



Curriculum Unit Title: Lessons from Southern Ghosts: Themes of Folklore and Fairytales

by Shannon McFarland, 2021 CTI Fellow
Alexander Graham Middle School

This curriculum unit is recommended for:
English Language Arts classes, grades 6-8

Keywords: Folktales, Cautionary Tales, Scary Stories, Short Stories, EL Curriculum, Theme, Plot, Read Aloud, Podcasts

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: Students will read and analyze southern folklore and stories. They will examine the purpose of the story and the themes that the story communicates. The students will answer essential questions such as “why do folktales endure?”, “What lessons can we learn from fear?”, and “How does one tell an engaging story?”

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 75 students in 8th grade English Language Arts classes.

I give permission for Charlotte Teachers Institute to publish my curriculum unit in print and online. I understand that I will be credited as the author of my work.

Introduction

Rationale

Throughout our seminar meetings, our group of fellows had countless conversations about literature, Southern culture, and, most frequently, how to bring the literature and culture to our students. We may teach a variety of contents and grade levels, but our conversations brought us all to the same obstacle: the restrictive nature of district curriculum. Besides the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and the impending End of Grade Level state tests that dictate the material we cover in our classroom; Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools provides teachers with comprehensive curriculums with the intention of ensuring equitable education to all students regardless of the school they attend.

While the intention of our administration is admirable, many teachers are left with little control over the content of their lessons or the style in which they are taught. Given this challenge, many of the fellows, including myself, have created curriculum units that will wedge into our given pacing calendars. My curriculum unit that follows will supplement the first module of the eighth grade English Language Arts curriculum, which explores the world of Latin American folklore through the novel *Summer of the Mariposas* by Guadalupe Garcia McCall. Throughout this module, student learn about traditional Latin American folklore creatures as the follow a group of sisters on their hero's journey through Mexico and the spirit realm. The unit that I am planning to succeed Module 1 will introduces the students to folklore stories of the American South. We will discuss why folktales endure, what lessons they impart, how to tell a story in an engaging way.

This curriculum unit gives teachers a chance to reteach a few of the skills students were introduced to in the first required module, while incorporating different teaching strategies using regionally relevant texts. Not only is literature a portal to other places and worlds, but it's a chance to better learn about where we are and where we come from. Students will get to engage with texts that take place in locations that are familiar or close by.

Demographics

I will teach this unit to 8th grade students at Alexander Graham Middle School. Our student population is about 30% white, 30% Black, 30% Hispanic and LatinX, and about 10% other ethnic groups. Students in honors sections are usually within the 70th percentile and higher, and our standard classes can range from the 1st to the 80th.

The variety of demographic groups is fairly new for Alexander Graham Middle School. As few as three years ago, our school was predominantly white with a small population of African American students, and even smaller populations of students from other racial backgrounds. This newfound diversity drives the need to create more inclusive and culturally relevant reading lists and strategies. In this curriculum unit, as we examine folktales, there will be opportunities to discuss the contribution of all types of cultures to our country. Students will read stories that introduce them to entirely different cultural

backgrounds and see that, in reality, they are not so different from their own values and beliefs.

Objectives

One of the important skills that my unit will address is to help students build their bank of archetypal characters, conflicts, and themes. So much of art and literature today is based on something already created. Recognizing a reference to another work, or how all versions of certain stories are linked can help students more successfully read new or more challenging literature. This concept is touched on in the first module of the eighth grade ELA required curriculum, but the word ‘archetype’ is not used. In this curriculum unit, students will take their learning from the first module and continue to add to it while discussing related texts.

When it comes to the themes and lessons learned from folklore, I hope to facilitate critical discussions about the merit of their messages. Not all messages serve us today. I want to discuss with students whether they think the implicit expectations of people are still relevant or obsolete.

While we will focus mostly on the stories themselves, this curriculum unit also affords the opportunity to touch on Social Studies objectives. When reading stories about Western North Carolina, students will examine a map of the region to better understand the geography of the area. The development of many folktales is tied to the landscape that surrounded to people who told the stories. Discussion about immigration, diasporas, and terrain will help students better understand the stories and the place.

Content Research

What is folklore?

