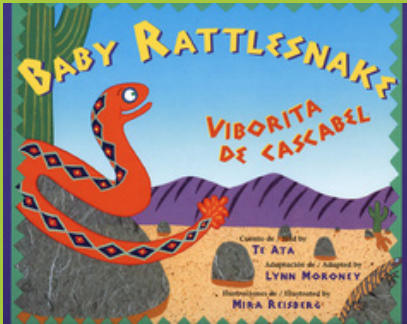


TEACHER'S GUIDE



LEE & LOW BOOKS

Baby Rattlesnake/ Viborita de cascabel

told by Te Ata

written by Lynn Moroney

illustrated by Mira Reisberg

About the Book

Genre: Folklore

*Reading Level: Grade 3

Interest Level: Grades K–3

Guided Reading Level: K

Accelerated Reader® Level/
Points: 3.0/0.5

Lexile™ Measure: AD550L

*Reading level based on the Spache
Readability Formula

Themes: Animals (Snakes),
Nature, Self-Esteem and
Confidence, Responsibility,
Compassion and Forgiveness,
Families, Community, Self-
Control and Self-Regulation,
Folklore, Native American
Interest

SYNOPSIS

A Native American (Pawnee) tale of family love and forgiveness.

Baby Rattlesnake is too young to have his own rattle, but he wants a rattle like his older siblings have. His crying keeps the rattlesnake elders up all night so his parents finally give him one. Sure enough, he misuses his new rattle and makes mischief in the desert. One day his trickery backfires. When he tries to scare the chief's daughter, she steps on his rattle and crushes it. Sad and defeated, he returns to his forgiving family who give him "big rattlesnake hugs" and he learns an important lesson.



BACKGROUND

Note from author: “Baby Rattlesnake is a teaching tale about what happens when you get something before you are ready for it. Subsequent to the original publication of this book, I learned that rather than being a Chickasaw story, its origin is in the oral literature of the Pawnee Nation. The traditional version of the story can be found in “Pawnee Music” by Frances Denmore, in the Smithsonian Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 93 (1929) 107-8. I am most pleased to be able to share the correct origin of this well-loved tale,”—Lynn Moroney, *Oklahoma City*

About Baby Rattlesnake: Oklahoma storyteller Lynn Moroney, herself part Indian, had admired Te Ata, internationally acclaimed Chickasaw Indian storyteller, for years. Moroney finally asked Te Ata’s permission to retell the story of *Baby Rattlesnake*. At first, Te Ata said no. But after hearing Moroney tell her own stories at a storytelling festival, Te Ata was so impressed that she gave Lynn her blessing to tell this story and pass it on to others as a book. Artist Mira Reisberg fell in love with the story of *Baby Rattlesnake* the moment she heard it. Mira was born in Australia and has lived in the Southwest United States, the setting of *Baby Rattlesnake*. Her medium for this book is cut paper and gouache paints.

Rattlesnakes: There are over two dozen types of rattlesnakes and they live in diverse habitats, including mountains deserts and plains, throughout North and South America. A rattlesnake’s characteristic feature is a rattle at the tip of its tale, used as a warning or distraction. National Geographic says, “The famous rattle noise comes from the sound created when hollow and bony doughnut-like segments in the rattle bang together” (<http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/animals/rattlesnake/#rattlesnake-tongue.jpg>). More student-friendly information, photos and a video clip can be found at <http://kids.sandiegozoo.org/animals/reptiles/rattlesnake>.

Pawnee Nation: The people of the Pawnee nation once numbered 60,000 and lived along the North Platt River in Nebraska. They were forcibly moved to Oklahoma by the US government in 1875. There are 3,200 enrolled tribal members today. Their traditions and dress are similar to that of other plains tribes. See more at <http://www.pawneenation.org/page/home/pawnee-history>.

Native American Stories: Native American culture includes a range of traditional tales. These stories often reflect elements common in the location where tribes lived. This site explains several common types of tales (e.g., creation stories, pourquoi stories, etc.) and links to many different legends and tales (http://www.librarypoint.org/folktales_of_the_american_indians). This site provides links to many other animal-related tales (http://www.nativepartnership.org/site/PageServer?pagename=roar_personalpages_examples).



