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Cinderella: A Cross-cultural Story

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Introduction

What is a story? According to Bill Johnson in *Understanding What a Story Is* it seems to be "a vehicle that carries us on an engaging, dramatic journey to a destination of resolution we find satisfying and fulfilling. When we find a particular story or journey to be dramatically potent and pleasing (more "true" than life or life as we would like it to be) we can desire to re-experience the same story or journey over and over."¹

I have chosen Cinderella for my unit because it is an exceptional story that we want to experience over and over. The fact that over 900 versions have been written is a testament to the "potent" power of this story. Almost every culture seems to have its own version. Anna Rooth discovered the wide dissemination of the story, beyond the European realm. She published her research in *The Cinderella Cycle*.² Cinderella stories date back as early as 850 A.D. with the first written version of the Chinese tale *Yeh-Shen*. The most popular, modern version was written and published by Charles Perrault of France in 1697.³ The Disney version is based on Perrault's story. Even though each version differs in characters, plot, use of magic, and other details, a common theme binds them all. They each tell the story of a young girl or boy who is mistreated by family or community but is eventually recognized and rewarded for goodness and virtue. Most versions include an ineffective father, the absence of a mother figure, some sort of gathering such as a ball or festival, mutual attraction with a person of high status, a lost article, and a search that ends with success.⁴ What makes the Cinderella story so popular after all these years? I believe that people enjoy reading about the "underdog" having a chance to win. We all want to believe that this "rags to riches" idea could really happen to us. Another testament to Cinderella's universal popularity is the fact that the story is told in films, ballet, and opera, as well as print form. In fact, the word Cinderella has come to mean one who achieves recognition after a period of bad fortune and neglect. This is evident in the boxing film *The Cinderella Story*. The story of Cinderella transcends time and cultures. In other words, it is a story that is enjoyed today as much as it was with the original story.

Overview

Both our state and district standards have third graders learning about the basic plots of fairy tales, as well as identifying the elements of a story. However, I want to extend that expectation further in my unit. I have three main goals in producing a unit on the cross-cultural aspect of Cinderella. First, I want to show how the concept of storytelling, whether it is in literature or films, is an art composed of basic elements. Second, I want students to be able to recognize the common attributes of a fairy tale. We will be using the Cinderella story as a means of accomplishing that. This will be a literature-based unit.

Third, and most importantly, I want to explore the influence of the particular country's culture on the story itself. I want students to appreciate the specific objects or mores that make each variant unique to that culture, while preserving the basic theme of the story.

I believe that my third graders will enjoy this unit. They love to read "sequels" to the books I read aloud in class like *Bunnicula* and the *Chronicles of Narnia*. They usually ask the school librarian if there is a "next book." So, they will have lots of different versions of Cinderella to read on their own. They also like to extend the same story with writing and skills development. Our basal reader stories are designed to last one week. Since I will be using only one story for the entire week, this will provide that continuity.

Another benefit of using the Cinderella stories in my unit is that the stories and language of fairy tales are often easier to read than the required basal reader stories. This makes students more enthusiastic about reading, which increases comprehension. Because I am using picture books with such wonderful illustrations, children are allowed to inspect illustrations and make meaning or connections with the text.⁵

Concept of Story

Identifying story elements help kids monitor comprehension. The main elements of a good story are setting, characters, sequence, exposition, conflict, climax, and resolution. Generally, the background information and setting are explained (exposition) at the beginning of the story. The particular conflict in the story is resolved during the climax. After the climax is resolved, you learn what happens to the characters during the resolution. Bill Johnson states, "The purpose of a story's elements is to move toward a meaningful resolution."⁶ Because of state standards for third graders, I will be focusing on setting, plot, characters, problem, and solution.

