

THE GRIMM BROTHERS TAKE ON MANHATTAN

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GRADES

3-5

LEARNING GOALS

- Students will learn about the universality of **fairy tales** and how to connect the story to another cultural setting while retaining the basic elements.
- Students will learn how classic **fairy tales** have relevance in today's culture and society and how those plot lines can be recycled into today's books, movies, and plays.
- Students learn how to put on their own play.
- Students learn how visual aspects of a play or musical, such as props, scenery, and costuming, can greatly contribute to the show's meaning.
- Students will learn better how to work together toward a common goal.

LESSON PREVIEW

Cinderella, one of the most commonly told tales across the world, has roots that go as far back as 9th Century China, where a tale involved a girl loosing her golden slipper. Versions of the tale have been told all over the world since then. Students will learn why this story has survived for so long and how its adaptability makes it so universal. The famous *Grimm's Fairy Tales* includes their version of *Cinderella* along with 200 other stories. After reviewing some of the tales (teacher's prerogative to chose which), students will break into groups and prepare to write and present their own retelling of one of the stories. Given time allotment, students will most likely only present a section of their story. The presentation can be as simple as a staged reading of their play/story, or it can involve the students presenting it as actors with minimal props and costume pieces. After all of the presentations, students should regroup as one and discuss how all of the stories relate to each other, and what made them different.

MATERIALS AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- [Grimm's Fairy Tales](#)
Links to each tale with the full texts.
- [Information on the Grimm Brothers](#)
Designed for kids in mind, this site includes games as well.
- [Play-maker from PBS](#)
An excellent site especially designed for kids with sample scripts, props, masks, and other resources for putting on your own play.
- Students may also want to use atlases, history textbooks, or even travel brochures for research into other cultures.
- Students can also use each other as resources
- If students chose, they can use props in their performances. Students can bring in items from home or make them using basic art supplies, such as construction paper, markers, etc.
- Students may also wear costume pieces, which can be as simple as a crown made from paper, or a shirt from home. Felt is another good material because it can be shaped to any form.

TIME ALLOWANCE

5-8 45-minute sessions, and 1 final session that is 60-90 minutes.
***Time allowance may vary by classroom, especially in the last session.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Publications

- Grimm, Jacob. *Grimm's Fairy Tales*. Seastar Books, 2001.
- Grimm, Jacob. [Popular Folk Tales](#). Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1978.
- Dundes, Alan, ed. [Cinderella, a Casebook](#). Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988.

NEW YORK STATE LEARNING STANDARDS (www.nysed.gov)

The Arts

Standard 1: Creating, Performing and Participating in The Arts

Standard 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources

Standard 3: Responding To and Analyzing Works of Art

Standard 4: Understanding the Cultural Dimensions and Contributions of The Arts

Social Studies

Standard 1: History of the United States and New York

Standard 2: World History

Language Arts

Standard 1: Language for Information and Understanding

Standard 2: Language for Literary Response and Expression

INTERDISCIPLINARY AREAS

English Language Arts

Fine and Performing Arts

Social Studies

PREPARING THE STUDENTS

1. Students should be familiar with terminology of story elements (see vocabulary below)
2. Students should have a basic understanding of the history behind the Brother's Grimm and how their stories impacted literature all over the world all through history and today.
3. The Grimm Brothers' fairy tales have been translated into hundreds of languages all across the world and they have influenced thousands of different stories.
4. Cinderella is one of the most frequently retold stories ([SYNOPSIS](#))
5. Students should be able to write basic dialogue that can be used as a script. Examples are included in the handouts.

THE LESSON PLAN

First Session:

1. Introduce students to basic elements of a **fairy tale**
 - a. Setting – The setting of each story should be reflected in the characters, the dialogue, and any costuming/sets.
 - Traditionally, many **fairy tales** are set “once upon a time in a land far, far away...”
 - Encourage students to set their own **fairy tales** in modern day New York City, an area with a motley assortment of cultures. This will help bring the tales to life with new connections.
 - b. Characters – Make a chart of the common main characters and have students list their qualities, placing them underneath the character names. The students can then use their qualities to create new characters
 - Common characters include Kings, Queens, Princes, Princesses, and wizards or fairies (or other supernatural characters).
 - Using specific examples might help get ideas flowing (i.e. the Prince from *Cinderella*, the Wicked Queen from *Snow White*, the Witch from *Hansel and Gretel* or the Wolf from *Little Red Cap*.)

