

THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

The Emperor's New Clothes

By Hans Christian Andersen, ill. by Nadine Westcott (Little, Brown)

Themes: Clothes, parades, Pride, Vanity

Grades K – 3

Running time: 8 minutes, Animated

Summary

In this story, the Emperor would rather spend his time trying on new clothes than doing anything else. The Emperor is so consumed, in fact, with clothing that the clothing shows up in very odd places, including on top of, underneath, and all around dining tables.

One day, two swindlers come to the castle, pretending to be tailors. They explain to the emperor that they can make him the finest clothing in the land. All but the foolish will be able to appreciate the clothing, they say. The clothing will be invisible to all who are foolish or unfit for their office.

The Emperor hires the swindlers, who, of course, create nothing, but tell the Emperor that his invisible clothing is simply perfect. The Emperor, not wanting to appear foolish, wears what is actually nothing in the royal procession. It is only when a child calls out, "But he has no clothes on!" that the people feel free to acknowledge what they see. The Emperor, certain now that he is wearing nothing, feels he has no alternative but to march on with his head held high. The people of the kingdom admire the Emperor's style and applaud him.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will learn about the importance of self-esteem.
- Children will understand the value of honesty.
- Children will investigate ways to judge character.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Talk with children about the different things they own that they consider special. Ask:

- What are some of your favorite things that you have here in school or at home?
- Why are they special?
- How do you feel when you have them?

- How do you feel without them?
- Do you have special clothing that you like to wear?
- How do you feel when you wear these things?

Explain to children that they are about to hear a story about an Emperor. In this story, the Emperor likes nothing more than clothing.

Share the story The Emperor's New Clothes, with children.

Ask:

- What was special about the way the artist made the letters of the story title on the book cover?
- Would this book have been much fun if the pictures were in black and white? Why? Why not?
- What kinds of outfits did the Emperor wear?
- Why do you think they were not always right?
- What kind of person do you think the Emperor was?
- How do you think the people in the castle felt about working for the Emperor?
- What would you like most about working here?
- What would you like least?

Encourage children to pay attention to the background music as they watch.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Ask:

- What kind of music did you hear?
- Did the music seem silly or serious?
- Did the music seem to match the story? Why? Why not?
- What happened to the music after the child told the Emperor that he was not wearing any clothing (music stops)?
- Why do you think the people who made the film decided to stop the music here?
- How did the music make you feel when it started again at the very end of the story?
- How else is the video different from the book?...(answer: there is a computer.)

Discuss with children the kind of person the Emperor was.

Ask:

- How did you feel about the Emperor in the beginning of the story? At the end of the story?
- Why do you think the Emperor felt his clothing was so important?
- Do you decide whether you like someone or not based on what he wears? Why? Why not?
- What kinds of things do you think are important about people?
- How do you think the Emperor felt about himself at the beginning of the story? At the end of the story?

As you discuss these questions with children, be sure to emphasize that qualities like kindness, fairness, considerate behaviors, etc., help us decide how we feel about people rather than clothing and other possessions they may own.

Have children think about the little boy who shouted that the Emperor had no clothes on. Ask:

- How did the little boy's honesty help the others?
- How did his honesty help the Emperor?
- How do you think the people and the Emperor felt before the little boy said anything?
- How do you think they felt afterward?
- Do you think clothing mattered as much to the Emperor at the end of the story? Why? Why not?

Talk with children about the different kinds of clothing the Emperor had. Then let children have some fun pretending to be tailors and designing their own clothing for the Emperor. Supply sheets of cardboard, pencils, markers, glue, scissors, and fabric scraps that children can use. Have children draw the outlines of clothing on the cardboard. Then have them glue the fabric scraps of their choice onto the cardboard, filling the outlines. Later, display the work of your "classroom tailors" on a wall or bulletin board. You might also want to have the children write or dictate simple stories about why their designs are the Emperor's preference!

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