Elements of a Fairy Tale

The Cinderella story is actually a fairy tale, which is part of a larger group of stories called folktales. A folktale is a story that was told again and again and was eventually written down. Originally, these folktales were just entertaining, but then they became vehicles in which natural phenomena were explained, relationships were explored, or morals were taught. However, fairy tales were simply used to delve into human behavior through fantasy, and offer hope that justice will prevail in the end.⁷

Linda Degh, a folklorist at the University of Indiana, says that a fairy tale is "a magic story which cannot be true."⁸ It does have certain attributes that are relatively consistent from story to story. First, there is usually an undefined time and place. That is to say that times are given in vague language, such as *Once upon a time*, or *long ago in a far away place*. Next, the characters are amazingly simple and do not develop as the

story proceeds. For example, Cinderella never stands up to her evil stepsisters; she just goes to a party and marries a prince! Next, some sort of transformation occurs. Cinderella is transformed from a person of lowly means into a princess. Finally, some kind of magic takes place in a fairy tale. In *The Persian Cinderella* it is the pari in the blue jug. In *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* it is the little green snake. In *Yeh-Shen*, it is the fish bones. Of course the Perrault version has a *fairy* godmother. Ironically, the term "fairy" tales is misleading because there are very few fairies mentioned in these stories.

Fairy tales were originally passed down through the generations orally until the 17th century. Then, Charles Perrault published his book of tales, which included "Cinderella," as the *Tales of Mother Goose*. As fairy tales evolved, they were sometimes grisly, sometimes clearly for adults and others for children.⁹

According to M. Jo Worthy and Janet W. Bloodgood, Cinderella versions can be categorized in three universal ways. The first category shows the heroine being mistreated by a stepmother or stepsisters. This is evident in *The Persian Cinderella* and *Yeh-Shen*. The second category shows extreme sibling rivalry. This is represented vividly in *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*. The third category has a daughter fleeing an unnatural or misunderstanding father, as in *Princess Furball*.¹⁰ Obviously, this is not an appropriate theme for third graders to deal with, so I will not be referring to that category.

Cultural Influence

How much does the culture of a place influence a story from that place? The storyteller, or author, gives us a snapshot of the food, festivals, clothing, and traditions of the area. Because there are so many different versions of Cinderella from around the world, we are privy to those cultures through the story. For example, in *The Persian Cinderella* we find that the women and girls are confined to a certain section of the house. They also have to cover their faces when they go out to shop so strangers cannot look at them. In *Yeh-Shen* we learn that some people of southern China used to live in caves. Also, there was a spring festival during the T'ang dynasty where young people socialized in preparation for marrying. In *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters* we are told that a king in southern Africa would send word to villages for girls to appear before him so he could choose a wife. We also learn that yams were eaten in that part of Africa.

Objectives

Cinderella variants from around the world contain the same story elements. I will be focusing on just three versions in my unit: the African Cinderella, the Persian or Iranian Cinderella, and the Chinese Cinderella. Exploring the commonalities of storytelling in these three cultures (Africa, Iran, and China) will help to show how Cinderella has withstood the test of time and distance around the world. My goal is to show the "sameness" despite all the differences. One of the commonalities in all three variants is the Cinderella character's kindness, as well as her beauty. In *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*, Nyasha is kind to the little green garden snake and shares her food with a hungry boy and old woman along the path instead of having any lunch herself. In *The Persian Cinderella*, Settareh gives one of her precious coins to an old beggar woman in the bazaar instead of using it to buy cloth for her new dress. In *Yeh-Shen, A Cinderella Story from China*, Yeh-Shen shared her tiny bit of food with a fish everyday, even though she was starving. All three characters have physical beauty along with their inner beauty, which makes them endearing in the stories.

One culminating lesson of the unit will have students writing another version of the Cinderella story set in an entirely different culture (modern America), inserting different "hinge functions." I learned in the Storytelling around the Globe Seminar that hinge functions are things that are necessary for the story to proceed. In the case of Cinderella, one magic object could easily be substituted for a different one depending on the country of origin. In the version from Iran, it's a blue jug. In the African version, it's a little green snake. In the Chinese version, it's fish bones. Even though the African version does not have the Cinderella character losing an article, there is a diamond-studded anklet lost in the Persian version, and a golden slipper lost in the Chinese version.