The more one researches the definition of folklore, the more nebulous it becomes. Jonas Balys defines folklore as comprising “traditional creations of peoples, primitive and civilized. These are achieved by using sounds and words in metric form and prose, and include also folk beliefs or superstitions, customs and performances, dances and plays. Moreover, folklore is not a science about a folk, but the traditional folk-science and folk-poetry (Definitions of Folklore).” B.A. Botkin notes “In a purely oral culture everything is folklore. In modern society what distinguishes folklore from the rest of culture is the preponderance of the handed-down over the learned element and the prepotency that the popular imagination derives from and gives to custom and tradition.” Theodore H. Gaster’s definition is “Folklore is that part of a people's culture which is preserved, consciously or unconsciously, in beliefs and practices, customs and observances of general currency, in myths, legends, and tales of common acceptance; and in arts and crafts which express the temper and genius of a group rather than of an individual.” Based on these definitions, it’s my understanding that folklore is somewhat of a collection of artifacts from a culture or community that is preserved through oral sharing. When examined, folklore demonstrates the values and customs of the culture. These values stay relevant even as time passes. The stories told may change but their integrity is largely uncompromised. In essence,

folklore is an umbrella term that encompasses the stories, myths, traditions, rules, customs, and music of a people.

For the purpose of this curriculum unit, I will be focusing on folk stories and myths. It's impossible to trace the true origin of a folktale, as the stories travel by word of mouth. Many are now printed in children's books and anthologies, with varying versions depending on the transposer's source. Folktales have become so familiar to us that many take their humble but enduring history for granted. After reading a considerable number of stories, I've noticed several character types, conflicts, and purposes that seem to be a cornerstone of the genre.

The hero is an archetype as old as the story itself and are also a mainstay of folktales as well. Folk heroes are known for their ability to overcome their obstacle using cunning and intellect. A folk hero is clever, sometimes behaving in morally questionable ways in order to succeed (Seal, xiii). Odysseus and Tom Sawyer, both heroes of their stories, overcome their foes in much the same way: trickery. Regardless of the country of origin, people latch on to stories where the character can withstand challenges using unconventional methods.

Of the four types of conflict, folktales tend to tell stories of man versus man, and man versus nature most frequently. This could come from the explanatory nature of folktales. Many cultures used stories to express their understanding of where we come from and why we are here (Leeming, 12). In America, Native Americans used stories such as "The Sky Father" and "The Earth Mother" to explain the creation of the world as they understood it. As the colonies formed, slaves were brought over, and the United States developed, other creation stories melted into the fabric of tales shared. There were stories that explained why there are stars in the sky, why crops didn't flourish, and where we go when we pass away. With this purpose, and a lack of scientific understanding, the villains of the stories were natural elements and phenomena.

Besides the need to explain the unexplainable, folktales serve many purposes for early communities of people. One obvious need was that of entertainment. Stories were told for the sheer need to take up time in an enjoyable way. As Africans were torn from their homes and forced into slavery in America, stories became a source of comfort and hope during a time of severe duress and horror (Hamilton, x). Through the years, the stories endured, and helped countless children and adults escape their reality for a moment with humor and fantasy.

Another folktale purpose was to communicate caution. Stories provide suspenseful arguments for adults to use to keep kids away from dangerous places and people. Stories like "Little Red Riding Hood" and a number of others from the Brothers Grimm, help parents teach lessons of what happens to children who do not listen or go where they should not. More modern folklore stories could also be tales of caution, but they tend to serve more of an entertainment purpose. Stories of ghosts and witches, haunted houses and supernatural occurrences on dead end streets both tell the reader to beware something unexplainable, while exciting and engaging the audience.

Folklore as Inspiration

In the South especially, the stories passed down through history continue to inspire authors. As America navigated wars, the end of established slavery, and emerging industry, young novelists who are now considered authors of the classics sought out folktales to add depth and collective understanding to their stories. Writers like Mark Twain and William Faulkner immortalized Southern dialects in their pages, creating characters that showed both the charisma and horror of the South. These authors and many others used motifs, or a dominant and recurring idea, to anchor their stories. Hennig Cohen gives examples of such anchoring with Edgar Allan Poe's story "The Gold Bug," which uses the folk motif of buried treasure as the base of the story (Cohen, 66).

