, she placed the remarkable peach on the kitchen table.**

The word remarkable shows that the peach was... Tick one.

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2. Number the events from 1-4 to show the order that they happened in.

- 4** Momotaro completed his quest.
 3 The pheasant offered to join Momotaro.
 1 The old couple wished Momotaro good luck.
 2 Momotaro met a large dog.

3. How did Momotato trap the ogres?

Momotaro trapped the ogres by tying thick ropes around them as they slept.

4. **Defeated, the grotesque creatures turned to Momotaro...**

What does the word **grotesque** mean in this sentence?

In this sentence, the word grotesque means disgusting and ugly.

5. What is Momotaro's favourite food?

Momotaro's favourite food is millet dumplings.

6. Do you think that Momotaro will go on another adventure in the future?

Fully explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Momotaro will go on another adventure in the future; the old couple were supportive of him going on this journey so they will probably support him again. He was also successful, which might make him want to go on another adventure even more.

7. Compare Momotaro at the beginning of the story to Momotaro at the end of the story.

How is he different?

Pupils' own responses, such as: At the beginning of the story, Momotaro was a young baby who was floating down a river in a peach and had nobody to look after him. At the end of the story, he is older, has somewhere to live and has people who love him and look after him.

8. Explain how the author has shown that time has passed since Momotaro was discovered.

Pupils' own responses, such as: The author started the next paragraph with 'Years later...' and told the reader that Momotaro was 'almost fully grown', which he wasn't when he was found in the peach. These things show the reader that time has passed.

9. Imagine that you are Momotaro.

Describe what is going through your mind as you approach the large gates.

Pupils' own responses, such as: 'Here we are. I hope that this wasn't a mistake and that the animals really are going to help me. We've thought of a really good plan: I just need to make sure that it works. I need to return the treasure back to the villagers.'

Momotaro



An old woman made her way down the worn path to the river's edge. Despite the heavy basket of clothes on her back, she quickly navigated to her usual spot and began the job of swirling, scrubbing, rinsing and wringing. Suddenly, a strange sight caught her eye: from upstream, a giant peach was travelling down the river.

Thinking fast, the woman stretched out and scooped the peach into her basket. It was a tight fit but, with the damp clothes obscuring it from view, the woman and her treasure made their way up the path.

Safely home, she unpacked the remarkable peach and placed it on the kitchen table. When her husband finally arrived, they both marvelled at the fruit for some time before eventually deciding to find out whether it tasted as good as it looked.



Taking a large knife from the kitchen drawer, the old woman began to gingerly cut through the flesh.

However, when the peach let out a cry, she jumped back in shock. Slowly peeking through the small gap that the knife had made, the couple saw something miraculous: nestled in the centre — where the stone should have been — was a beautiful, healthy baby boy. The couple carefully opened up the peach and cradled the child.

“We shall name him Momotaro,” announced the old man. “We shall love him and raise him as if he were our own child.” True to their word, the couple ensured that Momotaro had everything that he could ever need. The old man’s teachings sated his thirst for knowledge and the old woman’s delicious cooking satisfied his hunger.

Many years later, while the inhabitants slept, a group of ogres stormed Momotaro’s village and stole every piece of treasure that they could find. Desperate to help, Momotaro vowed to track down the ogres and return the treasure. Supportive of their son’s decision, the old couple wished Momotaro good luck and sent him away with a bundle of his favourite food: millet dumplings. Not long into his journey, Momotaro was approached by a large dog.

“Can I have one of those dumplings?” the dog asked enthusiastically.

“Of course,” replied Momotaro and he threw a dumpling towards the dog, who wolfed it down in one bite. After inquiring about where Momotaro was heading, the dog offered to accompany him on his quest. Momotaro and the dog continued along the path until they were interrupted by a monkey.

“Hey! Those dumplings look tasty — can I have one?” pestered the monkey.

“Of course,” replied Momotaro, passing a dumpling to the monkey. With a full mouth, it asked where the two were heading. Momotaro explained and the monkey decided to join them.

As the three adventurers neared the ogres’ hideout, a pheasant stopped on the path ahead.



“May I have a small piece of that dumpling?” questioned the pheasant. “I’ve not eaten all day and they look mightily tasty.” Unable to disagree, Momotaro tore off a small piece of dumpling and left it on the ground for the pheasant. After a short while, the pheasant offered to join the group and they continued towards the ogres’ lair.

Reaching the large, ornate gates that guarded the entrance to the ogres’ land, Momotaro and the animals began to silently enact their plan.

Flying up high, the pheasant scouted the area. Making two quick loops in the sky, the bird signalled that the coast was clear. Then, the monkey scaled the closest wall and dropped down quietly before opening the gates from the inside. Safely inside, it was clear that the ogres were fast asleep. With the dog standing by in case of trouble, Momotaro swiftly tied thick ropes around each of the beasts. When the final knot had been tied, the ogres began to stir.



Immediately, it was clear that the ropes were going to hold for, thrash as they might, the ogres were unable to get free. Conceding defeat, the grotesque creatures turned to Momotaro and begged to be released. “I will give you back your freedom,” began Momotaro, “in exchange for your treasure and the promise that you will never harm another human.” Reluctantly, the ogres agreed.

Laden with treasure, Momotaro made his way back home. Arriving at the village, he was welcomed with cheers of delight, open arms and a plate of his favourite millet dumplings!