For my unit I have chosen Cinderella stories from Africa, Persia (Iran), and China. These are three of the countries that we enjoyed films from in the storytelling seminar. Also, the state and district standards in the social sciences have third graders learning about the diversity of cultures within the United States. It is hoped that students will appreciate how each culture's unique clothing, music, and food has contributed to the wonderful diversity of our country. Besides learning about the ancient civilization of China in second grade, third graders also learn about the ancient civilization of western Africa (Mali). Iran is a place of rich history and traditions. It is also becoming a topic of discussion at many dinner tables in the United States because of the political tension.

It is my hope that examining the cultural influence on these three stories will help my students appreciate those cultures, and open up a wider view of the world. In my urban school I have students whose world is limited to the city limits. They may never have the opportunity to travel to Africa, Iran, or China, but at least their world view will be expanded. One lesson of the unit will have students using a graphic organizer to compare and contrast the three cultures as it relates to each story variant.

Cinderella is a story with a lesson or moral, that good will always triumph over evil in the end. Oddly, this concept is set in a family context. This is another benefit of using this story because it will show my students that bad things sometimes happen to good people. Bad things can happen in their world, their families, or at school. Many of my students have grown up in some difficult situations where bad things have happened to them. Hopefully, they can identify with the Cinderella character and have hope for happier days ahead.

Besides identifying with the Cinderella story on a personal level, my hope is that my students will get a glimpse of the story's social implications. In all three versions, there are people or animals mentioned who are of limited means or in need. In *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*, it's the hungry boy and an old woman. In *The Persian Cinderella*, it's the beggar woman in the bazaar. In *Yeh-Shen*, it's the fish. My students are all exposed to poverty and need on a daily basis. What will be their reaction when a neighbor has to borrow money for bus fare, or they pass homeless men resting on the sidewalk, or they see a classmate's family being evicted from their apartment? I hope my students will use the Cinderella story as their model for social decisions.

Background Information

The Persian Cinderella

This story is set in ancient Persia (present day Iran). Beautiful Settareh's mother has died so she has to live with other women in the house (aunts, cousins, stepsisters, and stepmother). They all treat her horribly, and most of the time she doesn't have enough food to eat. The star on her cheek is cause for much ridiculing. One

morning, Settareh's father gives all the women a large coin to buy cloth in the bazaar for new clothes to wear to the Prince's New Year's festival. The bazaar is a cornucopia of sights and sounds for Settareh. She uses some of her money to buy some food since she is so hungry. She gives some more money to an old woman who is begging in the bazaar. With her remaining money, Settareh buys a lovely little blue jug. Of course, there is no money left for new cloth now. She finds out that there is a *pari* or fairy in the blue jug that would grant her wishes, so Settareh asks the jug to give her a gown to wear to the festival. Not only does a beautiful silk dress appear, but a necklace, bracelets, and diamond-studded anklets also appear. After dressing, Settareh is transported to the palace, where she sees a handsome youth staring at her. Luckily, no one recognizes Settareh because she keeps her star mark hidden. When the party is over, Settareh rushes home so her stepmother won't discover her gone. On the way home, she loses one of the beautiful anklets. The next day, the anklet is discovered and taken to the palace. The prince immediately wants to find the woman who would wear such a beautiful piece. The prince's mother insists that she would do a better job of finding such a woman, so she sets out on the quest. Lots of women try to squeeze into the anklet, but finally Settareh comes forth to show she is the one. Settareh realizes that the young man from the night before is really the prince. Their marriage is arranged and the kingdom celebrates for thirty-nine days. Settareh's two stepsisters are so jealous that they use the little blue jug for one last wish. The jug produces six jeweled hairpins, which the sisters use to arrange Settareh's hair for the wedding. She was instantly transformed into a turtledove. The prince is heartbroken over Settareh's disappearance. Over time, he is visited by a turtledove on the windowsill. When the prince discovers and removes the hairpins, the turtledove turns back into his beloved Settareh. The story ends with the evil stepsisters filled with so much rage that their hearts explode. Of course, Settareh lives happily ever after.

