

**Theater at Monmouth  
2021 Fairy & Folk Tales for Schools  
Teacher Resource Guide**

**THE FOOL OF THE WORLD  
AND THE FLYING SHIP**



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## From the Page to the Stage



For spring 2021, Theater at Monmouth's Page to Stage Tour brings adaptations of classic literature to students across Maine through the *Fairy & Folk Tales for Schools* Streaming Series. *Fool of the World & The Flying Ship* (grades Pre-K-8) was adapted to build analytical and literacy skills through the exploration of verse and playwriting, fostering creativity and inspiring imaginative thinking. The 2021 *Page to Stage Fairy & Folk Tales for Schools* Streaming Series offers students the opportunity to study, explore, and view classic literature through performance.



TAM's Annual Page to Stage Education Tours and complimentary programming challenge learners of all ages to explore the ideas, emotions and principles contained in classic texts and to discover the connection between classic theatre and our modern world.



Teacher Resource Guide information and activities were developed to help students form a personal connection to the play before attending the production; standards-based activities are included to explore the plays in the classroom before and after the performance.



The best way to appreciate classic literature is to explore. That means getting students up on their feet and physically, emotionally, and vocally exploring the words. The kinesthetic memory is the most powerful—using performance-based activities will help students with a range of learning styles to build a richer understanding of the language and identify with the characters and conflicts of the plays.

Thank you for taking some of your classroom time to teach your students about *Fairy & Folk Tales for Schools: Fool of the World & The Flying Ship*! If you need more information to help prepare for the production, call 207.933.2952 or email us at [boxoffice@theateratmonmouth.org](mailto:boxoffice@theateratmonmouth.org).

Enjoy the show!

Dawn McAndrews  
Producing Artistic Director  
Theater at Monmouth

## A Fool and his brothers are soon parted...

A synopsis of what happens in the story

A poor Russian peasant named Dmitri lived with his family in a time long ago and far away. He was kind and caring and for that many believed he was a fool. The Czar of Russia announced that he would give his daughter's hand in marriage to anyone who could build him a flying ship. Dmitri's brothers set off, with everything their parents could give them, to build a flying ship and win the hand of the Czarina. When Dmitri tells his mother he wishes to go, too, she calls him a fool, but Dmitri is determined.

Dmitri meets an old man along the way who convinces him to share his meager meal. Dmitri hesitates because the meal was not fit for guests; but when he opened it, the food had become fine. In return the man tells Dmitri how to build a flying ship and the instruction to offer a ride to everyone he sees along the way. Dmitri thanked the man and set off on his way.

He followed the directions and to his surprise awoke to find a magnificent ship. Along the way, he met and gave a lift to the Listener who could hear everything in the world, to the Hopper who tied up one leg so that he would not reach the end of the world in one bound, the Archer who could site prey at a hundred miles, the Glutton who ate and drank more at one meal than most do in a month, the Strawman whose hamper of straw turned everything icy cold, and the Woodsman whose bundle of wood could magically become a regiment of soldiers. All these travelers were on their way to offer their talents in service to the Czar.

But once this travelling band arrived at the Czar's place, they were greeted by a surly Chamberlain who, when finding no gentlemen, reported his displeasure to the Czar. The Czar did not want to marry his daughter to a peasant so he set Dmitri a number of impossible tasks. First he sent him to the end of the world to get magical water before the Czar finished his dinner. The Hopper went after it but fell asleep by the spring; the Listener heard him snoring and the Archer shot an arrow to wake him up. The Czar continued to set impossible tasks for the Fool and his friends—each task more difficult than the previous and each successfully completed by the travelers.

Angered that the tasks did not scare away the travelers, the Czar decreed that the wedding would be announced after the Fool had bathed, and sent him to be stifled in the bath by heat. The Strawman snuck in and cooled the heat with his magical straw. The Czar demanded one last test, that Dmitri must produce an army of soldiers. Dmitri alarmed had forgotten about the Woodsman. They planted the fields with twigs that turned to soldiers. Fearing an attack, the Czar dressed Dmitri in fine clothing, and the Czarina fell in love with him on sight. They were married, and even the Glutton had enough to eat and drink at the feast.



