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## Picture This: A Journey through Fairy Tale Production

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### Rationale

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I teach art at a magnet high school in New Haven, High School in the Community (HSC). HSC serves three hundred and fifty students, two-thirds residing in New Haven and one-third residing in the surrounding suburbs. An astonishing percentage of our students arrive at HSC reading below grade level, many of them far below grade level. Both this statistic and the new CAPT mandates are forcing us to find new ways to incorporate reading and writing across the disciplines with the curriculum of my subject area: elements and principles of design. I am teaching this course, *Picture This*, as a way to fulfill both of these needs. The course will be taught to a class of students that range from ninth to twelfth grade. It will be taught as a quarter class and I will see the students everyday for about ten weeks. Students will read and analyze a variety of different versions of *Cinderella*, *The Three Little Pigs*, and *Little Red Riding Hood* while having a variety of other fairy tales available to them. I hope that if I provide students with literature that is not intimidating, they can focus on themes and construction rather than worrying about comprehension. Hopefully this will allow them to do a much more comprehensive analysis of the text, teaching them skills which they can later apply to more difficult texts. Students will also be challenged to compare a variety of different styles of illustration — from line drawing to cut paper to watercolor, etc. Students will discuss how viewing illustrations changes your perception of a story, and how simple compositional elements can easily express an idea. Once students have read and looked at a variety of different versions of the text they will be asked to create their own definition of a fairy tale - identifying key elements that are present in each story they have read. They will then be challenged to write and illustrate their own fairy tale, including all of the key elements they have identified.

### Objectives

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Using elementary texts, I would like my students to be able to focus on differentiating among these texts. They will compare and contrast different fairy tales and be able to identify the common denominators that connect these tales. Comparing and contrasting is a skill that they are learning in all of their classes. The problem with my student population is that once students have made comparisons, they are unable to use those comparisons to draw conclusions, and support those conclusions with evidence. One of our school goals

is to teach our students strategies for learning how to use supporting evidence. After students have decided what elements are necessary to compose a fairy tale, I will have them explain why each element is necessary in a fairy tale, citing fairy tales we have read as supporting evidence.

I would like to gear the class toward breaking the fairy tale into five different elements: characters (antagonist and protagonist), setting (usually a castle or enchanted forest), conflict (between good and evil), and moral and resolution (a "fairy tale" ending). Students will be able to identify these elements in any fairy tale and eventually will be able to effectively utilize these five literary elements to create their own fairy tale.

Besides the written texts, students will also be comparing illustrations. They will experiment with the elements and principles of design that will help them create interesting compositions illustrating their fairy tales. They will be allowed to illustrate their tales using any of the materials we learn about in class, but more importantly they will need to create the mood of the text on each page, will need to successfully represent their characters through color, shape and details and will need to be sure that the text and the images are successfully integrated — that each two-page spread is considered as a whole, not as separate pages.

## The Telling of Tales

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To start we will discuss fairy tales the students remember from their youth and why they remember them. Is it the pictures or the story they remember? They will begin by brainstorming what composes a fairy tale. We will list as many different fairy tales as we can think of and students will be encouraged to bring in their own favorites from childhood. This part of the plan is tentative, as I cannot know in advance how many of my students were read to as children.

In order to understand and analyze fairy tales we need to look at them in their original context first. Fairy tales began in oral traditions that date back to a time when the common man was illiterate. These stories were themselves traditions, a shared knowledge that was passed down and respected. Since the tales were told by word of mouth they were often adapted or embellished by each particular storyteller. After a rich oral history, fairy tales began to be recorded in the seventeenth century. We think of fairy tales as stories we tell children over and over again. However, when fairy tales were first written they were not intended for a young audience - the idea of "children's literature" does not appear until the twentieth century when there is market for it. (Sale 26) Fairy tales were originally told as entertainment for adults. This traditional readership is especially evident in the fairy tales written or compiled by the Brothers Grimm, for instance: the evil stepsisters get their eyes pecked out at the end of *Cinderella*. These tales are very dark and morbid compared to the ones that we recollect from childhood. By the time of Grimm in the early 19th century children were projected as readers along with adults. It's less clear what audience Perrault was writing for in the eighteenth century (see *Little Red Riding Hood* below). As more people became literate they became interested in preserving these tales on paper. Authors started writing down these traditional tales, and inventing new ones.

After discussing our initial ideas about fairy tales, students will read the traditional Brothers Grimm versions of *Cinderella*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, and *The Three Little Pigs*. I would like them to start with a reading of each by the same author so that they are not influenced by the embellishments of different authors. I would also like to start with the Grimm tales because they are the original versions intended for adults, not children primarily, and I would like to use this opportunity to outline a brief history of fairy tales to the students.

