

CHART 6.1

Characteristics of folktales, fables, myths, and legends

Form and Examples	Belief	Time	Place	Attitude	Principal Characters
Folktales	Fiction	Anytime	Anyplace	Secular	Human or Nonhuman
1. "Snow White and Seven Dwarfs" (European)	Fiction	"Once upon a time"	"In the great forest"	Secular	Human girl and dwarfs
2. "The Crane Wife" (Asian)	Fiction	Long ago	"In a faraway mountain village"	Secular	Human man, supernatural wife
3. "Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears" (African)	Fiction	"One morning"	In a forest	Secular	Animals
Fable	Fiction	Anytime	Anyplace	Secular/Allegorical	Animal or Human
1. "The Hare and the Frog" (Aesop)	Fiction	"Once upon a time"	On the shore of a lake	Allegorical	Animals
2. "The Tyrant Who Became a Just Ruler" (Panchatantra—India)	Fiction	"In olden times"	In a kingdom	Allegorical	Human king
Myth	Considered Fact	Remote Past	Other World or Earlier World	Sacred	Nonhuman
1. "The Warrior Goddess: Athena" (European)	Considered fact	Remote past	Olympus	Deities	Greek goddess
2. "Zūñi Creation Myth" (Native American)	Considered fact	Before and during creation	Sky, earth, and lower world	Deities	Creator Awonawilona, Sun Father, Earth Mother
Legend	Considered Fact	Recent Past	World of Today	Secular or Sacred	Human
1. "King Arthur Tales" (European)	Considered fact	Recent past	Britain	Secular	King
2. "The White Archer" (Native American)	Considered fact	Recent past	Land of Eskimos	Secular	Indian who wanted to avenge parents' death

CHART 6.2 Comparisons of folktales from different cultures

Culture and Examples	Portrayal of Hero or Heroine	Portrayal of Other Characters	Setting	Ending
British "Jack the Giant Killer"	The simple peasant lad rids the kingdom of giants. Qualities portrayed: intelligence and bravery	The giants are evil. The king is weak.	Mountain cave	Happy: The hero is rewarded with knighthood when the villains are slain.
French "Sleeping Beauty"	A threatened girl is rescued by a noble prince. Qualities portrayed: beauty, wit, grace, singing, and dancing	The fairy is wicked. The father cannot protect his daughter.	Castle with a series of rooms similar to Versailles	Happy: The prince and princess are married.
German "Hansel and Grete"	The woodcutter's abandoned children outwit the wicked witch. Qualities portrayed: caring and cleverness	The stepmother is uncaring. The father is weak. The witch is wicked.	Forest	Happy: The children are rewarded with jewels after the witch is burned to death.
Norwegian "The Lad Who Went to the North Wind"	The simple but honest peasant boy sets out to retrieve a lost object. Qualities portrayed: honesty and kindness	The north wind is powerful. The mother is scolding. The innkeeper is dishonest and greedy.	Rural far North	Happy: The boy beats the innkeeper and is rewarded with magical objects.
Russian "The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship"	A foolish but kindhearted boy sets out on a quest. He is aided by a magical ship and companions. Qualities portrayed: kindness and honesty	The czar is dishonorable. The four companions have great powers.	Rural countryside and the czar's palace	Happy: The peasant marries royally.
Jewish "Mazel and Shlimazel"	A simple boy is accompanied by good luck and then bad luck on a series of quests. Qualities portrayed: diligence, sincerity, and helpfulness	The spirit of good luck is happy and attractive. The spirit of bad luck is slumped and angry.	King's court and the countryside	Happy: The hero marries the princess and eventually becomes the wisest of prince consorts.
Chinese "The Golden Sheng"	A young boy goes on a quest to save his sister from a dragon. Qualities portrayed: helpfulness, diligence, and loyalty	The girl is helpless. The dragon is evil and cruel.	Rural	Happy: After the dragon whisks itself to death, the brother and sister return to their mother.
African "How Spider Got a Thin Waist"	The greedy spider does not work; instead, he plays in the sun. Qualities portrayed: industriousness	The villagers are hardworking.	Forest and village	Unhappy: The greedy spider gets a thin waist.
Native American "The Fire Bringer"	A Paiute Indian boy, concerned about his people, sets out with a coyote to get fire. Qualities portrayed: intelligence, swiftness, and bravery	The coyote is intelligent. The runners are swift.	Mesa and mountain	Happy: The boy and the coyote are honored.