A Look at an Author

Shirley Climo is the author of *The Persian Cinderella*. She was born in 1928, in Cleveland, Ohio. Obviously, she is not Iranian herself, which may not make her a good source for the perspective of this particular culture. She has had various jobs before becoming a published author, including the scriptwriter for "Fairytale Theatre." Her books are often inspired by traditional folktales and legends. *The Persian Cinderella* is based on a retelling of "The Anklet" by Naomi Lewis in her *Stories from the Arabian Nights*. Other books by Climo include *Cobweb Christmas*, *The Egyptian Cinderella*, and *The Irish Cinderlad*.

The Culture of Iran (The words Persian and Iranian are often used interchangeably, since Iran is the former Persia.)

In *The Persian Cinderella*, No Ruz (New Day) is mentioned as a great celebration. It has long been an important tradition in ancient Persia and today's Iran. It always begins on the first day of spring. Homes are cleaned and new clothes are made to signify a new beginning.¹¹

At the No Ruz celebration, guests were eating figs and apricots. Many of the fruits we eat, like figs and apricots, come to us courtesy of Iran. Many products were carried into Iran from China, and then moved on into Europe via the trade route.¹²

In the story, a *pari*, or fairy, was housed in the little blue jug. "This is unique to Persian mythology. It is always beautiful and usually helpful to humans, as in the story. A *pari* may be male or female, change shape or form - sometimes taking an animal form, such as a bird - or it may vanish completely."¹³

Settareh had to live in the part of the house reserved for females. 98% of Iranians are Muslims, and part of the

typical Muslim house is separated for women. Windows would open to the inner courtyard and not on the outside walls in order to prevent eye contact with "marriageable" males.¹⁴

The Cinderella character in the story looks out at the beautiful Alburz Mountains (also written as Elburz). This is a mountain range in northern Iran that stretches from the borders of Armenia to the southern end of the Caspian Sea. ¹⁵

In the story, the prince wore a tulip-shaped turban. The word turban is believed to have originated in Iran, although it is worn by men in many different places. The color, shape, and degree of ornamentation symbolize religious affiliation or leadership.¹⁶

Settareh has to go to the bazaar to buy cloth for a new dress. A bazaar is a place to buy and sell goods, food, and services. The Iranian bazaar has always been a huge part of the town's social and economic history. Typically, the bazaar is set up in a long, narrow- roofed configuration, with shops and stalls on both sides. ¹⁷

Settareh and the prince were married on the 40th day of celebration. Iranian marriage is celebrated joyously with a large group. There are various traditions according to location, but the festivities last several days. On the wedding day, there is a big feast with dancing. ¹⁸

The prince's mother was carried around in a palanquin. This was a covered, boxlike litter attached to poles. These poles would rest on the shoulders of several men, who would transport the passenger (inside of the litter). Palanquins were used by the Persians until spring-mounted coaches came along. ¹⁹

Yeh-Shen, A Cinderella Story from China

A cave chief named Wu had two wives who each bore him a daughter. Unfortunately, little Yeh-Shen's mother and father died when she was born. Her stepmother was very jealous of her beauty and kindness. So, poor Yeh-Shen had to work very hard for her stepmother. Yeh-Shen was befriended by a lovely fish from the pond. She shared food with the fish, even though she was often hungry. Yeh-Shen's stepmother tricked the fish into coming up onto the bank by wearing Yeh-Shen's old coat. She killed the fish and ate it for dinner! Of course Yeh-Shen was distraught when she found this out from a mysterious old man. He told her about the magical powers of the fish bones. Yeh-Shen began to speak to the bones and ask for food to survive. Yeh-Shen longed to go to the spring festival where young men and women looked for mates. Her stepmother did not want Yeh-Shen to go because her beauty might hamper her own daughter's chances of finding a husband. Yeh-Shen asked the fish bones for some clothes to wear to the festival. She was immediately outfitted with a beautiful gown, cloak, and golden slippers. She was a hit at the feast. Yeh-Shen left before anyone could recognize her. In her hurry, Yeh-Shen lost one of the golden slippers. Consequently, all of her fine clothes were turned back into rags except for the one slipper. Worst of all, the fish bones would no longer talk to her. The lost slipper wound up in the hands of the king, who became determined to find its owner. He devised a plan to place the slipper on the side of the road for women to try on while he waited in hiding. After all the women had tried in vain to fit into the slipper, Yeh-Shen sneaked up and took the slipper home to the fish bones. The king followed her and asked her to try on the slippers for him. She was instantly transformed into the beautiful clothing again. This made the king fall in love with her and they were married. However, the king banished the evil stepmother and stepsister to their cave home where they were killed by flying stones.

