

## Introduction

Traditional tales have captured our imaginations for centuries. A well told story will fascinate and bring enjoyment. Use these resources to inspire children and introduce them to the structures and language-rich formats of fairy tales.

In listening to, retelling and creating stories, children will learn about the structuring of a narrative, the creative process of forming characters and how they interact with events that build as a story progresses. Props, scenery, settings and characters can all be found in the resources in this collection.

The resources can be used separately or together to offer a range of learning opportunities. They are suitable for times of transition when a new chapter is beginning for the children, as well as a support for Year 1 children who need some help with storytelling.

## Resources in the collection

### YD1147 Fairy Tale Story Stones

This set of 13 stones is divided into three groups: characters, settings and props, each of which will help create the structure of a story.

*Characters:* fairy, giant, king, queen, and wolf

*Settings:* bridge, cottage, mountain, and wood

*Objects:* apple, beanstalk, crown, and wand

### YD1208 Fairy Tale Scenery Stones

The three designs in this set have been created for open-ended play. The set includes six of each design, so there are plenty to share. They can be used as scenery props for imaginary play and storytelling.

### YD1193 Little Lands Enchanted World

The upright stones in this set represent themes that often feature in traditional tales. They are ideal for small world play as they can be used outdoors in mud, soil, water and sand, so the stories can go where best suits them. Items included: apple tree, bridge, cottage, mountain, old door, toadstool, tower, and well.

## Developing learning through conversation

These resources will help develop a language-rich environment for children to learn in. Effective communication skills are vital to children's development in this area of learning, both for young children and older ones who may need additional support. To help children it is important to think through the comments you might make and the style of questions you use to best foster their creativity. Questions that begin with 'what', 'where', 'when', 'why', 'who' and 'how' provide opportunities for



extended interactions. Try using, 'Tell me about ...' or 'I wonder ...' to promote deeper exchanges. Listening to what a child is focused on, responding accordingly and then expanding the conversation will offer greater opportunities to extend their learning.

## Activity ideas using the resources

### Invitation to imaginary play

You will need: Fairy Tale Story Stones, Fairy Tale Scenery Stones, Little Lands Enchanted World

Display the resources above in an inviting way that encourages imaginary play. Provide extra items suitable for storytelling. Try to use natural materials such as sand, stones, wood, water, logs, stones, and so on. These tend to offer a greater range of tactile and sensory feedback, which often enhances play and language development. Display books of favourite fairy tales and traditional tales nearby, especially those that the children have enjoyed. Provide equipment for the children to record their play should they wish to.

Such provision encourages children to follow their own interests, engage in deep play with others, and develop their storytelling skills by learning how to structure narratives.

### Conversation prompts

The children may be absorbed in their own play, giving you the opportunity to observe first and then engage, focusing on their interests to extend their conversations and learning. You could try the following:

- Tell me about what you're doing.
- What's happening here?
- I would love to hear your story.
- This scene looks amazing. What can you tell me about it?

Look for opportunities to ask children to elaborate on what they said:

- Tell me more.
- What else can you tell me.

Provide a supportive environment for them to share their ideas and stories.

Help older children to think through their ideas before they write them down, whether using words or a combination of words and drawings.

### Vocabulary

- Beginning, middle, end
- Next
- Then
- Scene
- Story
- Character
- Prop



## The story sack

You will need: Fairy Tale Story Stones

This works best as a small group activity. Divide the set into its three themed groups and put each in a separate bag. Ask a child to pick one stone from each bag and share them with the group. It may be that you need two from the character bag. Encourage the children to begin to compose a story inspired by the stones. The questions below will help build the narrative. This is an activity that invites children to develop their creativity. This is enhanced by the interactions they have with each other: asking questions, considering other opinions, negotiating a way forward and sharing ideas.



Allow the children to pick more stones to help develop their stories, or children can pick stones that they think will help another group with their story.

Encourage older children to find ways to record their stories. This could be in written form, an audio retelling or a performance recorded on video. What they record could be for a specific format, such as a news report on the three little pigs escape.

### Conversation prompts

- Tell me about the stones you have chosen.
- What can [name stone] tell us about their life?
- How might [name the chosen stones] make a good story?
- I wonder what will happen next.
- What will happen to [name stone]?
- Why would they do that?
- Why do you think the [character name] has [give attribute]?
- How does the story end?

### Vocabulary

- Prop
- Character
- Setting
- Beginning, middle, end
- Next
- Then
- Because

### Going further with fairy tales

- Create a sack for each of the three themes: props, costumes, and pictures of places and landscapes. Make these available for small groups of children to access and use in a similar way to the idea above. This places the creative process completely in the hands of the children, requiring them to share thoughts, consider those of others, justify their thinking and negotiate over the shape of their story. The structuring of the story will benefit from the shared planning you did with the stones, which should remain available in case the children want to use it in some way.
- Similarly, this activity gives the children control of the narrative, with the stones and favourite picture books alongside for support. Leave some wooden spoons and coloured pens on a table with the other resources as an invitation to create characters for a known or new story. Children will need to collaborate not only on the story they wish to tell but also on what the spoons will represent and how they should be decorated to show this. The activity is good for motor skills as well as storytelling. Once underway, use the opportunity to ask some of the questions above to help children reflect on what they are working on and where they are heading. Ask older children to explain the challenges they faced and how they worked together to overcome them.

### Making a scene

You will need: Fairy Tale Scenery Stones, Fairy Tale Story Stones

Combining these two resources offers children characters and scenery in which to base their stories. The scenery stones can create different settings. These can be added to using imprints of the stones made in play clay. The stones could be stacked to make amazing beanstalks or magical paths to follow.



