

Grimm Tales



TELL YOUR OWN TALE

Retell a story you heard today as if it happened yesterday, not ‘once upon a time’. Change the names of characters to more modern names, change the names of places to places you know, but keep the basic outline of the story the same. If there is a magic fairy, elf, or other creature, how could you update this character to something more contemporary?

Use your voice, body and imagination to retell the story. How might you change your VOICE for different characters? How might you use your BODY if you had to tell it silently? Close your eyes and see the story in your IMAGINATION. TELL, do not read, your story. Practice telling it to yourself, a mirror, your mom, your friend, and your cat. Practice, Practice, PRACTICE. When you think you have told the story well, ask your teacher if you could tell your story to the class.

REWRITE A GRIMM TALE

Go to the library and read several Grimm Tales until you find one that you like. Find three different versions of the same fairy tale translated by different authors. Find a children’s picture book version. Look for the same story in a book that is a collection of stories and another on-line. Wikipedia is a good place to start, but be sure to follow the links to read the stories:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brothers_Grimm

To learn more about the Grimm Brothers’ lives and read all their tales here are two web pages: www.grimmstories.com/
www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm.html

Make a brief list of what you like about each version of your favorite story. How are they alike? How are they different? Decide which one you like best and why. Write a brief outline of the plot to help you remember beginning, middle and end. Draw a series of 5 small pictures to help you learn the story. Rewrite the story in your own words using ideas from each of the different sources. Read the story out loud and rewrite it focusing on the

sounds and rhythms. Stand up and act it out, then rewrite the action, verbs and adverbs. Read the story several times until you know it well. Do not memorize, remember the order of events and tell it with your words. Make a DVD of your performance and submit it to:

www.nationalyouthstorytellingshowcase.org/

DIG A LITTLE DEEPER

Many scholars have written about the psychological importance of these Grimm Tales. The stories help us to deal with real fear and important life issues. Little Red Riding Hood is about stranger danger; Hansel and Gretel is about the fear of parents abandoning you and how to overcome evil. What is the theme or psychological underpinning of your story? What lesson can we learn? Write a short essay that explores the metaphors and meaning in your favorite Grimm Tale.

RESEARCH YOUR CULTURAL STORY

The Brothers Grimm collected German folktales. Joseph Jacobs collected English, Irish, and Indian Fairy Tales like “Jack and the Beanstalk” and “The Three Little Pigs.” Harold Courlander collected African and Asian Folktales. Joseph Bruchac collects Native American stories. And Margaret Read Macdonald collects stories from around the world. Ask your librarian to help you find a fairy tale from your culture. Learn it and tell it! www.surlalunefairytales.com has put together dozens of e-books of fairy tales from around the world, some wonderful resources for teachers and students, and 1,500 images from fairy tale books.

For more information on how to tell a story please visit my web page and click on the animated fox to read a series of “How-To” articles I have written.

