

Fairy Tale Retellings

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

Includes
Common Core
Standards
Correlations



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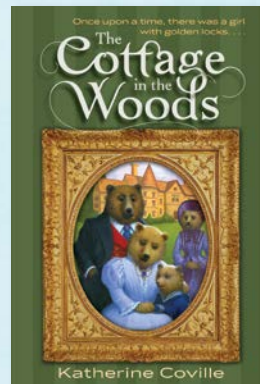
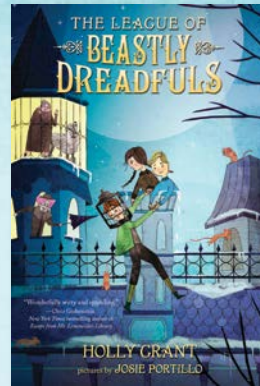
Teaching Fairy Tale Retellings

Fairy tales—stories full of magic, enchantment, power struggles, greed, heroes and heroines, talking animals, kings and queens, far-off lands, and deep, mysterious forests—are deliciously entertaining. They are also truly excellent resources for the classroom. *Win-win!* This guide lists five middle-grade novels that will serve as fantastic anchor texts or free-reading books for a folklore or fairy tale unit.

Most exciting about the fairy tale retellings discussed in this guide is the opportunity they present to study the evolution of stories, explore different cultures, and discuss the impact of perspective. These novels, as well as classic fairy tales, are ideal microcosms that help students analyze societal hierarchies and human flaws. Through these stories, students' curiosity will be triggered to ask why things are the way they are and why people do the things they do. The protagonists in fairy tales set off on odysseys during which they need to search deep inside themselves to overcome obstacles. They mature before the reader's eyes. Whom should they trust? What path should they follow? With these relatable characters, our students can learn about self-empowerment and growing up!

The discussion questions and extension activities included in this guide can be applied to all the novels discussed. They were also written with the Common Core State Standards in mind and include references to specific anchor standards where appropriate. Adapt the questions and activities any way you see fit—you know your students best!

Enjoy your exploration!



The League of Beastly Dreadfuls

Holly Grant

Fairy tale allusions pepper this *dreadfully* enchanting mystery. Lonely and scared Anastasia must learn to trust her instincts as she meanders through the dark hallways of her “aunties” asylum—er—home—to discover the truth, about her parents and how she can freeze glass with her breath. She plots her great escape alongside Ollie and Quentin, two mysterious brothers.

Grades 3–7

HC: 978-0-385-37007-3 • GLB: 978-0-385-37008-0

EL: 978-0-385-37009-7 • CD: 978-1-1018-9166-7

The Cottage in the Woods

Katherine Coville

Twisting plotlines and heart-pounding action abound in this captivating tale. When a governess is hired to care for the Vaughns’ young cub, Teddy, she quickly senses that strange things are happening in the house. Why is a girl called Goldilocks hiding on the third floor? And who is lurking in the enchanted forest? This novel will answer all your questions and inspire you to look for other twists.

Grades 5 and up

HC: 978-0-385-75573-3 • GLB: 978-0-385-75574-0

EL: 978-0-385-75575-7 • CD: 978-0-5535-5622-3

The Whisperer

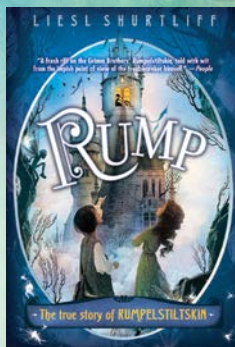
Fiona McIntosh

Two young boys from drastically different worlds collide in this exciting story that borrows from elements of *The Prince and the Pauper* but delivers a fresh twist. Lute is next in line to the throne, and Griff is merely a carnival worker, but their lives become inextricably connected when a power struggle for the throne commences. Readers will readily dive into this magical world, complete with deadly foes, magical creatures, and mysterious powers.

