

Before you read *Loukas and the Game of Chance*, explore the characteristics of folktales and fairy tales.

“But why explore the characteristics of folktales and fairy tales before reading *Loukas and the Game of Chance*?” you ask.

Because *Loukas and the Game of Chance* is a story that began as a folktale. Read on, Read on. Fright Now ... ooopppsss ... **Right Now.**

There’s a Greek folktale called *The Snake Tree*, which you’ll find in *Folktales from Greece: A Treasury of Delights* by Soula Mitakidou and Anthony L. Manna (<https://amzn.to/2FmL2SA>). Cool, right? A strange snake, a weird tree, and a mess of money. I really like this story.

I’m a greedy Granpa when it comes to reading a good story. So, I set out to make *The Snake Tree* into a longer story with a lot more magic, suspense, action and a few more characters, problems, conflicts, and settings. (By “settings” I mean the places where the story takes place.)

So I wrote, wrote, wrote and wrote some more and then... and then ...

...and then *The Snake Tree*, a folktale, became *Loukas and the Game of Chance*, a fantasy story that grew out of a folktale. YAY! and HOORAY!

I’m not the only author to take a folktale or fairy tale and make a different story out of it.

Get yourself to your local library and find *Beast* by Donna Jo Napoli (<https://amzn.to/2PTQKzE>), a magical retelling of *Beauty and the Beast*. There’s also Marissa Meyer’s wild stories *Cinder* (<https://amzn.to/2RVAICJ>), *Scarlet* (<https://amzn.to/2z8JmGV>), *Cress* (<https://amzn.to/2OH5LAb>), and *Winter* (<https://amzn.to/2OH98Hd>) where you’ll meet a Cinderella whom you’ve never met her before.

Hey, maybe you remember *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* (<https://amzn.to/2K2O6IF>) and *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* (<https://amzn.to/2FkAuU1>), both books by Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith, hilarious author and illustrator. Just as funny is *Honestly, Red Riding Hood Was Rotten!: The Story of Little Red Riding Hood as Told by the Wolf (The Other Side of the Story)* by Trisha Speed Shaskan and Gerald Guerlais (<https://amzn.to/2K2OoJh>).

Can’t help but remind you of *The Three Pigs* by David Wiesner (<https://amzn.to/2QEWzxP>), a great entertainment ‘cause it’s so inventive, clever, and smart and very different from the original tale about these three porkers. HA!

Stop right here. Take a breath. Just one long breath, please. Good.

Before you even begin reading about Loukas and his game of chance, let’s go on an adventure to explore fairy tales and folktales ... But why do that? Why spend our precious time snoopin’ around folktales and fairy tales. Those old stories!

Why? Why? Why? Trust me. You’ll find out as we move into questions and activities I invite you to use to do some thinking about fairy tales and folktales.

Smile now 'cause I know how you love to work on assignments, especially super cool ones like those you'll find here from Professor Granpa Tonio. 😊

Questions and Activities: Ready, Set, Go, Go, Go

STAY ALERT, Please. NO NAPPING. When you work through the questions and activities, keep a **record of your ideas on the worksheet you'll receive from your teacher or whoever is working with you today. (Teacher: Please distribute the worksheet which you'll find in the printable resources section of the website [Folklore Assignment Worksheet].)**

First challenge. Whether a story is called a "folktale" or a "fairy tale," it's a story found in a group's or country's or region's or tribe's **folklore**. But what is folklore? Time for you to find out.

*In the internet, find and record on your worksheet a definition for the word "folklore" in The Learner's Dictionary (www.learnersdictionary.com). To find the definition, type the word "folklore" in the search box at the top of the dictionary's search page. Record the definition on your worksheet

Second challenge. Get smart about folktales and fairy tales. Here goes, and don't forget to record your ideas on your worksheet:

*Use The Learner's Dictionary (www.learnersdictionary.com). to find a definition for "folktale" and a definition for "fairy tale."

*Now that you know definitions for folktale and fairy tale, ask yourself: What do I think the difference is between a folktale and fairy tale? Record your answer on the worksheet.

*Why is a folktale or a fairy tale a type of folklore? Record your answer on your worksheet.

Let the fun begin, ladies and gentlemen. It's time to search for examples of folktales and fairy tales.

Have a good time.

*In the internet, find the website for American Folklore (americanfolklore.net).

*Click "United States Folklore" at the top of the page.

*Click "Folktales" in the left sidebar. Now, on the main page you have a long, l.....o.....n.....g list of American Folktales and Stories." The tales are organized by the letters of the alphabet. Click one of the letters and find a COMPLETE tale that interests you.

Some of the stories are summaries. Click the letter L and find *La Llorna*, New Mexico ghost story. It's a summary. Use the letter L to find *Llorna, Omen of Death*. YAY! and More YAY!! That's a complete story. Click the letter S and find Sasquatch, a California ghost story. Another YAY YAY. That's a complete story. So is *Screaming Tunnel*, found by clicking S.

