

Let's Make a Story

The Billy Goats Gruff

Adapted by Gordon Lamont

Oh hello, I didn't see you there. I've just woken up you see. I'm Ratatatatty - the wisest, the smartest and...well...oldest rat on the river bank. Welcome to my river-side home.

I suppose you've come to hear the tail of old Trolley down there.

Look at him strutting about under the bridge like he owns the place. He didn't look so pleased with himself when the three billy goats gruff had finished with him, I can tell you.

Come on then, you don't expect to sit there like stones on the river bank while I do all the work I hope. On your feet and find a place of your own to stand in.

First you can have a go at being me, as I'm the most important animal around here. I'm a rat and I scurry about darting this way and that. I like to stop and sniff, standing up on my hind legs and sensing the air with my nose and whiskers.

Of course you humans spend most of your time on two legs. Waste of energy if you ask me but that's your problem. You can just hold your hands up under your chin to be your front paws. Off you go.

...scurrying along changing direction... more scurrying...now stop and stand still sniffing the air all around.

...first one way then the other...you want to know everything that's going on by your river bank...

Oh wait what's that coming across the field towards the bridge? It's the billy goats gruff!

Have a go at being a goat now. They trot along very neatly on their little hooves. Practice your own standing up version trip, trotting along. Looking all around you as you go. You're very happy because you're going to cross the bridge to the lovely fresh green grass on the other side. Off you go.

And stop where you are because now you find your way blocked by old Trolley.

He lives under the bridge and he thinks he owns the whole river bank. Silly old troll, doesn't he know that I'm the boss around here? He's a great big ugly beast who stands on his back legs like you. He's all hairy and covered with moss and he lumbers around like a great thuding, clumping thing.

Have a go at being old Trolley now, slow and steady steps...lumbering and grumbling as you move....

That was very good but quite enough - we don't want old Trolley to think he's the star of this story. So sit down with a partner and get ready to hear about the real star, me!





Now, the Billy Goats Gruff are three brother goats and the smallest one comes trip trotting up to the bridge without a care in the world ready to run across to all that delicious fresh grass on the other side. But old Trolly, he fancies a tasty meal of young goat so up he jumps from his smelly old home under the bridge.

'RAHHHHH!' he roars, putting on his best scary voice. 'I'm a troll, folly-roll, I'm a troll folly-roll, I'm a troll folly-roll and I'll eat you for my supper.'

Quick as a flash young Billy Goat Gruff replies, 'Oh you don't want to bother with me Mr Troll, I'm far too little. But my bigger brother will be along in a moment. He would make a much better meal: he's bigger and tastier and just dripping with flavour.'

Trolly's slow old brain starts working on this - it's painful to see such a lumbering old Troll try to think but he finally gets it and lets the little billy goat past.

Come on your turn to join in. In a moment you're going to tell that part of the story in your pairs, using three still pictures. In picture one will show the youngest Billy Goat happily approaching the bridge, with rotten old Trolly hiding under. Picture two will show the moment Trolly jumps out and scares the Billy Goat. In the last picture show the youngest Billy Goat going happily on his way while Trolly goes for his meal - the next Billy Goats Gruff.

You need to decide who's going to be goat and who's going to be Troll. Make your pictures full of life, telling the story and showing the story in the most interesting way that you can.

Sit down now with your partner ready to listen to old Ratatatatty.

So along comes the middle brother of the Billy Goats Gruff and old Trolly goes straight into his 'I am so scary' routine. You know the whole 'I'm a troll, folly-roll' stuff and 'I will eat you for my supper'.

But the middle Billy Goat isn't scared, oh no! He just launches into the same argument as his younger brother, you remember: 'Don't eat me there is a bigger and better meal coming next.'

Tell you what why don't you give this a go. In your pairs swap parts, so if you were the Billy Goat last time you're Trolly this time...and if you were Trolly you are the middle Billy Goat Gruff now. How will the middle Billy Goat Gruff convince Trolly to let him past? What words can you use about the oldest Billy Goat that will make Trolly want to get him instead of you? Act out the conversation between the quick thinking goat and the slow, old Troll.

Sit down with your partner again and get ready to listen.

As I expected, up trots the oldest brother - trip trot, trip trot - and yes you've guessed it out jumps old Trolly with the whole 'folly-roll' supper eating business.

As old Trolly came towards him licking his lips and ready to jump on him the oldest Billy Goat pretended to be frightened and backed away but then at the last moment he charged old Trolly with all his might and butted him with his long goat horns, sending him flying off the bridge to land with a splash in the water.



You're going to act out with part of the story in your pairs. But you're going to do it in slow motion to make the whole thing last longer and to show clearly and powerfully everything that happens. First choose who is going to be the oldest Billy Goat Gruff and who will be Trolly. Do that now.

This is how you're going to tell that part of the story. Of course you're not actually going to hit each other - the one who is going to be the Billy Goat Gruff will imagine he has long goat horns coming out of his head and it is these that send old Trolly flying through the air.

Now stand facing each other as if you were at opposite ends of the bridge. Make sure you listen carefully to old Rataatatty as you act this out and stay on your feet.

Trolly make sure you bend your knees when you land in the water, we don't want any of you ending up hurt. My burrow is not a hospital you know! Trolly, you start by moving towards the Billy Goat, ready to eat him. Slow and deliberate like a slowed-down film. Billy Goat: back off, as if you're really scared. Remember keep your movements slow and powerful...back, back. And Trolly... forward...and...forward.

Now Billy Goats: put your head down and start to move towards Trolly, your long imaginary horns make contact with the Troll.

Trolly: you're flying through the air in slow motion with your arms out by your side, waving around as if you're amazed at what's happening. Bend your knees as you land in the river with a big splash.

Now Billy Goat: off you go, trip trotting, normal speed now across the bridge while Trolly shakes his fist at you from river.

Have another go now, without my help, listening carefully to the sounds. Remember to keep your feet on the ground, all your movements slow and powerful and not to actually hit each other. It's the imaginary horns that hit Trolly off the bridge. Off you go.

Sit down now with your partner.

Poor old Trolly. But the only thing he really hurt was his pride - imagine the bully of the river bank cut down to size by three goats. Serves him right the bad old troll.

I'm off for a snooze in my cosy river side burrow. Good bye!