Grades 3–7

HC: 978-0-553-49827-1 • GLB: 978-0-553-49833-2

EL: 978-0-553-49834-9



Rump

Liesl Shurtliff

Rumpelstiltskin’s true motivations are revealed in this magical spin on the time-honored Brothers Grimm tale. Is he evil, or is there something more personal going on? Written from Rump’s adventurous and honest point of view, this book will entertain and enlighten readers as they experience Shurtliff’s masterful intertwining of classic fairy tales to tell Rump’s side of the story.

Grades 3–7 • PB: 978-0-307-97796-0

HC: 978-0-307-97793-9 • GLB: 978-0-307-97794-6

EL: 978-0-307-97795-3 • CD: 978-0-8041-6805-2

Jack

Liesl Shurtliff

How will Jack ever live up to his great-great-great-great-great-GREAT-grandfather’s legendary courage in defeating the giants? In this fantastical fractured fairy tale, Jack will do anything to prove that *he* is the bravest Jack of all—even as he struggles with the tiny, annoying detail of *how*.

Grades 3–7

HC: 978-0-385-75579-5 • GLB: 978-0-385-75580-1

EL: 978-0-385-75581-8 • CD: 978-0-553-55239-3

Don’t miss out on the fun of reading *Rump* and *Jack* as companion novels. Shurtliff writes about many of the same characters in both books, but usually from different perspectives. Who is going to pop up where? What will they be doing? What will we learn about them?

Questions for Group Discussion

Vary how the following questions are discussed: partner share, small group, debate, whole class, fishbowl, etc. In some cases, it may also make sense to have your students prepare written responses to the questions in advance.

1. How are the main characters in these stories the same and different from what you remember from other versions? Discuss how these characters have changed from version to version over the years. For example, you might discuss the characterization of Jack as both a protagonist and an antagonist in different versions of “Jack and the Beanstalk”, or “Goldilocks” as mischievous in one version and sad in another. You might explore how Anastasia’s adventurous spirit in *The League of Beastly Dreadfuls* compares and contrasts with her Cinderella counterpart from more traditional versions of the story. Discuss other ways the authors of these novels have transformed the fairy tales. What significant changes stand out to you, and how have they altered the story?

Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standard CCRA.R.9

2. As a class, read several classic fairy tales. Analyze the endings of these tales. Do they end happily? Discuss the common assumption that fairy tales end happily ever after. Does that misinterpretation apply to these novels? Why or why not?