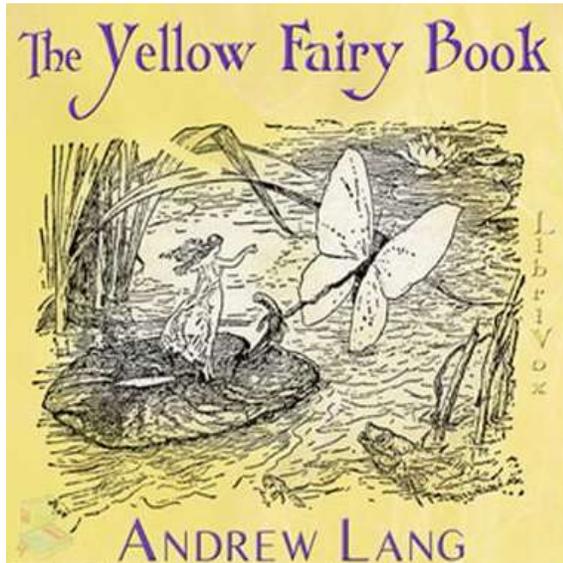
### Reflections

Dmitri dreams of doing “impossible” things, like building a flying ship, or marrying a princess and so he is called “a fool.” Is it foolish to dream of doing “impossible” things? Has anyone ever made fun of you for having a dream?

## From Russia with Love

### Adapting a Classic

Classrooms may read one of two different versions of the Russian Folktale, *The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship*. The first appeared in Andrew Lang's *Yellow Fairy Book* in 1894. The latter version was published by Arthur Ransome in 1916 in a collection titled, *Old Peter's Russian Tales*.



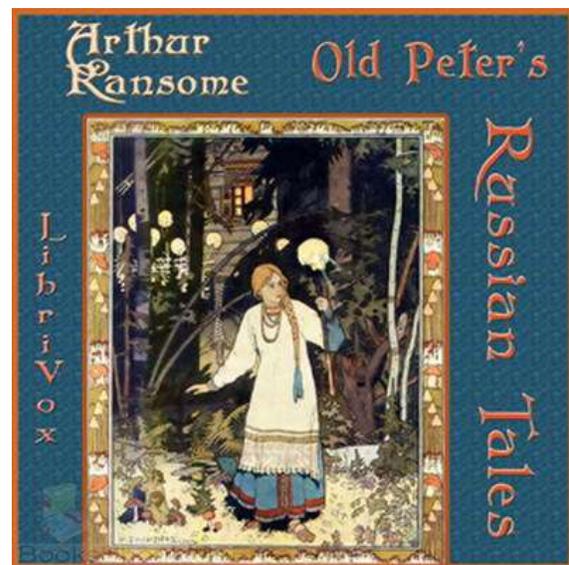
Andrew Lang's *Fairy Books* are a twelve-book series of fairy tale collections. Although Andrew Lang did not collect the stories himself from the oral tradition, the extent of his sources (who had collected them originally), made them an immensely influential collection, especially as he used foreign-language sources, giving many of these tales their first appearance in English. As acknowledged in the prefaces, although Lang himself made most of the selections, his wife and other translators did a large portion of the translating and telling of the actual stories.

[http://www.gutenberg.org/files/640/640-h/640-h.htm#2H\\_4\\_0018](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/640/640-h/640-h.htm#2H_4_0018)

<http://www.mythfolklore.net/andrewlang/019.htm>

audio recording: <http://www.booksshouldbefree.com/book/the-yellow-fairy-book-by-andrew-lang>

Arthur Ransome is best known for his *Swallows and Amazons* series of children's books. This is the only example of his fiction in the public domain. These stories are all from Russian folklore, some comparatively well-known, others less so. Ransome spent some years in Russia as a newspaper correspondent for the *Daily News* and the *Manchester Guardian* and was peripherally involved in the revolution. In the late twenties he married Evgenia Shvelpina, Trotsky's secretary, retired from newspapers and started writing his children's books.



