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Chapter 09: Gore & Grimm, Princesses & Porridge

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THE INSIDE, OUTSIDE, AND UPSIDE DOWNS OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

From Poets and Pop-ups to
Princesses and Porridge

Jenifer Jasinski Schneider, Ph.D.

The Inside, Outside, and Upside Downs of Children's Literature: From Poets and Pop-ups to Princesses and Porridge

Jenifer Jasinski Schneider, Ph.D.

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TEXTUAL TENDENCIES AND OPEN AND CLOSE READINGS

SECTION 3

CHAPTER 09

GORE & GRIMM, PRINCESSES & PORRIDGE

(THE ROOTS OF STORY AND NARRATION)

In this chapter, I'm going to put you to work. You are going to create a story, play with a story, and fracture a story. Along the way, pay attention to your process but also keep track of your products. When you are done, I will use your creations to discuss the roots of story and the traditions of narrative.

Passing Down Stories

Your first assignment is to "tell" a story that creates a communal explanation of an observed phenomenon. Much like ancient people who did not have modern science to explain the physical world around them, you are going to use your bodily senses, along with your sense of story, to develop a tale, legend, or myth to describe one of four events.

I would like for you to select one of the four visual images from *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Chris Van Allsburg (Figure 9.1). Each one of the mysteries includes a title and a small clue.

Figure 9.2 *The Seven Chairs*: The fifth one ended up in France.

Figure 9.3 *Mr. Linden's Library*: He had warned her about the book. Now it was too late.

CHOOSE
THIS
ONE

CHOOSE
THAT
ONE

Figure 9.1

The Mysteries of Harris Burdick is a collection of stories, but the reader must determine the beginning, middle, and end of each one. *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Chris Van Allsburg, 1984, New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin. Copyright 1984 by Chris Van Allsburg.

Figure 9.2

The Seven Chairs: The fifth one ended up in France. Image from *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Chris Van Allsburg, 1984, New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin. Copyright 1984 by Chris Van Allsburg.

Figure 9.3

Mr. Linden's Library: He had warned her about the book. Now it was too late. Image from *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Chris Van Allsburg, 1984, New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin. Copyright 1984 by Chris Van Allsburg.

Figure 9.4 Archie Smith, *Boy Wonder*: A tiny voice asked, “Is he the one?”

Figure 9.5 *Under the Rug*: Two weeks passed and it happened again.

Figure 9.4

Archie Smith, *Boy Wonder*: A tiny voice asked, “Is he the one?”
Image from *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Chris Van Allsburg, 1984, New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin. Copyright 1984 by Chris Van Allsburg.

Figure 9.5

Under the Rug: Two weeks passed and it happened again.
Image from *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* by Chris Van Allsburg, 1984, New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin. Copyright 1984 by Chris Van Allsburg.

Each visual image represents an event that you can observe, but which you may not readily understand. You can see who is involved (characters) and what has occurred (plot event), but the story is incomplete. It's up to you to narrate this event to help others make sense of what they are seeing and feeling.

To begin the process, select one image/event and read the corresponding caption. To build on this initial statement, use one or two sentences of your own to narrate the unbelievable event before your eyes.

Verbally share your story amongst your family or a group of friends. Invite one person to create the next sequence of events in the story. Then invite another. The sentence building should continue until everyone has had a chance to contribute and the story is told.

Your short story may twist and turn or end abruptly. But that's what happens in myths, legends, tales, and fables that are spun from oral traditions. Each teller takes the tale in a slightly different direction than the previous teller. Each teller remembers something new or embellishes different details to create intrigue, to foreshadow outcomes, to provide moral guidance, or to entertain.

Now that you have a story, how will you remember it?

Without the aid of writing tools or recording devices, how did ancient people hold on to oral stories? There are many groups of people in the world today who rely on storytelling to maintain their cultural history. Do you come from a family of storytellers? How are stories passed from generation to generation in your circles of family and friends?

Writing Down Stories

What happens to oral stories when they get written down? Well, sometimes the author gets it right, and sometimes the author gets it wrong.

Is this possible? Is there a right and wrong way to story? Is there a right and wrong story to tell?

