

# **Fairy Tales, Folk Tales, Tall Tales and Puppets!**

## **Abstract**

**Grade levels:** Grades 3-5.

**Curriculum areas:** Language arts, fine arts, drama and community involvement

**The idea:** Students will read fairy, folk and tall tales and identify story elements. They will learn about and write their own fairy, folk or tall tale in a play script form using the five step writing process. Students will design puppet characters that go with their tale and make the puppets from their design. They will then perform their puppet plays for the class.

**Curriculum:** The unit is used to help children understand the parts that make up fairy, folk and tall tales. The focus is on multi-cultural tales. Students learn about the three types of tales through whole class, independent and guided reading. Students learn to identify setting, main characters, and the plot of each story. Using graphic organizers, they will note similarities and differences of the tales. They write their own tales and create a puppet show or dramatic presentation to share with the whole class. An innovative part of this unit is that children work together to create their script and with parent volunteers to create their puppets. The unit takes the students through the five step writing process. The unit takes about a month and a half and includes at least fourteen lessons. I see much pride in the children when they get to perform their show. It is very helpful for me to see how they go through the whole process from the pre-write to the published piece and performance. What they have accomplished excites students.

**Assessment:** The California state frameworks and MDUSD standards and Benchmarks support the unit, e.g.: “The student uses strategies of the writing process to write for a variety of purposes and audiences.” “The student writes with a command of the conventions of English, including grammar, mechanics and spelling.” “The student uses speaking and listening strategies to enhance learning.” “The student responds to literary works from a variety of eras and cultures.” “Students listen and respond critically to oral communication. They speak in a manner that guides and informs the listener’s understanding of key ideas, using appropriate phrasing, pitch and modulation.” “They distinguish between the structural features of text and the literary terms or elements (i.e., theme, plot, setting and characters).”

This is a piece of authentic assessment. It becomes one of the items in the child’s

individual portfolio. Each stage of writing is attached to a copy of the finished product. Students are given the following criteria in a check list. I use the check list when grading the projects. Did the students choose a title for their play? Did the students give their characters interesting characteristics? Did the students format their play correctly? (Skipping a line when one person stopped talking and start a new line whenever a new character spoke. Underlining the speakers name and using a colon. Writing only on one side of the paper). Did the play have a beginning, middle and end? Was their play at least five minutes long? Did the students choose a setting? (Including the time and place). Did they write a summary of the plot showing a problem and solution? Did the students include stage directions? Did the students speak loudly with inflection during the play? Were the students well rehearsed? The students and I grade their work using the following: + Excellent: You did your personal best, T + Very good: You did well, but there was room for improvement, T Satisfactory: You did the basics and didn't challenge yourself, T - Poor: You put very little effort into your project, - Needs Improvement: You did barely anything for your project.

**Resources:** The following materials are used: different folk, fairy and tall tales; copies for students of student worksheets, and graphic organizers; overhead transparencies of script model, creating a script, and graphic organizers; an overhead projector, (activities can be done orally or on the chalkboard if equipment or materials are not available); donations or purchase of fabric, yarn, buttons, googly eyes, felt, thread, glue guns, glue for the glue guns and good shears; parent help to create the puppets. I have a parent volunteer sew the puppets at home. They are made of felt. Students can make paper bag puppets or a dramatic presentation without puppets. I find that children love having the puppets to go with their stories.

**Students:** I designed this unit for my third grade class of thirty students during my first year teaching third grade. This unit can easily be adapted to many different grade levels. This year, I have twenty students. My student population does include special needs students (ESL, resource, SDC, 504). The project meets the needs of differing learning modalities. Incorporating the drama allows children to shine. Children love to perform. Making sure that the student pairings are not two low students is important. Each class brings something different to the project. I have refined the unit over the past three years and am very proud of its success.

### Unit Objectives:

1. Students will gain an understanding of different types of tales. (fairy, folk and tall)
2. Students will learn the parts of a fairy, folk and tall tale.
3. Students will use the writing process to produce their own script of a tale.
4. Students will create puppets that characterize the main characters in their script.
5. Students will create and perform a show of their script.
6. Students will use graphic organizers along the way.

### Lesson one:

1. Discuss with the children that they will be reading folk, fairy and tall tales. Let them know that later they will be writing their own play. I often show the unfinished puppet, which gets them excited. Elicit prior knowledge of the different types of tales from the students. Do they know about these types of tales? Use the graphic organizer to help them show what they know about these types of tales.
2. Choose a folk, fairy or tall tale to read to the class. Use whatever reading strategy you prefer to read the story. I always have children make predictions based on the cover and title as to what this story will be about. Add to the organizer any things the students notice about the aspects of this type of tale.
3. Question children with the following: Who are the **main characters**? What is the **setting**? What is the **plot**? Use a graphic organizer to show these three parts.

### Lessons two through five:

Repeat lesson one (review three types of tales vs. introducing them). Read several different folk, fairy and tall tales. Try to read one of each to complete graphic organizer, before reading other examples. (See reading list for possible choices). Add to the graphic organizers as children learn what makes up these types of stories. I also use the character graphic organizer to show characterization.

### Lesson six:

Explain to the students that they will be writing their own folk, fairy or tall tale. Set up parameters of the tale. I find that limiting the characters to 2-4 works best. The students can then make double sided puppets if necessary. It becomes overwhelming if the characters get to be too many. Have children choose 3 people they would like to work with (on paper). You should make final partner selections. Avoid putting two low achieving students together!