Children's stories and young adult novels today also draw on folktales to create new stories for children. *The Summer of the Mariposas* by Guadelupe Garcia McCall is modeled after *The Odyssey* but is mixed with creatures from Latin American folklore. *We are the Water Protectors* by Carole Lindstrom uses animal allegory to depict the advocacy of indigenous people for cleaning and caring for water sources.

Folktales have stood the test of time for a reason; they are relatable, relevant stories that communicate timeless lessons. Our most revered authors and those continuing to create today understand the merit of folktales, and the importance of continuing to pass them along.

Contemporary Folklore

Stories of the unexplained and mysterious are still collected and passed around communities today, and this is what could be considered modern folklore. Sarah Pitzer writes in her book *Myths and Mysteries of North Carolina: True Stories of the Unsolved and Unexplained*, that "it must be human nature, when faced with what we don't know, to try to find, or create, explanations. So legends grow from how we explain to ourselves the things we don't understand. The legend of 'Tsul 'Kalu and the Judaculla Rock' is a good example. Some of the giant's roaring, leaping from mountaintop to mountaintop in a rage, cursing braves who upset him, must be how early tribes of Cherokee people accounted for thunder, lightning, and bad luck hunting. It must also be human nature to keep looking for additional information as we do learn about the world. Today, with thunder and lightning pretty well understood, folks acknowledge that old legend as a story that's been passed down over generations, but they still want to explain the strange markings on the rock, since no giant actually etched them with his toenails. Such curiosity seems to lead us from understanding into the next question (Pitzer, x)." As time passes, mysteries are solved, but some never are, and sometimes new mysteries emerge. In the case of local modern folklore, many stories tend to be accounts of hauntings or strange phenomena. Sometimes, these stories are tied to an historical event that took place on the land, or a person who passed away. Haunting stories are not always given an explanation, which leads the reader or listener to interpret in their own way. With the advent of the internet and social media, folk stories travel and perish much more rapidly. It takes a special blend of explainable and unexplainable factors and suspenseful intrigue for a modern folktale to enter any period of longevity. Regardless of our ability to debunk almost any tall tale, people everywhere still enjoy a good ghost story.

Mentor Texts

Mountain Jack Tales

Jack Tales are a prime example of a folktale's longevity. Originating in Scotland and Ireland, the Jack Tales traveled to America with immigrants from across the pond. European folklore includes stories of mythical beasts such as faeries, giants, trolls, mermaids, and many more, most being nefarious and beguiling. Many of the Scotch-Irish immigrants settled in the Appalachian Mountains, creating homes in isolation from larger cities. The Jack Tales flourished in these small rural communities, adapting to the terrain and animals, and became a cornerstone of mountain lore. The stories endured here in rural America in a way that they did not in the United Kingdom, possibly because many of those Appalachian communities are still isolated enough that fantastic stories continue to be a relevant form of entertainment.

Although they've been retold and transposed many times, Gale Haley's illustrated *Mountain Jack Tales* offer the reader a vivid retelling with a frame story narrated by the charismatic Poppyseed (Haley, 3). Haley, a famous children's author and illustrator from North Carolina, pairs her retelling of the Jack Tales with lemonwood block engravings that hold the same nostalgic warmth as the stories themselves. Readers of this story set are transported to Poppyseed's porch, with all the sensory details of a mountain holler homestead. The stories are meant to be read aloud in order to hear the characteristic dialect of the narrator as she describes Jack's adventures and the lessons he learns along the way.

The People Could Fly

Virginia Hamilton introduces this collection of stories by describing the value they held for enslaved Black people in America. "The African in them was forcibly suppressed by the white slaveowners. They were not supposed to speak in their own languages. The slaveowners made them speak American English but forbade them to learn to read or write it. They were compelled to do hard labor and exhorted never to run away. Alone and helpless, the slaves live under condition as brutal as any group of people has ever endured. It is amazing that the former Africans could ever smile and laugh, let alone make up riddles and songs and jokes and tell tales. As slaves, they were forced to live without citizenship, without rights, as property- like horses and cows- belonging to someone else. But no amount of hard labor and suffering could suppress their powers of imagination (Hamilton, x)." Although they came to America under completely different pretenses, African people brought their stories just the same as the Scotch-Irish. With such vastly different landscapes and animals, the African tales eventually transformed to reflect the rabbits, bears, and deer that were spotted near plantations.