If you want to find out how famous authors interpreted the visual images you selected, read *The Chronicles of Harris Burdick* (Figure 9.6). In this book, professional writers such as Stephen King, Lois Lowry, and Walter Dean Myers, recorded their interpretations of the events. Did the professional authors capture a similar story to yours? Where did your stories converge or diverge? What did you notice? You “witnessed” the same exact event, so what are the sources of any discrepancies?

Now what happens as an oral tradition arises about an historical event or an historical person is that, strangely enough, the first oral tradition is not an attempt to remember exactly what happened, but is rather a return into the symbols of the tradition that could explain an event. Therefore, one has to imagine that legend and myth and hymn and prayer are the vehicles in which oral traditions develop. The move into a formulated tradition that looks as if it was a description of the actual historical events is actually the end result of such a development....So oral tradition develops as the community looks for a recreation of memory in community life. (Helmut Koester, 1998)

Folk tales, fairy tales, legends, myths, tall tales, and fables are just a few of the recognizable forms of story that “originated in oral traditions throughout the world and still exist” (Zipes, 2012, p. 114).

Figure 9.6

The Chronicles of Harris Burdick is the attempt of 14 famous authors to solve the mysteries of Harris Burdick. You can also find out how other readers have responded to the Burdick mysteries (<http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/features/harrisburdick/>).

The Chronicles of Harris Burdick by Chris Van Allsburg, 2011, New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin. Cover art copyright 2011 by Chris Van Allsburg.

For an extensive collection of folklore and mythology texts, visit the digital archive created by Emeritus Professor D.L. Ashliman at the University of Pittsburgh, Department of German: <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/folktexts.html>

“Traditional literature” is the collective name for the text types that began through oral storytelling and are now preserved in iterations of writing. With oral origins, there were no “original” versions to track down and no identifiable authors to credit. However, as time passed, many individuals decided to collect, organize, and write these stories for collection and distribution.

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm (Figure 9.7), two German brothers who were aspiring lawyers with a hobby of collecting folktales, took positions as librarians in 1808 and became linguists, folklorists, and scholars of medieval studies (Ashliman, 2015). They traveled through Germany and spoke with families to acquire stories and document the language with which the stories were told. They published a collection of *Children’s and Household Tales* for wider distribution and their names became synonymous with these stories (Figure 9.8). The Brothers Grimm did not create the stories; they collected and interpreted them. Now the stories are preserved in time. The Grimms’ collections are often considered the originals, but the Grimms altered the stories across versions (Video 9.1).

Figure 9.7

Image of the Brothers Grimm. Retrieved from http://monumente-online.de/wAssets/img/ausgaben/2012/1/466/fotogrimm_Br_der_Grimm_Museum_Kassel_1_765x715.jpg

Figure 9.8

The Brothers Grimm published this version of *Children’s and Household Tales* in 1882. This version was illustrated by Walter Crane and translated by Lucy Crane. The text is available from The Project Gutenberg <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/19068/19068-h/19068-h.htm> and <http://www.archive.org/stream/grimmsfairytal00grim#page/n5/mode/2up>

Video 9.1 The Brothers Grimm and the Tales of a Culture <http://www.kaltura.com/tiny/te32o>

STUDYING FOLK AND FAIRY TALES: THE BROTHERS GRIMM

SPECIAL THANKS TO DR. KEVIN YEE

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In a different country, Charles Perrault (Figure 9.9), a respected academic who lived almost 100 years before the Brothers Grimm, engaged in the preservation of stories told in France. In 1697, he published a volume of *Stories or Tales from Times Past: Tales of Mother Goose* (Figure 9.10) and included the stories of *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Little Red Riding Hood*.

In another time and place, Joseph Jacobs (Figure 9.11), an Australian, Jewish scholar, folklorist, and literary critic compiled collections of English tales and legends (Bergman, 1983). Capturing stories such as *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *The Three Bears*, Joseph Jacobs preserved English legends as well as Jewish, Celtic, and Indian folklore (Figure 9.12).

