

## LESSON 4: “Once Upon a Time ...”

### MATERIALS:

- Exit Slip from last class (one per student)
- Once Upon a Time Openings cut into strips (one set per group)
- Jane Yolen Once Upon a Time Quote (teacher copy)
- Character Types (one set per group)
- Word Wall card (stereotype)
- Folklorist Journals
- Index cards (one per student)

### OBJECTIVES:



#### Folktales have recognizable, formulaic elements.

- Folktales have stock or set openings and closings.
- Folktales have generic, unspecified settings.
- Folktales have stereotyped characters.

#### Students will be able to:

- read a wide range of literature to build an understanding of human experience.
- apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts.
- apply knowledge of language structures, language conventions, and genres to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.



#### Key Terms:

- Stereotype

### SEQUENCE

#### WARM-UP: Review Exit Slip from Last Class



According to the student scores on the exit slip from the last lesson, place students into three groups:

- Group 1 (a score of 3/3)
- Group 2 (a score of 2/3)
- Group 3 (a score of 1/3 or less)

Give students back their exit slips.

Then, ask the students to do a jigsaw: one student from each of the three groups should partner to create a group of



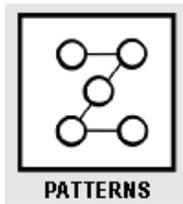
Teaching empathy is an important life skill. This activity encourages students to consider the context in which the text is situated by making personal connections with the characters.

three, consisting of one person each from Group 1, 2, and 3 to create a heterogeneous group consisting of three students.

In their groups, ask students to compare answers and to discuss any differences in their responses. Students can make a list of reasons why they agree or disagree on responses. Ask students to consider: *Why may you have the same or different responses to the same story?*

Students should tell their partners about a character they either **empathized** or **sympathized** with and explain why. If a student did not empathize or sympathize with any of the characters, they should explain why. During this time, the teacher can monitor the groups or work with individual students who are still struggling with the vocabulary/concepts.

**ACTIVITY: Fairytale Openings/Settings**



Review the Word Splash activity from the previous lesson that showed fairytales have formulaic elements (i.e., wicked, wishes, the woods, the number 3, “happily ever after,” etc.).

Fairytales have formulaic openings, settings, and characters. A formula is conceptually similar to a pattern. Fairytales have similar characters (i.e., beautiful, wicked, greedy) and similar settings (i.e., the woods). In particular, fairytales also have formulaic beginnings.

Group students into three small groups (A, B, or C) according to results from Formative Assessment 1 (Lesson 2) and distribute the Once Upon a Time Openings strips of paper to each group, as well as an index card.

Students should each take a slip, read it silently, and then pass it to the person next to them. This should continue until all of the strips have been read.

Display Once Upon a Time Openings. Ask: *Why do you think fairytales start like this?*

Independently, students should write their own answers on



You need to make multiple sets of the Once Upon a Time Openings and precut them for your groups before teaching the lesson.



The individual responses from student index cards will help teachers to monitor student progress by providing insight into students’ complexity of thought. Teachers could use these responses to identify areas where students may be struggling as well.

“The forest is a recurrent image in German fairy tales, in part

index cards. Then, in their groups, students can share their ideas and pick their favorite or best answer to share with the class (students turn in individual cards to the teacher as a means of informal assessment). The more advanced group should also be asked to generate more ways a fairytale could begin that follows the same idea as the ones they read.

Display the Jane Yolen Once Upon a Time Quote. Ask: *How is this quote similar to the answers we came up with?*

Explain that these openings signal that we have entered a fairytale place. They also tell us we are in a place that could be anywhere—even though it is set a long time ago, the woods are so general that they could be our woods.

because over a quarter of the country is comprised of forest land. In the Grimm’s tales, the forest is a supernatural world, a place where anything can happen and often does.”

(From *Hansel and Gretel* annotations, SurLaLunefairytales.com)



Ask students if they have a wooded area or forest near their homes, or perhaps

a place they have visited. Did that wooded place have any fairytale-like qualities? Or, if students have ever visited the city, ask how the tall buildings could be like the forest or woods.

**ACTIVITY: Character Types**



Allow students to break up into groups according to their interest in character types (i.e., the youngest girl, the beautiful princess, the youngest boy, the wicked stepmother, or the ogre) from the Character Types.

