

# Tops and Bottoms by Janet Stevens



## Overview

The teacher will read *Tops and Bottoms* adapted and illustrated by Janet Stevens. The Hare solves his family's problems by tricking rich and lazy Bear in this funny, energetic version of an old slave story. With roots in European folktales and stories of the American South, *Tops & Bottoms* celebrates the trickster tradition of using one's wits to overcome hardship. In the end Bear is fed up with getting tricked so he decides he will grow his own plants so he can keep all the parts. Hare earned enough money to buy his land back and to open a vegetable stand. The student or class will create a sequel to the story that contradicts the last sentence of the book... "And although Hare and Bear learned to live happily as neighbors, they never became business partners again!" Hare and Bear decide to join as business partners one more time to grow and sell turnips.

## Georgia Standards

- ELAGSE2W3. Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure
- S2L1. b. Plan and carry out an investigation of the life cycle of a plant by growing a plant from a seed and by recording changes over a period of time.

## Objectives

- Students will be able to explain why turnips would be an excellent plant to grow for both the top of the plant (turnip greens) and bottom of the plant (turnip root) to be used in harvesting.
- Students will be able to give details about why Bear and Hare started another business partnership and how the partnership went this time.

## Materials

- [Tops and Bottoms by Janet Stevens](#)

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## Lesson Plan

### Engage:

- Teacher will read *Tops and Bottoms* to students.
- The teacher will tell the students that Hare and Bear decide to join as business partners one more time to grow and sell turnips. If one takes the top and the other take the bottom of the turnip plant will they both benefit?

### Explore:

- The writing can be whole class writing, peer writing with a student with higher writing ability or individual student writing, depending on the level and ability of the students. If the writing is individual writing be sure to have conferences with the students throughout the writing process.
- Turnips are a root vegetable. However, their greens are commonly eaten too, especially in the south, where some varieties of turnips are grown for the leaves only. A good resource to explain the different parts of a plant that is eaten is *The Vegetables We Eat* by Gail Gibbons.
- How to Harvest Turnips: Harvest turnip greens in the morning. Using scissors or your just your clean hands, cut the outer most leaves first. New leaflets will eventually come in and you'll be able to harvest turnip greens again. You can also just harvest the root and greens together by pulling the whole plant, root and all, though you won't be able to harvest the greens again this way. Turnip roots should be harvested when they are about 2-3 inches in diameter. With your hand gripping where the greens meet the root, gently pull out of the ground.
- Vocabulary:
  - Flowers: allow the plant to reproduce by producing seeds; edible examples include broccoli, cauliflower
  - Fruit: hold the seeds of a plant; examples include tomatoes, pumpkins, squash
  - Leaves: soak up the sun's energy and produce food for the plant; examples include lettuce, cabbage, spinach, turnip greens, kale
  - Roots: absorb water and anchor the plant; examples include radishes, beets, carrots, turnips
  - Stems: transport water and food throughout the plant; examples include asparagus, celery

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## Explain:

- Jan Stevens ended her book with Hare and Bear deciding never to be business partners again. In your sequel explain what made the 2 decide to work together again.
- What is unique about the turnip plant that would allow both partners to be profitable even if one took the top and the other took the bottom of the plant?
- In your sequel include if Bear was continuing with his new habit of NOT sleeping through planting and harvesting. Did he help during these times with the turnips? Did Bear sell his portion of the crop at Hare's vegetable stand?

## Extend:

- (Math) If one took the tops (green leaves) and the other took the bottoms (the root) of the turnip plant, was one more profitable than the other? Research the price of turnip greens and the price of turnip roots. Per one plant, is the profit for one higher than the other?
- Are there other plants that both the top and the bottom are edible?

## Evaluate:

- Did the writing explain why turnips would be an excellent plant to grow for both the top and bottom to be used in harvesting?
- Did the writing give details about why Bear and Hare started another business partnership and how the partnership went this time?

Lesson created by Diana Cole for Georgia Organics