<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/16981/16981-h/16981-h.htm>

<http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/russian/oldpetersrussiantales/fooloftheworld.html>

audio recording: <http://www.booksshouldbefree.com/book/old-peters-russian-tales-by-arthur-ransome>

## From the *Fool* Adaptors

### Arthur Ransome's Note from *Old Peter's Russian Tales*

*The stories in this book are those that Russian peasants tell their children and each other. In Russia hardly anybody is too old for fairy stories, and I have even heard soldiers on their way to the war talking of very wise and very beautiful princesses as they drank their tea by the side of the road. I think there must be more fairy stories told in Russia than anywhere else in the world.*

*In this book are a few of those I like best. I have taken my own way with them more or less, writing them mostly from memory. They, or versions like them, are to be found in the coloured chap-books, in Afanasiev's great collection, or in solemn, serious volumes of folklorists writing for the learned. My book is not for the learned, or indeed for grown-up people at all. No people who really like fairy stories ever grow up altogether.*

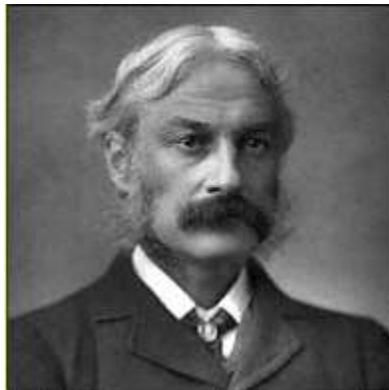


*This is a book written far away in Russia, for English children who play in deep lanes with wild roses above them in the high hedges, or by the small singing becks that dance down the gray fells at home. Russian fairyland is quite different. Under my windows the wavelets of the Volkhov (which has its part in one of the stories) are beating quietly in the dusk. A gold light burns on a timber raft floating down the river. Beyond the river in the blue midsummer twilight are the broad Russian plain and the distant forest. Somewhere in that forest of great trees--a forest so big that the forests of England are little woods beside it—is the hut where old Peter sits at night and tells these stories to his grandchildren.*

### Andrew Lang's Preface from *The Yellow Fairy Book*

*The Editor thinks that children will readily forgive him for publishing another Fairy Book. We have had the Blue, the Red, the Green, and here is the Yellow. If children are pleased, and they are so kind as to say that they are pleased, the Editor does not care very much for what other people may say...Where is the harm? The truth is that the Folk Lore Society—made up of the most clever, learned, and beautiful men and women of the country—is fond of studying the history and geography of Fairy Land....*

*As to whether there are really any fairies or not, that is a difficult question. Professor Huxley thinks there are none. The Editor never saw any himself, but he knows several people who have*



*seen them—in the Highlands—and heard their music. Again, if there are really no fairies, why do people believe in them, all over the world? The ancient Greeks believed, so did the old Egyptians, and the Hindoos, and the Red Indians, and is it likely, if there are no fairies, that so many different peoples would have seen and heard them? For these reasons, the Editor thinks that there are certainly fairies, but they never do anyone any harm; and, in England, they have been frightened away by smoke and schoolmasters. Probably a good many stories not perfectly true have been told about fairies, but such stories have also been told about Napoleon, Claverhouse, Julius Caesar, and Joan of Arc, all of whom certainly existed.*

*A wise child will, therefore, remember that, if he grows up and becomes a member of the Folk Lore Society, ALL the tales in this book were not offered to him as absolutely truthful, but were printed merely for his entertainment. The exact facts he can learn later, or he can leave them alone.*

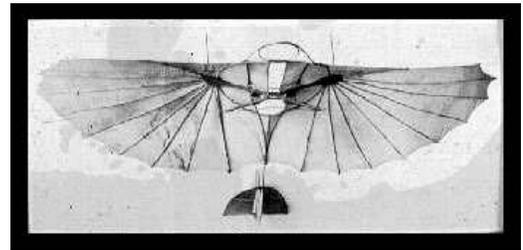
# Learning to Fly

The principles of lift, thrust, gravity, and drag

Since ancient days, people have longed to soar through the clouds. Leonardo da Vinci in the 15th century believed that he could learn how to fly by imitating the birds. But bird flight is more complex than it seems and humans just don't have the physical structure to fly. So many inventors throughout history set out to create a machine to help people.

## A Brief History of Flying Machines

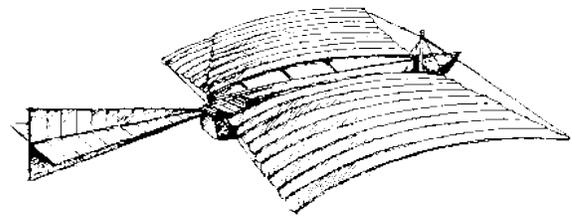
The evolution of the airplane developed with our understanding of the physics of flight. For centuries, human beings have admired birds and their freedom from the ground, but had no idea how they managed to keep airborne.