On your worksheet, record information about the COMPLETE tale you read. Record the title, type of story (you'll find a brief description of the type under the title) and the USA state, region, tribe, or group where the tale is located. For example, when you click P, you find *Pecos Bill Rides a Tornado*. The tale type is a "tall tale," and its state is Kansas.

On your worksheet: THINK! Think back to the definition you found for fairy tale and folktale. Well now. What do you think? Why is the story you read a folktale? Why? Why? Why? Go ahead: Record your reason(s) for calling it a folktale.

On your worksheet: THINK EVEN MORE! Record one sentence from the story you read that showed you something really important about one of the story characters. Who is this character and what does the sentence show about this character's actions, thoughts, or feelings? Explain why this sentence helps you to get to know this character.

Reminder: NO NAPPING, please.

Conflict, conflict, conflict. Every good story has some kind of huge or small conflict or struggle. It could be a struggle a character faces within himself or herself or it could be a conflict between characters. On your worksheet: Describe the conflict in the story you read or draw—yes, use the art materials your teacher gives you to make a drawing that shows the internal conflict a character is struggling with or the conflict between two or more characters. If you make a drawing, describe the drawing on your worksheet. That is, what would you like the viewer of your drawing to know about the story's conflict.

On your worksheet, describe how the conflict ended—if it did end. Did you like the way the conflict ended? Why? Why not? If the conflict didn't end, why do you think it didn't end? In other words, why would the storyteller or author choose to end the story without ending the conflict?

The story ended. Huge Question: What did you take away? In other words, what did the story make you think about ... about people ... about how to behave or not behave ... about people's relationships ... about the way people treat each other ... about facing and overcoming problems and conflicts ... OKAY, OKAY... You understand, don't you? What did you feel and think when you read the story? **Use your worksheet to record your ideas.**

Time for your teacher or another adult to manage the next activity. Please:

Form small groups.

Have each student use their worksheet to introduce their story, its title, its type, and the USA state, region, tribe, or group where the tale is located.

Each student tells why the tale they read is a folktale or a fairy tale.

Have them read the sentence from the story that showed something really important about one of the story characters. Have them identify this character and what the sentence shows about this character's actions, thoughts, or feelings? Have each student explain why this sentence helps them to get to know the character.

Next: the story's conflict. The students describe the conflict in the stories they read. Students who made a drawing, describe the conflict in the drawing. Each student explains whether the conflict is an internal conflict a character is struggling with or a conflict between two or more characters.

Students describe how the conflict ended—if it did end. Did they like the way the conflict ended? Why? Why not? If the conflict didn't end, why do they think it didn't end? In other words, why would the storyteller or author choose to end the story without ending the conflict?

Final move. Students describe what the story make them think about ... about people ... about how to behave or not behave ... about people's relationships ... about the way people treat each other ... about facing and overcoming problems and conflicts ...

What feelings and thoughts did they have when you read the story?

Laugh Break ... WHAT? Time to take a laugh break. Here's how: Log on to (americanfolklore.net). At the top of the page, click "Jokes and Tongue Twisters." Choose a tongue twister from "Funny Tongue Twisters," "Spooky Tongue Twisters," or "Hard Tongue Twisters." Practice saying it.

Time for your teacher or another adult to manage the next activity. Please: Ask volunteers to recite (perform?) their tongue twisters for the entire class or have students work in pairs and recite their twisters to each other.

The End. Whew.

Worksheet: Pre-Reading *Loukas and the Game of Chance*

Your name _____

1. Describe folklore. _____

2. Describe the differences between a folktale and a fairy tale. _____

3. Why is a folktale and a fairy tale a type of folklore? _____

4. Record information for a *complete* north American folktale (title, type of story, and United States location) _____

5. Why is this complete folktale a folktale and not a fairy tale? _____

6. Record a sentence about a character in the *complete* folktale you read _____

Name the character _____

What does the sentence show about the character? _____

Explain why this sentence helped you to get to know the character _____

7. Describe the conflict in the folktale you read _____

or

Make a drawing that shows the folktale's conflict. Make the drawing on a separate sheet of paper which you attach to this worksheet with a staple or paper clip.

Show your drawing to a friend. Ask your friend to describe the conflict in your drawing. Compare your ideas about the conflict in the drawing with your friend's ideas. _____

8. Describe how the conflict in the folktale ended _____

9. Describe why you think the conflict ended the way you thought it would end, or describe why the ending surprised you _____

10. Describe what you took away from the folktale. In other words, what did the folktale make you think about ... about people ... about how to behave or not behave ... about people's relationships ... about the way people treat each other ... about facing and overcoming problems and conflicts ... and any other ideas that you thought about during or after reading the folktale.