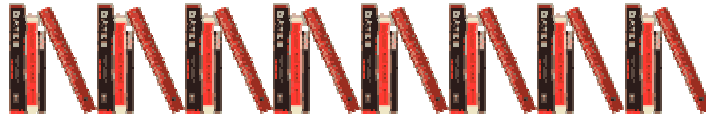


Fairy Tales and More!



You have been hearing and reading fairy tales, fables and myths all your life. They are part of the cultural background which every group shares. Just as you may not be able to tell what your best friend wore today without some thought, you may also take some time to realize what role story-telling may have played in your life. You are about to become a detective, unraveling fairy-tales and then putting them back together.

People have told stories from the beginning of time. Some are origin stories: they try to explain how the world came to be. They answer questions that you may have asked as a child: why is the sky blue? Why does the raven cry so coarsely? Other stories tell historical tales, and still others teach people to behave properly and to recognize the difference between good and evil. Questing tales share stories about travels far from home. Stories about mythical beasts and talking animals often help guide their listeners and readers in how to live life properly. A story helps its people realize who they are and what they believe.

As you explore, let part of your mind consider which stories have been important in your life. What have they taught you? What do they tell you about yourself? How would you explain the world or how to behave to young children in a way that they might understand?



Assignment 1: Gathering data

Read at least three stories. Keep a log for each one. There are five parts to this log:

1. Title of the story
2. Origin of the story (culture or people)
3. A brief summary
4. Type of story (fable, myth, fairy tale, legend, etc.)
5. Notes: the lesson the story teaches, the characteristics of the people or animals, or anything else that stands out about the story. These notes will be important for the next part of the assignment.

Example log: "The Wizard of Oz" is an American story about a girl, her dog, and three mythical characters who travel on a quest to find courage, a heart, a brain, and knowledge about how to go home. They learn that everyone has these within. There is a mix of reality and magic, witches, talking animals, and real people.

Turn in your log.

Resources

Literacy Rules!

Check the Library. Ask Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Johnson for permission to go to the Elementary section. Take your assignment with you.

Some Web sites

<http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/folktexts.html>

<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/4456/>

The top of this page has links to stories by country.

<http://www.themoonlitroad.com/>

This site features interesting American folktales.

<http://www.pacificnet.net/~johnr/aesop/>

Aesop's fables: examples of fables which teach lessons.

Assignment 2: Organizing data

Review your stories. Make a list of the stories and the fairy tale elements in them. The more elements you can list, the easier it will be to do the next assignment.

Examples of elements include the following:

Beginning and ending

- once upon a time
- happily ever after

Objects

- poisoned apple
- magic mirror
- magic horse
- invisible table

Characters

- ghost
- dragon
- witch
- fairy godmother

Place or Setting

- dungeon
- windy path
- deep dark woods
- grandmother's house

Organization

- Events happen in threes
- Oldest sibling is first, youngest is last to try a quest
- Words, details, and actions are repeated for different outcomes
- Time is not real

Assignment 3: Reorganizing data, part 1

Literacy Rules!

Write your own story. Try to mimic the style of writing you found as you use as many of your listed elements as possible. Look at how the stories flow, what kinds of words and descriptions they use, and how they're laid out. Use your full name as the subject line.

Assignment 5: Reorganizing data, part 2

Take an opportunity to write your own story. You have learned many lessons in your life, and you are establishing a set of values which help you decide how to behave. You are starting to answer questions about how the world works and what your place is in it. You may have traveled to unusual places. You may have some ideas about how the future will work.

Use all of this experience to write your own story, in whatever form suits you best: myth, fable, legend, fairy tale. Use aspects of those stories you have read to give you ideas of characters you might include. Read some of the stories of the future for ideas. Also think about changing a real request you might make of your parents into a myth which will explain your need for a car or a summer in Florida, for example. Finally, think about telling a story which shows clearly the values you hold in a way which makes it possible to pass them along to future generations. You may be inspired by examples from the Web sites below.

Prepare to **tell** your story to the class. **You must tell your story, not read it!**

Conclusion

Congratulations! If you have finished all the assignments, you have a better understanding of the stories which have affected your life. You have considered where you live, what kind of a person you are, and perhaps whom you would like to become. You have found a way to communicate these ideas to the world around you. In a century, maybe yours will be the stories the people of the future will be reading to understand how people thought today! You've done it!

Literacy Rules!

