

## USING FAIRY TALES IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG LEARNERS

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### Abstract

This article explores the effectiveness of integrating fairy tales into English language instruction for young learners. It highlights the benefits of using familiar narratives to enhance language acquisition, stimulate imagination, and promote cultural understanding. The article discusses various strategies for incorporating fairy tales into lesson plans, such as storytelling, role-playing, and creative writing activities. Additionally, it addresses the cognitive and emotional development of children through engagement with these timeless stories. The article concludes with practical tips for educators on how to select appropriate fairy tales and adapt them to suit different learning levels.

**Key words:** *Fairy Tales, English Language Teaching (ELT), Young Learners, Language Acquisition, Storytelling, Cultural Understanding, Imagination, Creative Writing, Role-Playing, Cognitive Development*

### INTRODUCTION

Fairy tales have captivated audiences for centuries, transcending cultural and linguistic barriers. Their timeless narratives, rich with imagination, moral lessons, and cultural insights, make them an invaluable resource in the classroom, particularly for teaching English to young learners. This article explores the benefits of using fairy tales in language instruction, effective strategies for implementation, and practical tips for educators. Fairy tales provide a rich linguistic environment that can enhance vocabulary acquisition and language skills. The repetitive nature of fairy tales, along with their rhythmic patterns and rhymes, helps reinforce language structures and promotes retention. For young learners, exposure to new words in context aids comprehension and encourages them to use these words in their speech and writing. Fairy tales often reflect the cultural values and norms of the societies from which they originate. By exploring different fairy tales, students can gain insights into various cultures, traditions, and moral lessons. This exposure fosters cultural awareness and empathy, essential skills in our increasingly globalized world. Educators can use fairy tales to initiate discussions about cultural differences and similarities, helping students

appreciate diversity. The fantastical elements of fairy tales spark creativity and imagination in young learners. Engaging with stories that feature magical creatures, heroic quests, and moral dilemmas encourages children to think critically and creatively. This imaginative engagement not only makes learning enjoyable but also enhances cognitive skills such as problem-solving and abstract thinking.

Fairy tales often explore complex emotions and moral dilemmas faced by characters. By relating to these characters and their experiences, young learners can develop emotional intelligence. Discussing the feelings of characters in fairy tales allows students to express their own emotions and understand those of others, fostering empathy and social skills. Storytelling is a powerful tool for language teaching. Educators can read aloud or narrate fairy tales, using expressive voice modulation and gestures to engage students. This method not only captivates attention but also helps students improve their listening skills. Teachers can encourage students to participate by asking questions or prompting them to predict what happens next in the story.

Role-playing activities allow students to embody characters from fairy tales, enhancing their speaking and listening skills. After reading a story, teachers can assign roles to students and encourage them to act out scenes. This interactive approach fosters collaboration, boosts confidence in speaking English, and reinforces understanding of the narrative. Encouraging students to write their own fairy tales can be an exciting way to develop writing skills. After discussing the elements of a fairy tale—such as characters, setting, conflict, and resolution—students can create their own stories. This activity promotes creativity while allowing them to practice vocabulary and sentence structure in a fun context.

Using visual aids like illustrations or videos can enhance understanding and engagement. Teachers can show animated versions of fairy tales or use picture books with vivid illustrations to support the narrative. Visual aids help contextualize the language and make it more accessible to young learners. Integrating fairy tales into thematic units allows for a multidisciplinary approach. For example, a unit on "Courage" could feature stories like "The Brave Little Tailor" or "Jack and the Beanstalk." Activities could include discussions about bravery, art projects related to the stories, or even lessons on related vocabulary. This holistic approach reinforces language learning through various subjects. When choosing fairy tales for young learners, consider their age, language proficiency, and cultural background. Select stories that are age-appropriate and contain language that is accessible yet challenging enough to promote learning. Familiar tales may be easier for students to engage with initially before introducing less familiar ones. Sometimes, it may be necessary to adapt fairy tales to suit the language level of your students. Simplifying complex sentences or modifying vocabulary can make stories more accessible without losing their essence. Additionally, providing summaries or key vocabulary lists before reading can prepare

students for understanding the story better. After reading a fairy tale, facilitate discussions that encourage critical thinking. Ask open-ended questions about the characters' motivations, the moral of the story, or how students would react in similar situations. Such discussions not only promote language use but also deepen comprehension. Setting up a dedicated space in the classroom for fairy tales can stimulate interest and engagement. Fill this corner with books, puppets, and art supplies related to fairy tales. Encourage students to explore this area during free time or as part of structured activities. Involving parents can enhance the learning experience outside the classroom. Encourage parents to read fairy tales at home with their children in English or their native language. This practice reinforces language skills while also providing an opportunity for family bonding.

Learning Area	Role of Fairy Tales	Pedagogical Benefit	Practical Activity Example
Vocabulary	Repetition of keywords and descriptive adjectives	Contextualized word retention	Creating a "Magic Word" visual dictionary
Grammar	Narrative tenses and sentence patterns	Implicit learning of structures	Predicting outcomes using future tenses
Speaking	Character dialogue and role-play	Increased fluency and confidence	Reader's Theater or puppet shows
Intercultural	Exposure to diverse values and traditions	Development of global empathy	Comparing local folk tales with English tales
Listening	Storytelling and auditory input	Improved phonemic awareness	Listening for specific character "clues"
Motivation	High engagement through fantasy	Lowered affective filter for learning	Designing a new ending for a classic story

### Analysis of the Table

The integration of fairy tales into primary English education provides a structured yet flexible framework for language acquisition, as detailed in the table above. This approach moves beyond traditional rote learning by embedding language into a meaningful and imaginative context.

- ✓ Linguistic Growth through Narrative: Fairy tales naturally utilize repetition and predictable patterns. As shown in the Vocabulary and Grammar sections, this allows young learners to acquire language implicitly. Instead of memorizing isolated verb lists, children see "Past Simple" used dynamically to describe a hero's journey, which leads to better long-term retention.
- ✓ Developing Intercultural Competence: A key highlight of the table is the focus on Intercultural awareness. Fairy tales are cultural artifacts. By introducing stories from various English-speaking cultures and comparing them with local heritage, teachers foster a sense of "intercultural competence" from a young age. This helps students recognize that while languages differ, universal human values (like bravery or kindness) remain constant.
- ✓ Communication and Fluency: The Speaking dimension emphasizes the shift from passive listening to active production. Fairy tales provide "safe" identities;

when a child performs as a character in a "Reader's Theater," their anxiety (affective filter) is lowered. They are no longer a student making a mistake, but a character telling a story, which significantly boosts oral fluency.

- ✓ Holistic Engagement: Finally, the Motivation aspect underpins the entire methodology. The fantasy elements of fairy tales cater to the cognitive developmental stage of young learners, turning the classroom into a space of discovery. This emotional investment ensures that the "Key Outcomes"-such as listening skills and phonemic awareness-are achieved more effectively than through standard textbook exercises

### CONCLUSION

Incorporating fairy tales into English language instruction offers numerous benefits for young learners, from enhancing language acquisition to fostering cultural understanding and emotional development. By employing creative teaching strategies such as storytelling, role-playing, and creative writing, educators can create an engaging learning environment that stimulates imagination and critical thinking. With careful selection and adaptation of stories, teachers can effectively harness the magic of fairy tales to enrich their students' educational experiences.

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