



# What's needed for a Traditional Tale?

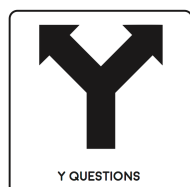
*We know who wrote Harry Potter, and when, and where. However, the origins of 'Traditional Tales' are less clear-cut. They're told and re-told, and passed from generation to generation. They often spawn new interpretations along the way. And depending on where we are in the world, the tales we tell our children will differ. Questions about Traditional Tales are excellent for P4C, as the confidence with which pupils talk about stories is generally higher than other things on the curriculum.*



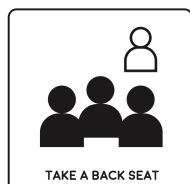
Get pupils to deconstruct the idea of a 'Traditional Tale' using the Thinkers' Game 'Concept Cake.' This asks pupils to decide what ingredients are needed for a concept to be realised. Just as flour is needed to make a cake, what ingredients are needed for a Traditional Tale?

First, give small groups this set of cards

...and ask them to separate the cards into those which are needed to make a Traditional Tale, and those which aren't. To make their choices distinctive, you could give them a skipping rope to create an 'in' circle. They could also create their own cards for missing ingredients.



The 'in/out' task creates more challenge than placing them in an order of importance. You could ask them if any of the ingredients are 'must-haves' - without which, something cannot be a Traditional Tale. In philosophical terms, these are called 'necessary conditions.' If they can come up with a counter-example of a Traditional Tale that lacks one of these ingredients, then it can't be a necessary ingredient. For instance, when I ran this last week, one child suggested that *"Traditional Tales don't need baddies, because Goldilocks doesn't have a baddie."* Cue a fiery exchange on whether Goldilocks was the baddie!



This is an example of how an enquiry can begin organically from the activity. You could also begin a discussion by highlighting differences in the groups' decisions. Or, using a technique I often use to move on from card sort activities, get each group to nominate their most contentious card, followed by a vote for which to discuss.

Questions about Traditional Tales are excellent for P4C, as the confidence with which pupils talk about stories is generally higher than other things on the curriculum. Therefore, need for our intervention is likely to be less, too. Unlike many of our lessons, we are not asking them to process or recap on knowledge already taught, but instead trying to tease out their own thinking about things they will have a very firm grasp of (perhaps firmer than ours!).

## NEXT STEPS

A tale on its own can make an excellent stimulus as they're often packed full of juicy concepts that come in pairs. I recently attended a course led by Sue Lyle ([www.dialogue-exchange.co.uk](http://www.dialogue-exchange.co.uk)), and we dug beneath the surface of Cinderella, coming up with:

Rich/Poor, Young/Old, Dirty/Clean, Evil/Goodness, Beauty/Ugliness, Fantasy/Reality, Royalty/Peasantry, Laziness/Hard-working, Mastery/Servitude

You can model this process for pupils, and get them to find the paired concepts, before letting them create questions from. Alternatively, for a quicker start, do it yourself in advance and offer them a choice of questions.



Goodies



A happy ending



A problem to be solved



Easy to understand



A surprise



# Baddies

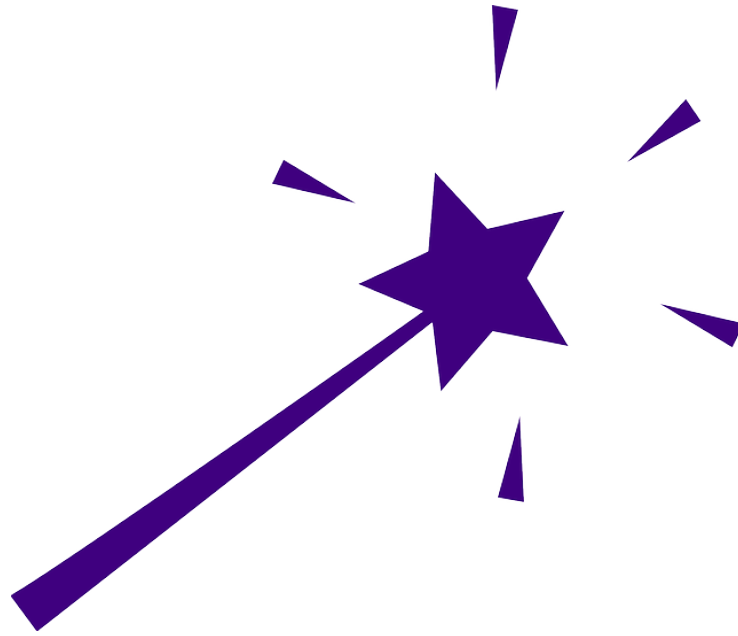


Someone being  
rescued





A moral



Magic