A Look at an Author

Ai-Ling Louie is a published author of children's books. She has also written *Vera Wang, Queen of Fashion* and *Amazing Chinese American*. She retells the Cinderella tale of Yeh-Shen from a book called *The Miscellaneous Record of Yu Yang* that was written sometime during the T'ang dynasty. (618-907 A.D.)

The Culture of China

In *A Cinderella Story from China*, Yeh-Shen catches a fish and keeps it in a pond. China has a long tradition of keeping fish. Not only to raise fish artificially for food, but also for pleasure. They even kept goldfish in ceramic bowls for enjoyment. ²⁰

Yeh-Shen wanted so badly to go to the Spring Festival because that is where young people would meet each other for possible marriage. The Spring Festival (New Year) in China can be traced back thousands of years. Not only is it a large and important festival, it is an occasion for family reunion. It is observed with much feasting. ²¹

The story originally appeared in a book that was written during the T'ang dynasty (618-907 A.D.) This was a strong period in Chinese history with good rulers overall. Great poets emerged and books were printed, which helped to unify the culture.²²

Yeh-Shen's father was a cave chief in China. There are still over 30 million people who live in cave dwellings, mostly in the middle and western regions of China. Cave homes can be dug underground, as in the plains of Shanxi, or carved into a mountain or hillside, as in the Loess Plateau of northwest China.²³

Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters

This story takes place in southern Africa (present-day Zimbabwe). A man named Mufaro had two beautiful daughters named Manyara and Nyasha. Manyara was very jealous of her sister's kind spirit. Despite the way she was treated, Nyasha tended to her little garden plot and worked hard. She was befriended by a little garden snake. Of course, Nyasha's father was oblivious to the way her sister treated her. One day a messenger came saying the king would choose a wife from the most worthy and beautiful girls in the village. The two sisters were supposed to travel to the city together, but greedy Manyara left the night before. On the way, a hungry boy appeared in the path, but Manyara would not share her food with him. Then, she came across an old woman who gave her advice. However, Manyara did not heed the advice and kept on going. Meanwhile, Nyasha and her wedding party traveled through the forest. When she saw the same hungry boy, Nyasha gave him the only food she had brought. When the old woman appeared, Nyasha was gracious and followed her directions. When the wedding party came into the beautiful city, they encountered Nyasha coming out in hysterics. She begged Nyasha not to enter the king's chamber because there was a monstrous snake there. However, Nyasha went in and found her own little garden snake, which changed into the king before her eyes. Because of her kindnesses, he made her his wife. Manyara became a servant in her sister's household.

A Look at an Author

John Steptoe was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1950. His first book was published at the age of 18. He studied art at two prestigious art schools. Prior to *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*, all of his works dealt with the African-American experience. For this book, Steptoe had to research the African history and culture. This initiated pride in his African ancestry. He hoped his books and his awards would spark the same feeling in other young black people. Unfortunately, John Steptoe died in 1989 at the young age of 38. Even so, his 20-year career left

wonderful books like *Thank You, Jackie Robinson* and *Stevie*.

The Culture of Southern Africa

Located in the southern part of Africa, Zimbabwe became a "landlocked country" after the colonialists cut African territory into units and named them.

In *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*, "the names of the characters come from the Shona language: Mufaro means "happy man"; Nyasha means "mercy"; Manyara means "ashamed"; and Nyoka means "snake."²⁴

In the story, Nyasha grew yams and millet in her garden. There are some native varieties of yams, and others have been introduced from elsewhere. Generally, they are planted in heaps. Millet is a grain that is indigenous to southern Africa, too. It was used to prepare bread for the wedding feast in the story.²⁵

Nyasha said, "A great *spirit* must stand guard here." Also, the king could transform himself into different things, like an old woman or a snake. Witchcraft and spirits are part of traditional Zimbabwe. They can serve various functions, including harming people or seeking revenge.²⁶