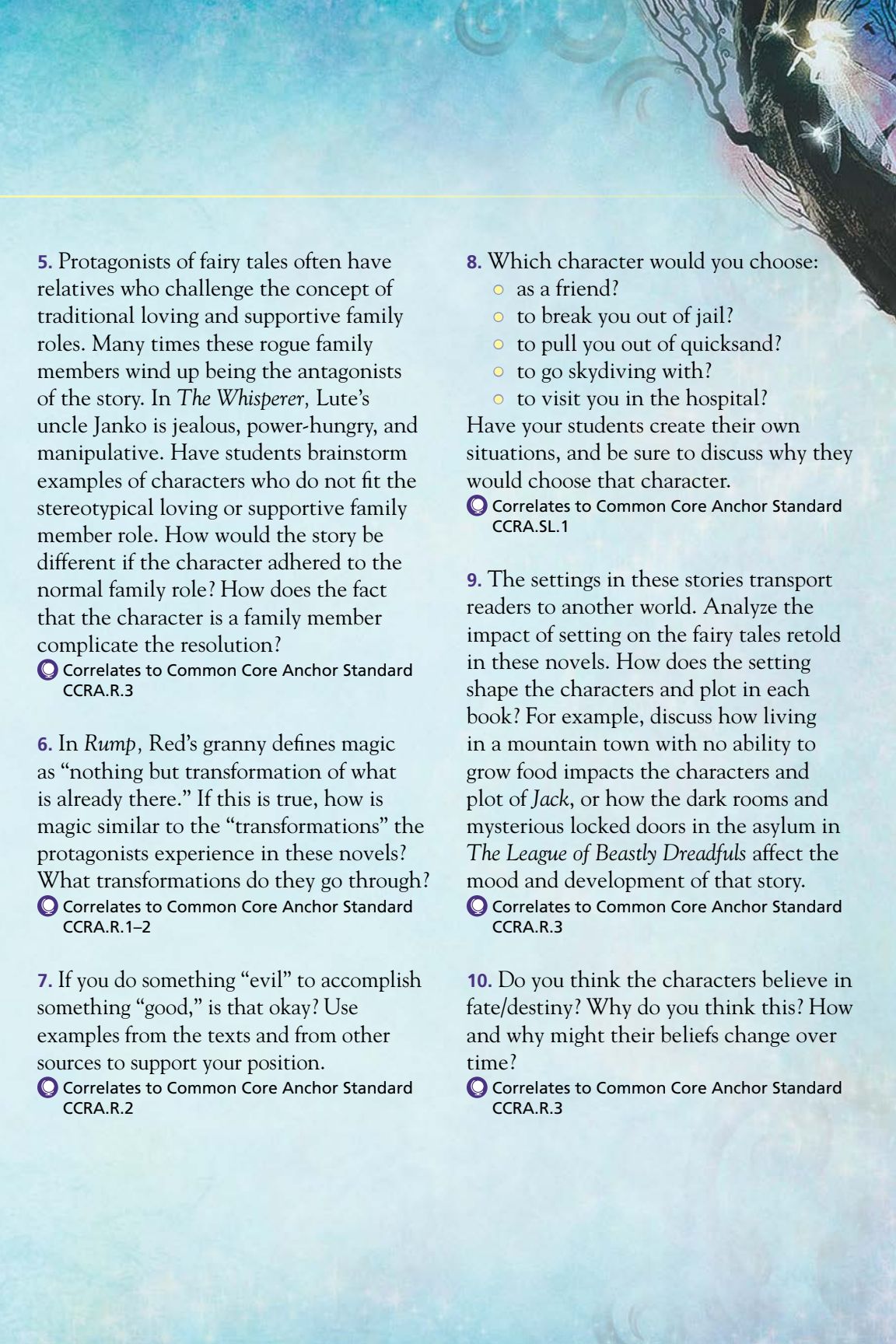
Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standard CCRA.R.10

3. Greed is a theme in each of these novels. Define greed as a class. Then compare and contrast how the novels approach this theme (or choose one of these novels and compare and contrast with another text that has the same theme). How effective are the authors in making their statement about greed? Discuss how greed affects the characters and plots in the different texts. Discuss where greed has played a role in your own community, in the news, etc. What were the effects?

Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards CCRA.R.9, CCRA.SL.2

4. How are male and female characters portrayed in the novels? Do they seem to be depicted equally in the depth of their heroic qualities? Debate! Identify specific examples from the text to support your claim and defend your position. How do these male and female heroes and heroines compare with those from other books you’ve read and other media you’ve encountered?

Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standard CCRA.SL.1



5. Protagonists of fairy tales often have relatives who challenge the concept of traditional loving and supportive family roles. Many times these rogue family members wind up being the antagonists of the story. In *The Whisperer*, Lute's uncle Janko is jealous, power-hungry, and manipulative. Have students brainstorm examples of characters who do not fit the stereotypical loving or supportive family member role. How would the story be different if the character adhered to the normal family role? How does the fact that the character is a family member complicate the resolution?

Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standard CCRA.R.3

6. In *Rump*, Red's granny defines magic as "nothing but transformation of what is already there." If this is true, how is magic similar to the "transformations" the protagonists experience in these novels? What transformations do they go through?

Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standard CCRA.R.1–2

7. If you do something "evil" to accomplish something "good," is that okay? Use examples from the texts and from other sources to support your position.

Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standard CCRA.R.2

8. Which character would you choose:
- as a friend?
 - to break you out of jail?
 - to pull you out of quicksand?
 - to go skydiving with?
 - to visit you in the hospital?

Have your students create their own situations, and be sure to discuss why they would choose that character.

Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standard CCRA.SL.1

9. The settings in these stories transport readers to another world. Analyze the impact of setting on the fairy tales retold in these novels. How does the setting shape the characters and plot in each book? For example, discuss how living in a mountain town with no ability to grow food impacts the characters and plot of *Jack*, or how the dark rooms and mysterious locked doors in the asylum in *The League of Beastly Dreadfuls* affect the mood and development of that story.

Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standard CCRA.R.3

10. Do you think the characters believe in fate/destiny? Why do you think this? How and why might their beliefs change over time?

Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standard CCRA.R.3

Extension Activities

1. Paper-Bag Characters: In this project, students will have an opportunity to further explore their favorite character from one of these novels. Assign students to decorate the outside of a paper bag to show what the character reveals to others in the book. Instruct them to fill the paper bag with items they've collected that show what the character is hiding. Students should be prepared to support with evidence whether that character ever really shares his or her true self in the book.

Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards
CCRA.R.1, CCRA.SL.4

2. Around the World with Cinderella: Lead your students through a walk around the world in your very own classroom! In small groups, have students visit three different stations that represent three different cultures. At each station, students will read, discuss, and take notes on that culture's version of Cinderella. Create a blank world-map graphic organizer on which students can write details about each culture's version of the story. After reading all the stories in small groups, have a whole-class discussion on the similarities and differences among them. Students can then write their own Cinderella stories.

Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards
CCRA.R.9, CCRA.W.3, CCRA.SL.6

3. Fairy-Tale-Finding Class Blog: During the fairy tale unit, set your students on a hunt—a fairy tale allusion hunt! They will search for allusions to fairy tales in their everyday lives. They might come across allusions in commercials, books, movies, video games, conversations, print advertisements, etc. Create a class edu-blog documenting all the fairy tale allusions they find. Every student must contribute at least two blog posts of their own and comment on at least five posts contributed by other students. The posts should do more than just recount what they notice. Make sure that students react to the

allusions by writing whether they found them effective, upsetting, inspiring, smart, misdirected, etc., and why.

Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards
CCRA.W.1, CCRA.W.6

4. Fairy Tale Mash-Up: Challenge students to write a fairy tale mash-up! Each student selects three fairy tale characters from a grab bag—characters from “Beauty and the Beast”, “Cinderella”, “Snow White”, “Hansel and Gretel”, “Peter Pan”, etc. Using Liesl Shurtliff’s technique in Rump and Jack as inspiration, assign students to write a short story in which they intertwine all three characters. Students should select one character as their protagonist and have the other two serve as supporting characters. But they don’t have to stop there! Students should include as many other characters from classic fairy tales as they can!

Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards
CCRA.W.3, CCRA.L.1

5. Matching Folklore: Define folklore with your students, and then discuss the differences among myths, fables, and fairy tales. Read aloud one of each type of story, but don’t tell the students which is which. After reading all three stories, have the students refer back to the elements of each genre to decide which is a myth, a fairy tale, and a fable. You might wish to follow this up by having students work in small groups to match more stories to the right genre.

Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards
CCRA.R.10, CCRA.SL.1, CCRA.L.6

6. Point-of-View Swap: In each of these stories, we see through the eyes of one character. What would change if the same story was written through the eyes of another character? For example, how would Jack’s mother view Jack’s almost getting eaten by a cat, or how does Teddy feel about how Nurse treats Ursula? Have students choose a scene

that they enjoy and write it from another character's point of view. Have them try for something even more fun by writing through the eyes of an inanimate object, such as the gold straw in *Rump* or one of the keyholes in *The League of Beastly Dreadfuls!* How does changing the point of view affect the telling of the story? How does it affect how the reader understands the characters' actions?

