



## Representation of Ethnicity through Fairy Tales: Cinderella

Curriculum Unit 04.02.02  
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### Purpose

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With this unit I intend to give students the opportunity to develop cooperative learning skills and to read and respond to fiction stories that reflect the ethnicity of different countries. Most importantly, students will experience reading as an enjoyable activity.

Through cooperative learning, students will become actively involved with the text. They will learn to present their ideas in a variety of formats. Students will acquire valuable strategies to use with all the versions of the different stories. They will gain confidence in themselves as readers, develop higher-level comprehension skills and a better understanding of the ideas of other cultures. Classroom activities will be based on state standards and will prepare them for the Connecticut Mastery and Academic Performance Test. By participating in these activities, students will become active, and will develop life-long reading habits.

### Description

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This curriculum unit is a 36-day reading enrichment program for students in grades three and four. This course combines my directed instructions with student-centered activities. The program I designed will use the “think aloud/think along” reading comprehension strategies with all the different versions of the *Cinderella* fairy tales. This will also prepare the students to gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures represented in each version. Students are given the opportunity to perform, think about their reading, select issues to discuss with their classmates, and develop group projects. This unit views reading as a thinking process. It will foster in students’ insights about ethnicity and culture around the world.

## Introduction

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For thousands of years people have been telling and listening to stories. The pleasures of a good story emerge most forcibly from a vividly evoked particularized setting. Details make a world. Some cultures have a strong tradition in storytelling, and the wisdom of people has been handed down through the oral tradition. Alma Flor Ada writes: “all literature begins with the oral tradition, which is the representation of a people’s culture.” (1) But written literature for children had a very different development. While oral folklore lived in the telling, requiring only a voice and an ear, to create a written literature presented different demands for skills and resources. The telling was not enough. People wanted to develop and share a common heritage. In France, Charles Perrault, a French poet and writer, initiated a written literature for children based on the popular tradition. He is known for his collection of fairytales, *Contes de Ma Mere l’Oye* (1697) translated into English, “Tales of Mother Goose.” He was also the author of “Stories of Tales of Times Past with Morals” (1697). This collection of French folklore included “Sleeping Beauty”, “Little Red Riding Hood”, “Puss in Boots”, and “Cinderella”.

The Grimm Brothers: After early work on medieval German texts, Jakob (1785-1863) and Wilhelm (1786-1859) set about collecting German folk tales published in a 1812-14 as *Kinder und Hausmärchen*. And we also have to mention Hans Christian Andersen (1805-75), Danish author, famous for his fairytales. He traveled widely in Europe and wrote novels, plays, and travel books. His international reputation, however, was earned by the 168 fairy tales that he wrote between 1835 and 1872. These include such classics as “The Snow Queen”, “The Little Mermaid”, and “The Ugly Duckling”.

Every culture in the world has its folk tales and/ or fairy tales. They have been retold so many times, over so many generations, that no one knows who first made up the story. And with each retelling, the story changes because it is practically impossible that different people are able to retell the story in the same way. Each person has also his/her own perception, and that is one of the reasons why the same story is not written or told exactly in the same way. What still remain in each new version are the values. We recognize the cruel and the kind and generous characters and at the end the “bad” character who is (most of the time) punished.

When I was given the opportunity to write this unit I was surprised to find so many similar versions, like Perrault’s and Grimm’s Cinderella, but from a different ethnic background. Each version gives us an interesting snapshot of a particular culture. That gave me the idea to promote cultural literacy and cultural identity with a specific fairy tale that could be relevant to most of the children’s own personal lives, using the characters as models, where basic human needs and experiences could provide the reader/listener with predictable outcomes, at the same time making comparisons of different cultural versions of the same tale, such as the numerous variants of “Cinderella”, possible and worthwhile.

### Historical Background

The Cinderella story is a universal one. There are over 400 versions on Europe; however, there is strong evidence that the story originated in China. The tiny shoe or other object to be fitted or recognized suggests that *Cinderella’s* heroine was of royal birth, one who was cast out of her royal station in life. *Cinderella*, known by many different names, then seeks to reestablish her rightful role. The tale surfaces repeatedly in cultures as far apart as Korea, Egypt, and Native America. This story is a part of the literacy heritage of all people.

The first Cinderella story I remember was the European version of Perrault and the Grimm’s telling, which

portrayed the stepfamily as cruel and abusive. Both versions have accompanied me all my life. During my adolescence I identified myself with the protagonist because of some personal similarities and our similar sphere; and when my first granddaughter was born, as soon as she was able to understand, and after I read her the tale, we played *Cinderella* over and over again. It was on her own initiative and she never was tired or bored. I was the terrible stepmother, the two stepsisters, the godmother and the prince- all the characters at the same time. Later, when her brother was old enough, he assumed the character of the prince. Probably one of the reasons I chose this fairy tale for my students is because of this enriched experience in my life. It made also a great impact on my granddaughter. She is now 19 years old and successfully studying Drama and Theater at Bard College. I want to believe that because of this fairy tale I probably influenced her decision to study theater and choose it as a career.

For my students it will be also a wonderful experience to read all the different versions. It will encourage children to think and reflect both on the stories and on what they may imply for their own lives. Using the characters as models, listeners can become active protagonists, creating their own life stories. The tales become, in a sense, metaphors that lend strength and direction to one's own life journey. Through critical reflection, the reader can evaluate and analyze how fairy tale protagonists successfully or unsuccessfully solve their problems. But not only we will be reading and discussing the different versions of *Cinderella*. There are other areas of the curriculum content we can explore and integrate in this process. This process involves genuine aspects of history and will engage students in the different cultures, religions, and languages related to where each Cinderella's version comes from. It will be an amazing journey through many civilizations. In the end it not only will be the Cinderella story but the history of the world that we have glimpsed.