**KITES:** Kites were known in China over 3,000 years ago, but Europeans didn't learn of them until the 14th century. The simple kite was most likely the first attempt to build a flying machine. The principles which allow kites to fly apply to all types of flight.

**BALLOONS:** Two French brothers, by the name of Montgolfier, developed the first successful flying balloon device. On November 21, 1783, a French doctor and a military officer took off and flew around Paris for about 25 minutes.

**EARLY GLIDERS:** Sir George Cayley started experimenting with gliders in 1789, at the age of 23. He flew several fixed-wing gliders by the year 1809. He found many of the forces of flight. He discovered the forces of lift, drag, and thrust. He was the first to use a tail on an aircraft to keep it stable. He watched birds and this gave him the idea of a fixed-wing glider. He also found out that a wing needs a curved upper surface. Before he died in 1857, he built a full-size glider with control lines attached that sailed like a kite.



**BIPLANE GLIDERS:** Biplanes are gliders or airplanes with two wings, one above the other. In the 1890's Otto and Gustav Lilienthal realized that wing flapping was not the right way to power a flying machine. So they stuck with learning more about gliders. They shared what they learned with others, including the "Wright" brothers. Through their research they developed the technique of shifting weight for control and used willow tree ribs and cotton cloth for the wings much like hang gliders today.



The Wright brothers, Orville and Wilbur, adapted their biplane design from a glider and added a gas powered engine to it. In December 1903 at Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, they succeeded in making the world's first powered, controlled, and sustained airplane flight. Their flight went only 120 ft. at 35 mph but the era of the airplane had begun. They were successful because they were the first to develop a method for control.

**PROPELLER PLANES:** By 1917 most World War I fighters were biplanes but vastly improved over those of the pioneers. The years between the wars saw development of single wing designs, all metal fuselages, helicopters and powerful engines.



**JET ENGINES:** After World War II, the propeller-driven fighters and bombers were soon replaced by jet aircraft. The invention of the jet engine revolutionized aviation by making supersonic transports, long range bombers and even jumbo jets a reality.

## The Principles of Flight

When an airplane stands on the ground, the forces acting on it are balanced. When the plane is in flight, the forces acting on it are also balanced. Then the plane stays in constant motion. Any change in the plane's motion is caused by the forces becoming unbalanced. When the forces are unbalanced, a plane can change speed and direction. There are four primary forces that make flight possible: Lift, Thrust, Drag, and Gravity.

### Definition of Forces

**Drag:** When a plane moves through the air, it is slowed down by the friction of the air. If it slows too much, the plane stalls and quickly loses altitude. Pilots must keep enough speed to make sure the plane stays in flight.

**Gravity:** This is the force that pulls the plane down. When a plane is on the ground it has only the force of gravity working on it.

**Thrust:** This force causes the forward motion of the plane. The plane can be pulled through the air by propellers or pushed by a jet engine. This power of this force is what gets the flying machine off the ground. Human-powered crafts were unable to produce enough thrust to overcome gravity and drag.

**Lift:** Air is a gas, and air has pressure. Imagine the air surrounding a plane as putting pressure on various parts of the plane. Lift is the force of this air pressure acting on the wings of the plane. When the air pressure on the upper surface of a wing is less than the air pressure on its lower surface you get lift. The faster the gas moves, the lower the pressure on the surface of the wing. The wing of a plane is curved so that the air moving past its upper surface travels further and moves faster than the air moving past its lower surface. The difference in pressures is lift. Flying machines like balloons use the force of buoyancy rather than.

## Reflections

A hundred years ago, an airplane or a spaceship would have seemed impossible. Now, we fly every day, men have walked on the moon, and scientists have sent spaceships to Mars. List some "impossible things" you would live to invent (teleportation, wings, a machine to talk to animals?)

# The World of the Play

## A Brief History of Czarist Russia



Russia has a colorful and enduring history of political turmoil, changing leadership and various social structures. Russia was formerly known as the Kievan Rus' from the 9th to 12th centuries. The lands were held by a Scandinavian people known as the Varangians until Mongolian invasion in 1237. The Mongols ruled Russian until 1480, when Ivan the Great defeated them. Russian became a unified state under Ivan the Terrible, Russia's first Czar, in the mid-16th century.