<http://www.archive.org/stream/morecelticfairytoojaco#page/n7/mode/2up>

Figure 9.9

Charles Perrault by Lallemand, 1693, de 'Académie Française, Source=New York Public Library Digital Gallery, Retrieved from <http://digitalgallery.nypl.org/nypldigital/dgkeysearchdetail.cfm?trg=1&strucID=1018746&imageID=1555918&word=Perrault&s=1¬word=&d=&c=&f>

Figure 9.10

Puss in Boots, from a handwritten and illustrated version of Charles Perrault's *Contes de ma mère l'Oye* (Mother Goose Tales). Retrieved from <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Puss-in-Boots-1695.jpg>

Figure 9.11

Joseph Jacobs was a distinguished Jewish historian and linguist who published folktales of English, Celtic, Indian, and European cultures. Retrieved from <http://www.folklore-network.folkaustralia.com/images/image0012.gif>

Figure 9.12

More Celtic Fairy Tales, Jacobs, J., 1895 New York : Grosset & Dunlap (2nd edition) Copy scan by nicole-Deyo, a trusted source, from copy held by New York Public Lib., obtained from <http://www.archive.org/stream/morecelticfairytoojaco#page/n7/mode/2up>

Comment: Professor D.L. Ashliman created a website for Charles Perrault. <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/perrault.html>

Project Gutenberg has published a 1922 version of *The Tales of Charles Perrault* <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/29021/29021-h/29021-h.htm>

Collections of Joseph Jacobs work can be found at <http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/eng/eft/>

Joseph Jacobs wrote explicitly about the people who passed down these tales from generation to generation. He noted, “in dealing with Folk-lore, much was said of the Lore, almost nothing was said of the Folk” [Jacobs, 1893: 233]:

<http://england.prm.ox.ac.uk/englishness-Joseph-Jacobs.html>

Oral traditions occur across all cultures, countries and time periods. The European origins of the Brothers Grimm, Charles Perrault, and Joseph Jacobs reflect Anglo-Saxon preferences in publishing and its corresponding impact on U.S. literary history.

Scholars have collected African, Russian, South American, Asian, and Native people's stories as well. <http://www.worldoftales.com/index.html>
<http://www.unc.edu/~rwilkers/title.htm>

I am focusing on the traditions of Grimm, Perrault, and Jacobs because I want to make a point about the evolution of oral stories into print and across time.

Exploring Story

Variants of oral tales provide interesting comparisons and opportunities for exploring the parallel development of stories across cultures and the divergence of stories across time, people, and languages. For your next assignment, you will read a selection of folktales to compare and contrast. (Click on the [form](#) to help you explore the story.)

Step 1. Choose one of the following folktales, which began in the oral tradition.
Select one story and use it for steps 2-6.

- Cinderella/ The Little Glass Slipper
- Sleeping Beauty
- Jack and the Bean Stalk
- The Three Bears
- The Three Little Pigs
- Little Red Riding Hood/ Little Red Cap
- Hansel and Gretel

ELEMENTS OF NARRATIVE FICTION	ORIGINAL VERSION	ILLUSTRATED VERSION 1800-1899	NEWER VERSION 1900-1999	NEWEST VERSION 2000-PRESENT
PLOT DEVELOPMENT				
CHARACTERS				
SETTING				
STYLE & PERSPECTIVE				
ELEMENTS OF NARRATIVE ILLUSTRATION	ORIGINAL VERSION	ILLUSTRATED VERSION 1800-1899	NEWER VERSION 1900-1999	NEWEST VERSION 2000-PRESENT
EXECUTION OF ARTISTIC TECHNIQUE				
PICTORIAL INTERPRETATION OF STORY OR THEME				
DELINEATION OF PLOT, THEME, CHARACTERS, SETTING, MOOD THROUGH PICTURES				
CONSIDERATION OF INTENDED AUDIENCE				

Step 2: Find a version of the selected folktale as it was first published by the Brothers Grimm, Charles Perrault, or Joseph Jacobs.

- Brothers Grimm: <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimmtales.html>
- Charles Perrault: <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/perrault.html>
- Joseph Jacobs: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/eng/eft/>
- Project Gutenberg (<https://www.gutenberg.org/>). Project Gutenberg offers over 50,000 free ebooks that were originally published by legitimate publishers. You can search by Perrault, Grimm, or Joseph Jacobs.

