

Topic: fairy tales

Overview

In this lesson students will be exposed to a variety of classic fairy tales and their variations, looking specifically at author's purpose and changes in motifs. Students will be reading them as well as viewing them, noting the similarities and differences between the classical versions and variations. They will also be compiling a list of motifs found within the tales. Students will then be using an interactive website to create Venn-diagrams focusing on the motifs in their chosen fairy tales. As a culminating activity students will be writing their own variation of a fairy tale, changing one or more motifs.

Grades 3-6

Time Allotment

Four 50-minute periods

Learning Objectives

On completion of this lesson students will be able to:

- Identify motifs in classic folktales.
- Explain the author's purpose.
- Describe how the choice of language, setting, and information contribute to the author's purpose.
- Describe the relationship between text and previously read materials.
- Use a text organizer to look at similarities and differences.

This lesson addresses Va. SOLs

- English 3.5,4.4, 5.5, and 6.4.

Media Components

- Videotape: **Reading Rainbow** #42, "Rumpelstiltskin"
- Website: <http://www.readwritethink.org/materials/venn/index.html>
Interactive Venn diagram – Students can enter diagram information and descriptions and print them out
- LCD projector and laptop with Internet (preferably in the classroom)
- VCR and TV
- Lab with a computer and Internet for every two students
- Printer connected to lab computers

Materials and Student Handouts

Per class:

- Book: Miss Rumphius. Cooney, Barbara. 1982. Viking Press.
- Book: Rumpelstiltskin's Daughter. Stanley, Diane. 1997. Morrow Junior Books.

Per pair:

- Books – classic fairytales and their variations for students to pick from (each pair will need one classic fairytale and a variation on the same tale). Here is a couple of helpful websites to get you started: Carol Hurst's Children's Literature Site <http://www.carolhurst.com/subjects/fairytongueincheek.html> or Nancy J. Keane's Fairy Tale Variations <http://www.nancykeane.com/rl/757.htm>

Per student:

- Classic versus Variation worksheet-2 per student (See attached)

Teacher Preparations

- Cue the video to the beginning of the story (when you see the book cover).
- Bookmark the website (in Portaportal).
- Become familiar with the interactive Venn diagram (there is a tutorial when you begin).
- Make a chart on the whiteboard, chart paper, etc. with the following title: "Classic versus Variation"
- Books available (checked out).

Introductory Activity

Day 1

Focus: Start reading the book, "Miss Rumphius." Stop after a few pages and **ask**, "Is this story a fairy tale?" (Hopefully the students will say no, because this lesson will come toward the end of a unit on fairy tale motifs.) **Ask**, "How do you know it isn't a fairy tale?" (Listen to their ideas until it becomes clear that it is missing the motifs that go along with fairy tales.)

Activity: Distribute a sheet paper titled "Classic Versus Variation" to each student. Have them write "Rumpelstiltskin" at the top of the left side. Write the same thing at the top of the left column on the chart on the board. **Say:** We are going to watch as someone tells us the story of Rumpelstiltskin. You are going to need to decide if Rumpelstiltskin is a fairy tale. If it is, on the left side of your sheet of paper you need to list all the fairy tale motifs that you notice (Be prepared to give an example of that motif). We will be sharing our lists when the story is finished.

Play the video from beginning to end without stopping.

Stop at the end.

Follow-up: Refer the students to the chart with the title, "Classic Versus Variation". Ask students to share the motifs they wrote down on their papers. As they share, write them on the left side of the chart. (They may include things like 'the poor succeeding in the end', 'magic', 'royalty', 'non-human characters who speak', 'the main character needing help', 'the main character becoming the queen', 'set long ago', etc.) Ask if there are any motifs they know of that weren't seen in "Rumpelstiltskin"? All fairy tales don't include all motifs.

Learning Activities

1. **Focus: Say:** Authors of fairy tale stories think a lot about motifs. The classic fairy tale stories, like Rumpelstiltskin, were written a long time ago. But today there are authors who write stories based on the classic stories. They are called variations. (Write the words “classic” and “variation” on the board. Ask the students where they think “Rumpelstiltskin” belongs (write it under the heading “classic”). Today you are going to hear another story called, “Rumpelstiltskin’s Daughter”. It is a variation on the story we just watched. (Have the students write the title at the top of the right-hand column on their paper as you add the title to your chart.) Listen as I read. Think about what makes it a variation. Write down the things that are different in this second story.