VOCABULARY

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

The story contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students.

Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below.

Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

Content Specific

rattlesnake, rattle, council, elders, chief, Indians, maiden

Academic

darted, foolish, warn, whirled, crushing, scattered, sobs, snug

BEFORE READING

Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

1. Have you heard of a rattlesnake before? What do you know about rattlesnakes? (Show a photo and/or demonstrate a “rattling” sound.)
2. Rattlesnakes can live in the desert. What’s a desert like? What other animals might live in a desert?
3. Have you ever wanted to be more grown up? How? What might kids want to have or do to feel more grown up? What kinds of things do adults say when kids aren’t old enough for something yet?

Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Talk about the title of the book. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?

Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, author and illustrators’ dedications, bilingual text, and illustrations. Point out that this book is bilingual. Ask students why a book might be written this way. Why does it matter what language an author uses? How does a language change how a story is told or who hears it?

Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out about:

- what Baby Rattlesnake wants that he isn’t old enough for yet
- how his family and community teach him a lesson

Encourage students to consider why storyteller Te Ata and book author Lynn Moroney would want to share this story with young people.



AFTER READING

Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses.

To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.

Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. Why does the baby rattlesnake cry all the time? Point to the place in the picture that shows why he's crying.
2. Why does Baby Rattlesnake think he should have a rattle? What do his parents say?
3. How does Baby Rattlesnake's family respond when he won't stop crying?
4. Who are the Rattlesnake People? Do they like being kept up at night?
5. What happens at the council? Why does the elder decide to give Baby Rattlesnake a rattle after all?
6. How does Baby Rattlesnake react to his new rattle?
7. What does Baby Rattlesnake do to the small animals? What do his parents and siblings say?
8. How do Mother and Father describe the chief's daughter? Why does Baby Rattlesnake want to know?
9. What does Baby Rattlesnake do when he sees the chief's daughter coming?
10. What does the chief's daughter do when Baby Rattlesnake darts out from the rocks? How does Baby Rattlesnake react?
11. What do Mother and Father do when Baby Rattlesnake gets home?

Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)
(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

1. What words that describe how Baby Rattlesnake feels about not having a rattle besides "sad?"
2. Why do you think the Rattlesnake People use a "council" to discuss the problem of Baby Rattlesnake's constant crying? Why would it be an "elder" who suggests a solution?
3. How do you think the small animals felt about Baby Rattlesnake's tricks? What do the Rattlesnake People mean when they tell him to "stop acting so foolish" with his rattle? Why don't you think Baby Rattlesnake listens?
4. Why do you think Baby Rattlesnake chooses the chief's daughter to try and scare? Why do you think he darted away quickly after talking about it with his parents?
5. What does it mean to walk with your "head held high?" What does it mean to be "very neat in your dress?"
6. What's fun about trying to scare someone? How does it feel for the person who gets scared?
7. After his rattle is broken, why do you think Baby Rattlesnake stays with his family for the rest of the day?
8. What do you think Baby Rattlesnake learns in this story?

Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. **Suggest that students respond in reader's response journals, essays, or oral discussion.** You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. Before he got his rattle, Baby Rattlesnake felt *frustrated*, *impatient* and *jealous* of his older



“The story is fast moving, dramatic, and economically told. . . [the] colors are deftly combined to make this book bright and attractive. This short tale will be a welcomed addition to story hour collections.”

–*School Library Journal*

“Reisberg’s vivid, fanciful illustrations perfectly depict the Southwestern setting. . . Even very small children will understand—and profit from—this deceptively simple story’s valuable lesson.”

–*Publishers Weekly*

“This satisfying cautionary tale is attractively illustrated in sophisticated desert colors, the bold designs framed in imaginative borders and incorporating Native American motifs.”

–*Kirkus Reviews*

siblings. Choose one of these words and explain what it means, using details from the story to help. Write about a time when you felt this way.