🕒 **Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards**
CCRA.R.6, CCRA.W.3

7. Missing Home: All of the characters in these novels set off (willingly or not!) on a journey. And they all miss home, though home is different for each of them. Have students choose a character and discuss how this character defines home. What clues does the writer give them that show this character misses home? How do they define home? Can home be a person or a scent or a sound? Next, have them read Claude McKay's poem "Home Thoughts" at TheOtherPages.org/poems/mckay01.html. As a class, discuss how we know the speaker misses home. What images does he use to show us what his home looks like (or sounds like, etc.)? Have students write a short essay explaining how we know that both the character from the novel and the speaker in the poem miss home. Be sure to use topic sentences, evidence from the texts, and a concluding statement.

🕒 **Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards**
CCRA.R.9, CCRA.W.2

8. Illustrated History: It is really fascinating how characters from fairy tales have evolved over the years. Some characters are more than 100 years old! This is true for other characters, too. Just think of characters from cartoons like *Mickey Mouse* or picture books like *Corduroy*. Assign students to pick a classic character whose history they want to know more about. Each student is to embark on a small research project in order to learn about the origins of the character, how the character has changed over the years, and how he or she looks and behaves today. Students are to write an informative text sharing what they learned, accompanied by a visual presentation, so other students can easily see the transformation that

has taken place. Discuss as a class which characters have changed for the better and which they think were best in their original form.

🕒 **Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards**
CCRA.W.2, CCRA.W.7, CCRA.R.7

9. Gossip Party: Fill a grab bag with popular fairy tale character names. Make sure to include different versions of the same character. For example, include the character Jack from Liesl Shurtliff's novel and the character Jack from Joseph Jacobs's version of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Or the character Goldilocks from Coville's *The Cottage in the Woods* and the old woman in Robert Southey's *The Story of the Three Bears*. Have students come in costume and prepared with at least one sentence they think their character might say at a party. The line should reveal something about that character's situation. The fun is the students' interaction with multiple incarnations of the same characters. Let students know that after the party, they'll need to write an opinion piece for the local gossip magazine. They should write about at least three characters. They might address such questions as which guest was the most surprising, most misunderstood, most convincing, least reliable, etc. Remind them to use specific examples in this article.

🕒 **Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards**
CCRA.SL.6, CCRA.W.4

10. Calling All Artists: One of the reasons we are so drawn to fairy tales is because of their intriguing imagery. Encourage students to choose a page from one of the novels in which they feel the writing appeals to the five senses. Have students chart which images appeal to which senses. What do the words help them see, feel, taste, hear, and smell, and what does the text reveal? Discuss why the author might choose to write this way. Students can then pretend to be the book's illustrator and turn the writer's enchanting images into an equally enchanting illustration. Students may draw or paint, or use graphic design or anything else they desire.

🕒 **Correlates to Common Core Anchor Standards**
CCRA.R.1, CCRA.L.3

COMMON CORE ANCHOR STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS EDUCATORS' GUIDE

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading

CCRA.R.1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCRA.R.2: Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

CCRA.R.3: Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCRA.R.6: Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

CCRA.R.7: Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCRA.R.9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

CCRA.R.10: Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing

CCRA.W.1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCRA.W.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCRA.W.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCRA.W.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

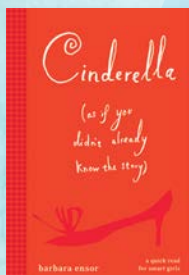
CCRA.W.6: Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

CCRA.W.7: Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

CCRA.SL.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Also Available



Cinderella (As if You Didn't Already Know the Story)
Barbara Ensor
PB: 978-0-375-87387-4



Ophelia and the Marvelous Boy
Karen Foxlee
PB: 978-0-385-75356-2
Discussion Guide Available at RHTeachersLibrarians.com



I Was a Rat!
Philip Pullman
PB: 978-0-440-41661-6



Will in Scarlet
Matthew Cody
PB: 978-0-375-87292-1

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