Activity: Read the story from the beginning to the end. Pause momentarily if you see students writing.

Follow-up: Ask: What did the author change to make this story a variation? (Add their ideas to the chart.) **Ask:** Did it still include many of the fairy tale motifs? Which ones? What was changed? What could the author have changed? Why do you think the author chose to change the time period and order of the story? Did she want to simply amuse us? Was she trying to teach us something about life? (Allow student responses. Collect student worksheets.)

Day 2

2. **Focus: Say:** Today we are going to use the information we gathered from yesterday and organize it into a Venn diagram. We will do this together on an interactive website that you will be using in a couple days. (Be sure to visit the website and become comfortable with it before showing it to the students. Hand out charts from yesterday while you bring up the website on the LCD projector in your room). **Say:** Who can remind me what stories we saw and heard yesterday? (“Rumpelstiltskin” and “Rumpelstiltskin’s Daughter”) We are going to compare and contrast these two stories to see if we can find which motifs the author chose to change.

Activity: Say: We need to choose a title for our diagram. What should we name it? (Accept students’ suggestions or name it “Classic versus Variation.” Type the title.)

Say: Now we need to put in the motifs that we found yesterday. Where should we enter things that both stories have in common? (In the center.) Where do we enter things that the stories do not share? (In the outer sections of the circles. Have students raise their hands as they tell you what could be put in the interactive Venn diagram. If you feel comfortable you can have students come up and type in some of the motifs and descriptions and drag them to where they belong in the diagram.)

Follow-up: Say: Is there anything else we need to add? (Add anything that was missed.) **Say:** Can anyone tell by looking at our diagram which motifs the author chose to change when writing the variation of “Rumpelstiltskin”? (Time period, no happily ever after, etc.) Why do you think the author chose to change that motif? (To teach us a lesson, to make us laugh, etc.)

Day 3

3. **Focus:** **Say:** We need to think about what the author is trying to do when they change a classic story. Spread around the room are several classic fairy tale stories that have been matched with a variation of the same story. You need to pick a partner (or have them pre-assigned). Each partnership will need to choose a pair of books to read together. (Give each student another sheet of paper like the one used with "Rumpelstiltskin." Give the students time to choose their books.)

Activity: Write the title of the classic story on the top of the left-hand column and the title of the variation at the top of the right-hand column. **Say:** You will need to read each book together. Begin with the classic fairy tale and list all the motifs you find on the left-hand side of your paper. If you finish, reread together to see if you missed any. When you have a good list of motifs from the classic story, read the variation. This time look for all the things that changed and list them on your paper. (Allow them time to read.)

Follow-up: Now talk to your partner and see if you can figure out what the author was trying to do by changing the story. Was the author trying to make you laugh? Was the author trying to teach you a lesson? Was the author trying to give you a warning? Write what you think on your paper. (Allow time for several pairs to share their stories.)

Culminating Activity

(Lab activity)

1. **Focus:** **Say:** Now we need to organize all our information into something that other people can really understand. Think about the interactive diagram we used with the Rumpelstiltskin stories. (Use the tutorial on the site to review for them what to do, if necessary.) Use the information from your paper to create one Venn diagram per partnership. Be sure to include all the similarities and all the differences that you wrote on your sheet.

Activity: Allow students time to work on, complete, and print the diagrams. Sufficient time should be allowed to complete and print them out since information cannot be saved on the website.

Follow-up: Before turning them in, have each pair write the authors purpose at the bottom of their Venn diagram. Again, allow several student pairs to share their stories. Compile them all into a class resource of classic/variation fairy tales. Keep all the books the pairs read. Other students can then use the student created Venn diagrams to select other books they would like to read.

Assessment

- Students may choose their favorite classic fairy tale and write their own variation by changing one or more of the motifs. These student variations can then be added to our class resource of classic/variation fairytales.
- Classic vs. Variation worksheets can be collected to use as an assessment.

Community Connections

- Take a fieldtrip to a nursing home and have the students read the classic stories as well as their own variations to residents. Discuss how fairytales used to be passed down through verbal storytelling rather than in written books.

Cross-Curricular Extensions

Social Studies

- Research the beginning of fairy tales. Why did people write them? Who were they intended for? How have they changed over the years?
- Read Native American folktales from different cultures and compare them. What do they tell us about the different cultures?

Art

- Illustrate the student variations. Illustrate using the techniques used by early authors or Native American cultures.

About the Author

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What's the Purpose?
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Classic vs. Variation

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