Strategies

This unit is designed to last four weeks. It is aimed at third graders, but can be adapted for lower and upper elementary grades. It will be taught during my self-contained language arts class for 75 minutes each day. I will begin the unit by having students locate each country of origin on a large world map. I will read aloud one Cinderella version at the beginning of the week, and use it to accomplish several classroom activities throughout the week. There are opportunities for students to work as a whole class, in small groups, with partners, and individually. Except for reading the story on Monday, all other activities can be done in any particular order. The activities are designed to reinforce my three main objectives of the unit: elements of a story, attributes of a fairy tale, and cultural influence on a story.

In small groups, students will respond to each story with a set of questions related to the attributes of a fairy tale. They will independently write a poem about each story from an entirely different point of view, such as another character or inanimate object. A structure poem will be used to make it easier to conceptualize such an abstract concept. Students will recognize and match the story elements (setting, plot, characters, problem, and solution) to each of the three Cinderella versions. Several guests will be invited to share their expertise on each story's country of origin (Iran, southern Africa, and China). These guests would come from the local universities, community, or parents in the school. Students will be expected to reflect on these visits in their journals. After reading each story, students will contrast each country's culture using a triple Venn diagram with unique facts that are revealed about that particular country's culture. The unit will culminate with students filling in the similarities of the three cultures on the triple Venn diagram. It is hoped, for example, that the influence of nature in all three stories will be obvious to students. For example, Settareh enjoys the call of a turtledove in the pomegranate tree in *The Persian Cinderella*. Yeh-Shen loves the company of a fish in the pond in *Yeh-Shen, A Cinderella Story from China*. Nyasha was happy to tend her small garden plot of vegetables in *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*. Students will also write their own version of the Cinderella story set in an entirely different culture, American. It will be fun to see how they adapt the story elements,

attributes of a fairy tale, and cultural norms to their Cinderella story. "Children incorporate ideas from books they have read (or heard) into the writing of their own stories." ²⁵ This is the reading/writing connection.

Perhaps students will want to explore other topics of interest as they come up in the stories. For example, they could research millet as mentioned in *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*, or the Iranian New Year as mentioned in *The Persian Cinderella*, or the cave dwellers of ancient China as mentioned in *Yeh-Shen*.

I plan to have several versions of the Cinderella story available in our classroom reading center so students can enjoy those during silent reading times. Some versions I want to provide are *The Gift of the Crocodile*, *The Korean Cinderella*, *The Maiden and the Fish*, *The Egyptian Cinderella*, and others.

Finally, I realize that the Cinderella story is not often used in the third grade classroom these days, but I believe it is the perfect story for teaching concept of story, attributes of a fairy tale, and cultural influence on a story. Besides, students will enjoy it!

Classroom Activities

Activity One

Before reading aloud one of the Cinderella versions, have students locate the country of origin on a big wall map. Introduce and discuss the four common attributes of a fairy tale. Allow students to brainstorm several familiar fairy tales that exhibit these attributes. After reading the story aloud, students will answer the following questions in small groups (preferably triads):

1. In what way is the time stated in the story?
2. How does the author show Cinderella as a "simple" character?
3. How is the Cinderella character transformed?
4. What specific magic takes place in the story?

Assemble the class back together and discuss the responses.

Activity Two

To demonstrate how a story can be told from a different point of view, read aloud *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs*. This is a funny look at the circumstances of the original tale from the *wolf's* point of view. Since the Cinderella story is told from the point of view of the Cinderella character, ask students what the story would be like from the point of view of an object or another character. Brainstorm a list of other characters and objects specific to that story version. Have students choose one and write an *I Am* poem about it in the context of the story.²⁸ It may be helpful for the students to collaborate on a poem about the wolf in *The Three Little Pigs* as a model for their assignment because this poem should be done independently.

