

Subject Area: Language Arts  
Grade Level: Middle School

## **Fables and Folktales**

### **Purpose/Rationale**

This assessment task invites each student to develop an original fable or folktale within the context of a storytelling festival in the year 2060. A planning worksheet and scoring rubric enable students to consider purpose, sequencing, character development, symbolism, word usage, expressiveness, and time management when preparing their project.

### **Knowledge, Skill, and Disposition Objectives**

Students will demonstrate their ability to:

- create a story with a message/purpose.
- sequence an orally presented story in a way that is easy for the listener to follow.
- use symbolism effectively in their storytelling.
- select and use colorful nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs appropriately.
- vary the tone and volume of their voice to add drama to their storytelling.
- complete a project in a timely manner.

### **Related Standards of Learning**

#### ***English***

Students will:

- use verbal communication skills such as word choice, pitch, feeling, tone, and voice.
- organize and synthesize information for use in written and oral presentations.
- elaborate on a central idea in an organized manner.

### **Prerequisite Knowledge/Skills**

Students must have:

- experience reading and listening to a variety of fables and folktales from different times and regions.
- working understanding of the elements of folktales and fables, including how these stories reflect cultural messages.
- working understanding of symbolism.
- experience in public speaking.

### **Context**

This task can serve as a culminating assessment for a unit of study on fables and folktales. Planning should be conducted during class time. Final story development can take

Moon, T. R., Callahan, C. M., Brighton, C. M., Tomlinson, C. A. (2002). *Development of differentiated performance assessment tasks for middle school classrooms* (RM02160). University of Connecticut, The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented. <https://nrcgt.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/953/2015/04/rm02160.pdf>

place in school or at home. The storytelling festival should take place during school hours and be promoted as a celebration of the spoken word.

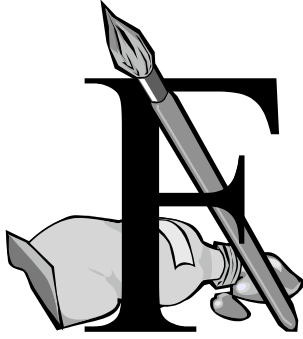
### **Rater**

It is important to clearly explain both the task and the scoring rubric to students before they begin work on the project. As each component of the rubric is explained, solicit and/or provide illustrations of quality performance, drawing examples from the stories students have read or listened to in class.

This task is to be rated by the teacher; rubric could also be used or adapted for peer review.

### **Prompt**

This task is designed for students functioning at grade level in language arts skills such as story writing and oral presentation. Students functioning below grade level may need additional help and/or coaching.



## Fables and Folktales

A good storyteller grabs the imagination of his or her audience and holds the listeners captive with the tales he or she is telling. You have learned about fables and different types of folktales—Trickster Tales, How-and-Why Stories, and Tales of Enchantment, etc. Now it is your turn to weave your own magic.

The Situation: The year is 2060. You have lived a long life and learned much along the way. A teacher at a local middle school has invited you to participate in the annual storytelling festival hosted by the school. You must create your own fable or folktale to share with the students.

In the process of developing your story, you will need to ask yourself a number of questions, including the following:

- What type of story do I want to tell?
- What message/moral/explanation/advice do I want my story to give to the listeners?
- How will I use symbolism to connect my story to universal themes that transcend time and/or place?
- Do I want to modernize or revise an old story, or create a brand-new one?
- Who will my characters be and what will they be like?
- What will my story be about?
- How will my story unfold? What will happen first? What will happen next, etc.?
- What story telling techniques will I use in sharing my story with others?

As you decide on answers to these questions, record your ideas on the planning page provided (front and back). Once this form is complete, have the teacher look it over and initial it when he or she is satisfied that you are ready to put the pieces together into a well-crafted story.

As you develop the story itself, think about how you can make the words, details, and expressiveness of your voice more interesting and/or exciting.

The storytelling festival is scheduled for \_\_\_\_\_.

Come prepared. Your work will be evaluated using a score sheet like the one attached.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Planning Page

### Type of Story

Part 1 (check all that apply)

Part 2 (check one)

- \_\_\_ Fable
- \_\_\_ Trickster Tale
- \_\_\_ How-and-Why Story
- \_\_\_ Tale of Enchantment
- \_\_\_ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_ Modernization or Revision of Old Story
- \_\_\_ Brand New Story

Main Point/Message

Characters

Name	Physical Description	Personality Characteristics

**Plot Summary** (Briefly, what will your story be about?)

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**Sequence of Events** (Step-by-step, what will happen in your story?)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

**Presentation Format** (check one)

Live!

Audio Tape Recording

Video Tape Recording

\_\_\_\_\_ **Planning Page Complete**  
**(Teacher's Initials)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Folktales and Fables Rubric

	<b>Wondrous Wordsmith (3 Points)</b>	<b>Skillful Storyteller (2 points)</b>	<b>Tale-Teller in Training (1 point)</b>
<b>Purpose</b>  <b>Score: _____</b>	The story you tell clearly and powerfully leads your listener to understand and appreciate the main idea/message.	The listener is able to understand the purpose of your story.	The main point of your story is unclear. The listeners are left unsure of the message you are trying to get across.
<b>Sequencing</b>  <b>Score: _____</b>	You effortlessly lead your listener along your story's path—from the introduction of the characters to the final resolution of conflict.	There are minor inconsistencies or gaps in the sequencing of your story. Still, listeners are able to understand and follow the basic series of events.	The listener is unable to follow your story. The sequence of events that you use is illogical or overly cumbersome.
<b>Symbolism</b>  <b>Score: _____</b>	Characters and events in your story are clearly symbolic of people and happenings across time and/or generations.	You use symbolism to represent people or happenings, but the symbolism does not easily transfer or connect to other times and/or generations.	There was little or no symbolism apparent in your story, OR the symbolism does not transfer to other times and/or generations.
<b>Word Usage</b>  <b>Score: _____</b>	You use vivid and powerful nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs when telling your story. Your listener can visualize in detail what happens.	You use nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs appropriately to express your ideas. Your listener is able to picture events or people in your story.	You do not make appropriate use of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Your listener is unable to visualize people or events in your story.
<b>Expressiveness</b>  <b>Score: _____</b>	Your story comes to vibrant life as you vary the tone and volume of your voice to match what is happening in your story.	Your voice is clear as you tell your story, but you do not vary your tone of voice and/or volume in a way that captivates and holds the listener's attention.	It is difficult to hear you as you tell the story. You do not vary your volume or tone of voice.
<b>Timeliness</b>  <b>Score: _____</b>	You are prepared and present your story at the festival as scheduled.	You are not prepared to present your story at the scheduled time, but you present it within 1-2 days.	You are not prepared to present your story at the scheduled time or within 2 days of the festival, OR you do not tell a story.

**Total Score:** \_\_\_\_\_