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Get Familiar With Fables

A **fable** is a short tale that teaches a lesson or a moral. Fables often have animals as characters. The most famous fabulist (fable-writer) in history is Aesop (AY-sawp). Although no one is sure of the exact details of his life, experts believe he was born into slavery in Greece in the sixth century B.C. Aesop was eventually freed, in part because he impressed his master so much with his intelligence and wit. During his lifetime, Aesop told hundreds of fables that showed insight into human nature and behavior.

Directions: Read the fable below, then answer the questions that follow.

The Dog and the Shadow

It happened that a Dog had got a piece of meat and was carrying it home in his mouth to eat it in peace. Now on his way home he had to cross a plank lying across a running brook. As he crossed, he looked down and saw his own shadow reflected in the water beneath. Thinking it was another dog with another piece of meat, he made up his mind to have that also. So he made a snap at the shadow in the water, but as he opened his mouth the piece of meat fell out, dropped into the water, and was never seen more.

1. Why did the dog snap at his shadow?

2. What human characteristic did the dog display?

3. What is the moral of this fable, in your own words?