## Procedure

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After the basic information has been given and when the story has been discussed, students will be encouraged to relate it to their own experiences and feelings. Questions that might be asked at this phase are: "Have you ever seen (felt, experienced) like this?" "Have you ever wanted something similar?" "Did you like the story?" "Did it make you happy?"

It is clear that going through the study of the different cultures that are evoked in each Cinderella's tale, and discussing all the possibilities of the fiction in ways that are related to their own emotions, open up identity options for the culturally diverse students I have in my classes and reading groups.

Given the fact that the culturally different child often requires new approaches, I must be somewhat analytical and even research oriented, ready to try new ideas when others do not work. Not all students will master the skills at the same time. They represent a continuum of skills, which need to be taught, retaught, and practiced often across the curriculum.

As a school resource teacher I am part of the evaluation team to which children are referred when academic problems need to be taken into consideration. But I also have children in reading groups who are substantially behind their peers. (Most of them are from different cultures and/or different ethnic backgrounds.) My instruction must emphasize the legitimacy of the children's natural culture and world view and assist them in adopting a multicultural style which can make them equally comfortable in both of the worlds in which they must function.

I have to accomplish two of the greatest challenges: meeting the State Standards and increasing students' achievement. What can be done to try new ideas? The cultural milieu of my students is very diverse, reflecting multiple influences. What could I teach when they come from different backgrounds? What could work successfully? Robert J. Sternberg advocates specific methods for making existing curricula more multicultural. He says: "To teach multicultural, you must first understand your students and their background, so you understand the context in which they are growing up. Once you possess the information, you can modify the curriculum to include presentations related to the cultures in the classroom, for example. You can discuss works of Literature and Art from each culture, political issues from the country of origin of the students, geography and biology, holidays, etc. When concepts are taught, provide examples from diverse sources across many cultures." He also writes: "Don't fall into stereotypes, scrutinize books, illustrations, art work and plays." (2)

The answer to my own question is that there is no one formula for working with children of different backgrounds. I have to build reading strategies developmentally appropriate to their circumstances. I also have to take into consideration the physical, cognitive and emotional components of children's developmental needs. Teaching and learning will be personalized and the student will be the participant in the process rather than the receiver of teacher-delivered instructional services. In listening, reading, re writing and adapting the stories, the students will be enriched to meet the goal of demonstrating that they have mastered the important concepts and tasks targeted in the lesson objectives as they explore ethnicity.

We as teachers must diversify our approaches to education if we want to reach successfully the many personalities and diverse ethnic groups in a classroom. My lessons usually move from doing to thinking, and talking. Instead of starting from a set scheme I invite students to get into the subjects first through exploration, then to anchor all previous experiences intellectually with a personal and social approach through lessons that will immerse them in creative experiences. This sequence urges my students and me toward greater participation as each lesson progresses. Using a metaphor, I would say that instead of pointing to an object of learning and going forth to reach it, I try a dance of involvement, of both the teacher and the student, or a group of students. The result is a sort of a spiral progression, which has proved most stimulating and usually leads to a convivial atmosphere in which the student is not afraid of his/her differences, nor afraid of "missing something and failing." I am not proposing a play or game-it is in the involvement that the clue lies to what I am talking about. When I assess the end results, I usually perceive a creative reaction from my students, which is the best sign they have learned the lesson.

A list of the New Haven Public School standards covered in this unit can be found in Appendix 1. However, this unit requires that the teachers make students aware of before, during, and after reading strategies to ensure they become independent readers.

Before students begin reading, the following strategies should be observed to create an environment for acquiring literacy. I should model each step.

We (teacher and students) should have:

1. Established a purpose for reading
2. Shared prior knowledge (about topic, author, character, event, etc.)
3. Predicted and previewed new vocabulary
4. Designed focus questions to use during reading

5. Selected note-taking strategy (graphic organizer, story map, outline, etc.)

During reading of the text, the following strategies should be observed. Teachers model. The teacher and students and or cooperative groups should:

- Make, confirm and/ or revise predictions
- Stop at an appropriate time to discuss focus questions and answers
- Use note-taking strategy to record information from text, story, etc.
- Paraphrase, summarize and retell at appropriate times
- Stop to identify and discuss new vocabulary in context

After reading the text, the following strategies should be observed. Teachers model. The students should given opportunities to:

- Verbally discuss text (the fairy tale in this case)
- Describe text by giving an initial reaction (personal opinion.)
- Describe text by describing its general content and purpose (factual)
- Confirm and or revise predictions
- Use notes to answer focus questions and/or questions asked.

Extensions to lessons: Students should be given opportunities to demonstrate further comprehension through related verbal, written, visual, artistic, musical, and/or technology formats.

*Versions of Cinderella*

Now that we have implemented and developed a plan for monitoring and documenting before, during and after reading strategies, (although the list does not reflect all the before, during and after reading strategies that could be utilized, it does include the most significant ones) we are ready to explore and enter into some

of the 400 Cinderella versions.

The first one we will read is the Hsue Chin Tao Yun version from the Ch'ing Dynasty (1644-1912) Its name is Yeh-Shen a Cinderella Story from China, retold by Ai-Ling-Louie and illustrated by Ed Young.