Students will compare and contrast these three fairy tales. After doing so, they will analyze what makes the three fairy tales similar, also drawing on knowledge they have of other fairy tales they have read prior to the course. Through comparison, students will begin to create their own definition of a fairy tale. They will choose certain elements that are included in the structure of all fairy tales. As mentioned above, I would like to focus on the following elements: setting, character (antagonist and protagonist), conflict, moral and resolution. Later we will also explore point of view.

Grimm's *Cinderella* begins with the death of Cinderella's mother after urging Cinderella to "be good and pious" so that God will always protect her. Her father remarries and Cinderella gains a wicked stepmother and two wicked stepsisters who are beautiful, horrible people. The family takes away all of Cinderella's belongings and tells her she needs to earn her keep, putting her to work. One day her father brings home an olive branch that she plants at her mother's grave. The branch grows into a tree, which a bird then takes residence in. The bird gives her things she needs when she visits her mother's grave. The daughters are all invited to a fair where the Prince will choose his bride, but Cinderella is forbidden to go unless she can pick out all of the lentils the evil stepmother throws into the ashes in two hours. The pigeons and turtledoves all fly into the house and help her pick the lentils from the ashes. After she has finished her stepmother still does not allow her to go, demanding that she pick double the amount of lentils out of the ashes. Again, the birds help her and she completes the task. Her stepmother still forbids her to go, so Cinderella goes to her mother's grave and the bird in the olive tree gives her a dress and silver shoes. Cinderella goes to the fair and the Prince is taken with her. Cinderella goes home at the end of the evening, and does the same thing for the next two days, getting more and more beautiful dresses from the bird, and always leaving the Prince when evening falls. On the third day Cinderella loses her shoe, stuck in pitch laid out by the Prince. He uses this shoe to try and track her down. The two stepsisters cut off parts of their feet in an attempt to get them to fit into the shoe. Finally he demands to see the other daughter of the house. The shoe fits Cinderella perfectly and she and the Prince are wed. At the wedding the birds come and peck out the eyes of the two stepsisters.

Grimm's *Little Red Cap* begins with a little girl wearing a red velvet cap and going to visit her sick grandmother with some cake and wine. Her mother warns her to go straight to grandmother's and not to wander off of the path. She meets a wolf in the woods and tells him where she is going. The wolf persuades Little Red Cap to go off the path and pick some flowers for grandmother. Meanwhile, the wolf runs to grandmother's house, disguising himself as Little Red-Cap. He eats grandmother, dresses himself in her clothes and hides in her bed. Finally Little Red-Cap arrives at grandmother's. She is surprised to find the door open and thinks that grandmother has extraordinarily large features. The wolf keeps making up excuses as to his large features, until she asks about his teeth and he replies, "The better to eat you with," and gobbles her up. A huntsman comes by to check on grandmother, and he finds the wolf asleep in her place. He cuts the wolf open with a pair of scissors and Little Red-Cap and grandmother hop out of the wolf's stomach alive. Little Red-Cap vows never to stray off the trail, as mother admonished, ever again.

Grimm's *Three Little Pigs* is a fairy tale about three pigs who leave home and set out to travel the world all summer long. Once summer ends they realize they must secure houses and jobs like everyone else. The first pig is lazy and builds his house of hay in one day. The second pig takes a little longer and builds his house of wood. The last pig takes his time and builds his house out of brick. One day a wolf comes along. He asks the first pig to let him in, and when the pig says no, he blows down the pig's house. The pig escapes to his second brother's house. The wolf blows down the wooden house with little more difficulty as the two brothers race to the third pig's brick house. The wolf tries to blow down the third pig's house but is unable to. Instead, he tries to climb in through the chimney, but the wisest pig has foreseen this and started a fire in the fireplace. The wolf burns himself climbing down the chimney and runs away. The pigs then set to work building two more

brick houses. The wolf never bothers them again.

## Dissecting the Fairy Tale

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There is a particular set of characteristics which fairy tales share. Using each of these parts of the fairy tale I will teach students literary elements. First, fairy tales are timeless. The characters in them can be translated into any time period, therefore anyone can relate to the conflicts a fairy tale character faces. We can see ourselves easily transposed into their situations. Take the fairy tales above as examples. Like Cinderella, we have all dreamed of something in our lives that was out of our reach, hoping that someone will grant our wishes. We have also strayed from the path set before us, like Little Red-Cap. Lastly, we have all also been lazy and taken a short cut when we did not feel like putting our all into something. Fairy tales are common tales to which everyone can relate. What makes this possible is the universality and generality of the characters. For instance, Cinderella is just a humble girl hoping to fall in love. Bettelheim writes, "All characters are typical rather than unique." (Bettelheim 8) The characters are not extremely detailed so that they can take on the characteristics of anyone.