Examine the elements of story:

Plot: The events and action within a story. The plot has a beginning, middle, and end connected through rising action, a climax, and falling action. Conflict drives the plot. Conflict typically occurs as character vs. character, character vs. nature, character vs. society, or character vs. self.

Characters: The actors in the plot. Characters are round, dynamic, flat or static. In other words, they grow, change, and evolve or they are limited, stereotypical, and unlearning. Characters are also identified as protagonists and antagonists. The author or illustrator characterizes the actors directly through description and direct statements or indirectly through thoughts, words, and actions.

Setting: The location of the events in the plot. The setting positions the action in time and space. The setting can also project the mood and develop the atmosphere.

Theme: The main point or essence of the story. The theme reflects the author and illustrator's central message.

Style and Perspective: The way in which a story is presented and the perspective from which the story is told or illustrated. The point of view can be omniscient (all knowing), limited omniscient (through one character), or first person. The author and illustrator's voice and techniques come into play as well.

To evaluate narrative books (i.e., chapter books) based primarily on the text, such as contemporary realistic fiction, historical fiction, fantasy, or novels in verse, I use a combination of criteria from the *Newbery Medal (ALA)* and the *Printz Award (ALA)*. Depending on the book, one or more of these criteria apply:

- Development of a plot
- Delineation of characters
- Delineation of a setting
- Distinctive interpretation of the theme or concept
- Excellent presentation of information including accuracy, clarity, and organizational flow
- Appropriateness of style for the audience
- Design

If the narrative is presented in the form of a picturebook or graphic novel, I use the following criteria from the *Caldecott Medal (ALA)* as well.

- Excellence of execution in the artistic technique employed;
- Excellence of pictorial interpretation of story or theme;
- Appropriateness of style of illustration to the story or theme;
- Delineation of plot, theme, characters, setting, mood through the pictures;
- Excellence of presentation in recognition of the intended audience.

What do you notice about the Grimm/Perrault/Jacobs version in comparison to your personal experience and recollection of the selected folktale?

If you are surprised by the content of the folktale you read, you aren't alone. Walt Disney versions of these stories pervade your experience. For an excellent discussion of the sex, violence, witches, and beasts of folktales, read *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales* by Maria Tatar (2003).

What do you notice about the recurring themes?

For example, I notice fear. Fear is part of our lives. Throughout our collective history, we have used fear (and story) to teach, convince, coerce, and control what happens in society. Fear rhetoric and scary stories are pervasive in adult literature (Check out this collection of classic horror: <http://www.underworldtales.com/classic.htm>). And if it happens in society, and if it happens in adult literature, it happens in children's literature. Ever read the Goosebumps series by R.L. Stine? (<http://rlstine.com>). What techniques do you notice?

Step 3: Find Something Old

Find another old version, and I mean really old! Yes, you already found an old written version of a fairytale, but now I want you to find another old illustrated version intended for children. Using the following database, find a children's book version of your selected folktale published between 1800 and 1899.

- The Baldwin Library of Historical Children's Literature (<http://ufdc.ufl.edu/juv>) at the University of Florida houses a searchable database filled with old examples of children's literature. In fact, the Baldwin includes individual stories and anthologies of the Grimm's fairy tales.

Read the old version.

What do you notice about a children's book version of your selected folktale published before 1900? What do you notice about the illustrations? Can you see evidence of different cultural expectations? What do you notice about the language?

Step 4: Find Something New

The story you selected is famous and it has been retold and interpreted by many authors and illustrators over the years. Find two "newer" versions of your story written for children.

Authors and illustrators who publish folktales:

Jan Brett	Paul Galdone	Jerry Pinkney
Anthony Brown	Virginia Hamilton	Cynthia Rylant
Marc Brown	Trina Shart Hyman	Jon Scieszka
Marcia Brown	Steven Kellogg	Paul O. Zelinsky

- Find a version published between 1900 and 1999.
- Find a version published between 2000 and today.

Hint: Search your public library’s database. Check Amazon for popular versions and then search for those titles in your library as well. Or head to the public library and search the stacks. That’s always a fun option.