CHART 6.3

Common motifs in folktales from different cultures

Common Motif	Culture	Folklore
Supernatural Adversaries	England	"Jack the Giant Killer"
Ogre	Italy	"Petrosinella"
Ogress	Norway	"Three Billy Goats Gruff"
Troll	Germany	"The Valiant Little Tailor"
Giant	China	"The Golden Sheng"
Dragon	Africa	"Marendenboni"
Witch	France and Germany	"Sleeping Beauty"
Fairies	Middle East	"The Woman of the Well"
Jinni	Italy	"The Cunning Cat"
Deceitful or Ferocious Beasts	Germany	"The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids"
Wolf	France	"Little Red Riding Hood"
Wolf	England	"The Three Little Pigs"
Wild hog, unicorn, and lion	United States	"Jack and the Varmints"
Magical Objects	Germany	"The Twelve Dancing Princesses"
Cloak of invisibility	Norway	"The Lad Who Went to the North Wind"
Magical cloth	Middle East	"Aladdin and the Magic Lamp"
Magical lamp	Norway	"Why the Sea Is Salt"
Magical mill	Germany	"The Fisherman and His Wife"
Granted wishes	Russia	"The Snow Maiden"
Wish for a child	Mexico	"The Riddle of the Drum"
Humans with extraordinary powers	Russia	"The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship"
Magical Powers	Norway	"East of the Sun and West of the Moon"
Prince to bear	France	"Beauty and the Beast"
Prince to beast	Japan	"The Crane Wife"
Bird to human	(U.S.) Native American	"The Ring in the Prairie"
Human to animal		

The same motif is found in tales from western Asia, eastern Europe, and India.

Extraordinary Animals

Whether cunning or stupid, deceitful or upstanding, extraordinary animals are popular characters in the folktales of all cultures. In the English and German versions of "Little Red Riding Hood," the wolf plays the role of ogre, deceives a child, and is eliminated. In Japanese folklore, the fox has a malicious nature; it can assume human shape, and it has the power to bewitch humans. Tricky foxes and coyotes are important characters in African, American, and Native American folktales as well.

Some extraordinary animals are loyal companions and helpers to deserving human characters. The cat in the French "Puss in Boots" outwits an ogre and provides riches for his human master. The German version of "Cinderella," collected by the Brothers Grimm, contains no fairy godmother; instead, white doves and other birds help Cinderella complete the impossible tasks that her wicked stepmother requires. The variety of extraordinary animals is apparent in texts such as Margaret Mayo's *Mythical Birds & Beasts From*

CHART 6.5 Variations found in Cinderella stories from different countries

Origin	Cause of Lowly Position	Outward Signs of Lowly Position	Cinderella's Relationship to Household	How She Receives Wishes	What Keeps Her From Social Occasion	Where She Meets the Prince	Test of Rightful Cinderella	What Happens to Stepsisters
French Perrault's "Cinderella"	Mother died. Father remarried.	Sitting in ashes. Vilest household tasks.	Stepdaughter to cruel woman. Unkind stepsisters.	Wishes to fairy godmother.	(Ball) No gown. Family won't let her go.	Castle ball. Beautifully dressed.	Glass slipper.	Forgiven. Live in palace. Marry lords.
German Grimms' "Cinderella"	Mother died. Father remarried.	Wears clogs, old dress. Sleeps in cinders. Heavy work.	Stepdaughter to cruel woman. Cruel stepsisters.	Wishes to bird on tree on mother's grave.	(Ball) Must separate lentils.	Castle ball. Beautifully dressed.	Glass slipper.	Blinded by birds.
English "Tattercoats"	Mother died at her birth. Grandfather blames her.	Ragbag clothes. Scraps for food.	Despised granddaughter. Hated by servants.	Gooseherd plays pipe.	(Ball) Grandfather refuses.	In forest. Dressed in rags.	None.	Grandfather weeps. Hair grows into stones.
Vietnamese "In the Land of Small Dragon"	Mother died. Father's second wife hates her.	Collects wood. Cares for rice paddies.	Stepdaughter to hateful woman. Hated by half sisters.	Fairy. Bones of fish.	(Festival) Must separate rice from husks.	Festival. Beautifully dressed.	Jeweled slipper (hair).	Not told.
Chinese "Beauty and Pock Face"	Mother turned into cow.	Straightens hemp. Hard work.	Stepdaughter to cruel woman. Cruel stepsister.	From bones of mother in earthenware pot.	(Theater) Must straighten hemp, separate sesame seeds.	Theater. Scholar picks up shoe from road.	Walks on eggs. Climbs ladder of knives. Jumps into oil.	Roasted in oil.
Micmac—Native American "Little Burnt Face"	Mother died.	Burned face. Ragged garments.	Despised by two jealous sisters.	The Great Chief's sister changes her.	Must make her own dress.	Wigwam by the lake.	Describes the Great Chief.	Sent back to wigwam in disgrace.

folk tale "The Three Little Pigs" and discuss the characters and the plot of the story. Ask the children to identify whose point of view the story reflects. Next, read aloud Scieszka's *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs!* Allow the children to give individual responses to this story. Ask them to identify the point of view in this adaptation and to discuss how they know that the point of view is that of the wolf rather than of the pigs. Encourage the children to compare the characterizations, plots, and point of view in the two versions, then have them write their responses to the two versions.

