

Fairy tale: origin, history and development

English Language Acquisition Phase 6 Summative Assessment Task

Important Reminders

Unit title

Telling Tales from Different Cultural Perspectives

Key concept

Creativity

Related concepts

Stylistic choices

Purpose

Global context

Personal and cultural expression: *Artistry, craft, creation, beauty*

Statement of inquiry

Narratives are creatively and purposefully crafted to express oneself and one's culture.

Instructions to students

You will study the following *aura* and spoken and visual texts:

"Fairy tales could be 6,000 years old" audio material. <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1601/160124-fairy-tales.html> published 24 January 2016, accessed 12 February 2016. Total length 01 min. 36 seconds

"History of Fairytales" video produced by Gary Owens. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIFOIQU56FY> published 18 December 2012, accessed 12 February 2016 Total length: 05 minutes 45 seconds

"How old is the oldest fairy tale?" video produced by BrainStuff. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M-h95bqsJLA> published 3 March 2016 accessed 6 March 2016 Total length: 03 minutes 10 seconds

Total overall length: 10 minutes 31 seconds

Answer the following questions in the space provided. Use your own words as much as possible.

Refer as closely as possible to the texts, justifying your answers and giving examples when asked.

Dictionaries are not allowed to be used in this task.

Answer the questions in English.

There is no prescribed time limit, although the task is to be completed in the exam conditions under the teacher's supervision.

You may listen to the audio text as many times as required.

Assessment

Criterion A: Comprehending spoken and visual text, phase 5

Source

Middle Years Programme Language Acquisition Guide. © International Baccalaureate Organisation, 2014, p.p. 81-82

Achievement level	Level descriptor
0	The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.
1-2	The student: i. has difficulty analysing information or main ideas and supporting details; i not able to draw conclusions ii. has difficulty analysing conventions iii. engages minimally with the spoken and visual text by analysing few ideas, opinions and attitudes; has difficulty making a response to the text based on personal experiences and opinions from a global perspective. The student shows limited understanding of the content, context and concepts of the text as a whole.
3-4	The student: i. analyses adequately and draws some conclusion from information, main ideas and supporting details ii. analyses some conventions iii. engages adequately with the spoken and visual text by analysing some ideas, opinions and attitudes and by making some response to the text based on personal experiences and opinions from a global perspective. The student shows some understanding of the content, context and concepts of the text as a whole.
5-6	The student: i. analyses considerably and draws conclusions from information, main ideas and supporting details ii. analyses most conventions iii. engages considerably with the spoken and visual text by analysing most ideas, opinions and attitudes and by making a response to the text based on personal experiences and opinions from a global perspective The student shows considerable understanding of the content, context and concepts of the text as a whole.
7-8	The student: i. analyses thoroughly and draws conclusions from information, main ideas and supporting details ii. analyses conventions iii. engages thoroughly with the spoken and visual text by analysing ideas, opinions and attitudes and by making a response to the text based on personal experiences and opinions from a global perspective. The student shows thorough understanding of the content, context and concepts of the text as a whole.

Strand i

Evaluate and draw conclusions from information, main ideas and supporting details

1. Compare and contrast the three texts to define their shared goal. Refer to the texts to support your conclusion. (2 points)

The shared goal of the three texts is to communicate the message of the origin of fairy tales, which appear to be much older than estimated earlier. Despite having much in common, the texts address this goal differently. Thus, Stimulus 1 ("History of Fairy Tales" video) emphasizes the oral tradition of these ancient stories, which "came long before the written page" and handed down from generation to generation, while Stimulus 2 ("How old is the oldest fairy tale?" video) gives the exact figure of 2,5 to 6 thousand years as the predicted age for the most ancient fairy tales. The authors of this video claim that those fairy tales appeared as part of ancient old traditions that "stretched from Scandinavia to South Asia" and "marked the beginning of Indo-European language". The title of Stimulus 3 ("Fairy tales could be 6,000 years old" audio) is self-explanatory and has the age fairy tales were originated in the "time between the Stone Age and Iron Age when humans first started making tools from metal" as its key component. Stimulus 2 and Stimulus 3 provide explicit scientific evidence to support Wilhelm Grimm's theory of the ancient origin of fairy tales, while Stimulus 1 gives an implicit indication of it.

