

Fairy Tale Elements

A **fairy tale** is a fictional story that may feature folkloric characters (such as fairies, goblins, elves, trolls, witches, giants, and talking animals) and enchantments, often involving a far-fetched sequence of events.

Fairy tales are a genre in literature. They have their roots in the oral tradition. Fairy tales with very similar plots, characters, and motifs are found spread across many different cultures. Fairy tales also tend to take on the color of their location, through the choice of motifs, the style in which they are told, and the depiction of character and local color.

1. **One-dimensional, iconic characters:** simple & easy to figure out
2. **Setting:** when - long ago/distant past; where - castle, forest, etc. (vague)
3. **Plot:** simple/straightforward; somewhat predictable
4. **Cliché beginning & ending words:** “Once upon a time” or “And they lived happily ever after”
5. **Usually a happy ending** (order is restored at the end)
6. **Include a good/kind/innocent character** (usually treated badly, helped by others, & a girl is usually the protagonist)
7. **Include a wicked character:** a witch, a demon, an evil stepmother, or a sinister gnome; in the end, does the evil character loses somehow
8. **Some form of royalty** (prince, castle, queen, king, queen, etc.)
9. **Social mobility:** characters go up the ranks in terms of class (i.e. poor girl becomes princess)
10. **Extreme conditions:** beauty, riches, poverty, etc. (Poverty: poor working girl, a poor family, a poor shepherd, or poor people trying to make a living to have enough to eat)
11. **Magic enchantments & the supernatural** (magical things happening, talking animals/objects, fairies, trolls, elves, goblins, etc.)
12. **Recurring patterns/numbers (MOTIFS):** things, phrases, or tasks appear in "threes," "sixes," and/or "sevens"
13. **Shape shifting** (LLRH: the wolf disguises himself as grandma; in “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” the evil stepmother disguised herself as an old woman tempting Snow White with an apple)
14. **Help from others:** a fairy godmother, huntsman, dwarfs, etc.
15. **Universal truths/experiences that communicate a message/moral** (touches on some universal experience)