Use a similar activity to accompany Scieszka's *The Sinky Chese Man and Other Funny Stupid Tales*. After students respond to and discuss Scieszka's text and Lane Smith's illustrations, have them choose other folktales and rewrite the stories to reflect another point of view. Place these new writings in the library along with the more traditional tales.

In *A Telling of the Tales: Five Stories*, William J. Brooke tells readers, "The telling of a tale links you with everyone who has told it before. There are no new tales, only new tellers, telling in their own way, and if you listen closely you can hear the voice of everyone who ever told the tale" (introduction). This book tells traditional tales with a new twist: The stories answer such questions as, "What if Cinderella did not want to try on the glass slipper? What if Sleeping Beauty did not believe she had been asleep? What if Paul Bunyan, the greatest tree chopper of them all, met Johnny Appleseed, the fastest tree grower? Encourage children to brainstorm other questions to ask characters from folktales, myths, and legends, then have them write their own adaptations of the stories that answer the questions.

Children's Literature

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published in single editions, such as Rebecca Hickox's *The Golden Sandal: A Middle Eastern Cinderella Story* (Ira) and Paul Fleischman's *Glass Slipper, Gold Sandal: A Worldwide Cinderella*. Chart 6.5 represents some key variants found in Cinderella tales from different countries.

After children have read, listened to, and discussed many Cinderella tales, they should summarize their comparisons. In addition to these comparisons of "Cinderella" stories, M. Joe Worthy and Janet W. Bloodgood (1992/1993) suggest sources and activities that can accompany the study of three categories of "Cinderella" stories: The heroine is mistreated by stepmother or stepisters, sibling rivalry, and the daughter flees an unnatural or misunderstanding father. A search for variant versions of a tale encourages children to develop an understanding of the impact of cultural diffusion on literature. Children also realize that each culture has placed the tale in a context that reflects the society of the storyteller and the audience.

Reading and studying traditional tales encourages numerous written activities. The recent examples of adaptations of folktales by Jon Scieszka and William I. Brooke provide exciting motivation for children to write their own versions of folktales. For example, read a traditional version of the

I = Interest by age level.
R = Readability by grade level.

FOLKTALES

African-American

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- _____. *Who's in Rabbit's House? Illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon*. Dial, 1977 (I:7+ R:3).
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and actions of animals in Jafar's African environment. The double-spread illustrations show both the boy and the particular animal demonstrating such actions as skipping (like a spider), stamping (like an elephant), and grumbling (like a warthog). In the modern fantasy *The Wish Giver*, Bill Brittain also uses figurative language to suggest character traits and to enhance the rural setting.

Older students can discover the mythological and legendary foundations of J. R. R. Tolkien's modern fantasy by tracing the important motifs in Tolkien's *The Hobbit* back to Norse myths and legends. Have older students identify the elements and motifs in Padraic Colum's *The Children of Odin*, Kevin Crossley-Holland's *The Faber Book of Northern Legends*, and *The Norse Myths*, and Michael Harrison's *The Curse of the Ring*.

In addition to identifying the important motifs in *The Children of Odin*, ask older students to identify quotes that show these elements. For example, following are a few of the quotes showing that Norse mythology includes a constant battle between good and evil: "Always there had been war between the Giants and the Gods—between the Giants who would have destroyed the world and the Gods who would have protected the race of men and would have made the world more beautiful" (p. 6); the dwarf Brok's bargain with Loki was an evil bargain and "all its evil consequences you must bear" (p. 42); and "East of Midgard there was a place more evil than any region in Jotunheim. It was Jarnid, the Iron Wood. There dwelt witches who were the most foul of all witches. The son of the most evil witch would be the wolf

Numerous books have vivid paragraphs that can be used for visualization and discussion. In *The Wish Giver*, Bill Brittain uses rich and colorful imagery to create a memorable story. Fantasies in picture-book format written for younger children are also excellent selections for this type of activity. For example, have children visualize and describe the settings and the personified characters in Virginia Lee Burton's *The Little House*, Munro Leaf's *The Story of Ferdinand*, and Leo Lionni's *Swimmy*. Pointing out the authors' use of similes and metaphors helps students understand the story.

