



7th ELA #2

Subject: English Language Arts

State: Ohio

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*“Blaming it on Adam” is a Nigerian folktale that retells the biblical story of Adam in an African setting. Read the folktale and answer the questions that follow.*

## **Blaming it on Adam**

by

1. Long ago there was a poor woodcutter named Iyapo who lived on the edge of the village in a small hut. Every morning he would get up early and go far away to the forest. In the forest, he would chop wood until the sun was at its highest point. Then he would carry all his wood down to the town and, after giving a few sticks to the tollkeeper at the gate, he would sell his wood.
2. He was always hungry but he had to sell his wood or he could not buy anything to eat.
3. “Wood, wood. Good wood. Who’ll buy some of my wood,” he would say as he walked up and down the streets. “It’s all the fault of Adam. Good wood for sale.” And so he sold some wood and bought food.
4. One day as Iyapo was selling his wood, the king heard him.
5. “Who is this person?” he asked his chief adviser. “And why does he say that it’s all the fault of Adam? If someone has wronged him then I should know about it.”
6. The chief adviser of the king asked all the other officers but none of them knew who he was or what he meant. So they took him to the king. He fell on the floor in respect.
7. “Now then, woodcutter, what is your name?” asked the king.
8. “Sire,” replied the frightened man, “my name is Iyapo.”
9. “Iyapo, that name means ‘many troubles’. But why are you blaming Adam?”
10. “I have heard that long ago Adam disobeyed God and ate the forbidden fruit. If he had not, we would all now be living in the Garden of Eden and I would never go hungry. That is why I say it is the fault of Adam.”
11. “I see,” said the king, looking thoughtfully at the woodcutter. “You are a hard worker yet you go hungry. It does not seem fair that you are suffering because of Adam’s mistake. I will help you.” The king called his chief adviser over and said to him, “Have Iyapo properly washed and dressed. Bring him to the palace and let him stay in one of the rooms there. Take his rags and wood away and let him have a new life.”

12. He then said to Iyapo, "From now on, you can call me brother. We will share everything and you can do anything you like except" – here he stared right into Iyapo's eyes – "except, you may not open the green door at the end of the hall. That is the one thing that you must never do."
13. "Oh, my king," cried an ecstatic Iyapo, "what reason do I have to open the green door. I have food, clothes and shelter, what more could I want?"
14. And so the woodcutter led his new life of comfort. He never had to get up early or work hard, indeed he had forgotten what it used to be like to get up every day and chop wood. He was eating very well and was even starting to get fat.
15. He had quite forgotten all about the green door. Then one day he happened to pass by it, and as he did he remarked to himself, "That is the door which I must never open. Still, I wonder what is behind it that I, the king's brother, am not allowed to find out." And with a sigh he carried on.
16. During the next few days Iyapo seemed to be drawn towards the door all the time. Without being aware of trying, he found himself outside the door several times a day and each time he was getting more and more curious as to what was behind it. Sometimes without thinking about it, his hand actually started towards the handle but he managed to stop himself each time.
17. One day, the king said to Iyapo, "Brother, I have been called away to another town and I am afraid that I will not be back until much later in the day. I am entrusting the palace to you. Please make sure nothing happens."
18. After the king left, the woodcutter started thinking, "The king has given me the responsibility of the palace. That is correct, after all am I or am I not the brother of the king. So surely I am responsible for the room behind the green door as well. I must be. I am going straight there now to find out what is hidden there."
19. After checking that no one was looking, he put his ear against the door. He could not hear anything.
20. "I simply have to know what is in there. I will just open it a crack and close it again. The king will never find out." And so he opened the door very slightly. The room was dark but after a while he could see that all that was in there were the old rags he used to wear and the wood he used to sell. Then suddenly, a mouse ran out the door.
21. "Oh no," cried Iyapo, "the king was hiding a mouse in the room and now it has escaped. I must catch it." And so he ran off in pursuit. As he ran, his shoes fell off. He started tripping over the bottom of his long, fancy robes and had to take them off. But still he could not catch the little mouse. His pampered life had made him fat and unfit and he was getting hot and out of breath. But he kept going – the king must not find out about his opening the door.

22. Suddenly the king was there. He was back early!
23. “And what are you doing, Iyapo?” boomed the king. “Why are you running around the palace without your clothes. Such behaviour does not become someone in your high position. Get up.”
24. But the poor Iyapo was prostrate on the floor sobbing. “I am sorry my king. I did not mean to let your mouse go.”
25. “What mouse?” asked the king. “I have no mouse.”
26. “The mouse in the room. You see I just opened the green door for a . . . ”
27. “You opened the green door?”
28. “It was a mistake. I did not mean to, but my feet kept taking me there and I was curious and . . . ”
29. “Iyapo, I am very disappointed in you. Opening the green door was the one thing I told you not to do.”
30. “I know sire, but I am the brother of the king and . . . ”
31. “And now you want to be the king yourself,” shouted the king, angrily. “You are worse than Adam. You should have learned from his mistake.”
32. “I am sorry, my lord. It will never happen again, I promise. I am at your mercy, master. What do you wish of me?”
33. The king’s mood had changed and now he had tears in his eyes.
34. “Go back to the room,” he said sadly, “and take your rags and sticks. Return to the market and sell your wood.”
35. “Yes, sire.” The woodcutter could hardly speak.
36. “Just remember this, others cannot make you happy. It is up to you and your fate. Go and work hard and know that your poverty is not the fault of Adam or anyone else.”
37. And so Iyapo returned to the market and shouted, “Good wood. Wood here. Who wants to buy good wood?” But no longer did he say anything about Adam.

1 In the folktale, what causes Iyapo to be brought before the king?

- (A) He is a dishonest businessman.
- (B) He has been critical of the king.
- (C) He is bothering some townspeople.
- (D) He has made a puzzling complaint.

2 How does Iyapo's life change after he leaves the palace?

- (A) He works harder than before.
- (B) He no longer respects the king.
- (C) He complains about how poor he is.
- (D) He no longer blames others for his problems.

3 According to paragraph 10, "Adam disobeyed God and ate the forbidden fruit." Which of the following details from the folktale symbolizes the forbidden fruit?

- (A) the forest
- (B) the village
- (C) the green door
- (D) the little mouse

4 Which of the following is the best definition of drawn as it is used in paragraph 16?

- (A) pulled
- (B) breathed
- (C) sketched
- (D) concluded