

TRADITIONAL TALES (SOL 3.5) Teacher Reference Resource

This chart should be sized to legal (11"x17") paper when printed.

Why teach the different forms of traditional tales?

1. They are good stories that children enjoy.
2. They are part of our collective culture.
3. They contain the essential elements of all stories: characters, plot, and setting.
4. Once students understand the form, they know what to expect and can use their knowledge of the form to make predictions and aid comprehension.

Information that Applies to All Traditional Tales

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Began as stories told orally <input type="checkbox"/> Way to pass on information about cultural values and accepted behaviors from one generation to the next <input type="checkbox"/> Told in order to teach audience, frequently children <input type="checkbox"/> Eventually written down by several different people; therefore, frequently several versions <input type="checkbox"/> A genre that exists in nearly every country around the world and usually with remarkable similarities in stories among different cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Contain story elements: characters, setting, plot <input type="checkbox"/> Follow a story structure with beginning, middle, end <input type="checkbox"/> Plot revolves around a problem or conflict <input type="checkbox"/> Character traits can be identified by what a character says and does and how the character is described in the story
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Information that Applies to Specific Forms of Traditional Tales

Comparison Features	FAIRY TALE/ FOLK TALE	TRICKSTER TALE	MYTH	FABLE	LEGEND
9-WEEKS TAUGHT	FOURTH 9-WEEKS	SECOND 9-WEEKS	THIRD 9-WEEKS	THIRD 9-WEEKS	FOURTH 9-WEEKS
PURPOSE	Entertains and may contain a warning	Funny and entertaining Presents a cultural perspective on intelligence	Teaches a lesson about social or religious customs Explains a natural phenomena Explains a human trait	Teaches a lesson to children about overcoming their shortcomings, faults, or bad behaviors; teaches how they should behave	Teaches by the example of the main character
Characters	<p>Make believe: fairies, trolls, witches, giants, dragon, elves</p> <p>Real: may include major characters who are human; sometimes princes and princesses</p> <p>Characters are often all good or all bad</p> <p>Characters may have magical powers</p> <p>Sometimes sets of three: three pigs, three bears, three sisters</p>	<p>Make believe: usually animal with human characteristics (e.g., can talk and behave like humans) May be human-like (e.g., leprechaun)</p> <p>Main character is the trickster with his/her ingenuity which enables him/her to defeat bigger and stronger characters.</p> <p>Trickster may be part of a cultural mythology.</p> <p>Real: Trickster exemplifies real human characteristics like greed, vanity, foolishness, and cunning</p> <p>Trickster characters tend to be funny.</p>	<p>Make believe: gods and goddess, may be depicted in human or animal form</p> <p>Gods and goddesses represent one dominant idea (e.g., god of sea, goddess of harvest, god of war, goddess of love).</p> <p>Real: may include mention of characters who are human</p> <p>Gods and goddesses frequently act like people with human weaknesses and demonstrate some complexity (they may be both good and bad)</p>	<p>Make believe: animals with human characteristics</p> <p>Animals talk and have human emotions, and actions. May live in human-style homes</p> <p>Animals frequently represent a type: turtle (slow and steady), sheep (follower of heard), fox (clever and sly), ant (industrious)</p> <p>Real: may include minor characters who are human</p> <p>Animal characters exemplify real human traits</p>	<p>Make believe: exaggerated characteristics or powers—though based on a level of reality</p> <p>Real: figures are real or supposedly real individuals, e.g., King Arthur, Robin Hood, Johnny Appleseed</p> <p>May be historical, e.g., George Washington, Abraham Lincoln</p>
SPECIAL POWERS	Often magical characters and/or magical or enchanted objects: e.g., mirror that talks, lamp that grants wishes; apple that causes one to sleep until awoken by one true love, magic beans, etc.	If the trickster is part of a cultural mythology, he may display a high degree of power.	Gods and goddesses are all powerful, especially of a specific realm, e.g., Poseidon used his power to rule the oceans. Gods and goddesses have the power to take different form e.g., wolf, rock, human.	No particular special powers; animal's talking is accepted as normal, part of what a fable is	Human trait is exaggerated beyond human capacity, e.g., John Henry's strength.
SETTING	<p>Time: long, long ago (no specific time)</p> <p>Place: far, far away; however, reflects the landscape of the tale's culture: medieval Europe with forests, castles and cottages, African jungle, palaces of India or China</p>	<p>Time: ancient</p> <p>Place: usually outdoors</p>	<p>Time: ancient</p> <p>Place: home region of the gods (may be above the earth as in Greek mythology or within the earth as in American Indian mythology)</p>	<p>Time: usually ancient</p> <p>Place: usually outside; however little effort is made to make the animal's habitat authentic. Animals may live in house similar to those of people</p>	<p>Time: historical past</p> <p>Place: regional and stories reflect the region e.g., Paul Bunyan in the northern U.S., Pecos Bill from Texas</p>

Chart continued on back.