Then, give each group the appropriate passage. Two excerpts will have very similar, stereotypical characters (i.e., a handsome prince, a greedy witch, or a beautiful, sweet daughter). The third excerpt will feature a non-stereotypical character.

Students should share the passages using the “Say Something” strategy in their groups: One student should read his or her excerpt aloud and the other students should then say something at the end of the passage. The statement can be factual, inferential, even an opinion. The only restriction is that they not repeat what another child says. This should continue until all three excerpts are read.



Why do fairytales have stock settings and characters? One reason is listeners can

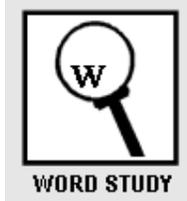
personalize the stories more easily. Another is that they are easier for storytellers to remember (this will be explained further in the Storyteller lessons).



The “Say Something” strategy can be used in partner reading while rereading for fluency.

If students finish early, encourage them to create a Venn diagram to compare and contrast the characters in the three excerpts.

**DISCUSSION/WORD WORK: Stereotype**



Once the students have completed the activity, ask the class: *What kinds of characters did you encounter in your tales* (i.e., a princess)? Record the types of characters on the board. These will become word webs, so make sure they are spread out.



Ask: *What adjectives would you use to describe the characters* (i.e., a princess is beautiful, pure, kind, etc., while an ogre is mean, huge, angry, green, violent, etc.)? Record answers on the web, with the character in the center circle, and the adjectives stemming from the center circle like a spider web.

Ask: *In which of the three excerpts is the character a little different?* In each of the passages, Excerpt C has a non-stereotypical character.

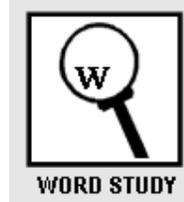
Explain that most characters in fairytales are **stereotypes**. They appear over and over in different tales—a formulaic type. Since these character types are very predictable, they are called **stereotypes**.

**KID-FRIENDLY DEFINITION: Stereotype**

A **stereotype** is a character that is simple, usually described with one or two words.

Tell students that the word **stereotype** is a noun, which can be a person, place, or thing. Add the word **stereotype** to the Word Wall and write the following sentence on the board: *Fairytales often reinforce the stereotype of a beautiful princess.*

Explain that **stereotype** can also be a verb (some words can be both): You can stereotype someone when you make an overly simplified judgment about someone.

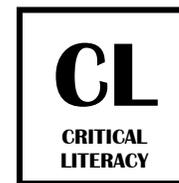


**Stereotype:** (*n*) A conventional, formulaic, and oversimplified conception,

opinion, or image. (*v*) To give a fixed, unvarying form to. (*American Heritage Dictionary*)



At this age students may not yet be saturated with character types, so they may not easily choose the non-stereotypical character in these passages; this is fine.



Encourage students to connect this activity with other stereotypes we have in our culture. Why is it important for us to examine stereotypes? Can we assume stereotypes are always correct?

Students may need a prompt for this activity. You might start by putting “football player,”

Write the following sentence on the board: *People stereotype princes as handsome and brave.*



Explain to students: *stereotypes can be harmful because they can affect how we view people. Think about the stepmother in Cinderella. What kind of a character was she? Do you think after hearing that story they could stereotype all stepmothers as being evil? Would that be accurate?*

*Stereotypes also go beyond fairytales. For example, if we have a stereotype that people from the city are rude, we might have a bad idea when we meet someone new from the city. The same goes with stereotypes about intelligence. For example, if we think girls are bad at math and boys are bad at English, it might let girls actually believe they aren't good at math, and boys might actually believe they aren't good at English.*

*This, of course, isn't true. Anyone who works hard enough can be good at anything they want. The brain never stops learning, so it's important that we don't lead others to think their abilities are limited by using stereotypes. Therefore, we shouldn't use stereotypes to limit someone or to spread negative images about a certain group of people.*

“cheerleader,” or “nerd” on the board.

**CLOSE/JOURNAL ENTRY: Unfair Stereotypes**



Ask students to think about where they live: *What stereotypes are there for people who live in the county? What about people who live in the city? Ask the students if they have ever made assumptions about someone based on what they looked like, how they talked, what they wore, or where they were from. Have they stereotyped before? Was it fair?*



Ask students to take out their Folklorist Journals and respond to the writing prompt: *Can you think of a time that you stereotyped a person then found out there was more to him or her? Why is it*

<i>so unfair to stereotype?</i>	
---------------------------------	--