This version tells us about China before the Ch'in and the Han dynasties. The oral story is as it appears in The Miscellaneous Records , *of Yu Yang* , a book which dates from the T'ang dynasty (618-907 A.D.). The author was one Tuan Ch'eng-Shih. Tuan's book was subsequently incorporated in an encyclopedia work, which went through many editions. The one we have is the Hsueh Chin Tao Yun edition from the Ch'ing dynasty. This modern reissue still uses the original block-printed page. (The oldest European version of *Cinderella* was found to be an Italian tale from 1634, but since Yeh-Shen's story predates that tale, we know that Cinderella seems to have made her way to Europe from Asia (3).

The characters are (as in many other versions) the father Wu , his little daughter Yeh-Shen and two wives. The first wife died and Yeh-Shen grew up with her stepmother who was jealous of the beauty and goodness of Yeh-Shen.

Other characters differ from the norm: For example, Yeh-Shen's best friend is a fish, (Walt Disney also used animals in his version) and the classical godmother is an old man who helped her when her friend the fish died. She also went to the ball but she did not meet the prince there, but she lost the beautiful golden slipper the old man gave her, made from the dead fish bones. She lost one slipper running away from the ball before her stepmother and stepsisters could recognize her. A merchant found the slipper and presented it to the king of the island kingdom of T'o Han. He loved that golden slipper. It was tiny, and shaped with the most precious of metals, and he was determined to find the woman to whom the shoe belonged. After searching through his whole kingdom he announced that the slipper had to be returned to its owner. All the women came to try the little shoe, but it did not fit anybody. During the night Yeh-Shen went to retrieve her shoe. Now she was able to return both slippers to the old man and to her dead fish.

The king was watching, saw the beauty of the girl, and did not send her to prison as a thief. He thought that she was stealing the shoe, but he let her go without stopping her. Soon the king's men came at her door, to order Yeh-Shen to try both slippers. The king already knew that he had found his true love.

After enjoying the piece for its own literary merits, students will reread it looking for meaningful issues, like cruelty and abusive behavior. This is an ideal opportunity to tap their personal experiences, and engage them in a classroom dialogue. Students will be encouraged to write essays about their own opinions and try their hand at various forms of creative writing. Grammar, spelling, punctuation, and word skills are taught within the context of one's own real literacy. Activities will also include dramatic plays, where the students will be the protagonists of the text.

Next, we will read *The Turkey Girl : A Zuni Cinderella Story*.

This thought provoking Native American version, retold by Penny Pollok, would intrigue anyone familiar with the traditional European Cinderella story. She writes: "Like many Americans, I have the blood of more than one race flowing in my veins. My mother's family was English. My father's family descended from Chief Tarhe, a Wyandotte Indian." The beautiful pastel and oil crayon drawings by Caldecott Award-winner Ed Young perfectly captures the vivid colors of the American Southwest and the drama of this story about humankind's bond with nature.

The story introduces a very poor young girl who lived alone in the shadow of Thunder Mountain, (a village of the pueblo Matsaki) and had to take care of huge black and white turkeys a wealthy family used for decorating prayer sticks and ceremonial masks. The wealthy family only paid her with corn and cast-off clothes, and called her the Turkey Girl. The girl and the turkeys became friends, and one day the birds started to talk to her because they belonged to an ancient race. One day the herald-priest announced that the “Dance of the Sacred Bird” would be held in Hawikuh and that everybody had to attend. The Turkey Girl knew that she couldn’t go. She had no dresses, only the cast-off clothes the rich family gave her. “Tears streaked the dust on her cheeks.” The “old one” among the turkeys began to speak to her and asked her to follow the turkeys to a place where they would give her beautiful clothes. The turkeys began to fly above her head and suddenly they brought a delicate dress made of feathers and after circling slowly they gave her necklaces, earrings, and bracelets of delicate beauty. “Now you may go to the dance”, said the gobbler. “But you have to be back before Sun-Father returns to his sacred place”.

The Turkey Girl promised to be back on time to latch the cage of her friends. Before she rushed to the dance the turkeys reminded her to keep her promise or she would not find any gobblers when she returned. The Turkey Girl was the best dancer. Everybody praised her. Soon the night was over and the music stopped and the sun rose. She broke from the ring of dancers and ran to the turkey pen. But she found it empty. The turkeys had waited until “Sun-Father” fell asleep behind the mountains. They realized that she had broken her promise and her trust with them. They had left Matsaki never to return. The Turkey Girl understood that she had lost her turkey friends forever. From the day unto this, turkeys have lived apart from the humans, for the Turkey Girl kept not her word (4).

The Zuni Cinderella story has a surprisingly unhappy ending, giving us an important lesson: if we break our promises we will not be able to receive the blessing of nature and its many spirits.

The Native American society was a very complex one, and the folk tales were different according to the place they came from, South, Central or North America. Native American culture is rich with stories that were designed to be told by a “storyteller” who was the “old man” from the tribe. Children learned valuable information as well as important lessons. Also, to tell a story the tribes followed specific rules; for example, they could never tell a story during the summer. Stories were told at celebrations, and the purpose was always to teach valuable lessons. The tales teach that good triumph over evil, and if an individual (as in the “Turkey Girl”) does not follow the rules, the gods can bring trouble for self and tribe.

Stories often have taught Geography, History, and the ways of nature. Tales might be shared with young people as they learned sewing, beading, basketry, or tanning-entertaining and distracting youngsters while they did these respective tasks. Tales also taught important community values. To the early people nothing was inanimate. Animals, plants, rocks, water, man-made objects-all natural things were fully alive with complicated and rich histories, and capable of thinking and causing things to happen. The Rough-Face Girl, written by Rafe Martin, is another variant of the Native American Cinderella tale. It is said to be an Algonquin tale. (I will list a series of recommended books for teachers and young children of the different cultures at the end of this unit.)

