

In this unit, students will read a variety of traditional stories and will study the craft of storytelling.

What's the story?

Students will read a wide selection of beloved **fictional stories** from around the world, including:

- "The Wolf and the Three Kids" (Cape Verde)
- "Anansi and the Pot of Wisdom" (Ghana)
- "Why the Toad Has Bumpy Skin" (Brazil)
- "The Lazy Bee" (Argentina)
- "The Kettle of Good Fortune" (Japan)
- "Baba Yaga and the Little Girl with the Kind Heart" (Russia)
- "The Fisherman and the Jinni" (Egypt)
- "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (United States)

This unit emphasizes **storytelling as a timeless tradition** and highlights the role of traditional tales in our shared world heritage.

What will my student learn?

Students will deepen their understanding of the **elements of fictional narratives**, including **dialogue, narration, theme, characters, and plot structure**. They will **summarize texts**, explain the impact of figurative language, and compare and contrast themes. Students will also study **how authors use ambiguity and build suspense** to engage their readers. Similarly, they will explore and practice a variety of **oral storytelling techniques** to captivate an audience.

Students will be guided through various writing experiences focused on different purposes. They will craft a series of **literary analyses** before creatively reimagining, writing, and telling their **own version of a traditional story**. At the end of the unit, students will present their stories during a **Storytelling Open Mic**, which will allow them to integrate and apply their new storytelling skills.

Conversation starters

Ask your student questions about the unit to promote discussion and continued learning.

1. What are some techniques oral storytellers use to engage their audience?
Follow up: Can you retell one of the stories you have read to me? Can you change your voice to match the characters', integrate sound effects, and/or incorporate movement or gestures?
2. What have you learned about theme?
Follow up: Tell me about a theme in a story you have read. What details and ideas repeat throughout the story?
3. What does *benevolent* mean?
Follow up: Can you give me an example of a benevolent character? Can you give me an example of the opposite—a malicious or malevolent character?
4. What story have you chosen to modernize and make your own for the narrative writing project?
Follow up: Why did you choose this story? What elements will you keep the same as the original, and what will you change?
5. Tell me about ambiguous endings.
Follow up: Why do authors write ambiguous endings? What impact does an ambiguous ending have on the plot of a story?
6. How will you build excitement and suspense in your story?
Follow up: How will you incorporate descriptive language, onomatopoeia, dialogue, repetitive phrases, and/or figurative language in your writing?