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Comparison Features	FAIRY TALE/ FOLK TALE	TRICKSTER TALE	MYTH	FABLE	LEGEND
PLOT	<p>Uncomplicated, straightforward plot (good vs. evil)</p> <p>Repetitive: events often happen in sets of three e.g., three wishes</p>	<p>Escape story: Trickster usually must get himself out of what seems like an impossible situation</p> <p>He probably got himself into the situation because his greed, vanity or foolishness that led him to play pranks and/or disobeying rules.</p> <p>Usually the outcome is a positive or help to establish the way the world is.</p>	<p>Action story: Plot demonstrates/embodies the purpose of the myth: to teach or explain a human trait, to explain a natural phenomena, to explain social or religious customs</p> <p>Plot may focus on the conflict between good and evil</p>	<p>Short, direct plot that is mainly action</p> <p>Problem: One animal/character usually displays a human weakness (e.g., greed, laziness, pride). The character's actions based on this weakness usually lead to embarrassment or downfall to the character and directly to the moral of the fable.</p>	<p>Short, direct plot that is mainly action</p> <p>Plot action establishes the character's dominant characteristic</p>
THEME/ MORAL/ MAIN IDEA	<p>Typical themes: truth prevails over deception; generosity is ultimately rewarded; hard work overcomes obstacles; love mercy and kindness are the greatest powers of all</p>	<p>Theme: usually has something to do with using one's intelligence/cunning which may have both positive and negative implications</p>	<p>Main Idea: is related to the purpose of the myth: explain human characteristics, e.g., jealousy/greed and its effects; explain a natural phenomena, e.g., why there are seasons</p>	<p>Moral: a one-sentence statement that expresses the lesson the story is teaching: a point of practical wisdom</p> <p>Examples of Morals: Slow and steady wins. Look before you leap.</p>	<p>Main Idea: Since legends are regional, their main idea involves a shared value. The story of the person demonstrates an individual or cultural value, e.g., honesty, determination, westward expansion</p>
STYLE	<p>Standard phrases i.e., "once upon a time", "they lived happily ever after", "long ago in a land far way"</p> <p>Dialogue: captures the nature of the character speaking</p> <p>Recurrence of the three: characters (3 pigs, 3 bears) or events (3 wishes, 3 tries)</p>	<p>Dialogue: captures the nature of the character speaking</p> <p>Language: Tricksters' words may carry double meanings in order to fool other characters</p>	<p>Plot Dominates: gods and goddesses are representative of a power (e.g., ocean/Poseidon underworld/Hades, Grain/Hera, Love/Aphrodite) and always act with respect to their power. They are predictable.</p>	<p>Dialogue: captures the nature of the character speaking</p> <p>Moral: is written at the end of the story—usually a single sentence that is set off and that is written in special type</p>	<p>Exaggeration: characters are based on real people, but their actions are bigger, more extreme than is usual</p> <p>Mix of Fact and Fiction: the person did live, but the actions attributed to him are exaggerated and therefore not factual</p>
EXAMPLES	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Three Little Pigs ♦ Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs ♦ Cinderella ♦ Little Red Riding Hood 	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ <u>Ananse</u> from West Africa mythology ♦ <u>Coyote</u> from Navajo mythology ♦ <u>Raven</u> from Pacific Northwest Indian and Alaska Eskimo mythology ♦ <u>Leprechaun</u> from Irish folklore ♦ <u>Loki</u> from Norse mythology 	<p>Examples:</p> <p><u>Greek</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ King Midas and the Golden Touch ♦ Pandora's Box ♦ Prometheus and the Gift of Fire ♦ Cupid and Psyche <p><u>American Indian</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Origin of Light (Inuit) ♦ Why the Opossum's Tale is Bare (Cherokee) 	<p>Examples:</p> <p><u>Aesop's Fables:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The Lion and The Mouse ♦ The Ant and the Grasshopper ♦ The Hare and the Tortoise ♦ The Dog and the Shadow ♦ The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing 	<p>Examples:</p> <p><u>Legendary US figures:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Johnny Appleseed ♦ John Henry ♦ Pecos Bill ♦ Paul Bunyan <p><u>Historical US figures:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ George Washington ♦ Abraham Lincoln <p><u>Other Legendary figures:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ King Arthur ♦ Robin Hood
SPECIAL NOTES	<p>Literary Fairy Tales are original tales written by specific modern authors that have all the flavor of a traditional folktale. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between the literary fairy tale and the oral folktale unless we know the origin.</p> <p>Example: "The True Story of the Three Little Pigs"</p>			<p>Modern Fables</p> <p><u>Arnold Lobel's Fables:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ The Crocodile in the Bedroom ♦ The Lobster and The Crab ♦ The Camel Dances ♦ The Bad Kangaroo 	<p>Urban/Contemporary Legend is a form of modern folklore consisting of stories thought to be factual. Like all folklore, urban legends are not necessarily false, but they are often distorted, exaggerated, or sensationalized over time.</p> <p>Story Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ a woman is killed by spiders nesting in her elaborate hairdo ♦ white alligators live in city sewage systems after owner has buyer's regret and flushes down the toilet