This collection of American Black folktales communicates stories of strength, hope, caution, and humor. Hamilton writes with a dialect that depicts realistic Black English, helping readers to truly hear the voices of the original story tellers. Paired with the stories, are illustrations by Leo and Diane Dillon. Like the stories, the illustrations have both magical and realistic elements that add to the reader's understanding as well as enhance the reader's imagination.

Mysterious Tales of Western North Carolina

The word folklore has a connotation of stories from a time long gone, historical in nature, but folktales are alive and well, still being passed on, and created today. Sherman Carmichael's collection of stories tells "true" accounts of hauntings, strange lights, and other unexplained phenomena in Western North Carolina. The stories are short and engaging, offering excitement from proximity. The author introduces his collection by recollecting time he spent as a child with friends absorbed in tales of the unknown. Carmichael and his friends grew up continuing to chase those stories, asking the question "what if" at each mysterious encounter. Children today still enjoy a good ghost story as they did in Carmichael's childhood, and his short stories are an excellent way to engage them. Lucy Elliott's accompanying illustrations add to the macabre and mystic elements of the stories, with small, wispy images that enhance several tales.

Instructional Implementation

Teaching Strategies

Mentor Texts

Described above are the mentor texts that will be used in this curriculum unit. A mentor text is a text which the lessons and activities revolve around. In English Language Arts classrooms, teachers find mentor texts helpful for teaching multiple skills because once students become familiar with a short story or a novel, the text can be returned to repeatedly to consult from a new angle. For example, in this unit, students will practice both identifying theme and analyzing the development of suspense. When using a mentor text, like one of the short stories in Virginia Hamilton's *The People Could Fly*, students would first read the story and discuss the theme, then they would revisit the story to understand how Hamilton creates suspense for the reader. Since students already know the plot of the story, they no longer have to focus on comprehension and are able to examine the text for more nuanced details.

Read Aloud

While reading aloud to students is an understood priority in elementary classrooms, it is a severely underrated strategy in middle and high school classrooms. Reading to students helps them understand how to pronounce words, pause effectively for understanding, and add inflection. Many children grow up without being read to by an adult, which makes this opportunity even more important. With folktales, the stories are meant to be read aloud, which makes this a pinnacle strategy for ensuring the lessons are effective.

Jigsaw Readings

This is a productive strategy to use when students need to read a significant amount in a short period of time. For this unit, students will be sorted into small groups, assigned a folktale, and given a reading guide. In their group, they will read their assigned story and complete their reading guide. After all groups are finished, students will be regrouped so that students will get to discuss with partners who read all of the other stories. This allows each student to relay their understanding of their assigned text while also learning from their group about the other texts.

This strategy is useful when reading particularly long nonfiction texts as well. The article or chapter can be broken up by subheading and divided among groups. Jigsaw readings help hold students accountable with comprehension and collaboration.

Socratic Seminar

A Socratic Seminar is a highly structure group discussion. Students are given a series discussion questions that they are provided time to research and answer with textual evidence. On the day of the discussion, students are organized into a formation where some students may discuss their research and some students may observe their peers’ discussion. There are multiple formations, but the most common is an inner and outer circle. The students who sit inside the circle with discuss and share first, and the students outside the circle observe, or possibly assist their peers in the inner circle. Once half of the questions have been discussed, the two circles of students should switch to give the outer group a chance to talk.

Socratic Seminars are an engaging way to have students dive deep into themes of literature. With students reading multiple folktales, the seminar discussion will be a chance for them to draw connections between the stories and tease out the deeper meanings.

Lesson Plans

The following lessons are planned for a two-week period. This unit was created in order to supplement the first module of El Education’s eighth grade curriculum. Students are intended to have some background knowledge of folklore before beginning this unit. Most lessons could be separated and taught in isolation if desired. Materials for lessons are listed in Appendix 2 and handouts are produced in Appendix 3.

<i>Lesson 1: Introduction to Southern Folklore</i>	
Prepare the Learner	Students will complete a warm up activity, where they answer the quick write question: What do you know about folklore? After a short period of silent time, students will share their answers with the class.
Interact with the Text	The teacher will introduce the unit by defining folklore with students. Students will share what they believe would be examples of American folklore.
Extend the Learning	Students will read chapter 1 of <i>Early American Legends and Folktales</i> by Joanne Randolph and answer text dependent questions.