- When the elders decided to give Baby Rattlesnake a rattle, what do you think they expected to happen? Write about a time when someone let you struggle or make a mistake. What did you learn from your mistake?
- Describe Mother and Father’s reaction when Baby Rattlesnake came home with a broken rattle. How else could they have reacted? If you were one of his parents, would you have reacted the same way or differently?
- How is this a story about forgiveness? Why can forgiving someone be hard? Why is it important?
- The author’s note says, “*Baby Rattlesnake* is a teaching tale about what happens when you get something before you are ready for it.” Explain what the book teaches this topic. Write about another example of a child learning this lesson from your own life or another book.

ELL/ESL Teaching Activities

(*Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6*)
(*Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6*)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

- Assign ELL students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages

after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.

- Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
- Depending on students’ level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
 - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
 - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
- Have students give a short talk about and experience in which they taught or learned a lesson, or about something they are looking forward to doing or having when they are older.
- The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students’ prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.



- Use the Spanish text in this book if it would be helpful to your students

INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

English/Language Arts

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1 and 2 and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 9)

(Writing Standards, Text Types and Purposes, Strand 3)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3 and Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- Have students act out this story with simple props or stick puppets. Encourage them to use expression to convey the characters' emotions and use different voices to differentiate each snake.
- Read other folktales, such as *Nine-In-One, Grr! Grr!* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/nine-in-one-grr-grr>) and *Magic Dogs of the Volcanoes/Los perros mágicos de los volcanes* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/magic-dogs-of-the-volcanoes-los-perros-magicos-de-los-volcanes>). Compare the characters and settings to those in *Baby Rattlesnake*. Discuss the moral of each tale.
- Discuss how traditional tales often reflect elements of nature found in a particular region. Have students write different versions of this story set in different regions with animals appropriate to that region.
- Explore the practice of oral storytelling with students. Create a chart listing key differences between oral stories and stories in books. List behaviors that make an oral storyteller successful, such as expression, gestures, sounds, etc. Have students practice telling *Baby*

Rattlesnake or another tale as an oral story.

This unit on oral storytelling from the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute has a wealth of ideas (<http://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/curriculum/units/2008/2/08.02.01.x.html>).

Art

(Reading Standards, Craft and Structure, Strand 4 and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)

- Study photographs of snakes and talk about their markings and patterns. Compare actual photos to the illustrator's interpretation of rattlesnake markings in the texts. Have students design their own snakes using drawing tools, stamps, stickers or cut paper shapes.
- Create a desert mural using cut paper collage in the style of the book. Add landscape features, snakes and other animals. Label each feature.
- Study the techniques used by the illustrator to show the animals' emotions (eyes, mouth expressions, tears, etc.) Create a chart with examples and the emotions they convey. Encourage students to use these techniques to show emotions in illustrations of their own writing.

Social Studies

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 7)

(Writing Standards, Research to Build and Present Knowledge, Strand 7)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Communication, Strand 1)

- This book is unique because it is written to preserve an oral story. Have students research storyteller Te Ata. (In addition to the information in the book, this *Smithsonian* article is a good starting point: <http://kids.sandiegozoo.org/animals/reptiles/rattlesnake>) What honors did she receive? Why? What impact did she make on the world during her lifetime?
- Discuss the idea of using a "council" to address problems. Revisit the council scene in the book to gather information about how one might work. Create a council in your classroom to talk about class issues.



Science

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strand 1)

1. Have interested students research rattlesnakes and present their findings to the class. Create a chart comparing true information about rattlesnakes with information from the story. What details from the story are accurate? Which ones are unrealistic? Some students may find this information about what to do if you meet a rattlesnake interesting (https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb5393596.pdf)!
2. Have interested students research other examples of how animals grow new features or parts as they mature (e.g., frogs' legs.) Have students present their findings to the class.

School-Home Connection

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strand 2 and Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strand 9)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strand 1)

1. Have students ask adult family members about stories they were told when they were children. Were any of the stories told in order to teach a lesson? How did the stories reflect the location, community or culture in which they grew up? Have family members visit school to share stories if possible.
2. Have students interview a parent, grandparent, older sibling, etc. about something s/he wished for during childhood. Brainstorm a set of questions beforehand as a class, such as “What did you wish for? How old did you have to be to get it/do it? What was it like to wait?” etc. Share responses at school.

