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approved



Mr Motaung's thirds

African Storybook
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English



It is break time at Siyafunda Primary School. Nomsa, Jabu and Zodwa have just sat down in the shade to enjoy their lunch.

Today Nomsa and Zodwa brought food from home, but Jabu is eating a kota from Mr Mkhize's shop.



"Mmmm, this cheese is creamy! Mr Mkhize's kotas are the best!" exclaims Jabu licking his fingers. Tebogo is sitting nearby and overhears Jabu. He can't believe his ears.

Tebogo asks, "Did you just say there's cheese on Mkhize's kota? Did you say Mkhize's kotas are the best? Are you joking?"



"Haa! You don't know Mr Mkhize! He's changed his ways and this kota speaks for itself," says Jabu pointing at his kota. The kota is stuffed with chips, polony and atchar, and covered in creamy melting cheese.

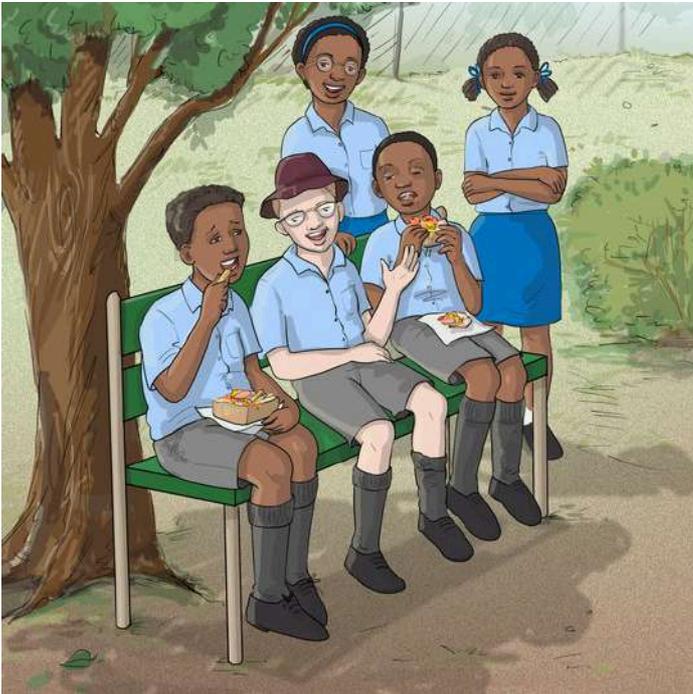
Tebogo is impressed. Just then Scelo arrives with his lunch and Tebogo says to his friend, "Hey Scelo, look at this kota!"



Jabu notices Scelo's face and asks, "Why are you so serious?" Scelo puts his kota on the bench next to Jabu's kota.

"I got my kota from Mr Motaung. The kotas are equal in size, but mine has less filling!"

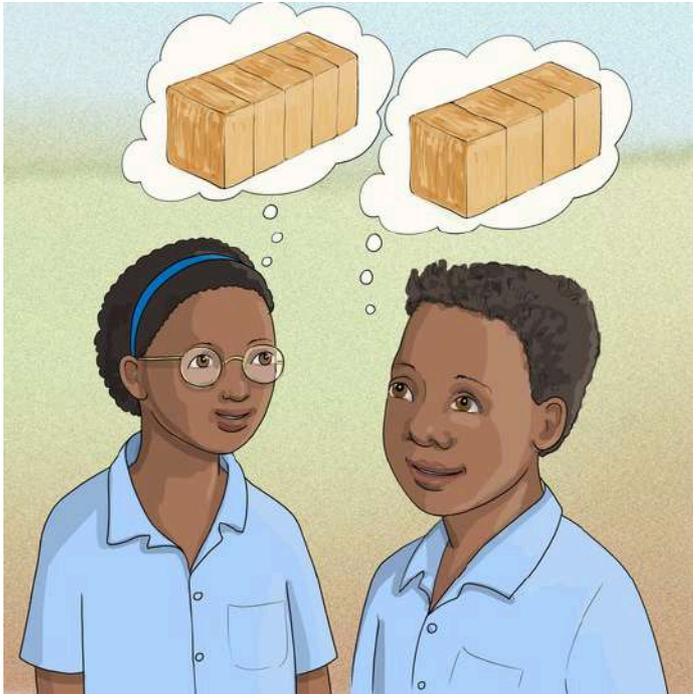
"Yes," says Nomsa, "that's exactly why so many kids are buying from Mr Mkhize's shop now."



