

Folk and Fairy Tales of Russia

Reflections of Elements that Define a Culture

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Folk and Fairy Tale Lesson

- **Purpose:** Consider the role that oral and written tradition plays in the definition of Russian culture. This lesson can be used to study Russian folk and fairy tales as a part of a unit on Russia and/or can also be used to compare Russian folk and fairy tales with those of another culture.
- **Targeted audience:** 11th and 12th grade.
- **Duration:** 2-3 class periods
- **Prerequisite:** Understanding that local and ethnic tales reflect and are based on aspects of the culture in which they were created. Factors contributing to the setting or meaning of the stories include geographic elements, economics of the society, social organizations of the culture and values/beliefs of the culture that are important.
- **Materials:**
 1. Fairy Tales

Choose 2 tales for students to analyze. Stories should be copied for distribution or read aloud if copies are not available. Students will see patterns of structure which will assist in reinforcement of concepts. Students could also be divided; each section getting one story and then pair/share or teach about each tale.
 2. Source for a collection of Russian Folk and Fairytales
<http://russian-crafts.com/russian-folk-tales.html>
 3. Note sheet for Elements of Folk and Fairytales
 4. Analysis sheet for Elements of Culture
 5. Rubric for original folktale
- **Guiding Questions:**
 1. What is a folk or fairy tale?
 2. Why are folk and fairy tales found across the world?
 3. What roles do folk and fairy tales play in reflecting the culture?
- **Objectives:**
 1. Students will consider the importance of art and stories in the formation of collective experience and memory in Russia and/or other countries of the world.

- **Assessments for understanding:**
 1. Discussion (collective)
 2. Analysis sheet (pair share)
 3. Analysis sheet (individual)
 4. Original folktale written for final project

INSTRUCTIONS:

Hour I

- I. Pass out Note sheet for Elements of Folk and Fairytales. (See attached copy)
Ask students to brainstorm about the following characteristics of folk and fairytales:
 - Characters often portrayed
 - Settings for stories
 - Plots
 - Common emotions

This discussion is intended to help students understand commonalities of fairy and folktales that all cultures share.

- II. Ask students to turn sheet over and read the definition of folk/fairy tales.
Discuss:
 - Do students agree that the folktales they grew up with fit the definition discussed in the article?
 - Do students think the folktales they recall from their own youth accurately reflect aspects or values specific to American culture?
 - Explain that students will have an opportunity to look at regional or country specific folktales. Folktales do share common elements, as we discovered in looking at plots, and types of characters. But country or regional tales also reflect, teach or celebrate factors that are culturally specific. How can students learn about cultures by reading folktales? The next portion of the lesson will help students analyze folktales to learn more about a culture.

Hour II

- I. Read the folktale provided by teacher.
- II. Hand out sheet for story analysis (See attached copy) **Note there are two versions of the same analysis. One includes translations in Russian.**
Ask students to reflect upon the story they just read or heard. Ask them to mark which factors of culture the story reflected. As a whole class discuss why students feel these factors are represented.

- III. Once students complete the analysis them to consider the purpose of the fairytale. Who was the intended audience?

Hour III

- I. Read a second folktale provided by teacher.
- II. Hand out sheet for analysis (Same version as used in Hour II)
- III. Ask students to complete the analysis individually. Collect.

Possible follow-on Summative Assessment

- I. This assessment will demonstrate an understanding of
 - basic elements of a folk or fairy tale
 - ways in which a folk or fairy tale reflect culture specific elements
- II. Students will be instructed to write their own short folk or fairy tale. They should clearly outline what specific message their folk or fairy tale is intended to impart to readers. Is the story meant to teach, to celebrate, or to inculcate specific values?

Students can access guidance in writing an original fairytale. See: <http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/index.htm> for tips from authors, such as Jane Yolen and Rafe Martin and others on how to get started.

Name _____

Common Characteristics of Folk and Fairytales

Characters, (types of):

Settings:

Plots:

Emotions evoked:

Folk and Fairytales Defined

Folktale

A tale circulated by word of mouth among the common folk- (dictionary online)

When we read these traditional stories from around the world, we find that the things we value most highly, fear most deeply, and hope for most ardently are valued, feared and hoped for by all people. Still, while the same yearnings are expressed, each culture has a unique response made richer by details from its society and the local ecology. Whatever the explanation, stories that have been told and cherished for countless generations are bound to be good. They fire our own imaginations. As we read, we ask ourselves, what do *I* think is true, or fair, or good, or beautiful?