The narrator of a fairy tale does not call attention to him or herself, nor does he or she interpret or explain the story. The narrator simply retells a series of events. The tales are constructed as communal tales, fit for an audience of common people. The original fairy tales do not alienate any group, and were not censored (with the exception of Perrault and Aesop's fables). (Sale 27) This means that anyone who picks up a fairy tale, even one hundred years from now, can appreciate it because the characters and themes are universal.

Although fairy tales are written so that they are universal, it should be noted that often times the settings are very archaic. For instance, many fairy tales are set in enchanted forests or castles. Fairy tales also often contain some sort of magic, magical object or magical creature, all of which are impossible in real life. Take the birds in *Cinderella* helping her sort out the lentils from the ashes, or the huntsman in *Little Red-Cap* opening up the wolf to find Little Red-Cap and grandma alive and intact. Although many of the magical situations are not believable in our physical world, we can still identify with the characters easily, because their conflicts are ones which we have experienced first hand.

Fairy tales all deal with the conflict of good and evil. "In fairy tales evil is as omnipresent as virtue. In practically every fairy tale good and evil are given body in the form of some figures and their actions." (Bettelheim 9) Usually two different characters in the tale represent this struggle of good and evil — for instance Cinderella and the step-mother, the three pigs and the wolf, and Little Red-Cap and the wolf. (As you can see, evil wolves are a recurring motif.) The good character with whom we empathize is the protagonist. The evil character is the antagonist. I think it is important for students to make this distinction. The theme of good and evil is the basis for conflict in each fairy tale. As a group we will define conflict, and will compare the conflicts in each tale, looking for similarities and differences. Usually the protagonist faces a moral dilemma regarding the battle of good and evil. *Cinderella* is an exception to this rule. We will discuss why this is such a powerful and universal theme.

This struggle between good and evil leads to another trait of the fairy tale, a moral. Sale writes, "the great traditional motive of fairy tales, (is to) triumph over our deepest fears with our deepest wishes". (Sale 51) Each fairy tale illustrates that life will be difficult, and will be full of difficult choices; however, through hard

work and good morals one can overcome their struggles and be victorious. (Bettelheim 8) The wisest pig saves both of his lazy brothers and gets away unharmed. Little Red-Cap gets eaten by a wolf because she does not heed her mother's advice. Cinderella lives a humble and helpful life, as her mother tells her to, and in return with the help of some magic, wins the love and affection of the Prince. Students will do a lot of work with the idea of the moral, especially looking at different Perrault fairy tales, which spell out the moral, even if it is facetious (see *Little Red Riding Hood* below). Students will then read examples of fairy tales where the moral needs to be inferred, and try to construct it on their own. For instance, students may infer a moral [from] *The Three Little Pigs* - the most important moral pertaining to effort.

This in turn leads to the last characteristic, a "fairy tale ending". (Sale 37) Fairy tales are famous for good conquering evil, and in the end everyone getting exactly what they deserve. Cinderella deservingly marries her Prince, while the evil step-sisters get their eyes pecked out by the birds. "And thus for their wickedness and falsehood, they were punished with blindness as long as they lived." (Grimm 43) The wolf is turned into a wolf skin coat in Little Red-Cap, while Little Red-Cap is saved after learning her lesson. This "fairy tale ending" is the resolution of each story, the final piece that I would like students to focus on. How does each protagonist overcome his or her conflicts? What is resolution and why is it important? What are the similarities between fairy tale endings?

We will read the three Grimm tales out loud, in different formats, noting the oral tradition of fairy tales. I will read one to the class, demonstrating good reading skills. The second we will read as a group, each student reading one sentence. I find that this reading method forces the students to stay engaged, because they need to know which sentence is their responsibility, and one sentence is short enough so that the less confident readers do not feel overwhelmed. For the third story students will break off into small groups and read to each other, allowing the stronger or more outgoing students to motivate the rest of the group through their own reading. I am curious to see how the students will interact in these small reading groups, because for me it brings back a time when I loved listening to stories and being brought to another land by the reader.

Once students have read the three stories we will come back together as a class and I will ask the students to identify similarities among the stories. We will recall our original definition of a fairy tale, and how these three fairy tales relate to it. We will edit the definition as we see necessary. Then as a class, we will create a column chart that includes the elements I have said I would like to focus on. The left column will list each of the elements, and then across the top the students will write the name of each story. Students will then fill out the chart for each fairy tale we have read, recording the details of each element in each story. We will use this column method for the rest of the stories we read, to familiarize students with identifying and recording those five main pieces of information. Throughout this process it will be important for students to note that, as always, there are exceptions to the rule. Then to be sure that students have grasped the concept, they will be asked to create their own "cookie-cutter" fairy tale by creating a Mad Libs fairy tale.