After enjoying and reading The Turkey Girl we will try to describe the tale, making our own mental picture as students suggest lots of details, and tell what words helped them form their mental picture before sharing the author’s illustrations.

Next, we will read The Egyptian Cinderella, by Shirley Climo, illustrated by Ruth Keller.

In this version of Cinderella set in Egypt in the sixth century B.C., a slave girl who came from Greece, stolen by pirates, had to work for her owner like the other Egyptian slaves. But she was different. She had a pale skin, with rosy cheeks, and green eyes. The other servant girls scoffed at her “hissing her name between their teeth”. Her name was “Rhodopis”. She had to wash clothes or gather the reeds that grew along the riverbank. Because she looked so different she had no friends, so she found them among the animals instead. She liked to dance barefoot for her animal companions. One day her master saw her dancing and decided to give her a pair of slippers made of rose-red gold. That made the Egyptian servant girls more jealous, because their sandals were made from papyrus.

One evening, the master announced that the Pharaoh of Memphis would hold court for all his subjects, and there would be a great feast. When the day came they left “Rhodopis” behind and gave her more work to do. When she was washing the linen, suddenly a great falcon, symbol of the god Horus, circled around her, picked up one of her beautiful slippers and disappeared. The falcon flew with the slipper directly to the city where the Pharaoh was holding court and dropped the rose-red slipper into his lap. The Pharaoh decided that it was a sign from the god Horus and wanted to find the maiden, the owner of the slipper who later would become his queen. All the maidens in Egypt tried the slipper, but none of them could fit into so small a shoe. At the end, even though when Rhodopis wasn’t Egyptian, the Pharaoh, after looking at her and finding that she had the other slipper on, did not hesitate to marry her and make her his queen.

#### *History of the Egyptian Cinderella*

According to the author Shirley Climo, the tale of Rhodopis and the rose-red slippers is one of the world’s oldest Cinderella stories. (It may be older than the Chinese story, but scholars think that the European story came from China because it is closer in structure.) It’s supposed to be recorded by the Roman historian Strabo in the first century B.C. She says that it is a fact that a Greek girl, Rhodopis was stolen by pirates and taken to Egypt and later married the Pharaoh Amasis, (Dynasty XXVI, 570-526 B.C.) and became his queen. (5)

This version could be used in discussing History, Geography, and customs of civilizations like Greece and Egypt, making connections with other disciplines.

The next strategy will be seeking to strengthen the development of associations and new information gained through questions raised for general discussion. The students should be able to draw conclusions about each culture in relation to others using the Cinderella story for continuity.

Next, we will read *Cendrillon : a Caribbean Cinderella* , by Robert D.San Souci. Illustrated by Brian Pinkney.

According to the author, the story is based on the French Creole tale “Cendrillon”, in Turiault’s nineteenth-century *Creole Grammar* . Basically it is a version of Perrault’s “Cinderella,” but in this story there are incorporated ethnic custom of the West Indies culture. The author incorporates details from the island of Martinique, using sources such as Lafcadio Hearn’s *Two Years in the French West Indies* , and Patrick Chamoiseau’s *Creole Folktales* (1994).

In this version we will find many words in proper French, rather than Creolized. As part of the lesson plan I will write a glossary of French Creole Words, taken from my own sources.

The author Robert D. San Souci and the illustrator Brian Pinkney often work together and have received the Boston Globe-Horn book award. Robert D. San Souci also received the Caldecott Honor for several children books. He lives in San Francisco, California, and Brian Pinkney lives in Brooklyn, New York. (6)



## Summary

This version is written in the voice of a poor washerwoman in the island of Martinique. Her mother died and left her only one thing: a wand of mahogany. The wand had magic powers but could only be used to help somebody she loved. She grew up alone and could not find anybody and nobody loved her either. When she was old enough and worked scrubbing other's people's sheets and shirts, she had the opportunity to work for a very kind lady who was continuously sick. She gave birth to a baby girl and the "Blanchiseuse" became her godmother after the kind lady died. Now the story becomes familiar: the "Monsieur" married again and the stepmother also had two daughters. "Cendrillon" the orphan girl was extremely beautiful and kind, but the stepmother gave her the hardest work and treated her as a serving-girl.

"The Blanchiseuse" wanted to help "Cendrillon", but she did not know how. Every morning they worked together at the river. Cendrillon enjoyed the company of all the other "Blanchisseuses" and seemed to be happy with her destiny. But one day she came to the river in tears. The godmother asked her about what troubled her so much. Finally Cendrillon confessed that everybody at home was going to a ball to celebrate Monsieur Thibault's son. But she wasn't allowed to go. Cendrillon's godmother remembered that she had that magic wand to be used for somebody beloved. This time, the "Blanchiseuse" was able to use the magic wand. "Cendrillon" loved her and she loved the girl deeply too! In an instant and with only a "tap-tap-tap" she gave to a basket of fruit, a golden coach appeared with six pair of horses. Her Cendrillon also got the most beautiful dress, and "upon her feet were elegant pink slippers, embroidered with roses." The Godmother went with her as a chaperone. The only problem was that they had to leave Monsieur Thibault's mansion before midnight because the magic would last only a short time.

Cendrillon was the most beautiful girl; everybody turned their eyes on her and, of course, the stepmother and stepsisters did not recognize her in such fine clothes. Monsieur Thibault's son asked her to dance and his eyes blazed with "love-fire." But soon midnight came, the godmother and Cendrillon had to leave in a hurry, and the girl left behind one of her embroidered slippers.