Closure and Assessment	Students will check their answers to the text dependent questions.
------------------------	--

<i>Lesson 2: Early African American Folklore</i>	
Prepare the Learner	Students will complete a warm up activity, where they read the introduction to <i>The People Could Fly</i> by Virginia Hamilton. They will answer the quick write question: Based on the introduction, why did Virginia Hamilton find it important to accurately record the dialect of the original story tellers? After a short period of silent time, students will share their answers with the class.
Interact with the Text	The teacher will guide students through a mini lesson in theme. Using the short story “He Lion, Bruh Bear, and Bruh Rabbit,” students will examine how lessons were conveyed in the stories circulating early slave quarters in America.
Extend the Learning	Students will participate in a jigsaw reading of several stories from <i>The People Could Fly</i> . Students will work in groups using a reading guide to determine the theme of their assigned story. After the first grouping, students will be regrouped to discuss all of the assigned stories. Students will discuss similarities, differences, and overarching themes.
Closure and Assessment	Students will share their thoughts about the stories with the class.

<i>Lesson 3: Early European American Folktales</i>	
Prepare the Learner	Students will complete a warm up activity, where they read the introduction to <i>Mountain Jack Tales</i> by Gale E. Haley. They will answer the quick write question: Based on the introduction, what lesson does Gale Haley plan to communicate in the collection of stories? After a short period of silent time, students will share their answers with the class.
Interact with the Text	The teacher will guide students through a mini lesson about story elements including types of conflict and character traits. Students will read “Poppyseed’s Invitation” and analyze the narrator’s character.
Extend the Learning	Students will participate in a jigsaw reading of stories from <i>Mountain Jack Tales</i> using a reading guide. Afterwards, students will be regrouped and create a plot diagram for the character Jack using all of the stories.
Closure and Assessment	Students will share and compare their timelines with the class.

<i>Lesson 4: Socratic Seminar Preparation</i>

Prepare the Learner	Students will complete a warm up activity, where they answer the quick write question: Who were the heroes in the stories we have read so far? After a short period of silent time, students will share their answers with the class.
Interact with the Text	The teacher will facilitate a lesson about protagonist characters and the traits of a hero. Students will participate in a Socratic Seminar in the next lesson. The Teacher will explain the assignment expectations.
Extend the Learning	Students will use stories from both <i>The People Could Fly</i> and <i>Mountain Jack Tales</i> to research the Socratic Seminar questions. Their answers should include evidence from the stories.
Closure and Assessment	Any unfinished work will be considered homework.

<i>Lesson 5: Folk Heroes Socratic Seminar Discussion</i>	
Prepare the Learner	Students will check over their answers to discussion questions and ensure they are prepared.
Interact with the Text	Before Class: The teacher should organize the desks in their classroom into two circles. Each circle should be able to seat half of the students in the class. During Class: Students should be sorted into two groups. One group will discuss first and sit in the inner circle. The second group will sit in the outer circle and record their observations of the inner circle's discussion. After the first group discusses, the two groups will switch roles and seats. The teacher should review expectations of academic conversations with students.
Extend the Learning	Students will partake in a discussion about the heroes in the folktales they have read so far. They will talk about the similarities and differences of the heroes, and if there are any cornerstones of the hero characters.
Closure and Assessment	Students will complete a reflection exit ticket pertaining to their participation in and preparation for the discussion. The teacher should collect students' preparation documents and observation and reflection sheet for a grade.

<i>Lesson 6: Creating Suspense</i>	
Prepare the Learner	Students will complete a warm up activity, where they answer the question: What is suspense? After a short period of silent time, students will share their answers with the class.
Interact with the Text	The teacher will facilitate a mini lesson in recognizing the development of suspense in a story. The students will reread the story

	“The Peculiar Such Thing” from <i>The People Could Fly</i> and annotate the story for suspense.
Extend the Learning	Students will listen to the episode “Tailypo” from the podcast <i>Camp Redrum: Halloween Campfire Stories</i> and complete a listening guide.
Closure and Assessment	Students will share their answers with the class.