"So Mr Mkhize is a changed man? He used to slice one loaf of bread into five parts to make his kotas!" says Tebogo.

"Ah!" replies Nomsa, "that was not a kota at all!"

"Why was it not a kota?" asks Scelo.



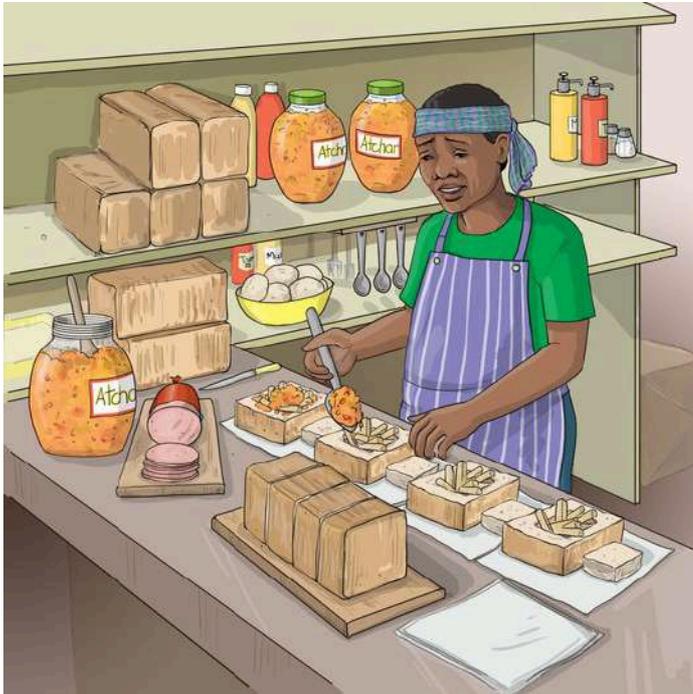
"Ha Scelo!" laughs Nomsa. "Don't you remember what our teacher taught us about fractions? Cutting one loaf of bread into five equal pieces does not give us quarters. It gives us fifths."

Scelo thinks, then he says, "I remember! Each part of a whole divided into 5 equal parts is $\frac{1}{5}$ of the whole. Each part of a whole divided into 4 equal pieces is $\frac{1}{4}$ of the whole."



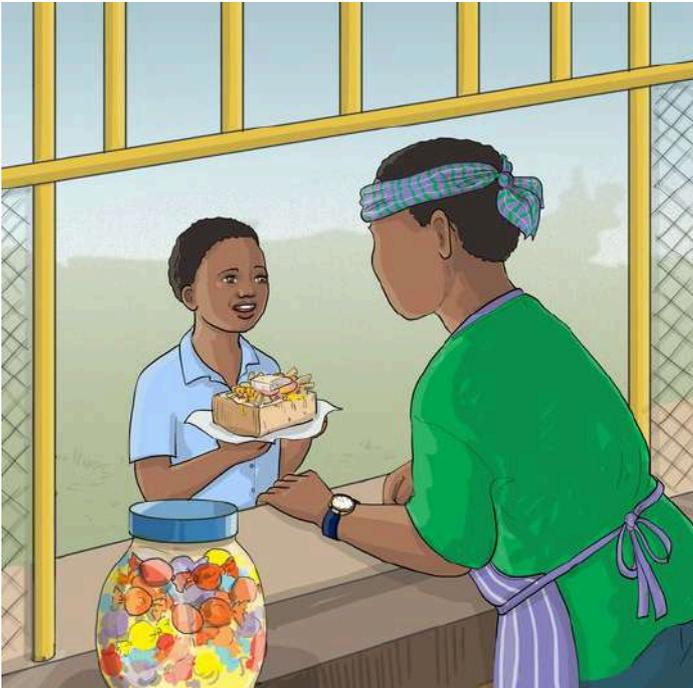
Zodwa interrupts, "But hey guys, what is going on with Mr Motaung's kota's? They're a quarter of a loaf, but they contain less than Mr Mkhize's kotas."

Jabu frowns and says to the group, "If Motaung is having problems and goes out of business, then Mkhize will have no competition. What if Mkhize gets greedy and goes back to his bad old ways?"