## **Lesson Plan One**

### *Do Now*

Students will be broken into small groups and given Mad Libs to complete. Pairs work best for this sort of activity, but groups of three can also be successful. It will be an opportune time to review parts of speech with students, since they will need to fill in verbs, adjectives, etc.

### *Procedure*

As a class we will talk about how Mad Libs operate, how the author contributes to the story, and what pieces will always be the same. After this discussion we will review which parts of a fairy tale always stay the same. Students will then be challenged to write their own Mad Lib, so that no matter what the author fills in, the story will still be a fairy tale. For instance, the author will need to choose a magical setting, a good character, an evil monster, a moral dilemma, and a happy ending (or some similar set of fill-ins.) This process may take a few days.

### *Closure*

Students will make copies of their Mad Libs and trade them with each other. We will review and solidify our list of what makes a fairy tale.

### *Assessment*

Students will complete each others' Mad Libs and will grade each other using a rubric which we have created at the beginning of the assignment.

## **Understanding Composition and Illustration**

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As students are reading each fairy tale they will also be learning about illustration and composition. There are a variety of wonderful children's book illustrators to use as examples, and the fairy tales which I have chosen vary greatly in their style of illustration. To begin our exploration of illustration I will go through two different processes with my students. The first two Grimm fairy tales that students read will be strictly text, no illustrations. Students at this time will get a chance to explore verbal to visual representation without any influence. After reading the Grimm version of *Cinderella* without illustrations I will ask the students to do the best drawing they can of the evil step-mother. We will look at their illustrations and compare them to each other. We will talk about similarities between the drawings and what students were trying to show in their drawing of the step-mother.

From these drawings we will discuss how illustrations can change a story. I will ask students what illustrations they remember, and why these illustrations have stayed with them. Next, before reading Grimm's *The Three Little Pigs* I will share with students a variety of different depictions of the wolf. This time they will explore visual to verbal representation by describing what they think the character of the wolf is like from looking at the illustrations. They will again need to use supporting evidence to back up their claims. Then, after we have read the story, I will ask students which wolf they would choose for their illustrations if they were the authors, or which characteristics from among the illustrations they might combine. Again, they will need to support their answer using specifics from the drawing, not simply their opinion.

When they read Grimm's *Little Red Riding Hood*, students will finally be allowed to look at the illustrations in conjunction with the text. We will talk about the benefits of being able to see the images, as well as the disadvantages. This time they will be able to use verbal and visual information at the same time. I will try to tie in books students have read which have been turned into movies as a parallel example. For instance, I loved the *Harry Potter* books and had created a wonderful world corresponding to them in my imagination. When I watched the movies I was very disappointed because the fantasy world had been much better in my head. In the end, though, despite such concerns, we will focus on reasons why illustrations help support and

enrich the text.

While students are reading the remaining texts, they will be doing a series of drawings to express different themes. I will be using Molly Bang's *Picture This* as a starting point to explain composition and how simply through basic shapes, colors and repetition an artist can effectively express an idea. I think that this is important, because not all students feel confident in their drawing abilities. Bang uses *Little Red Riding Hood* as the model for the illustrations of her book. The initial exercises will be done simply with cut paper, so students will be limited by color and by shape. As a way of showing the usefulness of simple forms, when we are reading *Little Red Riding Hood*, we will discuss the feeling that Red Riding Hood might have in the woods. Students will discuss a time when they may have felt similarly. Our first composition will focus primarily on color and shape. We will talk about limiting the composition to two colors for this particular scene. We will discuss which elements of the story will be important to include in the composition, and will then decide which two colors would best represent them and why. In this particular scene from *Little Red Riding Hood* students should note that their composition will need to include Little Red Riding Hood, a path, a wolf and trees. Next students will cut out a variety of shapes of different sizes from the two colors we choose. Students will begin to experiment with which shapes best express the mood they are trying to achieve. I would like students to experiment with shapes and sizes to begin to understand the idea of composition on their own. For this particular composition shape and size will be most important. Molly Bang explains that flat horizontal shapes create calmness, vertical shapes are more active, and diagonal shapes create movement and excitement. (Bang 42) With this information, students should begin to find that by using rectangles or triangles to create the trees they will begin to get a feeling of uneasiness, and by turning the tree trunks at a slight angle they will make the viewer even more uncomfortable. In deciding on a shape for Little Red Riding Hood, they will need to choose what feels most appropriate. Bang says that pointy shapes are scary, while rounded shapes are more comfortable. (Bang 71) Therefore students may want to represent Red Riding Hood with a curved shape and the Big Bad Wolf with a more pointy shape. The illustration in Grimm's *Little Red-Cap* is a perfect example of this: although it is only a line drawing, everything about the wolf except his tail is pointy and triangle shaped - his nose, tongue, hat and sword. On the other hand Little Red-Cap is all soft, curvy shapes from her bonnet to the pattern on her dress. We will discuss this image as an example of Bang's theories.