Please note the folktale may appear in a collection of tales. The story may be illustrated by any individual and categorized by the illustrator’s last name. The story might be retold by someone other than the Brothers Grimm, Charles Perrault, or Joseph Jacobs, but the new author should credit the old author in some way.

What do you notice about the children’s book versions of your selected folktale published between 1900-1999 and 2000 to present? What do you notice about the illustrations? What happened to the plot? What happened to the characters? What happened to the language?

Can you infer anything about the folk, by examining the lore?

Step 5: Find Something Borrowed

Find at least one "borrowed" variation of your folktale. In other words, many authors and illustrators have borrowed the basic plot structure or characters from your selected folktale and reinterpreted them from a different perspective. These variants, also known as "fractured fairy tales," share similarities with the well-known story you have read, but the author or illustrator has made changes along the way. Below, I have listed a few examples. There are many more.

Cinderella:

- *Cinder Edna* by Ellen Jackson and illustrated by Kevin O'Malley, 1998, New York, NY: HarperCollins (Figure 9.13)
- *Cinderella Skeleton* by Robert D. San Souci and illustrated by David Catrow, 2000, New York, NY: Silver Whistle.
- *Cindy Ellen: A Wild Western* by Susan Lowell and illustrated by Jane Manning, 2001, New York, NY: HarperCollins.
- *Ella Enchanted* by Gail Carson Levine, 2011, New York, NY: HarperCollins.

Figure 9.13

Cinder Edna is the story of Cinderella's neighbor. *Cinder Edna* by Ellen Jackson and illustrated by Kevin O'Malley, 1998, New York, NY: HarperCollins. Cover art copyright 1998 by Kevin O'Malley.

Read Aloud: Fractured Fairy Tales

Watch this wonderful selection of fractured fairy tales. The name, "Fractured Fairy Tales," originated during these shorts shown during the *Rocky and Bullwinkle Show*.

Cinderella

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-xnYcKHl8E4>

Sleeping Beauty

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=edS6i-2z4Ho>

Jack and the Bean Stalk

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YB1EE-FDgMk>

The Three Bears

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kby4oA1nQZM>

The Three Little Pigs

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYiCM35V7_w

Little Red Riding Hood

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RksxFR-uMaI>

Hansel and Gretel

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=csdZQZmgKfQ>

Sleeping Beauty:

- *Sleeping Ugly* by Jane Yolen and illustrated by Diane Stanley, 1997, New York, NY: Puffin.
- *Awake: The Story of Sleeping Beauty with Espresso* by Karleen Tauszik, 2014, Seattle, WA: Amazon (Figure 9.14).
- *Ugly Sleeping Beauty* by Jamie Campbell, 2014, Seattle, WA: Amazon Digital Services.

Jack and the Bean Stalk:

- *Waynetta and the Cornstalk* by Helen Ketteman and illustrated by Diane Greenesid, 2007, Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman & Co.
- *Jack and the Beanstalk* by Nina Crews, 2011, New York, NY: Henry Holt & Co.
- *Juan y Los Frijoles Magicos* by Carol Ottolenghi, 2005, Greensboro, NC: Brighter Child.
- *Jack and the Baked Beanstalk* by Colin Stimpson, 2012, New York, NY: Templar (Figure 9.15)

The Three Bears:

- *Deep in the Forest* by Brinton Turkle, 1992, New York, NY: Puffin.
- *I Thought This Was a Bear Book* by Tara Lazar and illustrated by Benji Davies, 2015, New York, NY: Aladdin (Figure 9.16)
- *Goldilocks and Just One Bear* by Leigh Hodgkinson, 2012, Nosy Crow.

Figure 9.14

Awake has the modern sensibilities of high-priced coffee. *Awake: The Story of Sleeping Beauty with Espresso* by Karleen Tauszik, 2014, Seattle, WA: Amazon. Copyright 2014 by Karleen Tauszik.

Figure 9.15

This is the story of Jack in the big city during an economic downturn. *Jack and the Baked Beanstalk* by Colin Stimpson, 2012, New York, NY: Templar. Copyright 2012 by Colin Stimpson.

Figure 9.16

An alien has landed in the story of the three bears. No problem, right? *I Thought This Was a Bear Book* by Tara Lazar and illustrated by Benji Davies, 2015, New York, NY: Aladdin. Cover art copyright 2015 by Benji Davies.