As soon as they ran home, all their fine clothes were gone, but one slipper stayed on Cendrillon's foot. Days passed and Cendrillon became sick with a broken heart. The "Blanchiseuse" could not help her with the magic wand, as it did not work for giving love; but they did not know that Paul, Monsieur's Thibault's son, was in love with Cendrillon too, and was searching for her. He wanted to wed the girl who had lost the slipper he found. All the unmarried girls tried that pretty shoe, but all their feet were too long or too big. The stepdaughters tried too but only if they cut their big toes would the slipper fit. The "Blanchiseuse" went to call Cendrillon and put a shawl around her and "tapped-tapped-tapped-her" and she became the girl of the ball, but she refused the spell and went to see Paul barefoot and with one slipper on. Paul knelt before Cendrillon and knew that the other slipper would fit perfectly.

Cendrillon and Paul were married soon after this and the "Blanchiseuse" never needed to use her magic wand again because she got love from her godchild and Cendrillon got love and respect from her husband. That is what the "Blanchiseuse" tells us in the story.

We have just finished reading Cendrillon: a Caribbean Cinderella, and the class has also learned about many of the customs and traditions of the French West Indies and details of life on the island of Martinique, integrating History and Geography in the Curriculum.

For character analysis, children can look for clues in the story and the illustrations that tell how Cendrillon and the godmother are feeling. For picture/text analysis of this version and the others, children can compare the

illustrations and the text on each page to see how they work together to tell the story. For fun, students can talk about the nuptial celebrations in each version we have explored thus far.

Finally, the students can begin with an overview of vocabulary contained in *Cendrillon*. They will be encouraged to discuss diversity and language. Language is intimately linked both to conceptual development and social experience. It is a very important part of cultural identity and needs to be preserved. It reflects how humans view and interact with their world-why they say what they say and why they think in certain ways. (Vigotsky,1962). Culture and language are closely related. Therefore, it is crucial to validate the linguistic and cultural identity of the students.

The next book we will be reading is *A Korean Cinderella*, written by Shirley Climo.

Here is an enchanting cultural variation of Cinderella. The fairy tale is set in ancient Korea; Pear Blossom, the protagonist, lived with her old parents. When she was born, after many years of waiting for a child, the father planted a pear tree to celebrate her birth, which is why the girl's name was Pear Blossom. Unfortunately, on a winter day, the mother died and the old man decided to marry a widow who also had a daughter, just the age of Pear Blossom. As soon as they started to live together, the stepmother and stepsister gave the girl more and more work to do. Pear Blossom cooked and cleaned but they never were satisfied with her job. They named her "Little Pig or Pigling", but nothing could hide Pear Blossom's beauty. The stepmother and stepsister resented her beauty, being jealous and giving her impossible chores: to fill a broken jar with water or polish a huge sack of rice spread around the courtyard. Little animals came to help her sparrows, a frog, and later an ox. They were all magical creatures, so Pear Blossom was able to accomplish each task.

One day there was a festival in the village and the magistrate, a nobleman, came to meet the people. Pear Blossom ran to the village and in her rush she lost one sandal. The nobleman saw her and tried to stop her but she was frightened and fled down the road. The stepmother and stepsister found her with only one shoe and made fun of her. They didn't realize that the Magistrate was looking for her because he had recovered Pear Blossom's sandal. The stepmother tried to introduce him to her daughter Peony, but he looked only at Pear Blossom with one shoe and asked her to try the one he had, and of course it fit Pear Blossom's foot perfectly.

As soon as springtime came and the pear tree was full of blossoms, the Magistrate sent a "Go-between to Pear Blossom's old father to arrange a grand marriage".

According to the author Shirley Climo, (7) in Korea there are half a dozen versions. "The Heroine is always a dutiful daughter and in the end prevails over her unkind stepmother and stepsister-or sisters". In the Korean fairy tales goblins or spirits of good people who have died often appear. In this version, the frog, the sparrows and the black ox probably were the spirit of Pear Blossom's dead mother.

After reading *The Korean Cinderella* version, I will introduce some of the Standards that the unit is designed to address.

Content Standard 2: Cultures.

Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures.

Concept and themes. Areas of Emphasis:

Introduction to Korean Geography, Climate, and History.

## Places of interest

Learning to use a map to locate sites in Korea.

Korean foods, drinks, etc.

Korean monetary unit, flag.

## Korean holidays

These are some of the activities to be assigned to allow the students to identify and understand Korean ethnic groups.

Listening and reacting to the next Cinderella version, *The Way Meat Loves Salt* by Nina Jaffe, illustrated by Louise August. Like many other fairy tales this version starts with “Once upon a time”. The story begins in a small town near the city of Lublin in Poland. In this little known town lived a Rabbi who had a wife and three daughters. He loved them all deeply. The family was very united and all the girls had special gifts, but the youngest spent her time daydreaming and looking out the window until her father came back from work. The Rabbi was very fond of his three daughters but became worried about how much the daughters loved him, and decided to ask them. The two older girls answered according to his expectations. The youngest answered that she loved him “ the way meat loves salt”. The father was horrified by her answer and drove her from the house and told her “never to return”

The girl wandered far away and did not know where to go. When she was just losing strength an old man appeared before her and gave her a stick that would give her luck because it was a magic stick. After that he disappeared and soon she found a house made of stone. When she was sitting at the door, all dirty and crying, the household woman saw her and gave her food. The rabbi who lived in the house with his wife and son decided to give her shelter in the attic.