As students work through their compositions I will hold conferences with them to look at their progress and to talk to them about why they have made particular choices in shape, color and arrangement. Halfway through their compositions students will take part in a peer critique. They will be supplied with a worksheet of questions about their peers' work, which they will answer honestly. In this case they will be asked whether the artist has captured the mood, whether the Big Bad Wolf looks scary, etc. It will also include space for helpful suggestions. Peer critiques are a process that I use often with my students. I find that the students can often be each other's best teachers, and that it is good for them to hear constructive criticism from someone other than myself. It is important when using this strategy to be clear that all feedback should be positive, helpful and specific. Saying, "It's ugly," would not be tolerated, whereas saying, "I think that if you made the wolf a more threatening shape it would look better," would be helpful criticism.

For the first few exercises in composition I would like students to continue using cut paper. I think it is a wonderful medium, one that is often neglected. It is also an easy way to limit students' choices so that they are focusing on creating a mood without being overwhelmed by complex materials and the need for drawing skills. Just as I will be using text that is easy to comprehend, so too we will start with basic building blocks of composition so that students can focus on mood without feeling intimidated.

After we have talked about the rules for composition involving shape and color, we will move onto scale or

size. This time we will use the wolf from *The Three Little Pigs* as an inspiration. Students will need to choose only three colors. They will create a composition where the wolf looks intimidating to one of the pigs. There will need to be a drastic scale change between two of their objects, as indicated by the text. This lesson will reinforce the use of shape and color, while also introducing scale. Once students have decided on a shape and color for each character, they will cut out those characters in a variety of different sizes to see how the two will interact. Bang writes that contrast is important; hence the larger a shape is the stronger it looks. (Bang 8) In Steven Kellogg's *The Three Little Pigs*, the first time that the wolf interacts with the pigs is a perfect example of this. The wolf takes up half of the composition, and even breaks out of the format, making himself the strongest element in the composition. Once students have finished their own compositions, we will discuss and compare them again, noting which are most successful and why.

The last compositional element which students will be responsible for is placement on the page. Students will be challenged to create a composition for *Cinderella*, selecting the point when the bird gives her the dress and she is just ready to go to the fair. This composition will be very different from the other two, since it will have a joyful tone. Bang says that the eye will move to the center of the page unless the artist places things to keep the eye moving around the page. Students will be challenged to crop parts of their composition. This means that objects will be running out of the format of the page - which keeps the viewer's eye moving. Bang also writes that the upper half of the page is free and happy whereas the lower half is sad and heavy. We will experiment with this as a class by moving Cinderella around the page. This exercise will also reinforce our previous lessons about limited color, shape, etc.

As we continue reading, students will begin to explore different media, from pen and ink to watercolor, trying out different types of drawings and looking at different illustrators. The media and styles made available will vary greatly depending on the class makeup. If I have a class of students who have taken art classes before, I will make more choices of materials available to them, whereas if I have a fairly inexperienced group we will take time learning only a few new materials. Throughout the illustration process we will continually be referring back to the original elements of composition we have learned.

Once students have a good grasp of illustrating the text based on mood and character, we will begin to work on the composition of a two-page layout with text incorporated. We will compare ways different authors use illustrations: full page with text on the bottom, small illustrations placed throughout the text, one page of illustration with one page of text, or text incorporated throughout the illustration. Jon Scieszka's *The True Story of the Little Pigs!* furnishes a perfect example of a variety of ways to integrate text and image.

## The Telling and Retelling of Tales

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Once students have created their own construction rubric for a fairy tale, they will begin looking at different, more recent variations on the fairy tale. For instance, they will consider how point of view is important in a fairy tale.

