



## **Ending a Famous Fairy Tale**

By Erin Armstrong  
Visiting Writer-in-Residence

Time Frame: 60 minutes

Grade Level: 1st - 6th

Prior Skills: None required

Learning Objectives:

- To introduce students to well-known fairy tales
- To allow students to creatively imagine an alternative ending and story to a well-known work
- To give students an opportunity to collaborate with renowned authors
- To further develop students sense of story

Definition of fairy tale:

A: a story (as for children) involving fantastic forces and beings (as fairies, wizards, goblins)—called also *fairy story*. B: a story in which improbable events lead to a happy ending

I. Discuss fairy tales.

What kinds of characters are there? What kind of ending does a fairy tale typically have? What are some things that happen?

Typical Characters: fairies, wizards, goblins, witches, foxes, hunter, prince, princess, queen, dwarf, beast, rabbit

Typical Plots: Someone is trying to deceive another character. A witch wants something the princess has or a prince might have to pass a test to find the woman he is supposed to marry.

Here are some fairy tales that most students might know and can think about in this context:

*Cinderella*  
*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*  
*Hansel and Gretel*  
*The Ugly Duckling*  
*Goldilocks and the Three Bears*  
*Little Red Riding Hood*  
*Beauty and the Beast*

Discuss other versions/adaptations of these stories (like the new movie coming out that is going to have a new take on *Little Red Riding Hood* called *Red Riding Hood*). Explain the activity for the day. "We are going to take some famous fairy tales and make them our own by adding our own ending."

If there is time, have students describe their favorite fairy tale and give a plot summary.

II. After discussing fairy tales, read the excerpts from Jean Valentine's poem and from the Brothers Grimm\*.

(\*Read "The Twelve Brothers" up until the cut-off point--where the old woman says, "My child, what hast thou done? Why didst thou not leave the twelve white flowers growing? They were thy brothers, who are now for evermore changed into ravens.").

Explain that fairy tales can show up in really unlikely places and that in some ways, any story can be made into a fairy tale.

III. Alternative Ending

Tell students that their job today is to finish this famous fairy tale. They can end the story anyway they want. They just have to figure out what happens to the maiden and her brothers. They can write a poem, a story, whatever they want, as long as they finish the story.

Here are questions to prompt the student's endings:

What happens to the 12 ravens?

How does the Maiden rescue her brothers?

Can the Maiden use a special power to rescue her brothers? What is the special power?

Will all 12 brothers be rescued?

What does the old woman tell the Maiden to do?

Who else helps the Maiden? Who are the other characters that come into the story?

Where does the Maiden go to get help?

Does the Maiden stay in the Great Forest? What does the Great Forest look like with 12 ravens in it now? Is it spooky? Is it pretty?

What happens to the Maiden at the end of the story? Does she ever return to her parents?

What is everyone wearing at the end of the story?

Will the Maiden live happily ever after?

IV.. Have students share their stories with one another. (Before they begin, read Valentine's poem and describe this was one poet's ending to this famous fairy tale.)

Extension Activities: Have students illustrate their stories

### **Required Resources:**

"The Twelve Brothers," by The Brothers Grimm, <http://www.literaturecollection.com/a/grimm-brothers/554/>

"The Eleventh Brother" by Jean Valentine, <http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/21676>