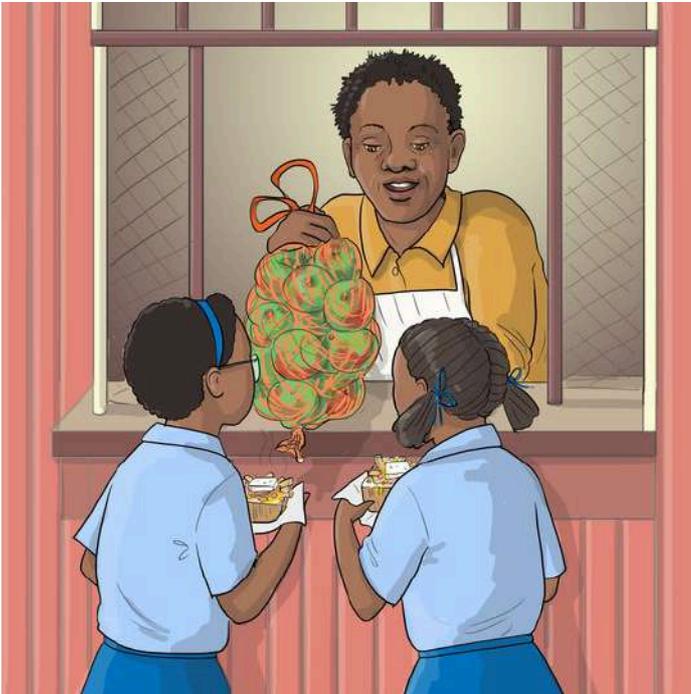
A few days later, Mr Motaung is getting ready to sell lunch at break time. He's worried. Lately, fewer and fewer learners are buying from him.

Mr Motaung asks himself, "Why are they all flocking to Mkhize? I thought we were selling the same kota at the same price."



Jabu on his way from Mr Mkhize's shop passes by Mr Motaung's shop. He calls the boy over, "Hey Jabu, how are you?" Mr Motaung's eyes are not on Jabu but on the kota Jabu is carrying!

He smiles when he realises that the kota has got more chips, more cheese, more polony and more atchar than his kotas!



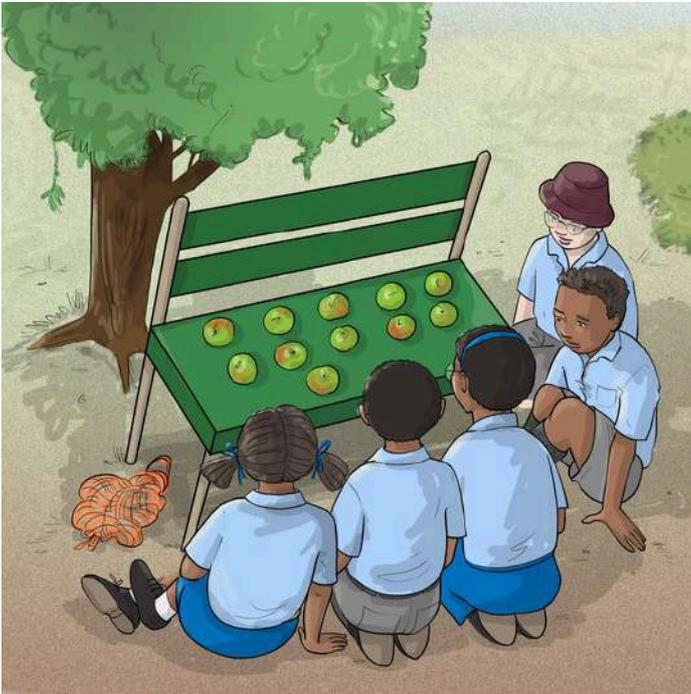
The next time Nomsa and Zodwa are buying kotas, Mkhize gives them a gift.

"Wait a minute, I've got a surprise for you. Soon I'll be selling fruit at my shop. Here are some sweet juicy apples to try for free. Please share with your friends."