*The True Story of the Three Little Pigs!* is an account of what happened from the viewpoint of Alexander T. Wolf (Al to his friends). In this retelling of the classic, Al has a terrible cold and while baking a cake for granny, runs out of sugar. So he goes to visit his neighbor to borrow some sugar. The neighbor's house is made of straw, and because it is so weak the door falls in when he knocks on it. Just then, the wolf sneezes and knocks



the whole house over. The pig is in the rubble, dead, and the wolf can't let a ham dinner go to waste, so he eats the pig. Still in need of a cup of sugar, Al visits the next neighbor. The second pig tells the wolf to go away because he is shaving. Al sneezes again and finds the second pig dead, so again he cannot let a ham dinner go to waste. The third neighbor tells Al to go away, and then insults his grandmother. Al becomes outraged and has another sneezing fit, just as the cops show up. He claims the media jazzed up the story and he was framed.

*The True Story of the Three Little Pigs!* is told from the point of view of the wolf, and leaves the viewer with a very different idea about what happened that day. Students will focus on point of view and how the choice of narrator can affect a story. We will talk about rumors, and ask whether there have been times that students can recall hearing two different sides of the same story. We will talk about how important it is to get your facts straight, and how two people's points of view can differ so drastically. If more materials are necessary, *Cinderella's Stepsister and Cinderella: the Untold Story* illustrates this for Cinderella, and the animated film *Hoodwinked* does the same for Little Red Riding Hood. Students will set up a mock trial to defend both the pigs and the wolf in order to stress the importance of point of view.

## **Lesson Plan Two**

### *Objectives*

Students will understand how point of view can affect the telling and outcome of a story. Students will understand and be able to retell a story from a different character's point of view. Students will be able to combine points of view to reconstruct an idea about what actually happened, taking into account both sides.

### *Materials*

Students will read Grimm's *The Three Little Pigs* and Scieszka's *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*. Class copies of these two books should be available. Also, information about court cases should be available, and tables to set up as a courtroom.

### *Do Now*

Think about the standard version of *The Three Little Pigs*. If the wolf had a chance to give his side of the story, what do you think his excuse might be for his behavior? Why?

### *Procedure*

As a class we will discuss their answers to the do now, brainstorming possible reasons for the wolf's behavior. Next we will read aloud *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*. I will ask for student volunteers to get up and act out each part. Once we have read the story students will each be assigned a position in the court by randomly selecting a card. The available positions will include a judge, jury members, prosecution and defense teams, the wolf, and each of the three pigs. The class will then be divided up into a courtroom, and each group will need to support their side. The wolf will be suing the pigs for libel and slander — giving him a bad name. The pigs will be counter suing for the cost of their destroyed property. The students will compile their cases and will need to coach their party in order to convince the judge and the jurors. The trial process may take a few class periods, depending on how long you see the students.

### *Closure*

In closing, the jurors will deliberate and reach a verdict. We will discuss point of view as a class. Students will be given two homework assignments throughout the trial. First, in writing they should think of a time when they heard a story from two different points of view: how did the points of view differ, which did they assume was the more accurate, and why? The second assignment will be to take a fairy tale they know or have read in this class and retell it from another point of view.

### *Assessment*

Students will be graded based on their participation and homework assignments.

Students will read different versions of *Cinderella*. There are thousands of them. I have chosen a few versions which have origins in other countries. Included in the works referenced is a traditional version, along with a Russian, Vietnamese and African version. There are similar themes in stories which were written across the world from each other: how is this possible? It will be important for students to think about how stories that are so similar could have been written in places that had no contact with each other. How did fairy tales become so universal? I would like students to offer their own explanation of why similar stories might have come to be told across the globe.

John Steptoe's *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: An African Fairy Tale* is about two sisters, one of whom is very jealous of the other because everyone talks about how kind she is. One sister threatens the other that when she is queen she will make the other a servant. The king is trying to choose a wife and Mufaro sends both of his daughters, not knowing the relationship between them. The evil sister meets people who try to help her on her journey to the city, but she ignores their advice and is rude to them, repeating that she will soon be the queen. The good sister waits until the next morning to leave with her father and encounters the same people as her sister, but she is kind to them. In the morning she finds her sister, who has been scared away from the king by a six-headed snake. The good sister goes to see the king, who seems to be a snake that she had made friends with in her garden. The snake then turns into the king and explains that he was all of the people she had run into on her journey. He observed how she interacted with all of them. He asks her to be his wife. The evil sister becomes a servant in the new queen's house. The illustrations in Steptoe's version are incredible works of art, in terms of value and crosshatching. They are extremely realistic and breathtaking.