The Three Little Pigs:

- *The Three Pigs* by David Wiesner, 2001, New York, NY: Clarion (Figure 9.17)
- *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* by Eugene Trivizas and illustrated by Helen Oxenbury, 1997, New York, NY: Margaret K. McElderry.
- *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka and illustrated by Lane Smith, 1989, New York, NY: Viking.
- *Pig, Pigger, Piggest* by Rick Walton and illustrated by Jimmy Holder, 2003, Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith.

Figure 9.17

David Wiesner turns the story of the three pigs inside out. *The Three Pigs* by David Wiesner, 2001, New York, NY: Clarion. Copyright 2001 by David Wiesner.

Little Red Riding Hood:

- *Honestly Red Riding Hood was Rotten* by Trisha Speed Shaskan and illustrated by Gerald Guerlais, 2011, Mankato, MN: Picture Window Books.
- *Lon Po Po* by Ed Young, 1989, New York, NY: Philomel.
- *Good Little Wolf* by Nadia Shireen, 2011, New York, NY: Knopf Books (Figure 9.18).

Figure 9.18

Nadia Shireen explores what happens when the bad guy is good. *Good Little Wolf* by Nadia Shireen, 2011, New York, NY: Knopf Books. Copyright 2011 by Nadia Shireen.

Hansel and Gretel:

- *Hansel and Gretel* by Cynthia Rylant and illustrated by Jen Corace, 2008, New York, NY: Hyperion.
- *Hansel and Gretel* by Neil Gaiman and illustrated by Lorenzo Mattotti, 2014, London, UK: Bloomsbury.
- *Hansel and Gretel* by Rachel Isadora, 2009, New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons (Figure 9.19).

Figure 9.19

Rachel Isadora's illustrative style gives Hansel and Gretel a completely different feel. *Hansel and Gretel* by Rachel Isadora, 2009, New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons. Copyright 2009 by Rachel Isadora.

Step 6: Comparing Characteristics

The versions, variants, and examples of old and new books exemplify the ways in which narrative elements (plot, setting, character, point of view, theme) impact the story arc and the reader's experience. Using different examples of your selected folktale, compare and contrast the stories. You can compare

- whole-to-whole
- similarities to differences
- Female antagonists vs. Male antagonists

What do you notice about the scare? What do you notice about the characters and plot events? Short or elaborated, realistic or imaginative, the same standards of quality apply.

To evaluate narrative books (i.e., chapter books) based primarily on the text, such as contemporary realistic fiction, historical fiction, fantasy, or novels in verse, I use a combination of criteria from the *Newbery Medal (ALA)* and the *Printz Award (ALA)*. Depending on the book, one or more of these criteria apply:

- Development of a plot
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- Delineation of a setting
- Distinctive interpretation of the theme or concept
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- Appropriateness of style of illustration to the story or theme;
- Delineation of plot, theme, characters, setting, mood through the pictures;
- Excellence of presentation in recognition of the intended audience.

From Tradition to Modern Fiction

We make sense of the world through story. Children's language usage indicates their development of the concept of story (Applebee, 1978). The oral, abbreviated folktales from centuries ago serve as short story archetypes for today's fully developed novels. Many people view fantasy as the natural progression of traditional literature, but other forms of fiction follow suit as well. For an excellent overview of fictional genres, visit Pauline Dewan's website <http://childliterature.net/childlit/index.html>. She describes the differences between genres of fiction: adventure fiction, realistic fiction, animal fiction, historical fiction, toy fiction, and fantasy fiction.

The traditional and modern stories written for children and young adults are structured around characters who live in particular places and times, who experience a series of events that are revealed through narration, character action, and dialogue. Although stories can have elaborate plots that defy chronologies or narrative practices, they all have a basic beginning, middle, and an end. Otherwise, we wouldn't be able to follow along as readers. Some people feel we are born with an understanding of story structure; others believe we are socialized into the practice. Either way, story has a grammar and it's a tool for thinking and understanding. The Brothers Grimm, Charles Perrault, and Joseph Jacobs represent the many people who have attended to story and recognized its value in culture and human development.