What’s in a Fairy Tale?

Learning objectives

• Use characters, action, and narratives to convey a story, a theme, and emotions
• Create dialogue around experiences, events, and characters’ responses to given situations
• Sequence and retell story events while evaluating speech
• Distinguish between formal and informal language when speaking and writing
• Express and develop ideas through collaborative discussion
• Determine and utilize characteristics of the fairy tale genre

Setting the scene

The stranger watches closely as he gives the chalice to the disguised princess. She eyes it warily. “Should I drink it?” the princess asks herself. “Will it really make my dreams come true? Or does disaster await at the bottom of this cup?” The contents seem to bubble as a steady stream of smoke wafts toward her. A moment later the empty chalice clatters to the floor.

Ask students to discuss the characteristics of the fairy tale genre: How do fairy tales differ from other types of texts, such as non-fiction? What do most fairy tales have in common? What is the purpose of fairy tales? Create a class list of fairy tale characteristics.

Building the story

Ask the students to work in teams. Have them brainstorm ideas and then create a storyboard for a three or five scene drama depicting what happens to the disguised princess. Remind students to use the list of characteristics of the fairy tale genre to guide their stories. Encourage them to consider how these characteristics influence the plot.

Reflecting, sharing, and documenting

Have the students use the StoryVisualizer software to document their dramas and share with the class. Encourage students to focus on the correct sequence of events and utilize transitional words. Compare and contrast stories:

• How do characteristics of the fairy tale genre affect your story?
• Though each group started with the same prompt, how do the endings vary?
• What is the purpose, lesson, or moral of your story?