



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute
1993 Volume II: Folktales

Cultural Understanding Through Folklore

Guide for Curriculum Unit 93.02.05
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Children have always enjoyed folk and fairy tales. There is the fantasy into which the children can escape, there are heroes with whom they can identify and there is justice which often doesn't exist in real life. Folktales tell the stories of a people. They tell us who we are. The Brothers Grimm showed us the hardships faced by German peasants in the 17th century, while Charles Perrault brought us the stories of French nobility.

Many elementary school children in New Haven cannot really identify with the stories of Grimm or Perrault. Instead, they want to know about themselves their history and their ancestry. They want to hear words which are familiar to them. Since most of my students are either Black or Puerto Rican, they want to hear stories about those cultures.

This unit was designed to introduce students to their own heritage as well as that of their schoolmates. Not only will they hear stories about their ancestors, they will get to look at the geography, climate, and customs of a variety of cultures which have made their way to our schools. The children will finish this unit with an better understanding of their own ancestry as will as that of their classmates.

(Recommended for Language Arts and Library Appreciation, Grade 3)

Key Words

Folktales Literature Ethnicity Culture

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