

## Lesson

# The Greenhorn and the Mule Egg



## Get Started

### Discuss in groups:

At times, we all get bored and want some change in our lives. Then we daydream about having some adventure. If you were given a choice, what kind of adventure would you choose?

Do you think it would be easy for you to follow your dreams? Discuss with your friends.

There was a chap who got real sick of working in the big city. One day, he quit his job, packed up his luggage, and moved with his wife and kids to Kansas to become a farmer. He bought a big piece of land with a grand old barn and some fields just ready to plough and plant.

Now, being a bit of a **greenhorn**, the poor fellow didn't know where to start with that farm. His wife suggested that they get a mule to pull the plough for them, and the greenhorn thought this was a **splendid** idea. He set off down the road to visit their neighbour and ask him where he could buy a mule.



**plough (or plow)** a large farming equipment used to turn over and cut furrows in soil  
**greenhorn** an inexperienced person, beginner | **splendid** excellent, praiseworthy



That neighbour was a bit of a **wag**. In about five seconds, he was sure that his new neighbour was a greenhorn and decided to have a bit of fun with him.

“Well, you could advertise for a mule in the local paper,” the neighbour said. “But if you want to do it the Kansas way, then you should get yourself a mule egg and hatch your own. That way you can train the mule up from birth to do exactly as you want.”

The greenhorn’s **eyes got real wide**. “I didn’t know mules are hatched from eggs,” he said excitedly. “Where do I get one?”

“It just so happens I have one mule egg left from the last batch I raised,” the neighbour said. He went into the shed and came out with a round, hairy coconut. The greenhorn’s **eyes lit up**.

“How much do I owe you?” he asked his neighbour.

“That’ll be a dollar. And mind you, you’ve got to sit on the mule egg night and day for a week before it will hatch,” the neighbour said, accepting the greenhorn’s money and handing over the coconut to him.

The greenhorn ran all the way home and showed the mule egg to his wife and kids. Everyone was **thrilled** with his purchase, and they all took turns sitting on the coconut, waiting for it to hatch. They waited for a week. Then they waited two. By the third week, everyone’s bottoms were sore from sitting on the hard coconut, and still there was no sign of a mule.



**wag** a person fond of making jokes | **eyes got real wide** delightfully/happily surprised | **eyes lit up** became very happy | **thrilled** delighted



"It must be a bad egg," the wife said at last. "Better throw it out and see if our neighbour will give us our money back."

As the disappointed family watched, the greenhorn took the coconut outside and threw it into the bushes. All at once, a giant **jackrabbit** burst out of the tall grass next to the bushes and hopped away.

"It's the baby mule!" shouted one of the kids. "Catch it, Pa! Catch it."



The greenhorn ran after that long-eared rabbit as fast as he could, shouting: "I'm your daddy, baby mule! Please come back!" But he was no match for the jackrabbit. It **darted** here and there, hopped and finally slid down a hole in the ground and disappeared. The greenhorn fell to the ground and lay panting in exhaustion. A few moments later, his wife and kids caught up with him and pulled him to his feet.

"Where's our mule?" asked his wife.

"The stupid thing got away," said the greenhorn. "And I'm not sorry it did. That's the speediest mule I ever laid eyes on, and I don't aim to plough that fast!"

(Retold by S.E. Schlosser)

**jackrabbit** a large, long-eared, long-legged hare | **darted** (here) moved fast

## Respond and Reflect

### A. Complete the following sentences.

1. The family left the city and went to \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The land that they bought had a grand old \_\_\_\_\_.
3. For ploughing the fields, they thought of buying a \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Their neighbour suggested them to \_\_\_\_\_ for a \_\_\_\_\_ in the local paper.
5. The neighbour charged \_\_\_\_\_ for the mule egg.
6. The neighbour made a fool of the city man by giving him \_\_\_\_\_ as a mule egg.
7. The family thought the \_\_\_\_\_ was their baby mule.

### B. Answer the following questions briefly.

1. What did the city man do when he got real sick of working in the big city?
2. How did the family react on seeing the mule egg?
3. What happened when the man threw away the mule egg?
4. Why did the city man run after the jackrabbit?
5. When the jackrabbit escaped, the man said, "And I'm not sorry it did." Why did he say so?
6. The neighbour had concluded that the city man was a greenhorn. What might have made the neighbour think of the city man as a greenhorn?

### C. Do you think the family could adjust with this incident and successfully lead a farmer's life? Justify.

## Learn New Words

### A. Complete the following sentences.

greenhorn      splendid      wag      pitched      darted

1. Going for holidays was a \_\_\_\_\_ idea.
2. Piyush \_\_\_\_\_ towards the door as soon as he heard the car horn.
3. In the office, everyone likes to hear Suresh talk for he is a \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Sachin was batting as Dorris \_\_\_\_\_ the ball.
5. Rohan is well-educated but as he has come from a small town, everyone thinks he is a \_\_\_\_\_.



# The Truth—is Stirless

Is truth powerful or meek? Does it make us strong or weak? Read the following poem, to know why she feels that truth is stirless.

The Truth—is **stirless**  
Other force—may be presumed to move  
This—then—is best for confidence  
When oldest **Cedars swerve**.

And Oaks untwist their fists  
And Mountains—feeble—lean  
How excellent a Body, that  
Stands without a Bone.

How **vigorous** a Force  
That holds without a **Prop**  
Truth stays Herself—and every man  
That trusts Her—boldly up.

—Emily Dickinson



**stirless** firm, immovable | **cedar** evergreen coniferous trees | **swerve** change direction, turn aside | **vigorous** strong | **prop** support

# Understand and Enjoy

## COMPREHENSION

Answer the following questions.

1. Emily Dickinson has used different words/phrases to define the qualities of truth. Find them out and write in the space provided. One is done for you.

- (a) Truth is best for confidence.
- (b) \_\_\_\_\_
- (c) \_\_\_\_\_
- (d) \_\_\_\_\_
- (e) \_\_\_\_\_

2. "What we think to be strong and immovable also move but truth does not change." Locate the lines which convey this meaning and write in the space provided.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. "Truth has no structure or body yet it has a strong hold, whereas great mountains or massive trees fall down." Locate the lines which convey this meaning and write in the space provided.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## VOCABULARY AND APPRECIATION

### Personification

Personification is giving human qualities to something that is not human.

**We can personify objects, concepts, birds and animals.**

**Objects:**      The lights blinked at a distance.  
                     Your computer hates me.

**Concepts:**     Time marches on.  
                     It's not nice to play with justice.