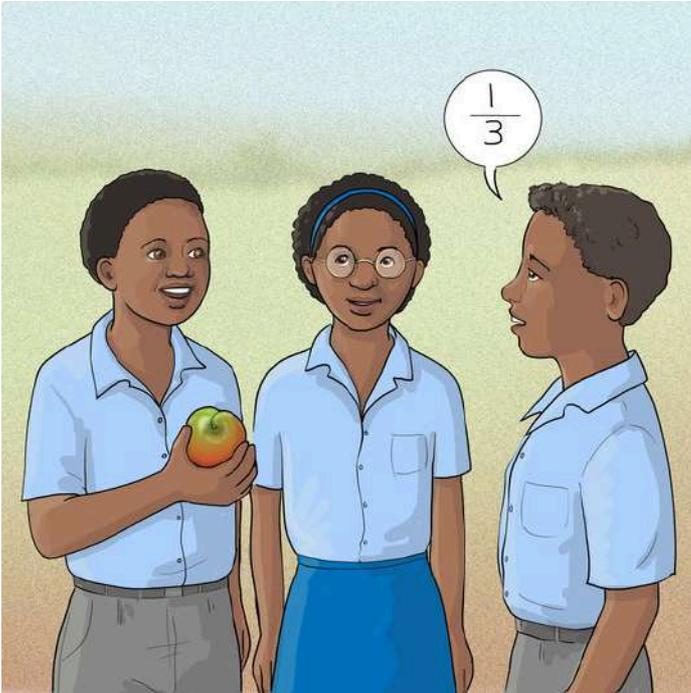
The girls are delighted. "Thank you Mr Mkhize!" they say at the same time.

They decide to share the apples with Jabu, Tebogo and Scelo. They go to find them in the yard.



Zodwa tells the boys, "Mr Mkhize gave us these apples to share. He wants to sell them at his shop." Nomsa puts the apples on the bench so that they can all count them.

"Well," says Tebogo, "we can each have an equal number of apples. But there's one apple left over."



"Let's cut that remaining apple into three equal parts," suggests Jabu. "What are three equal parts called?" mutters Nomsa to herself.

"Thirds! Cut the apple into thirds!" says Scelo proudly.



"No, let's give that leftover apple to our maths teacher!" says Zodwa.

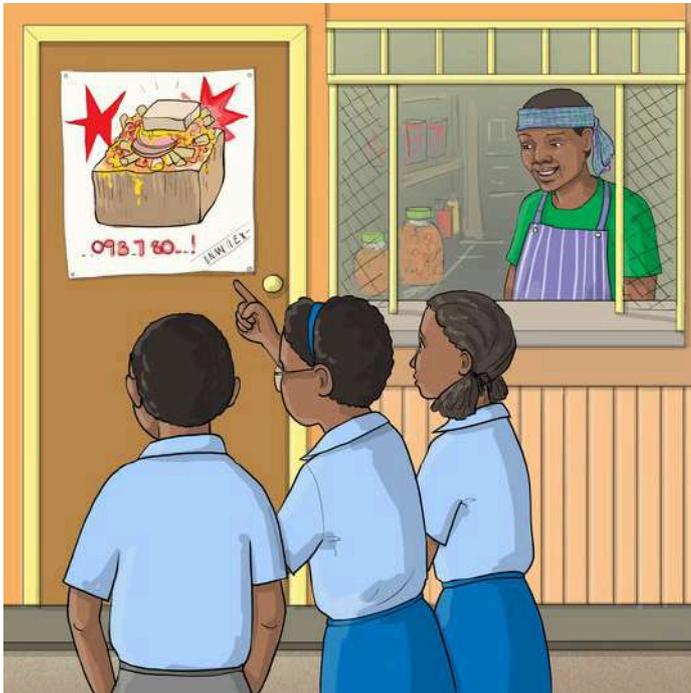
The friends agree that it's a good suggestion to give the apple to Ms Nkosi after break.



The next week, Jabu and Nomsa are waiting for Zodwa at break. "Look, Motaung is back in business!" she says. Zodwa puts her kota on the bench and the three of them compare their kotas.

"Wow!" says Jabu, "that kota is bigger than a quarter! And look at all those chips!"

"I bet this cost a lot extra?" asks Nomsa suspiciously.



After break, as they head back to class, Zodwa takes her friends to read the notice board outside Mr Motaung's shop. Jabu and Nomsa can't believe their eyes when they read the sign:

Get your supersize kota third! Only R3 more!
A third of a loaf with extra chips and extra sauce. With polony OR cheese!

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