*Domitila: A Cinderella Tale from the Mexican Tradition* is about a girl whose mother tells her, "Do every task with care, and always add a generous dash of love." Domitila's family are leather-makers creating purses, sandals, etc. After a while her mother gets very sick and Domitila must go to work as a cook in the Governor's mansion. One day she is asked to cook for the grandmother and her grandson. Domitila cooks nopales, which the grandson tells her are not fit for royalty to eat. The grandmother convinces him to try them and he is amazed at how good they taste and eats every bit from his plate. Domitila must return home because her mother's illness has worsened, and during her journey home Domitila's mother passes away. Her mother comes back to her as a ghost and reminds Domitila of the importance of adding love to things. The grandson wants to talk to Domitila about her cooking. He finds a piece of leather that she has tooled, and goes in search of the girl who carved the leather piece. He searches Hidalgo for her and meets a woman named Malvina on his way. She realizes what he is up to and points him in the wrong direction. In the meantime Malvina marries Domitila's father and puts Domitila to work. When the grandson comes in search of Domitila, she plans to impose her daughter upon him. Instead, the townspeople lead him to Domitila, who is at her mother's grave. She becomes his wife and Malvina and her daughter flee Hidalgo. The Mexican tale has different morals on each page, surrounding the text.

Different versions of each fairy tale can be found in different countries. If you feel that versions from other

countries would be more appropriate for your class, *In the Land of the Small Dragon* is a good Vietnamese version, and *Baba Yaga and Vasilis the Brave* is a good Russian version. There are two main reasons why it is possible that tales with similar characters and themes could exist in different countries. There may be themes that are so universal throughout human life that inevitably each culture has written a story with a similar plot and moral. The other school of thought is that a story was told in one culture and then through migration, trade routes, or oral tradition carried on to another culture. Either of these options is a viable one, and whatever the truth is it remains unknown. Also, one explanation may be valid for some cases but not for all. It is incredible how similar the stories are between cultures.

Besides point of view, I would like students to read "updated" versions of fairy tales. *Cinder-elly* and Kellogg's *The Three Little Pigs* (like Scieszka's) are set in present times, which I think will appeal to my students. This technique incorporates their culture into stories that can sometimes seem archaic.

Frances Minter's *Cinder-elly* stars a little girl who is forced to do housework while her sisters play video games and watch television. The story is told in rhyme and is meant to be sung as a rap song. Cinder-elly's older sisters get dressed up to go to the huge school basketball game but the family can't afford to buy new clothes for Cinder-elly too, so she must stay at home. The night of the game her godmother appears and gives her beautiful clothes and a bike to get to the game, but warns that she must be home by ten o'clock. At the game, Cinder-elly catches a ball which has flown into the stands, and as she passes it back down to Prince Charming he asks her to go out for pizza. He says he'll meet her after he's finished showering, but it is too late and she must go home. However, she leaves a glass sneaker behind. Prince makes a flyer looking for the girl who wore the glass sneaker in an attempt to find her. Both of her sisters try on the shoe with no luck. Then she tries on the shoe and it is a perfect fit. Godmother shows up to scold the two older sisters, and then they all live happily ever after.

I would like to try and find a recorded version of this rap if one exists, or create one for my students. Considering all these versions of *Cinderella* at once, I would like to discuss with students the differences among the characters who help Cinderella get to the ball (or game, or whatever), and also the resolutions of each story. What other objects could be used in place of the glass slipper? Who is the evil figure that keeps Cinderella from her just reward?

Steven Kellogg's *The Three Little Pigs* is fairly similar to the Grimm fairy tale, with a few modern day updates. The mother of the three pigs starts a waffle cart, which she uses to support the boys and then hands down to them when she retires to the Land of Pasta. In this tale the pigs take on many more human qualities than in Grimm. Tempo the wolf shows up and instead of waffles from the waffle cart, he wants to dine on the three operators of the cart. The pigs go running for their houses. The wolf blows down the straw and wood houses, but the two pigs who live there escape to the brick house. Mother comes back to save the day. After the wolf has tried and tried to blow the brick house down, he eventually tries a new strategy, flying up and climbing in through the chimney; waiting for him at the bottom is the waffle maker, which irons the badness out of him. He spends the rest of his time in the Land of Pasta and the pigs are prosperous and have large families, to the delight of mother pig. The illustrations in this book are fantastic, from the details of the pigs right down to the wolf's T-shirt, which says, "Say YES to THUGS".

I would like to raise the following questions with the students: How do you feel about the characters taking on more human qualities? What makes this story different from the previous version of *The Three Little Pigs*? What does Kellogg change about the original story? How is this resolution different? How does this version compare to the version told by the wolf himself? Students will be challenged to update their own fairy tale of

choice.

### **Lesson Plan Three**

#### *Objectives*

Students will learn about poetry through rhyming and rhythm and will make text to world connections. They will understand that fairy tale characters are universal and are still sung and written about today. Students will be able to transform a fairy tale into a rap.