- There is always a **hero(ine)** of the story and a villain against whom they struggle.
- c. Plot – Create a timeline of events for the story. Distill the events down to those most important and include them in their most basic form.
 - Basic plot points to include are introduction, conflict, climax, and resolution.
 - d. Conflict –What the characters struggle with during the course of the action.
 - Three basic kinds of conflict: man v. man; man v. himself; man v. nature
 - e. Resolution –Usually occurring at the very end of the story, this is when the conflict of solved or some sort of solution or explanation is reached.
 - f. Theme – A recurring idea that runs through the whole story
 - Good versus evil is a common theme among **fairy tales**.
2. Introduce *Grimm’s Fairy Tales*
 - a. Complete collection includes 200+ **fairy tales**
 - b. Well-known tales include *Rapunzel*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Little Red Cap*, *Snow White*, *Briar Rose* (the story of *Sleeping Beauty*) and *Cinderella*. However there are hundreds of other more obscure tales as well.
 - c. Grimm brothers were German, hence Germany becomes the setting for many tales.
 - d. The tales have been retold for hundreds of years with many modern-day story roots lying in *Grimm’s Fairy Tales*.
 - *Cinderella* alone has been retold as *Ever After*, *Ella Enchanted*, and *A Cinderella Story*.
 - Movies like *Shrek* are based largely on **fairy tales** (Fiona closely resembling a character from a Scottish tale, *The Greyhound and the Green Girl*).
 - The tradition of “and they lived happily ever after” began with the **fairy tale**

Second Session:

1. Discuss with students how to dramatize a story into a play.
 - a. In a dramatic production, the students become actors.
 - b. In the telling of any story, dialogue plays an important role – it makes up the majority of the script.
 - c. Scripts can be as simple as back and forth dialogue between characters. Scripts can be written in a variety of formats. (see handout)
 - d. Movement is also important. Stage directions are any movement that actors make while onstage. They can be as simple as a specific time to enter the stage, or they can involve walking in a specific direction or picking up a prop when saying a line.
 - e. Narrators can be used to fill in the audience about past events, or to hurry the story along by summarizing what is happening.
 - f. Some actors play more than one part. This allows more characters to be introduced without needing more actors. A simple costume piece change can signify another character.
2. Allow students to form their own groups or split them into groups (4-8 students) and give them ample time to discuss their ideas. There can be as few as 2-3 groups or as many as 4-5. Have one student in each group act as “secretary”. Although each student will take notes, the secretary should record ideas for any finalized plans to be handed in.
 - a. Where is the story set?
 - Location? Time?
 - How will their story show the setting?
 - How does the setting impact their story?
 - b. Who are their main characters?
 - Encourage creativity. Students can change any of the characters to fit their story.
 - c. What is their plot?
 - Story should have a clear beginning, middle, and end.
 - d. How will each student contribute to the finalized presentation?
 - Note: All contributions do not have to be reading aloud or acting. They can involve working on the story/script, props, or costumes.
 - Each student should have at least 1 job on which they will be working.

Third through Sixth Sessions (or until work is complete):

1. Students should continue working on their stories/scripts. If students are going to dramatize their

stories, time should be allotted for production of props/costume planning, and **rehearsal**. Encourage students to incorporate music into their presentations. Lines should be, but do not have to be memorized and each student should have a copy of the script.

Final Session:

A longer session, which focuses on the presentation by each group and a final wrap-up, which brings students together to compare/contrast their different versions.

- How did the students use props to tell their story?
- How is the same process used in a show like *Cinderella*?
- How do the different versions of the **fairy tales** all tie together and relate? What are common themes?

*** If classroom is larger, the “final” session might be entirely devoted to the presentations, with the follow-up session the next week.

EXTENDING THE LESSON

1. Students can join with another group and incorporate their 2 stories into 1 new story.
2. Students can also work their story into the story of *Cinderella*. What would happen if Cinderella met their main character?
3. Given unlimited resources and time, how would each group use costumes, sets, and props to tell their story? In stories as versatile as, perhaps *Cinderella*, how can different costumes, sets, and props tell one story infinite ways?
4. What other stories have we carried with us through the centuries?
5. How is *Cinderella* being told today?

EVALUATING THE LESSON

1. Each story should contain the basic story elements of a **fairy tale**.
2. The students should work together in a group making the best use of each student’s individual talents while working together with group effort.
3. Students should be able to hand in a copy of their story prior to their presentation.
4. Along with a script, students should hand in a rough outline, or fact sheet that sets out the basic elements of their story.

DEEPER-THINKING QUESTIONS

- Although all of the stories are different, what ties them together?
- What makes the basic story so timeless? So powerful?
- How does a specific culture impact the story?
- Physical transformation is a common theme among **fairy tales**, as in *Cinderella*. What modern tales or stories also present this theme?

CURRICULUM TIE-INS

English / Language Arts

- Students will be using a **fairy tale** by The Grimm Brothers to write their own story.
- They will be learning about and using technical elements of story

Fine and Performing Arts

- Students will dramatize and then perform their retelling

Social Studies

- Throughout the process, students will be able to explore other cultures and societies

VOCABULARY

Setting: time and place

Plot: what happens in the story; distilled down to the most necessary and basic points

Script: the dialogue, stage directions, and any key notes that make up a play in its written form

Stage directions: the movements of an actor while onstage

Props: the objects that actors use while onstage as part of the scene or part of their costume