

Suggested Lesson Procedure
“The Griffin and the Minor Canon” by Frank R. Stockton

1. Before-Reading Word Sort (~15 minutes)

Have students work with a partner to sort the words into groups based on what they have in common. Students should label each group, try to use every word, and remember that they do not need to fill every box. There is more than one way to organize the words, so encourage students to explain their choices.

Next, have students write a one-sentence prediction about what the story might be about. Invite a few pairs to share their groups and predictions without giving away the plot.

2. Introduce the Story (~5 minutes)

Review the brief background information at the top of the during-reading worksheet. Explain what a griffin is and clarify that “Minor Canon” is the character’s title, not his name. This will help students follow the story more easily.

3. Read and Discuss as a Class (~75 minutes)

Read “The Griffin and the Minor Canon” together as a class. Pause at the appropriate points to discuss and answer during-reading questions 1–12. Give students time to record their answers before continuing.

4. After-Reading Partner Questions (~30 minutes)

Have students work in pairs to complete after-reading questions 13–22. Ask partners to talk through each question before writing their responses and use specific details from the story to support their ideas.

5. Review and Discuss Answers (~15 minutes)

Review the after-reading questions as a class. Invite different pairs to share their responses, and encourage classmates to build on their ideas or offer another interpretation.

6. Wrap Up with the Gist Summary (~10 minutes)

Have students complete The Gist Summary independently to check their understanding of the story. Remind them that more than one word or phrase may fit a blank, but every answer must make sense grammatically and accurately reflect the story.

Review a few possible answers together, or collect the summaries as a quick comprehension check.

Total Estimated Time: ~150 Minutes

Before Reading

Part 1: Read the words below. With a partner, sort them into groups based on what they have in common, and write each group in a separate box. Give each group a label that explains how its words are connected. You do not need to fill every box, but try to use every word.

Church	Classroom	Devour	Equinox	Books
Town	Wilderness	Death	Hunger	Wings
Sculptor	Courage	Stone	Village	Danger
Beast	Trust	Friendship	Charity	Honor

Part 2: Predict what the story might be about.

3) How does the Minor Canon's decision to meet the Griffin reveal his courage?

4) Why does the Minor Canon guard the stone griffin throughout the night?

PREVIEW
NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

5) How does the Griffin react when he first sees his stone likeness, and what does this reveal about his personality?

PREVIEW
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6) How does the relationship between the Griffin and the Minor Canon develop?

PREVIEW
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7) Why do the townspeople send the Minor Canon into the wilderness?

PREVIEW
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8) What is ironic about the townspeople's treatment of the Minor Canon?

9) How does the students' behavior change when the Griffin becomes their teacher, and why?

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

10) What does the townspeople's willingness to suggest the neighboring orphan asylum reveal about them?

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

11) Why does the Griffin become furious when he learns where the Minor Canon has gone?

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

12) What does the Griffin demand that the townspeople do when the Minor Canon returns?

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

After Reading Questions

13) How does the author challenge the idea that the Griffin is the story's true "monster"?

PREVIEW

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14) Why is the Griffin's decision not to eat the Minor Canon significant to the ending?

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

15) How does the Minor Canon's goodness both put him in danger and save him from the Griffin?

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

16) How does the townspeople's attitude toward the Minor Canon change, and what theme does this develop?

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

17) Is the Minor Canon's decision to leave town an act of heroism, or does he allow the townspeople to take advantage of him? Could it be both? Explain.

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

18) The children work harder when the Griffin teaches them, and the townspeople initially honor the Minor Canon because they fear punishment. What does the story suggest about the strengths and limitations of using fear to influence behavior?

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

19) The Minor Canon receives honor and comfort, but the Griffin dies alone. Is this a happy ending, a tragic ending, or both? What makes it feel fair or unfair?

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE



20) What is ironic about the Griffin’s behavior compared with that of the townspeople?

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

21) What message does the story convey about selflessness and selfishness?

PREVIEW

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22) Why might the author allow readers to know about the Griffin’s death while keeping the townspeople unaware?

PREVIEW

NOT FOR EDUCATIONAL USE

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The Gist Summary

Fill in each blank to complete the summary of the story. Choose words or phrases that make each sentence grammatically correct and accurate to the story. More than one answer may work for a blank, but not all answers will be correct.

In "The Griffin and the Minor Canon" by Frank R. Stockton,

a _____ visits a town to see a stone carving of himself above the church door. The _____ townspeople send the Minor Canon, a young religious leader, to speak with the creature. Despite his own fear,

_____ treats the Griffin with _____.

The Griffin becomes attached to him and _____ as he teaches children and cares for the sick and poor. Hoping the Griffin will follow, the townspeople pressure the Minor Canon to _____.

When the Griffin discovers what they have done, he finds his friend and

_____. Before he leaves forever, the Griffin demands that the townspeople value the Minor Canon and treat him well. Their unlikely friendship develops the theme that being a good person

depends on how you treat others, not _____.

At the end of the story, the Griffin returns to the wilderness and _____.