<i>Lesson 7: Modern Folklore</i>	
Prepare the Learner	Students will complete a warm up activity, where they answer the quick write question: can someone create folklore today? After a short period of silent time, students will share their answers with the class.
Interact with the Text	Students will read the introduction and “Just A Thought” chapter of <i>Mysterious Tales of Western North Carolina</i> . The teacher will facilitate a class discussion using this reading and the definition of folklore from the first lesson to answer the question: can folklore be created current day?
Extend the Learning	Students will participate in a jigsaw reading of several of the stories from <i>Mysterious Tales of Western North Carolina</i> using a reading guide. After some time, the students will be regrouped and discuss the stories they read in their first groups.
Closure and Assessment	Students will share their answers.

<i>Lesson 8: Creating Folklore</i>	
Prepare the Learner	Students will complete a warm up activity, where they answer the quick write question: if you were telling a folktale, what would you need to do in order to make the story engaging? After a short period of silent time, students will share their answers with the class.
Interact with the Text	The teacher will review the culminating assignment with students, explain expectations and review an exemplar model.
Extend the Learning	Students will begin researching to complete their culminating project.
Closure and Assessment	Students will ask questions they have after beginning their work.

<i>Lesson 9: Finish Project</i>	
Prepare the Learner	Students will review their grading rubric as they enter and prepare for class to begin. After a short period of silent time, students will have an opportunity to ask any questions they have.

Interact with the Text	The teacher will answer any questions and set expectations for class time.
Extend the Learning	Students will finish their culminating assignment, which is to write and perform an oral telling of their own folktale based on a story from <i>Mysterious Tales of Western North Carolina</i> . Students will use this book along with their own personal research to write a folktale about the event or location. The story should reflect oral story telling conventions that were discussed in class. It should also follow a main character, and the resolution should convey a theme.
Closure and Assessment	Any student who is not finished with their assignment should finish their work for homework.

<i>Lesson 10: Project Presentation</i>	
Prepare the Learner	Students will use the beginning of class to ensure their project is complete and turned in.
Interact with the Text	The teacher will review expectations of behavior while students review their peer's work.
Extend the Learning	Students will participate in a virtual gallery crawl of finished projects. Projects will be digitally recorded and added to a collaborative slideshow, which students will click through, watch and listen, and record what they notice and wonder.
Closure and Assessment	Students will complete a reflection pertaining to their effort in completing the project, and their thoughts about their peers' projects.

Appendix 1: Teaching Standards

North Carolina Standard Course of Study

RL.8.1 Cite textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text

RL.8.2 Determine a theme of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text

RL.8.3 Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

RL.8.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

RL.8.6 Analyze how differences in the perspectives of the characters and the audience or reader create such effects as suspense or humor

RL.8.9 Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works, including describing how the material is rendered new.

Appendix 2: Material List

The following items will be necessary for each student to have to complete the lessons in this curriculum unit.

- Notebook
- Pencil
- Digital device, for completing final project

Appendix 3: Student Resources

The following resources are handouts students will use to complete the lessons of this unit.

Lesson 1 Text Dependent Questions

Name: _____ Block: _____

Early American Legends and Folktales **Text Dependent Questions**

Answer the following questions after reading excerpts of *Early American Legends and Folktales* by Joanne Randolph

1. List the reasons the author says that people tell folktales.
2. What cultures contributed to American folklore?
3. Why do you think people would find the story of Black Sam appealing?
4. How did Paul Revere's myth inspire the colonists? Do you think they would have been victorious without his tale?
5. What lesson is communicated through John Henry's story? Did this story have an intended audience?

Theme Reading Guide

Name: _____ Block: _____

Theme Reading Guide

Complete the chart as you read your assigned folktale.

What is the title of your assigned story?	
Who is the main character of your story? How would you describe them?	
What problem is the character facing? Is it a problem inside themselves or outside?	
How does the character attempt to resolve their conflict? Are they successful?	
How does the character overcome the conflict impact other characters? Do people celebrate? Is there character made into a legend?	
What is the lesson we as the reader should take away from this story? Remember this is a lesson we can apply to OTHER situations besides this story.	

Name: _____ Block: _____

Story Elements Reading Guide

Complete the chart below as you read your assigned folktale.

