

ENJOYING FAIRY TALES

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THINKING SKILLS

Warm-Up Activities

The following critical thinking skills are stressed in this program:

1. **FLUENCY:** The ability to make many responses.
 - a. List as many folk and fairy tales as you can.
 - b. List all the folk and fairy tale objects you can think of that are magic.
 - c. List as many folk and fairy tale characters as you can.
2. **FLEXIBILITY:** The ability to respond in a variety of areas.
 - a. Categorize the fairy tales you listed in the fluency activity (1.a.) How many categories do you have?(Example: Tales of magic, trickery, tall tales, etc.)
 - b. Look at your list of categories. How many of you listed tall tales? Animal tales? Tales of enchantment? What other categories could we use? How many categories did you have?
 - c. Acronyms are an example of flexible thinking where one word appropriately describes an organization *and* each letter of that word is a part of the organization's name. For example: A group of fairy tale witches might belong to an organization called S. P. E. L. L. which stands for: Simply Perfect Enchantresses Lacking Love. Decide what each of the letters might stand for in the acronyms given below:

1. The seven dwarfs belong to the miner's union M. I. N. E.

2. Sleeping Beauty belongs to N. A. P.

3. The elves who helped the shoemaker belong to H. E. L. P.

4. B. I. G. is the organization for fairy tale giants.

5. The Wizard of Oz belongs to the Wizard's Union F. A. K. E.

6. The organization for fairy tale dragons is F. I. R. E.

FLEXIBILITY and ORIGINALITY

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY



Another example of flexible thinking is looking at a story from a different character's point of view.

Writers of folktales often present characters as either good or bad. "Good" characters can do no wrong. For example, it is perfectly acceptable for the hero to trick the witch or dragon but wrong for the witch or dragon to resort to trickery.

Here is a possible "other side of the story" as told by the queen in SNOW WHITE.

Read the story below. Then select your favorite fairy tale villain to transform into a hero or heroine by telling his or her side of the story.



THE MISUNDERSTOOD QUEEN

When I married the king and became Snow White's stepmother I truly loved the beautiful little girl as my own child. It was by accident one night that I overheard her talking to the ravens who, for some strange reason, gathered often at her window.

Imagine my shock to discover this lovely child chanting evil spells. First she wished upon her father both illness and death, and upon me, ugliness of such immense proportion that the entire kingdom would shun me.

To my dismay and sorrow, my beloved husband sickened and died before the year was out. Thus, I often consulted my mirror to see the first traces of the spell she had cast on me. One day I saw it! A small mole appeared just below my right eye and I knew indeed that Snow White was an evil witch whose purpose was to destroy the kingdom. I had no choice but to order her killed by the huntsman.

Your turn:

1. Write an explanation given by the troll under the bridge as to why the billy goats should not cross the bridge. Also explain how the third billy goat was wrong to toss the troll in the water.

or

2. Write a paragraph from the giant explaining how he had been robbed and his reaction to the theft when the boy, Jack, climbed the giant's beanstalk.

THINKING SKILLS continued

3. ORIGINALITY: Responding in new or unique ways.
- A. What tale(s) did you list in the fluency exercise that no one else listed?
 - B. What favorite tale could you retell in a new or unique way? Many authors have brought their own original ideas to the retelling of favorite folktales. *Pondlarker* written and illustrated by Fred Gwynne is a good example of bringing original twists to a familiar tale.



Jacket cover for *Pondlarker* illus by Fred Gwynne © 1990

Pondlarker was a young frog who loved to hear stories about princesses who kissed frogs and turned them into princes. When he leaves home to find a princess he meets many dangers but finally arrives at the palace to find a white-haired, elderly princess who claims to have kissed millions of frogs but none, alas, turned out to be her Prince Charming. "Let me kiss you," she says to Pondlarker. "Even if it turns out you aren't my Prince Charming, at least there'll be one less slimy frog in the world. And that's a good thing, I'm sure you'll agree."

Does Pondlarker agree? Think of an *original* ending for this story. Then compare your ending with that of the author.

- C. Look at the jacket illustration above for *Pondlarker* by Fred Gwynne. How many words can you list to describe Pondlarker that no one else will list?

4. ELABORATION: Adding to basic products or ideas.

- A. What could you add to Pondlarker's costume above to make it more interesting?
- B. Create a newspaper based on characters from fairy tales using elaboration to add details in articles about their activities (weddings, births, deaths, want ads, recipes etc.) See the example that follows.