2. According to the videos, what is the women's role in in the heritage conservation of fairytales as a genre? (2 points)

A direct reference to the women's role in the heritage conservation of fairytales as a genre is provided in Stimulus 1 ("History of Fairy Tales" video). The authors of this video claim that these stories that reveal great imagination and creation were primarily created by women who were "surreptitiously rebellion against the constraints placed upon them by the restrictive society". It is obvious that throughout history, fairy tales were women stories and

“mothers and grandmothers” were the major “communicators” of them as samples of oral folk tradition in preliterate culture. Female authors also contributed a lot to developing the genre, as it became a literary form.

3. How was the name “fairy tale” coined? (1 point)

The name “fairy tale” was coined from the French “conte de fees” in the 17th century.

4. Analyse the texts to find evidence to support the opinion of the ancient origin of fairytales. (3 points)

The issue of the ancient origin of fairytales as a folklore genre stands out in the three texts. Although there might still be some discussions about the plausibility of existence of these folktales as long as 5 or even 6 thousand years prior to Indo-European languages, as claimed by supporters of the so called Aarne-Thompson-Uther Index for a “massive” classification of folktales (Stimulus 2), the scientific evidence used by Sara Graca da Silva and Jamshid Tehrani (Sources 2 and 3) appears to be rather convincing. The method used by these researchers is based on the tools, which proved effective in a range of comparative analyses of other linguistically-related phenomena. As applied to this particular research, this method helped discover that at least 76 out of 275 stories were being told “before English, French or Italian even existed as languages”. This affords ground for many scientists to acknowledge that many fairy tales could be over 4,000 years old (Stimulus 3). Moreover, although large numbers of well-known fairy tales were written in the 17th century France, as suggested by Stimulus 1, most of the well-known fairy tales which are told nowadays appear to have far older roots and were continuously altered to suit needs of different times and generations.

5. What does the title of Sara Graca da Silva’s and Jamshid Tehrani’s article in the journal “Royal Society Open Science” suggest about its content? Which tools did they use to prove their theory? (2 points)

Sara Graca da Silva’s and Jamshid Tehrani’s article in the journal “Royal Society Open Science” is entitled “Comparative phylogenetic analysis uncover the ancient roots of Indo-European folktales” It suggests a different, scientific-based approach to studying this rather complicated phenomenon, as “phylogenetic” means studying evolutionary history and relationships of individuals, groups and events. Therefore, these researchers used tools usually reserved for evolutionary biologists, such as phylogenetic method to examine relationships between population history, geographical distances and linguistic patterns. They also focused on tracing the folktales of commonly debatable origins along the “tree of Indo-European languages” and found out compelling evidence of the ancient origin of many of the folktales in the examined group.

Strand ii

Interpret the author's choice of style, format and ideas to suit an intended audience and purpose

6. What is the general tone of the three texts (formal, sarcastic, ironic, aggressive, familiar, charming, rude, enthusiastic, etc.) and how is it modified in each of them to suit the specific purposes? (2 points)

Despite variations in communicating the key message of the ancient origin of fairy tales adopted by the authors of the three texts, the general tone is rather enthusiastic and business like as the texts are aimed to inform rather than entertain. The three texts do not seem to be in contradiction with each other about the major statement. However, the individualities of the authors are traced in each of them in delivering the message, with Stimulus 1 ("History of Fairy Tales" video) being more concerned about the diversity and combination of the voice-over, visual support images and the background music in several variations, Stimulus 2 ("How old is the oldest fairy tale?" video) more focused on the factual information and Stimulus 3 ("Fairy tales could be 6,000 years old" audio) being an aural summary of the discoveries made by anthropologist Jamshid Tehrani and folklorist Sara Graca da Silva.

7. Which fairy tale/folklore characters have you recognized as being used in the videos? How do the authors of the videos create mood through the visuals and how do the visuals support the narration? (3 points)

A wide range of commonly recognized fairytale characters are used in the texts: "Snow-white and 7 dwarfs", "Little Red Riding Hood", "Beauty and the Beast", "Goldilocks and the Three Bears", "Cinderella" to name very few. The authors of Stimulus 1 ("History of Fairy Tales" video) use visuals to attract the viewers' attention to the amount and diversity of fairytales that represent various cultures and, at the same time, have a shared origin. As the majority of images seem to be related to the narration, the perception of the whole piece is that it is dynamic and engaging and may be suitable for a wide audience. As alternative to it, Stimulus 2 ("How old is the oldest fairy tale?" video) appears to be more specific and informative to people with some prior knowledge and/or linguistic background; therefore, it uses more of a subject-specific style of communication and creates the mood, which may be more pertinent to an interactive lesson with a group of young adults.