Questions

1. What was the old woman doing by the river's edge? Tick one.

- looking for giant fruit
- swimming
- washing clothes
- fishing for food

2. Draw **four** lines and match each extract from the text to its purpose.

When the final knot had been tied,
the ogres began to stir.

to show that time
has passed

Many years later,...

to introduce the story

Arriving at the village, he was
welcomed with cheers of delight...

to conclude the story

Suddenly, a strange
sight caught her eye...

to build tension

3. Find and copy a phrase which implies that the woman believed the peach was valuable.

4. How did the pheasant signal that the coast was clear?

5. What **two** things did Momotaro want in return for releasing the ogres?

• _____

• _____

6. Compare the different ways in which the animals asked for a dumpling. Who do you think was the most polite? Explain your answer.

7. What impression do you think the author wanted to give of Momotaro? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

8. Argue that Momotaro would have still been able to retrieve the treasure without the animals' help.

9. What sort of adventure do you think Momotaro will go on next? Fully explain your answer.

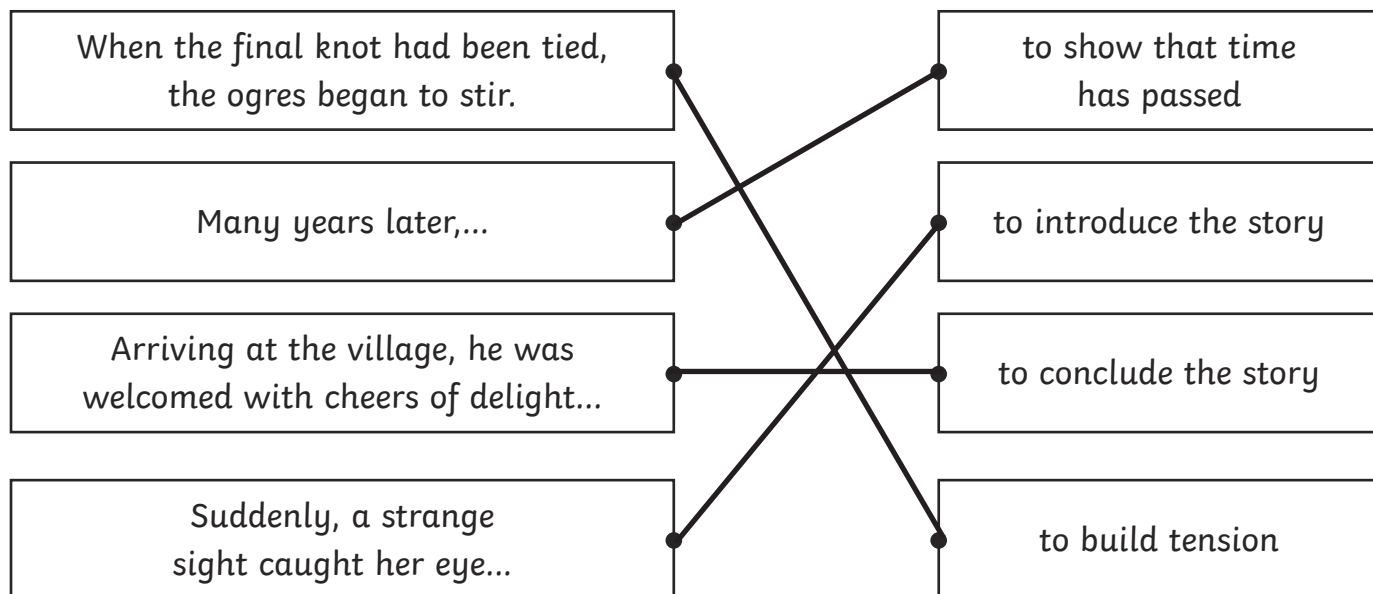
10. If you could change one thing about the story, what would it be? Give a reason for your answer.

Answers

1. What was the old woman doing by the river's edge? Tick one.

- looking for giant fruit
- swimming
- washing clothes**
- fishing for food

2. Draw **four** lines and match each extract from the text to its purpose.



3. Find and copy a phrase which implies that the woman believed the peach was valuable.

Accept any direct quote from the text which includes the words 'her treasure'.

4. How did the pheasant signal that the coast was clear?

The pheasant signalled that the coast was clear by making two quick loops in the sky.

5. What **two** things did Momotaro want in return for releasing the ogres?

- **Momotaro wanted their treasure.**
- **Momotaro wanted them to promise that they would never harm another human.**

6. Compare the different ways in which the animals asked for a dumpling. Who do you think was the most polite? Explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Each of the animals asked for a dumpling without introducing themselves first. Both the dog and the monkey ask for a whole dumpling but the pheasant only asks for a small piece. I think that the pheasant was the most polite because they were the only one who explained why they wanted a dumpling.

7. What impression do you think the author wanted to give of Momotaro? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that the author wanted to give the impression that Momotaro was kind and liked by everyone. When he sets off on his adventure, the author describes the old couple as 'supportive of their son's decision', which shows that they trust him. When Momotaro arrives home, the author shows how liked he is by saying that he was welcomed with 'cheers of delight' and 'open arms'.

8. Argue that Momotaro would have still been able to retrieve the treasure without the animals' help.

Pupils' own responses, such as: Momotaro was strong, brave and clever so he would probably have been able to climb into the window himself. As the ogres were asleep, the pheasant wasn't needed as a lookout and the rope was so tight that the dog wasn't needed for protection. Without the animals, the outcome would have been the same.

9. What sort of adventure do you think Momotaro will go on next? Fully explain your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I think that Momotaro will travel to another village after hearing that the ogres have raided there too because he made the ogres promise not to harm any more humans. He could want to punish them for breaking their promise.

10. If you could change one thing about the story, what would it be? Give a reason for your answer.

Pupils' own responses, such as: I would change the part with the ogres to include more action so that Momotaro and the animals only narrowly escape. This is because just tying ropes around their legs while they slept isn't very interesting and it doesn't feel as though Momotaro earned the treasure.