#### *Do Now*

Students will listen to a few modern/current songs which tell stories. I would like to use songs which are popular while I am teaching the class, however a classic example *I Shot the Sheriff* by Bob Marley, where a good force and a bad force is present. They will be asked to identify possible fairy tale elements in them. Songs which tell a story will be most effective, so that students can hopefully identify characters, conflict and resolution.

#### *Procedure*

We will discuss how the songs parallel fairy tales. Students will contribute other songs which also fit into this rubric. They will be encouraged to bring in songs for us to listen to throughout the process. As a class we will read *Cinderella* and discuss how it differs from the Grimm *Cinderella*. Students will then be challenged to recreate a fairy tale in rap or poem form. We will discuss the importance of rhythm and rhyming.

#### *Closure*

We will discuss whether or not updating fairy tales changes their meaning or universality.

#### *Assessment*

Students will present, either through rap or reading, their new fairy tales. Students will be graded on both their presentation and their written product, which will need to include an illustration based on the Molly Bang principles we've been discussing.

In Perrault's *Little Red Riding Hood* a little girl in a red hood is sent on a journey to bring her sick grandmother griddle cakes. Along the way she meets a wolf and tells him that she is going to visit her grandmother. The wolf says he will go there too, and races her. Little Red Riding Hood takes the longest path and collects flowers along the way. When she arrives at grandmother's house grandmother invites her in, except her grandmother is really the wolf who's eaten her grandmother. Little Red Riding Hood keeps talking about how large grandma's features are until she gets to grandma's teeth which are "All the better to eat you up!" Little Red Riding Hood is then gobbled up.

A quick note if you are teaching this tale: when Red Riding Hood gets to grandma's Perrault writes, "Little Red Riding Hood took off her clothes and went to lie down in the bed." Because of the wording, students may have quite a reaction to this sentence. Perrault includes a moral at the end of his fairy tales, which is unlike that of any other author. The moral here is that pretty girls should never talk to strangers, or wolves may eat them, and wolves are not even the most dangerous beasts of all. His typical moral is a tongue in cheek look at social habits, especially libertine behavior, and is usually more entertaining than cautionary. I would like to use

Perrault as a jumping off point to engage the students in a discussion about the morals that are drawn in didactic fiction, how they might be inferred from tales where they are not explicit, why the author might make a point of including them, and how much we are actually expected to heed such warnings. Perrault's point, for example, is that girls don't meet many wolves nowadays, but they do meet a lot of men who act like wolves, with less drastic though still serious consequences. But that's not his whole point; the lingering joke is that of course his readers know this already, and are likely to behave according to their own wishes regardless of whether they've read Perrault's "moral" or not.

We will also look at Roald Dahl's *Revolting Rhymes* and Aesop's fables, where the morals change drastically. Perrault's morals are cautionary but funny. Dahl's morals are outlandish but very entertaining twists on the original classic fairy tales. Aesop's morals are very straightforward advice to live your life by, though some of them are outdated. I would like the students to have a discussion about morals, asking them if they feel that morals are treated the same way in entertainment today.

Once students have collected all of this information about writing and illustrating a fairy tale, they will be challenged to create their own fairy tale. There will be a huge class library available to the students. Before writing their own tales each student will read a fairy tale from the class library and present it to the class, explaining how it uses the elements we have laid out. They will have three different options: creating a brand new fairy tale, retelling an old fairy tale from a new point of view, or updating an old fairy tale for modern times. Through the exercises we have completed as a class, they will already have a lot of experience with this process. I will encourage them to create their own original tale. Students will be placed in pairs, a strong author with a strong illustrator. They will be given the same column sheet that they filled out for each fairy tale to help them begin thinking about their own fairy tale. They will also be given character development worksheets to help them brainstorm about their new characters. Students will write the concept of the story together, and then refine the language.

Students will also choose how they would like to illustrate their fairy tale. They will use a story board to break down the page layouts, and as a guide for what information will be included on each pair of two-pages. Students will create their book as though it [were] going to be published, including an "about the author" and a dedication. This will be their final project. As a culminating activity students will take their books to neighboring elementary schools and read them to students in the lower grades.

## Assessment

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Students' final stories will be assessed by two different rubrics. The first rubric will be the one that they have created for the criteria of a fairy tale. Their newly written fairy tale must include a setting, universal characters, a battle between good and evil, a moral and a happy ending where each character gets what they deserve. Their illustrations will be based on another rubric which includes use of the compositional elements we have learned, creating characters which exemplify their personality traits, creating two page layouts, and incorporating the text and images successfully. Students will complete peer evaluations of each other's work using these criteria, and will also complete their own self-evaluation.

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