

# Comparing Aspects of Story across Types of Tales

Aspect	Myth	Legend	Fairytale	Folktale
<b>Belief</b>	True (Religious Truth)	True	Fiction, Psychological –Feeling relations revealed by objects & events in outer world	Same as Fairytale Note: Fairytales are technically a category of folktale. No folktale is generic
<b>Place</b>	Sacred	This world–often a specific site	Anywhere	A specific place (country)
<b>Time</b>	Remote prehistory	Dated. Aware of cessation of time	Timeless	Timeless
<b>Attitude</b>	Sacred	Secular. Conversational style. Tell us customs & way of life. (credibility is vitally important)	Fantasy. Symbolic: feelings and relationships congeal into objects and become visible. Relationships as gifts; characteristics as actions.	Fantasy
<b>Characters</b>	Gods/supernatural	Real people who may have special qualities and supernatural beings (See Supernatural below)	Woodcutters and princesses and supernatural. Anonymous, flat bloodless, No separation between supernatural and secular.	Representative of the culture where the story is told.
<b>Plot</b>	Community wrestling with cosmos/divine forces	Man against society	Man against self (own psyche)	Stories of everyday people, animals, plants behaving as people
<b>Language</b>	Poetic picture language	Matter-of-fact	Stark. Few adjectives or adverbs. Symbolic. Precision of being true to a form	Reflects culture
<b>Relation to life</b>	Poetic vision macroscopic view	“Remembered” history plunge into life	Microscopic view of life family romance distanced –allows you to ponder relationships	Used to entertain, educate, pass on culture
<b>Hero</b> Pattern: special birthing, isolation, journey, test, victorious	Pre-historic divine	Real person	Domestic, anonymous, “ordinary.” Allow themselves to be helped, transformed	Reflects cultural ethos & may have “trickster hero”
<b>Supernatural</b>	The whole setting is supernatural, it is taken for granted	If evil is in the story it takes over the story–becomes the focal point	Supernatural is both good and bad–it is taken for granted	Often as in fairytale or may astonish characters in story but who quickly accept it
<b>Ending</b>	Tragic	Often explanatory, or joke, or a shocking statement	Happy	Usually fair. Everyone gets just rewards.

Compiled by Ruth Stotter