I Am Poem

I am _____

(Two special characteristics)

I wonder _____

(Something you are curious about)

I hear _____

(An imaginary sound)

I see _____

(An imaginary sight)

I want _____

(A desire you have)

I am _____

(The first line of the poem repeated)

I pretend _____

(Something you pretend to do)

I feel _____

(A feeling about something imaginary)

I touch _____

(An imaginary touch)

I worry _____

(Something that bothers you)

I cry _____

(Something that makes you sad)

I am _____

(The first line of the poem repeated)

I understand _____

(Something you know is true)

I say _____

(Something you believe in)

I dream _____

(Something you dream about)

I try _____

(Something you make an effort on)

I hope _____

(Something you hope for)

I am _____

(The first line of the poem repeated)

Activity Three

Introduce and discuss the major elements of a story (setting, plot, characters, problem, and solution). Model those elements on an overhead transparency of the graphic organizer using a familiar book or story that has been read in class. Disperse the graphic organizer handout and direct students in completing the story map for this particular Cinderella version.²⁹

09.01.09.01

Activity Four

Arrange for a guest to come in and share his or her expertise on each story's country of origin. Make sure the guest is aware of the components of the unit, and what is expected of him or her. Then, students will reflect on the visit with journal writing. They could simply list facts they learned about the country's culture, or write in paragraph form. As a thank-you gift, students could sign a copy of the particular Cinderella version for the guest.

Activity Five

Explain how a Venn diagram is a good way to compare and contrast different things to show how they are different, but have some similarities. Model these using two different things that are familiar to students, such as two teachers or two characters from a story. Remind students about the country of origin for the Cinderella story. Disperse the triple Venn diagram handout labeled Iran, China, and Africa to partners.³⁰ Have them list unique facts that are revealed about the country's culture of this week's Cinderella version. For example, in *The Persian Cinderella*, students will see that girls covered their heads with a cloak so no stranger might see their faces when they went to the bazaar. After reading all three versions, students will then be able to fill in the overlapped area with common characteristics. Students may need to refer back to their journal reflections on the guest visit to get ideas. Reserve the middle section of the diagram for the fourth week's culmination.

09.01.09.02

Culminating Activities

This is now the time to go back to the triple Venn diagram and fill in the middle section with ways that all

three countries in the Cinderella versions are alike. What are their similarities?

Finally, students are ready to write their own version of the Cinderella story set in modern-day America. They will organize their ideas using a pre-writing web. Then, turn these ideas into paragraphs. The writing process continues as they edit and revise the story with self-editing, buddy editing, and then teacher editing. Students will write a final copy making all corrections. Assemble all completed stories in a class book for the reading center.

Resources

Bibliography for Teachers

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This author gives a clear look at southern Africa's crops.

"Asia Travel Guides: Things Asian: Asia Travel Site: Things Asian." Asia Travel Guides: Things Asian: Asia Travel Site: Things Asian. <http://www.thingsasian.com> (accessed July 21, 2009).

This site shows the history of goods coming over the trade route through Iran.

Bearse, Carol. "The Fairy Tale Connection in Children's Stories: Cinderella Meets Sleeping Beauty." *The Reading Teacher*. <http://www.jstor.org> (accessed July 13, 2009).

This is a great essay by Bearse.

"China Travel, Culture and Chinese History Articles." China Travel, Culture and Chinese History Articles. <http://ChineseArt.com> (accessed July 23, 2009).

This site has good information about the types of cave dwellings and their locations in China.

Climo, Shirley. *The Persian Cinderella*. New York: HarperTrophy, 2001.

One of the three main versions I focused on in the unit. It is beautifully illustrated

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Young, Ai Ling, Ed, and Illustrator Louie. *YEH-SHEN: A CINDERELLA STORY FROM CHINA*. USA: Philomel Books 1983, 1983.

You will immediately recognize Ed Young's illustration style.

Zipes, Jack, editor. *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*. New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2003.

Jack Zipes edits the original 1910 version.

Reading List for Students

Brucker, Meredith Babeaux, and Lila Mehta. *Anklet for a Princess: A Cinderella Story from India*. Morton Grove: Shen's Books, 2002.

This version is set in India.

Climo, Shirley. *The Egyptian Cinderella*. New York: HarperTrophy, 1991.

Another Climo book about Cinderella, but this one is set in Egypt with a hippo.