During the 17th-century Russia entered the "Times of Trouble" when false heirs (both of whom were coincidentally named Dmitri) attempted to claim the throne. Michael Romanov was elected Czar in 1613; this was the beginning of the Romanov dynasty which lasted for 304 years. The Romanovs advanced Russia's political influence throughout Europe, as well as the country's borders across Asia and Eastern Europe. The dynasty survived an attempted takeover by France in 1812, which led to Napoleon Bonaparte's downfall, when he was defeated by Alexander I during the brutal Russian winter.

The autocracy thrived in Russia. The Czar was the figure of absolute authority, as well as a divine leader or "Czar Father" who was bound by love to his people; the majority of which were peasants and serfs. In Russian society, a serf was bound to the land he or she worked on, which was privately held by a nobleman. The Russian serf and was more or less enslaved, being given little to no chance to improve his or her economic and social position.



Russian peasants, however (like Dmitri, in *Fool of the World*), lived and worked on land which was held by the state (Czar), paid wages (which he or she used a portion of to pay rent back to the state), and had more freedom to pursue additional employment outside of their particular village or commune. This freedom to travel enabled the peasants to somewhat improve their socio-economic status.

In truth, however, it was unlikely that any peasant would gain complete freedom because the Russian economy depended on a large population of working class which received little to no wages. This working class segment of society provided the labor for: agriculture (in the small portion of the country having a terrain, climate, or soil conditions which would support farming); cottage or craft industries; and commercial industries, such as textiles (which was popular in central Russia). This low cost labor force, driven by a demanding state and landlords of a scant noble-class, was the backbone on which the Russian economy depended.

In 1861 Alexander II abolished serfdom, but this did little to improve the conditions of the peasant-class, which was viewed by many of the more educated Russian citizens as ignorant and backwards due to the peasant's sometimes brutal treatment of each other, often rowdy behavior during festivals, and their unique mixture of Russian Orthodoxy with Paganism; believing in the existence of supernatural forces and spirits, such as sprites, and practicing magical rites and the casting of magic spells. Such superstitious behavior and clinging to tradition lead many of those in leadership positions to conclude that the peasants needed the strong leadership of the Czar to instill order, which was highly regarded by the upper-class population.



As the 20th century approached, Russia became a larger, more industrialized nation, with an increasingly riotous working class, who yearned for more land to work on and therefore social upward mobility. The Romanov dynasty, as well as the autocratic, Czarist rule eventually came to an end when Nicholas II, who took the throne in 1894, was defeated by the Soviet Bolsheviks, and was executed along with his wife Alexandra (grand-daughter of Queen Victoria) and their five children in 1918, one year after being overthrown by the Worker's Party.

## Reflections

What customs about dating and marriage do we see in our society today?  
How do the roles in a marriage from our time period and Czarist Russia differ?  
How would you feel if you had to marry someone of your parents' choosing?

# BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

## 1. Fairytales

*The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship* is considered a fairy tale. Fairy tales usually take place “long ago” and have special beginning words such as “Once upon a time”, and ending words such as “lived happily ever after.” Fairy Tales usually have both a good character and a not-so-good character, and the good character usually wins in the end. There is almost always royalty and castles in a fairy tale, and sometimes magic. Fairy tales often contain a problem, and by the end, a solution. Ask your students:

- Does *The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship* fit all the criteria for a fairy tale?
- What kind of beginning and ending words did it have?
- Who were the good and not-so-good characters? Was there royalty and castles?
- How about magic?
- Can you identify the problem and the solution?

## 2. The Moral of the Story

Many of us grew up reading or listening to parables from the Bible, Aesop’s Fables, Trickster Stories, or Grimm’s Fairy Tales. An important aspect to all of these stories is that they have a moral—a lesson that the author wanted us to learn. While these stories often had very clearly stated morals, Lang’s and Ransome’s adaptations offer no easy moral. Ask students to discuss the lesson they felt was communicated in the story. Ask each student to select a character from the tale and write a moral from that character’s perspective.

Ask students:

- What lesson does the Fool learn in this story?
- What do the other characters learn?
- Which character changes the most?