Next day the family went to Cracow for a wedding feast, but they did not invite “Mireleh”, which was the girl’s name. She was sad, as she wanted to go too. Then she remembered the magic stick the old man gave her. Three times she tapped the floor with the stick, asked for and received a beautiful dress and satin slippers, and went in a hurry to the wedding. The celebration had just begun when she appeared in her satin dress. Everybody looked at that lovely maiden, especially the son of Rabbi Yitshok, whose attic she lived in. He danced with her all the time, and asked her name but the girl did not say a word. She needed to go back quickly. She knew that the magic would work only for awhile. At midnight Rabbi Yitskhok’s son had an idea to retain the girl and to speak to her. He put some tar and pitch outside the door and when Mireleh left, one of her slippers got stuck in it. With the help of the magic stick she disappeared and went back to the attic. The Rabbi’s son picked up the satin slipper and decided to marry the owner of that beautiful slipper. He went several days from town to town but could not find the girl. Finally, tired and lonely “he made his way back home”, and told the parents about his decision to marry the girl who went to the wedding. Mireleh was listening and stepped out from the kitchen with the other slipper on. Everybody was surprised and the parents accepted the son’s decision. Many guests were invited to the wedding including Mireleh’s family. She decided not to put salt on the food they were preparing in the kitchen. When Mireleh’s father tasted the food he demanded salt because without it it tasted terrible, and Mireleh whispered to him: “Father, don’t you remember me? I loved you like the way meat loves salt”. The father recognized his beloved daughter and asked for forgiveness. When the family was happily reunited, the old man appeared before them. He was “Elijah the Prophet” whose function was to help those in need.

Years later, Mireleh and the rabbi's son had two daughters and Mireleh broke the magic wand in two and gave one half to each daughter, "for good fortune should always be shared".

The author Nina Jaffe says that she found this Jewish version in the classic collection *Yiddish Folktales*, edited by Beatrice Silverman Weinreich, under the title "How much do you love me?" Y. L. Cahan in Smorgonie, Poland collected the tale in the 1920s from a storyteller named Khave Rubin. The narrative starts with a "Love Test" that also appears in other world folktales and is seen in literacy works such as Shakespeare's *King Lear*. The Yiddish version seems to be a composite of the two tale types. She also writes that her great grandmother, on winter's nights used to tell her children wonder tales, or "vunder-mayse," from her own childhood in Bialystok. (8)

As they read the students will use the following strategies:

-Noticing - we will notice important clues

-Wondering - we will wonder how these clues might fit together

-Connecting -see if we have any connections in between all versions

-Picturing - we will make a picture of the connections

-Predicting (guessing)- about some outcomes, in order to figure out text meaning.

Next, we will read *The Golden Slipper: A Vietnamese Legend*. Retold by Darrell Lum and illustrated by Makiko Nagano

This tale comes from Vietnam where the story is also called *The Brocade Slipper*. It tells that along the Red River in Vietnam, a poor rice farmer lived with his wife and daughter Tam. The mother died, and soon the farmer remarried a widow who had a baby girl. After the birth of her own baby, the stepmother became cruel and despotic and gave Tam more work to do and neglected her. The farmer died soon after and Tam worked in the rice fields all day, and also did the housework during the night. She slept in the kitchen and often she would dream of herself as a princess who would marry the prince living in the Royal House.

Tam went very often to the river with Cam, her stepsister, who sat at the sand and watched how Tam caught shrimps in her basket. Using tricks, she stole all the shrimps Tam had caught and made her mother believe that Tam had no water shrimps. Tam missed her father and wished that her mother would be alive to hold her and comfort her. Suddenly a soft voice called her name and she saw a beautiful woman in a golden-orange dress standing before her. "A princess shouldn't be crying", said the woman. "You are a princess because you are strong and have a gentle heart". She vanished after talking to Tam and in the basket she found a catfish shimmering in gold-orange colors. She ran home and set the fish free in a nearby pond. Tam had a good relation with animals, like the rooster and an old horse. They were able to understand each other. She was kind and gentle with them and also fed them when they were hungry.

One day, the autumn festival was near and everybody wanted to go. It was the time when farmers celebrated their harvest and the prince came to visit all the villages. This event was celebrated with joy and all kinds of exquisite food the women prepared for the occasion. Tam wanted to go and participate but her stepmother decided that she could go only if she finished husking all the rice that was in a cart. That was an enormous task for Tam. In tears she began to work, and suddenly the same mysterious woman appeared and sent ricebirds to help her, and gave her beautiful silk clothes in light yellow and orange colors. Her rags turned into

black trousers. The rooster scratched the hard dirt and golden slippers came out. Tam “slipped them on”, and riding the old horse she rushed to the town. The horse ran faster, and in the middle of the festival one of the slippers fell from her foot and she couldn’t recover it. The prince saw her and sent somebody to pick up the beautiful slipper. The prince wished to meet the owner of the brocade slipper.

The whole town was in commotion, and all the girls came to try their foot in the slipper. But no one could slip it on, including the stepmother’s daughter. Tam came and held out her foot to the prince, and the slipper fit perfectly! She also had in her hands the other slipper.

The prince was captivated by her beauty and decided to marry her and make her his princess. The stepmother was furious and shouted that Tam was her daughter but nobody believed her and laughed aloud. Sometimes you can hear the sound of the laugh coming from the prince and Tam, because they are happily married .

The tale of The Golden Slipper comes from Vietnam, a country not larger than New Mexico. People officially speak Vietnamese as a language but also speak French, Chinese, English, and tribal languages. Rice is the preferred food of most Southeast Asians. More than half of the farmland is planted in wet rice.