Climo, Shirley. *The Irish Cinderlad (Trophy Picture Books)*. New York: HarperTrophy, 2000.

Another Climo Cinderella version, but this one is set in Ireland.

Climo, Shirley. *The Korean Cinderella (Trophy Picture Books)*. New York: HarperTrophy, 1996.

Climo writes another Cinderella version, but this time it is set in Korea.

Climo, Shirley. *The Persian Cinderella*. New York: HarperTrophy, 2001.

This is my favorite Cinderella version, set in Persia (Iran).

Coburn, Jewell Reinhart. *Angkat: The Cambodian Cinderella*. Morton Grove: Shen's Books, 1998.

This is the Cambodian version of Cinderella.

Craft, K. Y. *Cinderella*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2000.

This is a French version of Perrault's story.

Hickox, Rebecca. *The Golden Sandal: A Middle Eastern Cinderella Story*. New York: Holiday House, 1999.

Set in Iran, this version features a fish.

Louie, Ai-Ling. *Yeh-shen: A Cinderella Story from China*. NEW YORK: PUFFIN BOOKS , 2008.

A version of the original tale, featuring a fish.

Nhuan, Nguiyen. *Tam Cam: A Vietnamese Cinderella Story/Vietnamese-English*. Auburn: Shens Books & Supplies, 1995.

The Vietnamese version features a fish.

Paola, Tomie De. *Adelita: A Mexican Cinderella Story*. New York: Putnam Juvenile, 2002.

Students will readily recognize dePaola's style.

Pollock, Penny. *The Turkey Girl: A Zuni Cinderella Story*. New York: Little, Brown Young Readers, 1996.

Students will enjoy this Native American version of Cinderella.

Schroeder, Alan. *Smoky Mountain Rose: An Appalachian Cinderella (Picture Puffins)*. New York City: Puffin, 2000.

Whether students live in or near Appalachia, they will enjoy this version.

Sierra, Judy. *The Gift of the Crocodile: A Cinderella Story*. New York: Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, 2000.

An Indonesian version with a crocodile.

Souci, Robert D. San. *Cendrillon: A Caribbean Cinderella*. New York: Aladdin, 2002.

The illustrations are colorful and typical of San Souci.

Step toe, John. *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale*. Pueblo: Live Oak Media, 2003.

An African version with a snake.

Thomas, Joyce Carol. *The Gospel Cinderella*. New York: Amistad, 2004.

This is an unusual version of the story set in the United States.

Materials for Classroom Use

1. Copies of the three Cinderella versions being used in the unit: *The Persian Cinderella*, *Yeh-Shen, A Cinderella Story from China*, and *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*
2. A large wall map of the world
3. Response questions typed on a handout
4. Copies of the *I Am* poem structure
5. Graphic organizer for story elements
6. Triple Venn diagram for comparing/contrasting
7. Journal for reflecting on guest visits
8. Overhead projector and transparencies
9. Notebook paper and pencil for writing the story
10. *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka

Appendix

Implementing District Standards

The standards used in my unit are taken from the Richmond Public Schools *Curriculum Compass* for English and Social Sciences, which strictly adhere to the Virginia State Standards.

3.5 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fiction.

- a) Set a purpose for connections with the text.
- b) Compare and contrast settings, characters, and events.
- c) Draw conclusions about character and plot.
- d) Understand basic plots of fairy tales, myths, folktales, legends, and fables.

3.10 The student will write stories, letters, simple explanations, and short reports across all content areas.

- a. Use a variety of planning strategies.
- b. Organize information according to the type of writing.
- c. Revise writing for specific vocabulary and information.

3.11 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

- a. Understand that grammatically correct language and mechanics contribute to the meaning of writing.

3.12 The student will recognize that Americans are a people of diverse ethnic origins, customs, and traditions, who are united by the basic principles of a republican form of government and respect for individual rights and freedoms.

- a. Understand that there are benefits of diversity which include food, music, and clothing.

Notes

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9. Jack Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*.
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19. N.M. Penzer, *Poison - Damsels and Other Essays*, 229
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26. Tabona Shoko, *Karanga Indigenous Religion in Zimbabwe*, 41.
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