

UNIT 2 >>> Literature – Folk tales

Aims: To learn about the folk tales and fairy tales and their common elements

Activities: Matching words with their definitions; writing a definition. Identifying common elements in folk tales and fairy tales. Reading about and researching a folk tale; completing a table with notes. Researching and writing about another folk tale.

Language: Literature

Procedure: This worksheet can be given as homework or be done in class. If given as homework, Exercise 4 can be used as a follow-up activity.

1a

Remind students that they learnt about different kinds of stories in Unit 2. Ask students what books they are reading at the moment and what their favourite books are. Remind them of the different genres (eg *comic book*, *novel*). Ask students to look at the list of words we use to talk about books and stories 1–5 and match them with the definitions a–e. Then get them to check their answers with the Macmillan Online Dictionary before checking as a class.

Answers

1 e 2 d 3 b 4 c 5 a

b

Ask students to write a definition of *fairy tale* and *folk tale*. Remind them that they saw these words and their definitions in Unit 2. Tell students that folk tales and fairy tales are traditional stories and occur in most countries and cultures. Explain that fairy tales are mostly for young children. Ask students what their favourite folk and fairy tales were when they were young. Ask them if they have seen any famous films of fairy tales (eg *Cinderella*, *Aladdin*).

Answers

fairy tale: a traditional children's story in which magic things happen
folk tale: an old traditional story

2

Explain to students that many folk tales and fairy tales from around the world, even though they are from different cultures, have similarities and common elements, for example the setting, the plot. This is because many of the stories may have the same roots, and evolved from an oral culture. Ask students to work in pairs and look at the list and circle the things that they think are common elements in many traditional tales. They can use the internet to check their answers if they wish. Encourage them to discuss their answers before checking as a class.

Answers

Time setting: past

Landscape setting: wilderness (eg forest, desert, mountains)

Characters: simple / often embody stereotypical characteristics (eg vanity, greed, good, evil) / in disguise or pretending to be something different

Plot: a journey / a problem that needs to be solved / meetings with talking animals / meetings with magical people or magical creatures / help from a stranger / things happen quickly and suddenly / choices / have a clear message

Themes: conflict (good vs evil) / growing up / magic / learning a lesson / family / love

Structure: often end in the same place they started / repetitious patterns (eg things happening three times) / a happy ending / a lot of dialogue

3

Ask students if they know the stories of Little Red Riding Hood and Vasilisa the Beautiful. Tell students they are going to find out about the two tales and make notes about them. Go through the headings in the table and make sure students understand what information they are looking for to complete each section. Ask students to use the internet to research information about the stories and make notes to complete the table. When students have finished, compare notes. Ask students if there are similar tales to Little Red Riding Hood and Vasilisa the Beautiful in their countries. For example, Vasilisa the Beautiful is a story from Russia, but there are similarities with Cinderella, a story the students may know.

Continued on page 2 →→→

UNIT 2 >>> Literature – Folk tales (Cont'd)

Possible answers

Little Red Riding Hood

Time setting: Indeterminate time in the past (Once upon a time ...)

Landscape setting: a forest

Main characters and their characteristics they embody: a brave young girl, a wicked wolf, a kind grandmother, a kind wood-cutter, irresponsible parents
Plot: One day, a young girl sets off alone on a journey through the woods to take food to her grandmother, who is sick in bed. On her way through the forest, she meets a woodcutter who expresses concern for her being alone. He tells her to be careful. When the girl gets to her grandmother's house, she thinks her grandmother doesn't look or sound as she normally does. What she doesn't realise is that a wicked wolf has eaten her grandmother and has disguised himself in the old lady's clothes and is waiting to trick the girl. The clever girl is suspicious and questions her 'grandmother' (the wolf) about his appearance three times. Just as the wolf reveals his true identity, and leaps up to attack her, the kind woodcutter bursts in, saves the girl, frees the grandmother (who is still alive inside the wolf) and slays the wolf with one blow of his axe.

Themes: good vs evil, growing up, learning a lesson, family, love

Structure: repetitious patterns, a happy ending, a lot of dialogue

Vasilisa the Beautiful

Time setting: Indeterminate time in the past

Landscape setting: a forest

Characters: a brave young girl, a wicked stepmother and two step-sisters, a mysterious stranger, an evil old woman

Plot: An orphan girl lives with her father, stepmother and two step-sisters. Her stepmother is cruel to her, and makes her do the housework. The girl has a magic doll that her mother gave her before she died. The doll can talk and it helps the girl with her work. One day the stepmother sends the girl to fetch fire from the hut of an evil old woman. On the way, she sees a man dressed in white, riding a white horse, then a second rider dressed in red, then a third rider dressed in black. The old woman's house is scary, and the woman says the girl must clean her house and cook for her before she will give her fire, or she will kill her. The girl is too tired to finish her tasks, however, so the doll tells her she will do it. The next day, the three riders pass again and the old woman returns. The girl has done her tasks and can go. She returns home with the fire and it burns her stepmother and step-sisters to ashes. Later, the girl marries the King.

Themes: good vs evil, growing up, love

Structure: repetitious patterns, a happy ending, a lot of dialogue

4

This can be done in class or as homework. If it's done as homework, students research and write about their folk tale. Students can then present their tale to the class in the next lesson.