In the 1960s, the two separated lowlands became one when communist North Vietnam took over all of Vietnam after 20 years of destructive warfare. The main food-raising area in the north is on the plains of the Red River where this tale came from. Like a number of other countries in Asia, Vietnam has been shaped and influenced by the invasions of armies from other countries. Under China’s rule of Vietnam, a small number of powerful families ruled over a much larger number of poor families. (9) The similarity between the Chinese version and the Vietnamese version of Cinderella is not difficult to see. The reason why the Vietnamese Cinderella version seems to be similar to the Chinese version is because one of the kingdoms in northern Vietnam was part of the Chinese Empire for almost 1,000 years. Chinese influence remains strong even after Vietnamese independence.

When reading the Vietnam Cinderella version, students who would like more information about Southeast Asia from colonialism to nationalism might read Lea E. Williams, *Southeast Asia: A History*. They could report their reading to the class or write a book report. Students also are always interested in the Vietnam War. I might want to show portions of the video series: *Vietnam, a Television History* . Students might do research on the Vietnam War and the role of the United States in that war. Their findings could be shared with the class and other grades.

Next, we will read Charles Perrault version of Cinderella .

One of the world’s best loved fairy tales is here retold by Christine San Jose but her retelling remains faithful to Perrault’s original. Cinderella is the heroine of this folktale, of which the first recorded version dates from 9th Century China. The story by Perrault tells us of a girl who was treated cruelly by her stepmother and stepsisters after her mother died and her father remarried a very rich widow. The stepmother could not bear the good manners and beauty of the orphan. She employed her in the meanest work of the house: she scoured the dishes and tables and cleaned “Madam’s chamber” and those of her daughters. They named her “Cinderwench” or Cinderella, because she used to go into the chimney corner, and sit down among cinders and ashes.

It happened that the King’s son gave a ball, and invited all persons of fashion to it. The stepsisters were very excited and talked all day long about how they should be dressed. Cinderella was consulted in all these

matters, for she had excellent notions. But when the day came, she had to stay because she was only wearing nasty rags. When the stepsisters left, she began to cry. Her godmother, who was listening, decided to help her and asked her to bring a huge pumpkin that was turned into a beautiful coach. Next, she turned six mice who were in a trap into six brown horses and six lizards into footmen in gleaming green. The coachman was a long-whiskered rat. The godmother, touching her goddaughter with her cane, covered her with a silk white dress with tiny seed pearls, a diadem on her head, and on her feet a pair of sparkling glass slippers. The girl climbed into the coach and before the door closed the godmother told her to be back before the clock struck twelve. It was imperative to do this because if she stayed a moment longer the spell would not last.

Cinderella went to the ball and when she entered the ballroom everybody looked at her. The prince, with a bow, asked her to dance with him. He had eyes and ears for no one but her. Soon the clock struck half past eleven and she slipped away to her golden coach and rode home. When the old clock told midnight Cinderella was again in her rags and barefoot. When the stepsisters came home, they could only talk about the beautiful princess who appeared at the ball.

The prince decided to invite everybody the next day, and Cinderella's godmother helped her again. Her dress was more magnificent than the one she used the night before. She was so involved in what the prince told her that she quite forgot what her godmother had commanded "The clock struck twelve and she had to flee and left behind one of her glass slippers, which the prince took up most carefully".

"The king's son proclaimed that he would marry her whose foot this slipper would just fit." All the young ladies tried the glass slipper but either the foot was too long or too thin. Not even the two stepsisters could put the slipper on. Cinderella was watching and came out of the ashes with the other slipper and put it on her foot. The godmother came at the very moment and changed Cinderella's clothes, so she looked better than ever. The prince recognized her and decided to marry her, Cinderella became his princess.

In Europe they have found over five hundred versions of Cinderella, with more tales still being found and recorded. This version (Perrault's) has many facets of the "universal" tale, especially the stepmother who neglects her stepdaughter and favors her own children.

The Perrault version introduces the glass slipper. In the Chinese and Egyptian versions, it is a golden slipper, and in some cultures it is a fur slipper or made of brocade. The fairy godmother is found in the Charles Perrault version of the Cinderella tale, but is rarely found in the world tales. Europe has a rich source of folklore. Fairy tales are French in origin ("fée," meaning "fairy" is from the French, specifically from northwest France.) Fairies are common in local traditions and are assumed to have originated in Brittany, then spread over England, Germany, Italy and Spain.

### *Conclusion*

Students will be divided into teams to do an in-depth study of the different Cinderella versions. Having been given copies of the variants of the tales that are Chinese, Egyptian, Native American, Jewish, Korean, and Vietnamese, students will make a huge comparison chart for the wall. They will list the bibliographic information, name of main character, setting, type of magic, how Cinderella's problem was solved, the ending, and their own reactions to these variants from other cultures.

## Multicultural Lesson Plans

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The following lessons represent a sample of the many activities that will be included throughout this unit.

The main goal is to create an ethnic-cultural environment where students will become independent readers. The reader will apply appropriate reading strategies to construct meaning from a variety of "Cinderellas versions."

### Student Performance Objectives

Given the different versions of the Cinderella fairy tale, the student will:

Apply prereading strategies to text in order to activate thinking skills.

- Develop motivation.
- Activate prior knowledge before reading.
- Formulate pre-reading techniques.
- Determine a purpose and a strategy for reading.
- Using predicting strategies.
- Use textbook aids.

Apply during- reading strategies in order to comprehend to text

- Generate own questions and theories while reading.
- Confirm or alter predictions while reading.
- Visualize text meaning.
- Make connections.
- Use a recording system to note important information while reading.