With detailed illustrations and simple plots, picture books can help children understand the more complex elements found in modern fantasy. Picture books can stimulate discussion, illuminate meanings, and form bridges between illusion and understanding. Chart 7.1 identifies elements in modern fantasy and selections that develop and illustrate the elements. The picture books include both modern fantasy and traditional tales. (See the Children's Literature in Chapter 6 for traditional tales.) Have the children read and discuss the picture books in each category before they read and discuss the fantasy. After children can recognize the literary elements in picture books, they find it easier to identify similar elements in fantasy selections.

Each of the picture books in Chart 7.1 illustrates an important element in fantasy. For example, Hugh Lewin's highly illustrated *Jafar and Jafar's Mother* are excellent sources for figurative language. Lewin describes and illustrates Jafar's feelings by comparing them to the feelings

CHART 7.1 Books for helping children understand modern fantasy

Elements	Picture Books	Modern Fantasy
Allegory	Holder's <i>Aesop's Fables</i> Lobel's <i>Fables</i> Kulka's <i>Wolf's Coming</i>	Lewis's "Chronicles of Narnia" Britain's <i>The Wish Giver</i> Britain's <i>The Wish Giver and Dr. Dredd's Wagon of Wonders</i>
Irony	Lewin's <i>Jafar and Jafar's Mother</i> Pullen's <i>Friday My Radio Flyer Flew</i>	
Figurative language		
Folklore elements		
Power in tangible objects	Aylesworth's <i>The Full Belly Bowl</i>	Crossley-Holland's <i>Arthur: The Seeing Stone</i> Lunn's <i>The Root Cellar</i> Funk's <i>Dragon Rider</i> McKinley's <i>The Hero and the Crown</i> McKinley's <i>The Blue Sword</i> Pullman's <i>I Was a Rat!</i>
Magical powers	Severo's <i>The Good-Hearted Youngest Brother</i> Hodges's <i>Saint George and the Dragon</i> Grimm's <i>The Devil With the Three Golden Hairs</i> Andersen's <i>The Wild Swans</i> Williams's <i>The Velveteen Rabbit</i> Van Allsburg's <i>The Wreck of the Zephyr</i>	Cooper's <i>Seaward</i> Larbalestier's <i>Magic or Madness</i>
Transformations		
Punishment for misused ability		

CHART 10.1 Eras and themes in historical fiction

Date	Period	Themes
3000 B.C.	Ancient times through the Middle Ages	Loyalty is one of the noblest human traits. Ignorance, prejudice, and hatred can have destructive consequences for all concerned. Hatred, not people, is the great enemy. Love is stronger than hatred and prevails through times of great trouble. People will always search for freedom and riches. Courage is more important than physical strength. A physical disability does not reduce a person's humanity. People can overcome their handicaps.
A.D. 1492	Changes in the Old World and discovery of the New World	Greed is a strong motivational force and can have destructive consequences. Moral dilemmas must be faced and resolved. People will face severe hardships to acquire the political and religious freedom that they desire. People must work together if they are to survive. Overcoming problems can strengthen character. War creates tragedy. Life is more than physical survival. Land is important: People will endure numerous hardships to acquire land for personal reasons or for the glory of their country.
1692	The Salem witch hunts	Prejudiced persecution of others is a frightening and destructive social phenomenon. People seek freedom from persecution. Moral obligations require some people to defend the rights of others.
1776	The American Revolution	Freedom is worth fighting for. Strong beliefs require strong commitments.
1780	Early expansion of the United States and Canada	Friendship and faith are important. People long for their own land and the freedom that ownership implies. People will withstand great hardships to retain their dreams. Strong family bonds help physical and spiritual survival. Prejudice and hatred are destructive forces. The greatest strength comes from within. Moral obligations require personal commitment. War creates tragedy.
1861	The Civil War	Moral obligations must be met even if one's life or freedom is in jeopardy. Moral sense does not depend on skin color, but on what is inside a person. People should take pride in themselves and in their accomplishments. Prejudice and hatred are destructive forces. People search for freedom. Personal conscience may not allow some people to kill others. Strong family ties help people persevere.
1860s	The western frontier	People have moral obligations. People have strong dreams of owning land. Families can survive if they work together. People need each other and may work together for their mutual good. Battles can be won through legal means rather than through unlawful actions. Hatred and prejudice are destructive forces. Without spiritual hope, people may lose their will to live.
1900	The early 20th century	People will strive for survival of the physical body and the spirit. Prejudice and discrimination are destructive forces. There is a bond between people who experience injustice. Monetary wealth does not create a rich life.
1939	World War II	People will seek freedom from religious and political persecution. Prejudice and hatred are destructive forces. Moral obligation and personal conscience are strong forces. Freedom is worth fighting for. Family love and loyalty help people endure catastrophic experiences.