## 3. Pass the Story, please

Theater at Monmouth’s version of *The Fool of the World and the Flying Ship* is based on two different adaptor versions of a traditional tale told orally by people in a country that speaks a different language over a century ago. Ask students to develop their own story based on a fairy tale, myth, or folk tale that they have read in class previously. Sitting in a circle, have students pass a talking block or beanbag to indicate their turn. When they have the bag, they should add one sentence to tell what happens in the original story. Once the story has been completed then start to pass the bag again only this time, students may add to the story in whatever way they wish so long as they continue to tell the basic tale as it was started by those that added before them. Repeat as many times as the class’ imagination will allow.

Ask students:

- What did students find easy/difficult/fun about the process?
- How did their stories change?
- What elements remained in each version?

# AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

## 1. Judging a Book by its Cover

In this adaptation, we only get to hear one part of what the Czar is thinking. As a class, discuss some of the words and actions used by the Czar and answer the following questions:

- What did the Czar do that was unfair? Why was this unfair?
- Why do you think the Czar kept adding new requirements? Why did he not want the Fool to marry his daughter?
- Does wanting the best for his daughter make him a not-so-good person?
- What lesson does the Czar learn by the end of the play? How does he learn it?

## 2. Imagining the World

Designers translate the world of the play into the real space and time of the performance, creating the music and sound, set, costumes and props for the production. Designers transform the ideas of the story into real elements that convey the mood, meaning and magic for the audience. What choices did the designers make for this production make? How did they represent the characters, the places and the magic of the journey? How was it different than what the students imagined? How would students have done it differently? Divide students into groups and ask them to pick an element of the play, sets, costumes, props and re-design it for their own production.

## 3. Dmitri's Journey

Well known mythologist Joseph Campbell felt that everyone followed the path of the “hero’s journey”—encountering challenges in life, attempting to overcome them, and changing as a result of conquering them. Within a given journey, one finds many obstacles, barriers, and enemies, as well as friends, allies, and teachers. Trace Dmitri’s “hero’s journey” over the entire play. Discuss specific moments when he confronted to obstacles, barriers, enemies, friends, allies, and teachers. As a class, create a timeline of his adventures and then break into groups and have each draw a section of comic strip of the journey. Be sure to include visuals of the events, places, and people he meets along the way.

## 4. Adapting to the Time

Some adaptations of fairy tales or folk tales update the story into a contemporary time period to make the play more recognizable to a modern audience. In pairs, students should review one of the original versions of the *Fool of the World* and select a time period and location (city or region) to reset their tale. Focusing exclusively on the image of the Flying Ship, ask students to depict how they would create this iconic piece of the story in their selected time period and location. Create a gallery (either online or on the walls of the classroom) to display the reimagined flying ships.

# RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

## Books on Fairy Tales

- *Fantasy Literature in the Classroom*, by Monica R. Edinger. Scholastic, 1995
- *The Multicultural Cinderella*, by J.D. Rusting. Rusting Educational Services (4523 Elinora Ave., Oakland, CA, 94619), 1994 with updates.
- *The Storyteller's Sourcebook: A Subject, Title, and Motif Index to Folklore Collections for Children*, by Margaret Read MacDonald. Neal-Schuman, 1982.
- *The Uses of Enchantment: the Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, by Bruno Bettelheim. Knopf, 1976.
- *Fairy Tale in the Ancient World*, by Graham Anderson. Routledge, 2000.
- *Perrault's Complete Fairy Tales*. Trans. A.E. Johnson and others. Illus. W. Heath Robinson. Dodd, Mead, 1961.
- *The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*, Ed. and trans. Jack Zipes. Bantam, 1987.

## Websites

- *The Face of Russia*: <http://www.pbs.org/weta/faceofrussia/>. PBS website providing information on Russian culture and history.
- *A Guide to Russian*: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/russian/>. BBC website on the Russian language.
- *Fractured Fairy Tales Bibliography*: <http://people.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/fft.html>. Lists grade-level appropriate modern versions of classic tales.
- *Cinderella Stories*: <http://people.ucalgary.ca/~dkbrown/cinderella.html>. An exhaustive website of all things Cinderella.

## Common Core Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy addressed in the Guide: Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening

- Comprehension and Collaboration
  - Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
  - Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
  - Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.
- Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas
  - Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
  - Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.
  - Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.