<p>EXPOSITION:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Where does your story take place?2. Who are the important characters?3. What are the character traits of the main character?	
<p>RISING ACTION:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What type or types of conflict are developing in the story so far?2. How is the main character responding to the conflict?	
<p>CLIMAX:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Who is the antagonist of the story?2. How do they work against the main character?	

<p>FALLING ACTION: 1. How is the conflict resolved?</p>	
<p>RESOLUTION: 1. What is the theme or lesson of the story?</p>	

Socratic Seminar Discussion Questions

Name: _____ Block: _____	
Socratic Seminar Discussion Question	
Prepare to answer the following questions during a Socratic Seminar by rereading folktales and complete research. Be sure to record your sources and have at least one direct quote to support each of your answers.	
What do African American and European American folktales have in common?	
What are the differences between African American and European folktales?	
When considering the main characters of the stories, what constitutes a folktale hero? What kind of traits should they possess? Does the origin of the story	

impact the makeup of the character?	
When considering the themes of the stories, how have the values of these stories continued to be relevant today? Which story do you think would be most valuable to share with people present day?	

Suspense Reading and Listening Guide

Name: _____ Block: _____

Suspense Reading and Listening Guide

Complete the chart below as you read or listen to your assigned story.

As the story begins, what words does the author use to describe the setting? What kind of mood do these words create?	
What is the perspective of the main character about the events taking place in the beginning of the story? How does the character's perspective add to the overall feeling of the story?	
As you read the rising action of the	

story, what techniques does the author/narrator use to create suspense?	
How does the author use the mood to show a change between the rising action and the climax?	
How did suspense contribute to the overall purpose of the story?	

Modern Folklore Reading Guide

Name: _____ Block: _____	
Modern Folklore Reading Guide	
Complete the chart below as you read your assigned story.	
How is the story similar to traditional folklore?	
How is the story different from traditional folklore?	
What is the purpose of this story?	
Does this story have a theme? If so, what is it?	
Do you believe this story will endure like traditional folklore? Why or why not?	

Culminating Project

Name: _____ Block: _____

Final Project: Folktale Performance

For this project, you will select a modern folklore story, rewrite it using traditional story telling methods and techniques, and record yourself reading the story. In your retelling of the modern tale, you should integrate a theme that listeners can take away from the story.

Rubric:

	10	5	0
Story Elements	The story contains well thought out characters, conflict, and a complete resolution.	The story contains characters, conflict, and an attempt at a resolution.	The story does not contain characters, conflict, or a resolution.
Organization	The story follows the plot structure and uses suspense to create excitement and action.	The story mostly follows the plot structure and attempts to use suspense to create excitement.	The story does not follow the plot structure or does not attempt to use suspense.
Theme	The story conveys a valuable theme.	The story portrays some type of theme.	The story does not have a theme.
Performance	The performance of the story is well rehearsed, and the narrator uses their voice to excite and engage listeners.	The performance of the story is complete, and the narrator reads the story fluently.	The performance of the story is incomplete or unrehearsed or difficult to understand.

Bibliography

“Definitions of Folklore.” *Journal of Folklore Research*, vol. 33, no. 3, Indiana University Press, 1996, pp. 255–64, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3814683>.

- Carmichael, Sherman. *Mysterious Tales of Western North Carolina*. The History Press, 2020.
- Cohen, Hennig. "Folklore in Literature." *The New Encyclopedia of Southern Culture*, edited by M Thomas Inge, vol. 9, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, NC, 2008, pp. 64–70.
- Haley, Gail E. *Mountain Jack Tales*. Parkway Publishers, 2002.
- Hamilton, Virginia. *The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales*. Alfred A. Knopf, 1985.
- Leeming, David Adams, and Jake Page. *Myths, Legends, and Folktales of America: an Anthology*. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. Print.
- Pitzer, Sara. *Myths and Mysteries of North Carolina: True Stories of the Unsolved and Unexplained*. Guilford: The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, 2010. Print.
- Randolph, Joanne. *Early American Legends and Folktales*. New York, NY: Cavendish Square Publishing LLC, 2017. Print.
- Seal, Graham. *Encyclopedia of Folk Heroes*. ABC-CLIO, 2001.