Pre-Writing: Whole class: Using a graphic organizer, brainstorm different tale topics for children to write about. Model how to brainstorm with their partners the main characters, setting and plot. If you have time, have children brainstorm with their partner using a graphic organizer.

**Lesson seven through ten:** (this could take longer)

Pre-Writing: Show an example of what a script should look like (see attached sample). Model how the students should write the script on the overhead.

Rough draft: Show overhead of "Creating a Script." Students write their rough draft scripts. The first page format is given to them. I also give them a copy of the student grading checklist so students can organize themselves.

Edit: Students conference and edit their work. They revise their plays based on the peer conference. Students then turn the plays into me for a final edit.

Rewrite: Students rewrite their final draft scripts.

**Lesson eleven:**

Students design and create their puppets. (Puppets have previously been sewn by a parent volunteer.) If this is too difficult, have children make paper bag puppets and use construction paper or have them write a dramatic play instead of puppet play.

**Lesson twelve and thirteen:**

Students practice their plays using their puppets. I have a puppet stand made of PVC pipe and fabric, however desks with a table cloth thrown over work fine for practice and performance.

**Lesson fourteen:**

Children perform their complete creation for the rest of the class. They are graded on their presentation, voice projection and inflection, quality of the story, and if all aspects requested were present. I often invite parents in to watch the shows. (See grading sheet)

**Assessment:**

This is a piece of authentic assessment. It becomes one of the items in the child's individual portfolio. Each stage of writing is attached to a copy of the finished product. I also use the attached checklists in having students and myself grade student work.

## Creating a script

The following are the steps to writing your script. Each item needs to be completed, but not in this order.

1. Choose a title for your play.
2. Choose your characters. Remember to give them interesting characteristics.
3. Create a script of your story. Skip a line when one person stops talking. Start a new line on your paper whenever a new character speaks. Underline the speaker's name and use a colon. Write only on one side of the paper. Remember you need a beginning, middle and end to your story. Your play should be at least five minutes long.
4. Choose a setting. Include the time and place.
5. Write a summary of the plot. There should be a problem and solution.
6. Include stage directions. For example: Maria exits stage left, then returns to stage with a flower in her hand.

**Title:** The Lost Alien

**Characters:**

Maria: A young girl looking for her lost magic frisbee. She is outgoing and a bit of a daredevil.

Zoola: A young lost alien looking for her parents and space ship. She is kind and gentle.

**Setting:** The story takes place in a densely forested wood behind the fenced backyard of Maria's house. It is just at dusk. It is a warm summer evening.

**Plot:** The story starts showing Maria climbing the fence in her yard. She has lost her magic frisbee. As she begins to look for it in the thick woods of the mountain side she comes across Zoola. Zoola has wandered away from her parents and cannot find her way back to their spaceship.

*Maria climbs over the fence. She yells to her friends in her yard.*

Maria: I will find the frisbee, it should not take more than a few minutes. I will be back soon!

*Maria begins to search for her frisbee. She looks up and sees a strange creature holding the toy.*

Maria: What or who are you?

Zoola: Qui co ni foresa mimi yo popo.

Maria: Oh my! Do you speak English?

Zoola: I do know your language, but it is filled with many strange rules.

Maria: Whoa! Who are you exactly and what are you doing here?

# Student Worksheet

Name of partners/group: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Characters:

\_\_\_\_\_:

\_\_\_\_\_:

\_\_\_\_\_:

Setting: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Plot: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Stage directions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_:

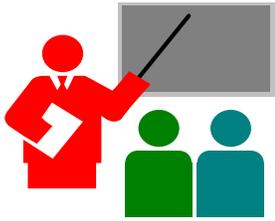
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Partner/Group Names: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Student Grading Checklist:**

- ' Does your play have a title?
- ' Did you give your characters interesting characteristics?
- ' Did you format your play correctly?
  - ' Skipping a line when one person stopped talking and starting a new line whenever a new character spoke.
  - ' Underlining the speakers name and using a colon.
  - ' Writing only on one side of the paper.
- ' Does the play have a beginning, middle and end?
- ' Was your play at least five minutes long.
- ' Did you choose a setting. Including the time and place.
- ' Did you write a summary of the plot showing a problem and solution.
- ' Did you include stage directions?
- ' Did you speak loudly with inflection during the play?
- ' Were you well rehearsed?

### **Circle the grade you feel you deserve:**

- + Excellent: You did your personal best!
- T+ Very good: You did well, but there was room for improvement.
- T Satisfactory: You did the basics and didn't challenge yourself.
- T- Poor: You put very little effort into your project.
- Needs Improvement: You did barely anything for your project.

Comments:

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Partner/Group Names: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Teacher Grading Checklist:**

- ' Does the play have a title?
- ' Did students give characters interesting characteristics?
- ' Did students format their play correctly?
  - ' Skipping a line when one person stopped talking and starting a new line whenever a new character spoke.
  - ' Underlining the speakers name and using a colon.
  - ' Writing only on one side of the paper.
- ' Does the play have a beginning, middle and end?
- ' Was the play at least five minutes long.
- ' Did students choose a setting. Including the time and place.
- ' Did students write a summary of the plot with a problem and solution.
- ' Did students include stage directions?
- ' Did students speak loudly with inflection during the play?
- ' Were students well rehearsed?

### **Circled grade is your final grade for this project:**

- + Excellent: You did your personal best!
- T+ Very good: You did well, but there was room for improvement.
- T Satisfactory: You did the basics and didn't challenge yourself.
- T- Poor: You put very little effort into your project.
- Needs Improvement: You did barely anything for your project.

Comments:

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