You could also provide art resources so that children can make their own scenery props. These need not be large in scale. However, what they are will need to be discussed and agreed upon. The more effective the discussion, the more valuable the props created will be to the story. The value of this activity is more in such conversations than in the quality of the finished pieces. The stories generated will be that much richer in language and structure as a result of the discussions that preceded them.

### Conversation prompts

- Tell me about your scene.
- How did you make ...?
- What's your story about?
- Why did you want [name prop] as part of your story?
- How did you agree on what to make?
- What are you going to do next?

### Vocabulary

- Scene
- Scenery
- Props

Possible additional scenery items: fir tree, cave, beanstalk, tree stump, log, pond, river

### Settings and scenery for stories

- One of the props not included in the stone set is a beanstalk. However, this is a great opportunity to suggest the children build their own. As the beanstalk in Jack and the Beanstalk reached to the sky, the challenge could be to build the tallest freestanding one. If you give groups of children the same materials – tape, newspaper, play clay – they will need to work together to create their beanstalk. There will be lots of ideas, so children will need to listen to those of others and build on them with their own, hypothesising, experimented, revising and collaborating as they do so. Ask questions to prompt discussion and elaboration, and model how to negotiate. Older children may want to find ways to record progress. They may want to take photos and record instructions for each part of the process they carry out to make their beanstalk, providing others with the means to do the same.
- There is a star and a rainbow shape in the scenery stones set. Both of these can be used to suggest story journeys. Create a large painted rainbow and/or a set of bigger star stepping stones. Either of these can be laid out as pathways to different lands for storytelling. You might want to leave a box of props on the other side of the stars or at one end of the rainbow that the children can unpack and use to develop their own stories. Such play will involve thinking about narrative structure, effective communication and working together in play. Older children could be asked to prepare a story that can be performed, taking on board how such a narrative might differ from a written version.



### Little lands; big ideas

You will need: Little Lands Enchanted World

Each item in this set – apple tree, bridge, cottage, mountain, old door, toadstool, tower, and well – needs a character(s) to be part of its story. Ask the children to decide whom might go with each one. Making connections with stories they know is a good way to consolidate and apply learning. For example, the bridge could be associated with the troll and the three billy goats gruff. Encourage children to describe what is in their scene. Older children could be given one created by another group to develop. This activity provides opportunities for collaborating, sharing ideas, considering and building on the

ideas of others. The stories created can be shared as live performances to you or a small group, or recorded using digital technology to be shown later.

### **Conversation prompts**

- Why have you chosen [name of character] to go with your stone?
- Tell me about your story.
- What might happen next?
- What other ideas did you have?
- How shall we keep your story to share?

### **Vocabulary**

- Scene
- Scenery
- Prop
- Story
- Character
- Beginning, middle, end
- Next
- Then

### **Enchanted stories for little lands**

- The apple tree stone features the outline of a large apple. Apples have been attributed with qualities in fairy tales and myths for centuries. Versions include poisoned, golden, healing, love. Share slices of apple with the children and talk about the stories they know that have apples in them. Ask them to discuss what else an apple might symbolise in a story. This is a more abstract reflection on stories and requires the children to speculate and imagine different options, and then find effective ways to share their ideas. You could record their ideas on a sheet of paper shaped like an apple. Having done this, older children could be given a different stone from the set and asked to fill their paper outline with ideas for it.
- The stone door in the set is an invitation to enter another world. If the children were designing their own door to another world, what would it look like? Leave a range of resources available that might inspire the children to design and make their own doors. If older children work in pairs, this collaboration will encourage shared planning, listening and responding skills, justifying thinking and compromising. Once made, the doors could be shared around the children, who describe what world they see behind the door, comparing how this relates to the ideas of the makers.

---

## **Something to solve**

You will need: Fairy Tale Story Stones

The story stones work as prompts for storytelling. By giving children a range of stones from the set, you can give them a problem to solve, from which a story can grow. There are some examples below.

Such challenges are ideal for encouraging children to hypothesise, collaborate, consider options and agree on an approach. As well as sharing their solution with others, older children could ask the group if they have any thoughts or suggestions that they could incorporate or use to revise their plans.

### **Conversation prompts**

- How might the king get the apple from the wolf?
- How will the giant get through the wood to give the crown to the queen?
- How might the fairy retrieve her stolen wand hidden on the mountain?
- How might the wolf rescue the king from the top of the beanstalk?



## Vocabulary

- Prop
- Character
- Setting
- Beginning, middle, end
- Next
- Then
- Because

## Fun with fairy tales

- In a similar manner to the beanstalk challenge above, ask the children to build a bridge that will take the weight of an apple, for example. This will consolidate the skills used for the previous challenge: collaborating, listening, communicating, compromising, planning and executing. As above, older children may want to record their progress for others to follow.
- Sequencing activities can be inspired by the beanstalk and apple on the stone set. Ask children to complete patterns of beans and apple chunks. They could create patterns for others to complete.

## Children's books to enjoy together featuring fairy tales

Reading books together and actively commenting on the text and what is shown in the illustrations will allow children to experience language structures and a rich range of vocabulary.

*Each Peach Pear Plum* by Allan and Janet Ahlberg

*Once Upon a Wild Wood* by Chris Riddell

*My Favourite Fairy Tales* by Tony Ross

*The Foggy Foggy Forest* by Nick Sharratt

*Grimms' Fairy Tales* by Eli Woollard