Additional folktales:

Magic Dogs of the Volcanoes written by Manlio Argueta, illustrated by Elly Simmons
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/magic-dogs-of-the-volcanoes-los-perros-magicos-de-los-volcanes>

Bears Make Rock Soup written by Lise Erdrich, illustrated by Lisa Fifield
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/bears-make-rock-soup>

The Woman Who Outshone the Sun written by Alejandro Martinez, illustrated by Fernando Olivera
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-woman-who-outshone-the-sun-la-mujer-que-brillaba-aun-mas-que-el-sol>

Uncle Nacho's Hat written by Harriet Rohmer, illustrated by Mira Reisberg
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/uncle-nacho-s-hat-el-sombrero-del-tio-nacho>

Maneki Neko written by Susan Lendroth, illustrated by Kathryn Otoshi
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/maneki-neko>

The Crane Girl written by Curtis Manley, illustrated by Lin Wang
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-crane-girl>

The Invisible Hunters written by Harriet Rohmer, illustrated by Joe Sam
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-invisible-hunters-a-legend-from-the-miskito-indians-from-nicaragua>

The Harvest Birds written by Blanca López de Mariscal, illustrated by Enrique Flores
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/the-harvest-birds-los-pajaros-de-la-cosecha>

Prietita and the Ghost Woman written by Gloria Anzaldúa, illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/prietita-and>



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Te Ata whose name means “Bearer of the Morning,” was an internationally acclaimed Chickasaw storyteller. Born in the Oklahoma Territory in 1897, she was proclaimed Oklahoma’s first Oklahoma State Treasure. She regaled audiences in the US and Europe for over 65 years, performing at the White House during the Roosevelt Administration. She died in 1995.

Lynn Moroney is a storyteller of Cherokee and Chickasaw background. Best known for her interpretation and retelling of Native American sky lore, her repertory includes star legends, sky myths, traditional folk tales, and teaching tales. Her career in storytelling includes workshops, residencies, and performances for universities, museums, schools, festivals, radio, and television.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Mira Reisberg was born in Australia. She is a painter, graphic designer, and the illustrator of several books for children, including *Uncle Nacho’s Hat* and *Where Fireflies Dance*. Mira has also taught art to both children and adults. She holds a Master’s in Fine Art and a PhD in Education with an emphasis on Cultural Studies and Art Education. She currently teaches in the Art Education program of Northern Illinois University, outside of Chicago. Her website is <http://www.mirareisberg.com/about.html>.

ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

LEE & LOW BOOKS is the largest children’s book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, “about everyone, for everyone,” is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company’s goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at leeandlow.com.

ORDERING INFORMATION

On the Web:

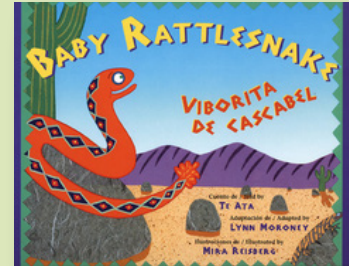
www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering (general order information)
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/baby-rattlesnake-viborita-de-cascabel> (secure online ordering)

By Phone: 212-779-4400 ext. 25

By Fax: 212-683-1894

By Mail: Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016

Book Information for *Baby Rattlesnake*



\$9.95, PAPERBACK

978-0-89239-188-2

32 pages, 8-3/4 x 10-1/4

*Reading Level: Grade 3

*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula

Interest Level: Grades K–3

Guided Reading Level: K

Accelerated Reader® Level/
Points: 3.0/0.5

Lexile™ Measure: AD550L

THEMES: Animals (Snakes), Nature, Self-Esteem and Confidence, Responsibility, Compassion and Forgiveness, Families, Community, Self-Control and Self-Regulation, Folklore, Native American Interest

RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/baby-rattlesnake-viborita-de-cascabel>

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.