

# Armadilly Chili, The Three Little Gators, Señorita Gordita, There Once Was a Cowpoke

written by **HELEN KETTEMAN** and illustrated by **WILL TERRY**

Ages 4–7/Grades PreK–2 // Albert Whitman and Company, 2010

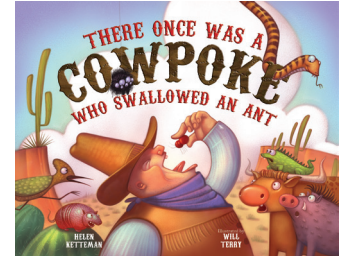
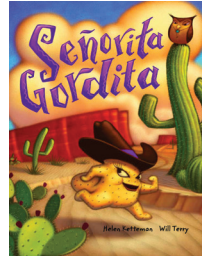
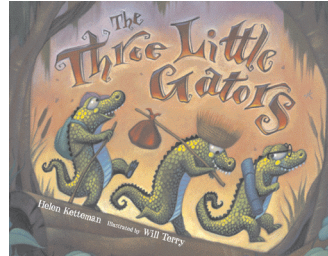
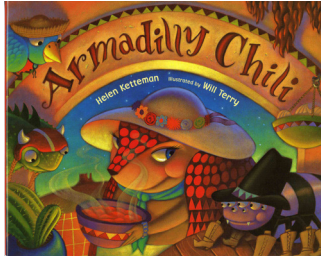
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**Armadilly Chili** HC 978-0-8075-0457-4 // PB 978-0-8075-0458-1

**The Three Little Gators** HC 978-0-8075-7824-7

**Señorita Gordita** HC 978-0-8075-7302-0

**There Once Was a Cowpoke** HC 978-0-8075-7850-6



*This guide is aligned to the Common Core State Standards for Grade 2, but standards for other grades may also apply.*

## ABOUT THE BOOKS

Each of these fun retellings put a Texas spin on familiar folktales and are great class read-alouds. Miss Billie, an armadillo, tries to enlist the help of her desert-dwelling friends in a story modeled after the Little Red Hen, and the Three Little Pigs are transformed into young gators leaving home to make their way in an East Texas swamp. A desert setting, a long-lashed corn cake, and a mix of Spanish and English words throughout the story adds a Tex-Mex flavor to the Gingerbread Man. Finally, imagine the Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly as a cowboy on the Texas range.

## COMPARING AND CONTRASTING FOLKTALES VARIANTS

*The CCSS ask for close reading of texts and text-based evidence to support students' answers about the reading. It's important for students' responses to refer back to the text and steer clear of opinion.*

## READING THE RETELLING

Prepare to compare and contrast each Kettelman/Terry retelling with your choice of an edition of the original folktale. Before reading aloud the retelling, share book title, author and illustrator, cover, and title page with students. Ask students if they know the classic folktales that correspond to the retelling (either The Little Red Hen, The Three Little Pigs, The Gingerbread Man, and There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly.) Explain that the story you're going to read is a retelling of that classic folktale.

## READING THE ORIGINAL

Ask students to talk about some of the differences they notice between the two versions based on what they already know of the original. Then read the original version aloud. Ask students to compare and contrast the two versions and record their observations on a large Venn diagram set up in front of the class. Ask them to notice details about the setting and characters as portrayed through text and pictures and to identify recurring patterns as well as changes. **(RL.2.1, RL.2.3, RL.2.9, SL.2.2)**

## READING OTHER VARIANTS

Have many variants of the four stories available for students to browse and read. Then ask students to choose two variants of the same story and direct them to write about the differences between the versions. **(RL.2.9, W.2.2)**

## WRITING A VARIANT

Have the class decide which of the four stories they will retell. Refer back to the Venn diagram and explain that their new story will include the basic elements included in the “same” area of the diagram. Choose a local setting or someplace else. There are many possibilities—another country, outer space, urban? Discuss how the setting will determine the characters and plot. What is the problem and how will it be solved? How will the story end? Prepare a story map for students’ reference as you begin the collaborative writing process.

After writing and revision is complete, have all students participate in designing and illustrating the cover, front matter, and pages of the story. Make copies for all students to take home. **(W.2.3, W.2.5, W.2.6, W.2.7, SL.2.1, SL.2.6, L.2.1, L.2.2, L.2.3)**

## Armadilly Chili Discussion questions and activities

### VOCABULARY

Have students ask about unfamiliar words and keep a list of those. Encourage students to figure out meanings of words they don’t know from the text and pictures, and, if necessary, study the unfamiliar words before moving on to the questions.