Fairy tale

A fairy tale, or wonder tale, is a kind of folktale or fable. In these stories we meet witches and queens, giants and elves, princes, dragons, talking animals, ogres, princesses, and sometimes even fairies. Marvelous and magical things happen to characters in fairy tales. A boy may become a bird. A princess may sleep for a hundred years. A seal may become a girl. Objects too can be enchanted — mirrors talk, pumpkins become carriages, and a lamp may be home to a genie.

The oldest fairy tales were told and retold for generations before they were written down. French fairy tales were the first to be collected and written down, but now we can read fairy tales from almost any culture. When these stories were studied together, something amazing was discovered. From countries as distant and different as Egypt and Iceland similar fairy tales are told. Both Egypt and Iceland have "Cinderella" stories, as do China, England, Korea, Siberia, France, and Vietnam; and the list doesn't stop there. There may be a thousand versions of the Cinderella story, each with a unique telling which carries cultural information about the time and place the story was told. One thing is for sure; people everywhere like stories in which truth prevails over deception, generosity is ultimately rewarded, hard work overcomes obstacles, and love, mercy and kindness are the greatest powers of all.

Source Scholastics Online

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/index.htm>

Retrieved March 31, 2011

Name _____

Hr. _____

Elements that Define Culture
Reflections of Culture in Folk and Fairytales

Instructions:

Consider the story you have heard. What aspects of culture were considered in the story? Circle any elements that apply and then thoroughly explain how the story pertains to these elements.

Name of the story and country of origin: _____

<p>Geography</p> <p>Are any of the following important in the setting?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Topography• Climate• Natural Resources	
<p>Economy</p> <p>How do people earn a living or acquire goods? What is the basis of work for the characters?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Service based• Industrial• Agricultural <p>Consider who controls means of production.</p>	

Social Organization

What social groups are most important to the characters or plot?
Do these relationships drive the story or message?

- Family
- Religious groups
- Education groups
- Political groups
- Recreational groups
- Work-related groups
- Ethnic groups

Values and Beliefs

Does the story serve to remember, celebrate or teach? Topics below are not intended to be comprehensive or complete.

- Origin of values and beliefs
- Behaviors
- Material Objects
- Skills
- Education
- Religion
- Interdependence
- Responsibility
- Historical Events
- Use of or preservation of resources

Elements that Define Culture

Folklore Analysis

Элементы, которые определяют культуру

Фольклорный Анализ

Instructions: Инструкции

Consider the story you have heard. What aspects of culture were considered in the story?

Underline any elements that apply and explain the role each element played in the story.

Подумайте об истории, которую вы прослушали. Какие культурные элементы считались в истории? Подчеркните все элементы из тех, перечисленных ниже, которые относятся и объясните какую роль каждый элемент играл в истории.

Name of the story and country of origin: _____

Название истории и страна происхождения: _____

Geography 1.Topography 2.Climate 3.Natural Resources	География 1.Топография 2.Климат 3.Природные ресурсы
Economy 1.Service 2.Industry 3.Agriculture	Экономика (economics, scientific field)/ экономия (saving) 1.Служба/обслуживание 2.Промышленность (business term)/трудолюбие (work-loving) 3.Сельское хозяйство
Social Organization 1.Family 2.Religion 3.Education 4.Political 5.Recreational 6.Work-related 7.Ethnic	Организация 1.Семья/семейная (familial) 2.Религия/религиозная (religious) 3.Образование/образовательная (educational) 4.Отдых/развлечение развлекательная (recreational) 5.Связанная с работой 6. Этническая

<p>Values and Beliefs</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Origin of values and beliefs 2. Material Objects 3. Skills 4. Artistic Ability 5. Education 6. Religion 7. Interdependence 8. Historical Events 9. Distribution of Natural Resources 	<p>Социальные Ценности и убеждения/вера (religious belief)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.Источник социальных ценностей 2.Материальные вещи 3.Навыки 4.Художественные способности 5. Образование 6. Религия 7. Взаимозависимость 8. Исторические события 9. Распределение природных ресурсов
<p>Everyday Life</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Customs 2. Foods 3. Clothing 4. Songs or dance 	<p>Быт</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.обычай 2. пища 3. одежда 4. песни/танцы