8. Comment on the author's choice of the background music in "History of Fairytales". What effect do you think the music creates in the video? (2 points)

Taken that 5 musical pieces were used for a rather short video it is clear that the authors have made the choice of the background music not only a significant point in narration to

indicate the five logical and interrelated parts, but also to create the atmosphere of anticipation and mysteriousness inherent in the genre.

Strand iii

Engage with the spoken and visual text by evaluating ideas, opinions and attitudes and by making a response to the text based on personal experiences and opinions from a global perspective

9. From the historical perspective, to what extent are linguistic origins reflected in folklore and fairy tales? Refer to the texts to illustrate the authors' position and extend to illustrate your opinion by providing examples from your own culture. (3 points)

Even the supposition that some of the existing fairytales may "have been first told in a language that is now extinct", as claimed in Stimulus 3, makes the study of this phenomenon intriguing to those who are interested in the language development and returns us to the debate of the linguistic origin of Indo-European languages. A hypothesis mentioned in Stimulus 2 ("How old is the oldest fairy tale?" video) emphasizes the relationships between the content of fairytales, which was strongly affected by the people's agricultural lifestyle at the time of the assumed origin of fairytales, and the linguistic specifics of the regions where those folktales were presumably originated, which are now Turkey or Russia.

Students further explore linguistic connections by analyzing an example of a fairy tale from their own culture.

10. What is your view on fairytales and folklore stories? Refer back to the conclusion made in the texts about the impact of fairytales on an individual person. Why would/would not you agree with this conclusion? (2 points)

Answers vary, but students are expected to provide well-grounded justification and make reference to the texts to extend on the conclusions about the impact of fairytales with their own examples

A conclusion provided in Stimulus 1 ("History of Fairy Tales" video) is that the same story will have different lessons for each person and requires openness of spirit and tenderness of soul to be able to extract moral lessons, while Stimulus 2 ("How old is the oldest fairy tale?" video) considers a showcase effect of what people think about good and evil, morality and punishment.

11. How is creativity important in the genre of fairytales? Quote the text to support your position and your personal experience in any art form where your creativity had helped you to reach the desired response from the target audience. (3 points)

Creativity is very important in fairytales, because their target audience is children who are endowed with rich imagination. It needs to be considered by creators of fairytales and storytellers who are recommended to ensure there are actions performed by recognizable characters and an original and engaging story line in the fairytale to attract young readers and/or listeners. Historically, according to Stimulus 1 (“History of Fairy Tales” video), fairytales were not designed for children, but as they received transformations and were adjusted to the needs of this target group, they became softer, sweeter and included clearer moral messages. Another evidence from the text to illustrate the importance of creativity is reference to Hans Christian Anderson’s works, which are translated into 160 world languages and remain popular because of their original and engaging plots. Dr Tehrani’s evaluation of the fairytale survival the long period without being written down as “remarkable” in Stimulus 3 also implies that there is something special in fairytales that helps them remain popular as a genre with new generations of people.

Students are expected to provide and elaborate on their own examples of creativity in any art form that had helped you to reach the desired response from the target audience. Contextualized examples with the focus on concrete samples of art works, the way they were being developed and changed or shaped the students’ perception of creativity are commendable.

12. Imagine you live in the 25th century. What would be an appropriate topic for a fairy tale to describe the life in the 21st century? Using “The Smith and the Devil” as an example provide a short summary of this imaginary fairy tale focusing on the major topic world issue the humanity is facing nowadays, the main character(s) and the message to be communicated to the future generations. (4 points)

Answers vary, but students are expected to demonstrate their ability to explore on the chosen topic that has global significance. The summary does not need to be lengthy, but should follow the sample of the summary of “The Smith and the Devil” fairytale from Stimulus 2 (“How old is the oldest fairy tale?” video) to include: the name of the story, a distinct main character/characters, condensed information about the plot, the main action and/or conflict, the dénouement and the moral of the fairytale.