Some possible examples: harrumphed, snorted, scurried, peck, concentrate, tottered.  
**(L.2.4e)**

Ask students what Miss Billie’s reaction is when her friends tell her they can’t help. What does the text tell them? What do the pictures tell them? **(RL.2.1, RL.2.7)**

The expression “flat as a Texas prairie” is an idiom, a descriptive phrase not meant to be taken literally. What are other examples in the story? (ex. “shaking my tailfeathers”; “sour as a scorpion”; “flat as a Texas prairie”; “skating the day away”) What are some familiar idioms that students use when speaking? **(RL.2.4)**

What is the setting for *Armadilly Chili*? Have students make a list of the words in the story that evoke setting. How do the illustrations emphasize the setting? **(RL.2.1, RL.2.7)**

Discuss the message of this story. **(RL.2.2)**

Ask students to write about the endings of *The Little Red Hen* and *Armadilly Chili* and how they differ. **(RL.2.9)**

## **The Three Little Gators Discussion questions and activities**

### **VOCABULARY**

Have students ask about unfamiliar words and keep a list of those. Encourage students to figure out meanings of words they don't know from the text and pictures, and, if necessary, study the unfamiliar words before moving on to the questions.

Some possible examples: tunnel, crawled, trembled, scrambled, shivered. **(L.2.4e)**

Ask students if they think the swamp is a good setting for retelling the story of *The Three Little Pigs*? Why or why not? **(RL.2.1, RL.2.7)**

Where do Second and Third Gator run to? What happens there? What bad choice does Big-Bottomed Boar make? Why do students find this funny? Ask students about the shift in perspective for this spread. Does it add or detract from the story? Why did the illustrator choose this perspective? **(RL.2.1, RL.2.3, RL.2.7)**

There are several repetitive lines in the story. What do the little gators say to the boar when he threatens their homes? What does Big-Bottomed Boar say to the gators when they won't let him in? Repeat these lines aloud, noticing the rhythm. Why are some of the words in a larger font? What does repetition add to the story? **(RL.2.4)**

## **Señorita Gordita Discussion questions and activities**

### **VOCABULARY**

Have students ask about unfamiliar words and keep a list of those. Encourage students to figure out meanings of words they don't know from the text and pictures, and, if necessary, study the unfamiliar words before moving on to the questions.

Some possible examples: underneath, skittered, scrumptious, hustled, scratching, burrow, cocked, approaching. Also review the glossary of Spanish words at the end of the book. **(L.2.4e)**

Ask students to recount the animals Señorita Gordita meets on her way through the desert in the order they appear. Why does she run away from each one? Why doesn't she get away from Búho? **(RL.2.1, RL.2.3, RL.2.5, SL.2.2)**

Ask students to explain the last line of the story, "But being smart is better." **(RL.2.2)**

Ask students to describe the pace of the story. How do the characters' actions contribute to the pace? What words and phrases does the author use to help readers visualize and feel the story's pace? **(RL.2.3, RL.2.4, RL.2.7)**

Spanish words are woven into this tale. What clues do the author and illustrator give students to help them figure out what the Spanish words mean? Why do they think the author chose to include Spanish words in this story? **(RL.2.4, L. 2.4)**

## **There Once Was a Cowpoke Discussion questions and activities**

### **VOCABULARY**

Have students ask about unfamiliar words and keep a list of those. Encourage students to figure out meanings of words they don't know from the text and pictures, and, if necessary, study the unfamiliar words before moving on to the questions.

Some possible examples: horribly, roadrunner, scratchity-scratchy, quivered, quaked, mash, lasso, trample, spent. **(L.2.4e)**

Ask the students why the cowboy is eating all these strange animals. Why is the order of animals the way it is? What happens at the end? Is the ending a surprise? The ending of *Once There Was a Cowpoke* is different from the ending of the original story it's based on, *There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly*. Why do students think it's different? **(RL.2.1, RL.2.5, RL.2.9)**

The repetition, rhythm, and rhyme of this cumulative tale makes this a good choice for a class read-aloud. After reading aloud a couple of times, divide the class into groups and assign each group pages for reading. (One suggestion is to organize groups so they are reading the lines about one of the animals and a separate group repeats the cumulative refrain.) Give groups time to practice their parts and assist them as needed with fluency and expression. Have each group make a cardboard animal cutout corresponding to the animals they will be reading about. Decorate cutout and attach it to a flat stick. Students can wave the cutout while reading the lines about it including when it's mentioned during the refrain. Consider taping the presentation so students can listen to and/or watch their performance. **(RL.2.5, RF. 2.4b)**

See the full text for all standards used in this guide at the Common Core State Standards Initiative website—[www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy](http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy)