

## LESSON 11: STORYTELLERS

### MATERIALS:

- Read aloud: *The Little Mermaid* opening paragraph (teacher copy)
- Word Wall cards (**adjective, storyteller**)
- *Rapunzel* (Lesson 2) and *Snow White and Rose Red* (Lesson 3) (teacher copy)
- White drawing paper (three pieces per student)
- Markers or crayons
- Formative Assessment 3 (one copy per student)
- Folklorist Journals
- Once Upon a Time Openings (from Lesson 4—optional)
- Folktale Recording Chart

### OBJECTIVES:



**BIG IDEA**

**Characters in folktales are usually stereotypes with set descriptions.**

**Characters are usually described using a single adjective.**

**Storytellers use adjectives that are evocative (not limiting) so the listeners can form a picture in their minds.**

**Folktales have stock or set openings and closings to help people remember them.**

### 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.
- participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.



**LANGUAGE**

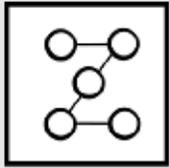
### Key Terms:

- adjectives:
  - evocative or “reader’s choice”
  - limiting or “author’s choice”
- storyteller

### Suggested Story Vocabulary:

- cornflower
- gothic
- amber

**SEQUENCE**



**PATTERNS**

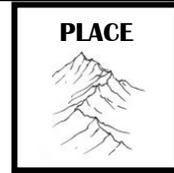
**WARM-UP/JOURNAL PROMPT:  
Story Openers**

Ask students to think about the beginnings of tales (you can reference the Once Upon a Time Openings from Lesson 4 if needed). Ask the students to provide verbal examples of some common openings that they have heard from the stories in class or elsewhere: (e.g., “Once upon a time ...”; “In olden times when wishing still helped ...”)

Ask the students to consider: *Why do you think stories begin this way?* Ask students to take out their Folklorist Journals and write a short entry based on what they know about this feature of the oral storytelling tradition.

After students are done writing, allow them to share their responses. Then, discuss how storytellers had to remember so many tales that it helped to have repeated descriptions and characters to give their stories familiar structures so that they wouldn’t forget anything.

**TEACHER NOTES**



**PLACE**

How do people where you live begin their stories? Ask several friends or family members to tell you a story and record how each story begins. Do you see any patterns?

**READ ALOUD: *The Little Mermaid* (Fairytale)**



**CLASS**

Invite students to find a comfortable place for listening. Tell them that you are going to read the opening paragraphs of *The Little Mermaid*. Instruct the students to close their eyes and to pay close attention to how the writer presents the

tale and the words he uses. Ask the students to try to visualize what is being read.

Read *The Little Mermaid* (opening paragraphs)

After reading, encourage students to share some of the words that stuck out in their minds or that helped them visualize the setting. Ask the students: *If I asked you to draw a picture of castle of the Sea King, could you do it? What adjectives or descriptions from the story would help you with your drawing?*

**ACTIVITY: Limiting v. Evocative Adjectives**

Give every student a piece of paper and some markers or crayons. Tell the students that you are going to read the opening paragraph from two stories they have already heard. Since they are familiar with the stories, tell them to focus on the words the author uses, and to visualize the story. While you are reading, students should draw the picture that forms in their mind using only the words and details provided by the **storyteller**.

Read the first paragraph from *Rapunzel* (from Lesson 2) while students quickly illustrate the picture that forms in their head of the character that is described.

Once students have finished their drawings, give them another piece of paper (or ask them to flip the paper over to the other side). Then, read the first paragraph from *Snow White and Rose Red* (from Lesson 3) as the students quickly illustrate characters as accurately as possible.

Once you are done reading, ask the students to turn and compare drawings with neighbors. Ask the students to consider: *How are your drawings similar? How are they different? How did you know what to draw?*

Display the two fairytales on the projector/Smartboard, if you have one. Remind students that **storytellers** use **adjectives** to describe nouns. These words can help describe an object so that we can easily visualize it. Add these words to the Word Wall.

As a whole class, highlight the adjectives from the first paragraph in *The Rapunzel* (i.e., poor, old, wicked). Then repeat this with the *Snow White and Rose Red* (i.e., sweetest, hardworking, cheerful, gentle). Ask: *Which words or descriptions let you use your imagination to draw your own picture? Which word creates a specific image?*

Explain to students that when writing descriptions, we sometimes learn to use specific adjectives and descriptions. In storytelling, however, we want to choose adjectives that are not too specific, but are evocative—words that that let



Students are not required to know or use the word “evocative,” but to understand that characters can be described in two ways. Another way to explain the difference: adjectives can either be author’s choice or reader’s choice. With a limiting adjective, the author tells the reader what the character is like. With a “reader’s choice” adjective, the author suggests something, but the reader gets to use his or her imagination.

readers draw their own pictures in their minds.



LANGUAGE

**KID-FRIENDLY DEFINITION:**

A limiting adjective tells what something looks like; an evocative adjective suggests what something looks like. For example, if someone tells a person how to do something, he or she should do it that way. If someone suggests how to do something, a person can do it that way or do it another way.

Using evocative adjectives is especially important with oral folktales that will be listened to, not read. (Literary fairytales or modern tales, which will be examined next, are sometimes more detailed and descriptive.)

As a whole class, look at the displayed fairytales. Find the highlighted adjectives. Identify the highlighted adjectives as being evocative or limiting by circling evocative adjectives and underlining limiting adjectives.

Example:

Blue eyes

Dancing, sparkling eyes

Five-feet tall

Petite, slight stature

**PRACTICE/HOMEWORK: Adjectives**

*Challenge:* Ask students to select a character from one of the tales read in class (i.e., a hero, villain, etc.) or to think of a particular character or character type that they may want to create when they write their own folktale later.



INDEPENDENT

Ask students to write that character's name at the top of a piece of paper and then to fold it in half. On one side of the paper, the student should write a brief description of that character using evocative (suggesting/reader's choice) words. On the other side of the paper, the student should describe that character using only limited (telling./writer's choice) descriptions.



PLACE

As an optional homework assignment, encourage students to continue working with adjectives by writing limited and evocative descriptions of familiar people, places, or events in the community. Then, have the students read their evocative description to a friend or family member first to see if they can guess what is being described, and then read the limiting description. Ask: *Which description is easier for the friend or family member to identify? Why do you think that description was easier? What words did you use in your descriptions?*

Allow students time to finish their two descriptions in class. For homework, ask the students to go home and give a friend or family member a separate piece of paper that is folded in half.

On the left-hand side, ask the friend or family member to draw a picture of what they think the character looks like based solely on the first (suggesting/evocative) description. Then, on the right-hand side, ask the friend or family member to draw a picture of what they think the character looks like based solely on the second (telling/limiting) description.

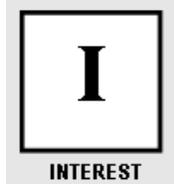
After the friend or family member is done drawing, ask them two follow-up questions and have them write down their answers in their Folklorist Journals:

*Which description was easiest to draw? (Explain why)*

*Which description did you like the best? (Explain why)*

Have students bring the descriptions, pictures, and journal to the next class to share.

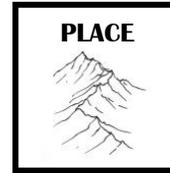
### ACTIVITY: Telling a Group Story



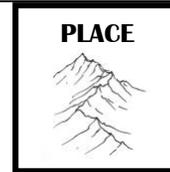
In the next class, students will try their hand at storytelling in the safety of a group. Today, ask students to look at the list of tales that have been studied so on their Folktale Recording Chart and to select a folktale that they enjoyed. Students can also choose another folktale from an anthology or picture book, but since they have limited time, it would best if they choose a tale that they are familiar with.

Give students a few minutes to select their tales and then tell you their decisions. Group students who show interest in the same or similar folktale together.

Once they decide what tale to tell, groups must divide the story and decide who will read certain parts. Students may divide the story by paragraph or by event. They may choose to have different students read dialogue to show different voices of characters. They may read their individual sections straight from the text, or they may retell the story in their own words. Encourage students to think about how many characters are in their story, and to ensure that every person



This homework assignment allows friends and family members to become involved in what the student is learning, and is an engaging way to reinforce concepts learned in class and to share what the student is learning with others.



In their groups, students can choose to read or retell a familiar tale, or to create an original. If students wish to create their own tale, encourage them to select a topic that is familiar to them by thinking about the people, things, and places surrounding where they live. Is there a story hidden there that needs to be told?

in the group has a speaking part in the story.

Students must have a tale selected and parts assigned by the end of class. The students will perform their tales in the next lesson.



**READINESS**

**DIFFERENTIATION: Giving Guidance**

In storytelling you must begin and end strong. If students within groups cannot get organized, the teacher can step in and assign students parts that better address their readiness levels.

**CLOSE/ASSESS: Evocative or Limiting?**



**GROUP**

To review, spiral back to the story that was read at the beginning of the lesson. Ask students to turn to a partner and discuss: *Do you think Hans Christian Andersen’s opening to The Little Mermaid is a good way to tell a story?*

*Can you imagine the setting in your head, or is it too specific? What kind of words and language would you use in your own tale?*

Give students Formative Assessment 3. There are three versions of this assessment with increasing levels of difficulty: (1) easiest, (2) on level, and (3) advanced.

The teacher can give students the appropriate assessment based on pre-determined reading levels from his or her personal assessments. Or, the teacher can have every student start with the easiest version of the formative assessment. As students finish, they can turn the assessment in, and the teacher can quickly skim the student’s answers in order to determine if the next level formative assessment should be given, or if the student should stop.

**PREPARATION: Review Formative Assessment 3**

Review the Formative Assessment 3 in order to monitor student progress and to inform instruction. These results will be used to determine the passage that will be read during the activity in Lesson 13.

Score each assessment based on correct responses:



**PLACE**

*Ask: If you were telling a story that describes a particular place where you live (like Hans Christian Andersen described the Sea King’s castle in the first paragraph of The Little Mermaid), what words would you use? Would you use evocative or limiting language? Would your word choice change depending on if you were describing where you live to someone who also lives inside the area versus someone living outside?*

*Ask: Sometimes our word choices are guided by the purpose of writing. If you were going to give someone who does not live in the area directions, would you want to use evocative or limiting words? Why?*

- 1) Easiest form: 8 possible points (one for each correctly filled blank)
- 2) On-level form: 8 possible points (one for each correctly filled blank)
- 3) Advanced form: 8 possible points (4 points for a correctly composed limiting description, 4 points for a correctly composed evocative description).

Students will then be divided into two groups: Group 1 will be students who only were able to complete the easiest form, and students who received a score of 5/8 points or lower on the on-level form. Group 2 will be the students who were able to complete the advanced form, and students who received a 6/8 or higher on the on-level form.