Fairy Tales
History of Fairy Tales

- Told as oral stories since the beginning of time.
- Passed from generation to generation.
- These stories had to be told orally because many people were not able to read and write.
- The term “fairy tale” was first used in the 1600’s!
CHARACTERISTICS OF FAIRY TALES

- A fairy tale begins with “Once upon a time…” or a form of this phrase.
- Fairy tales are set “long, long ago” in foreign or make-believe lands.
- Fairy tales have clearly defined “good” vs. “evil” characters.
- Royalty and a castle are usually present in a fairy tale, along with a beautiful princess or handsome prince.
- Poor peasants are often in fairy tales.
HEROES AND HEROINES

There are two types of heroes/heroines in fairy tales:

- The Poor hero/heroine—this character is set apart from their family; survive and win against the odds, win by being smart, skilled, and having good intentions.

- The Royal hero/heroine—this character is a prince or princess who survives because they are rich and noble.
CHARACTERISTICS OF FAIRY TALES CONT.

- Expected gender roles for males and females are very clear.
- Magic happens and may involve giants, elves, talking animals, witches, or fairies.
- The magic can be used for good or bad things (think of the difference between the Sea Witch in *The Little Mermaid* versus the Fairy Godmother in *Cinderella*).
- Fairy tales have a conflict or problem that needs to be solved.
- Fairy tales end with “they all lived happily ever after,” and usually teach a moral lesson.
THE SYMBOLISM OF 3

- Tales from central Europe often have groups of three in Fairy tales. The number three is everywhere, three bears, three little pigs, three guesses, three Billy Goats Gruff, three witches, three fairies. Often rewards for Fairytale protagonists are the three wishes.

- People attribute the number three to many things including the Holy Trinity, Birth, Life, Death and Mind, Body, Soul. The significance of the number three ultimately comes down to mankind's acceptance of mortality. We are born, we live, we die.
The Symbolism of 3 cont.

- But why three wishes? These could well be wishes for life, mainly past, present and future life. To fix what was, to improve what is now and to prosper in times to come. Simple human survival.
The Symbolism of 7

- The number seven is considered a “lucky” number and is symbolic in most cultures of perfection and purity.

- Here are some examples:
  - Symbol of the totality of the created Universe (3 the sky + 4 the earth), it expresses the creation within which the man evolves.
  - Symbol of eternal life for the Egyptians: it symbolizes a complete cycle, a dynamic perfection.
For the Indians in the prairie and the "Pueblo" Indians, the number seven represents the cosmic coordinate of the man.

In Africa and for the Bambaras of Senegal, seven is a symbol of the perfection and the unity.

The seven symbolizes the cross with its six directions plus the center - indefinite extents moving toward the top, the bottom, the right, the left, forwards and backwards.

The dice symbolizes the seven: the dice itself, 1, having 6 faces.
FRACTURED FAIRY TALES

- It is a fairy or folk tale that has been modified in such a way as to make us laugh at an unexpected characterization, plot development or contrary point of view.

- For example: If you write a story from the prince’s point of view in Cinderella. What went through his mind when he saw her in the dress at the ball? What did her feet REALLY look like when he put that slipper on them? Did he really think she looked nice covered in ashes???

- We will write one, so as we read fairy tales, consider every character’s point of view!!!