Apply post-reading strategies to text in order to become actively involved in the learning process.

- Determine what was learned from the reading
- Reflect and contemplate
- Reread to refine meaning
- Determine how new information gained from reading related to what is already known.

## Lesson Plan 1

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Subject Areas: Language arts, ESL, Social Studies, History

Time Frame: This is one-week program

Grade: 4-5-6

Goal: To engage in shared verbal and written reflections about ethnic traditions.

Place: The island of Martinique / Saint Maarten in the Caribbean.

Book: *Cendrillon. A Caribbean Cinderella* by Robert D. San Souci. Illustrated by Brian Pinkney

Theme: A Creole variant of the familiar Cinderella tale set in the Caribbean and narrated by the godmother, who helps Cendrillon find true love.

Objectives:

1: the students will learn about fairy tales of the Caribbean.

2 : the students will learn the repeating patterns or themes used in folktales and fairy tales.

Procedure

Day 1: the teacher divides the students into small groups, giving each photocopies of a brief passage from the book selected. The members of each group read their passage in English and highlight the French words. Discuss the words among the group and prepare six sentences to present on the following day.

Day 2: a) after reading the passage, the members of each group will describe their passage to the class, giving time for reactions and questions.

b) Historical Background: The teacher will present a basic outline of Caribbean history, from the colonial period to the present day, while discussing points of comparison with the United State History.

Day 3: The students will explore examples of magical beliefs and practices by reviewing other Cinderella versions.



Day 4: Selected passage and a play. After reading and discussing the book, the students should be able to interpret it in light of the historical and cultural material already discovered.

Day 5: Conclusions:

Students will discuss similarities and differences among the various versions we have been reading prior to this lesson plan.

After reading background material on *Cendrillon*, students will discuss concepts, vocabulary, etc. Parallels can be drawn with other Cinderella versions, and different ethnicities.

## **Lesson Plan 2**

Subject Area: Celebrations in Asia

Grade Level: 4-5-6

Duration: Two or more days if needed.

Instructional Goals:

To learn about the festivals that exist in Asia

Develop knowledge of different celebrations.

Key Concept

The cultural environment that exists in this huge continent, reflected in the celebration of festivities.

Objectives:

Students will be able to choose one of the celebrations that exist in Asia.

Students will be able to describe the festivity or celebration chosen.

Students will be able to compare different celebrations they choose to study.

Instructional Delivery/Student Activities

The teacher will assist students to:

List and name some of the many celebrations that exist in Asia.

Remember the celebrations of the student's family.

Interview their grandparents (or an older person) to find out how they celebrated the New Year when they were growing up.

Watch a videotape on Asia (the National Geographic Society). During the video there can be a time to distribute some fortune cookies, and popcorn.

Create a giant dragon with papier-mâché. A long colorful cloth can be attached. (New Year celebration in China).

Material/Resource:

Holidays Around the World , by Carol Greene (Chicago: Children's Press, 1982) is a good beginning resource.

The National Geographic Society has a number of video-tapes on Asia that can be secured from the local library.

Assessment- Evaluation.

Students will be able to make comparisons with festivities they celebrate at home. The teacher will record opinions (same or different), and assess their understanding, of whether the celebrations have a meaning for them.

Lesson Plan 3

Subject Area: Language Arts, Geography and History.

Grade Level 4

Duration 1-2 weeks

Instructional goal: To locate this small oceanic island on the map or globe.

Multicultural Principle(s): Increases intercultural competence

Key Concept: A mountainous island of volcanic origin

Objectives

Students will be able to teach the bodies of water that surrounds the island. (Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean).

Students will be able to compare sizes among Martinique, Barbados and Cuba.

Delivery/Students Activities

The teacher will assist students to:

Brainstorm the names of other islands in the Caribbean

Work with groups of 2-4 to identify other islands in a map or globe.

Expose children to a wide variety of pictures, magazines, about the West Indies and other Caribbean islands.

## Materials/Resources

*Cendrillon: A Caribbean Cinderella* . By Robert D. San Souci,1998. Illustrated by Brian Pinkney. A French Creole tradition.

Creole Folktales book by Patrick Chamoiseau. New York: The New Press, 1994. Translated from the French by Linda Coverdale. Try the videotape National Geographic about the West Indies and The Antilles. With this videotape, teachers and students will come to appreciate all the geographic aspects of the West Indies.

## Assessment/Evaluation

Organizing what the students learned

Working alone, sometimes with other students, sometimes at the computer.

Active learning opportunities.

Creating a bulletin board that arranges facts about the island.

Revise vocabulary, using some Creole or French words for multicultural awareness.

## Conclusion

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After all the Fairy Tale sessions, the students are ready to take a more detailed approach to the traditional European Cinderella story, with additional variants reflecting a number of other cultures. Students will have control over the items they have categorized and generalized, making clear distinctions of the similarities and differences among each and all the Cinderella versions. It will also give teachers and students the opportunity to supplement the curriculum with a more detailed study of ethnic diversity using instructional materials that show events, situations and concepts from the perspective of a range of cultural, ethnic, and racial groups.

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## Multicultural Resources

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## Dedication

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Dedicated to my beloved Granddaughter EME who inspired me to write this unit.

## Appendix

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### **New Haven Public Schools Curriculum Standards**

Standards that the unit is designed to address.

Content standard 2: Cultures: Gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures

Content standard 3: Connections: Connect with other disciplines and acquire information.

Content standard 4: Comparisons: Develop insight into the Nature of Language and culture

Content standard 5: Communities: Participate in Multicultural Ethnic groups at home and around the world.

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