

The Grasshopper and the Ant

- Attitudes towards work -

attitude: the way that you think and feel about somebody/something; the way that you behave towards somebody/something that shows how you think and feel

<https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/>

The Grasshopper and the Ant is originally one of Aesop's fables, who was a slave and storyteller believed to have lived in ancient Greece between 620 and 564 BC. The stories associated with his name have descended to modern times through a number of sources and continue to be reinterpreted in popular as well as artistic media.

The fable describes how a hungry grasshopper begs for food from an ant when winter comes and is refused. The situation sums up moral lessons about the virtues of hard work and planning for the future.

I chose the most popular retelling of the story by Jean de la Fontaine to showcase two different attitudes towards work.

Fables by Jean de La Fontaine, translated by Elizur Wright

The Grasshopper and the Ant

A Grasshopper gay
Sang the summer away,
And found herself poor
By the winter's first roar.
Of meat or of bread,
Not a morsel she had!

So a begging she went,
To her neighbour the ant,
For the loan of some wheat,
Which would serve her to eat,
Till the season came round.
"I will pay you," she saith,
"On an animal's faith,
Double weight in the pound
Ere the harvest be bound."
The ant is a friend
(And here she might mend)
Little given to lend.
"How spent you the summer?"
Quoth she, looking shame
At the borrowing dame.
"Night and day to each comer
I sang, if you please."
"You sang! I'm at ease;
For 'tis plain at a glance,
Now, ma'am, you must dance."

[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Fables_\(La_Fontaine,_tr._Wright\)/The_Grasshopper_and_the_Ant](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Fables_(La_Fontaine,_tr._Wright)/The_Grasshopper_and_the_Ant)

The fable describes a grasshopper that spent the summer singing while the ant worked to store up food for the winter. It paints a graphic picture of two completely different attitudes towards work. Attitude is the way one thinks and feels about something. It is clear that the grasshopper's attitude towards work is non-caring, reckless, neglectful and negligent. The ant on the other hand is hard-working, prudent, astute and considerate.

The fable also provides us with hints about where the different attitudes lead. Be like the grasshopper, and you will have nothing – no food, no place to stay, no secure future. Or, be like the ant, and you will be secured for future events.

As a teacher, I can use this fable to provide my students with guidance about the virtues of hard work and study. If they learn hard, they will easily pass all the tests, can get in better schools or colleges, and in the end can get better jobs with higher salary to provide for themselves and their family. Or else, they will fail the tests, can not get into good schools or colleges, can not get a good job and will not have financial security.

It is up to everyone what attitudes they will have. Attitudes change, and they must change with experience. My responsibility as a teacher is to expose my students to new experiences and introduce stories that have a moral, so that they can learn from it and have a better future.