

Red, the Pig, and the Automobile

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The Learning Progression Frameworks (LPFs) describe significant signposts in reading and writing as students develop and apply their literacy knowledge and skills with increasing expertise from school entry to the end of year 10.

Overview

An inventive reimagining of the fairy-tale genre, based loosely around Little Red Riding Hood. This is a great model for student writing, especially for those who want to explore the creative possibilities of a retelling by innovating on a familiar form.

A PDF of the text is available at www.schooljournal.tki.org.nz

Themes

- Fairy tales
- Innovating
- Character and human psychology
- Humour

Related texts

“The Red Ball” SJ L3 May 2015 | “The Healers’ Apprentice” SJ L3 May 2016 |

“The Duel: The Inventors Awaken” SJ L3 May 2016 | “The Duel: The Final Challenge” SJ L3 Aug 2016

Strengthening reading behaviours (what to notice)

Text structure and features

- Implied information
“Just follow me.” Now the pig laughed so hard that tears streamed from his eyes. He fussed about, looking for a handkerchief, then spent a moment wiping his eyes ... Red noticed they were very long teeth, for a pig.
- Connotative, sarcastic, and colloquial language
“Wow. A human. The smartest creature”; paid you a compliment; “Your lot invented the things”; They were trying to catch Red’s attention; something was up.
- Competing information
Red walked a little way, then sat down to eat an apple. Then a plum.
- Italics for emphasis and effect
How could you expect someone to be nice when their stomach was empty?
“Asked me. As if anyone asks me anything.”

Requiring students to:

- use the context, their prior knowledge of fairy tales, particularly Little Red Riding Hood, to infer that the pig is actually a wolf in disguise
- use their knowledge of book language (particularly of fairy tales) and the context, in combination with everyday language and phrases, to interpret the intended meaning of the words
- differentiate between information that is important to the plot and interesting details that make no difference to it
- recognise and understand the reasons for the deliberate emphasis on particular words (that is, to strengthen meaning or to understand Red’s thoughts).

Vocabulary

Some possibly difficult vocabulary peculiar, paid you a compliment, shrugged, automobile, agitated, gullible, distracted, jiggled, glistening, flailing

Helpful prior knowledge (pre-reading and introducing the text)

- Fairy tales are a particular genre.
- Irony and humour can be powerful techniques when used in stories.
- The roles of the wolf and pig often appear in fairy tales. (Some English language learners may benefit from pre-reading or viewing some traditional fairy tales such as Little Red Riding Hood or The Three Little Pigs. They could compare them with traditional tales from their homeland and discuss whether these creatures are depicted in a similar way.)
- We can innovate on traditional stories to tell a slightly different or new story.

Possible reading and writing purposes

- Enjoy a quirky innovation on a traditional fairy tale about how an enterprising young girl deals with a creature in disguise
- Identify and evaluate the structure and features of a traditional fairy tale
- Explore the author's purpose
- Identify and evaluate the effect of changing elements of a traditional fairy tale and then use this technique and their own experience to create their own story.

See *Effective Literacy Practice in Years 5–8* for information about teaching comprehension strategies ([Teaching comprehension](#)) and for suggestions on using this text with your students ([Approaches to teaching reading](#)).

Possible curriculum contexts

This text has links to level 3 of *The New Zealand Curriculum* in: [ENGLISH](#)

Understanding progress

The following aspects of progress are taken from the [Learning Progression Frameworks](#) and relate to the specific learning tasks below. See the LPFs for more about how students develop expertise and make progress in these aspects:

- Reading for literary experience
- Making sense of text: reading critically; using knowledge of text structure and features
- Creating texts for literary purposes.

Strengthening understanding through reading and writing

Select from the following suggestions and adapt them according to your students' strengths, needs, and experiences.

Note: Most of these activities lend themselves to students working in pairs or small groups.

- Ask the students to give their opinions on the story and to share anything they noticed that made it different or unusual. Prompt them to reflect on what they liked or disliked about the author's decisions. *At what point did you realise what was happening? What gave you the clue that it wasn't a pig and that Red would be OK?* Check their understanding of important phrases, for example, "So what else could he be?" (rhetorical question); "Humans are definitely the smartest" (sarcastic compliment); *How could you expect someone to be nice when their stomach was empty?* (Red talking to herself); "Some fruit? I have as much fruit as I like."; He pointed along the path, which was nothing like a road, and Red thought, *It'll have to be a very small automobile.* (implied information); and "There's always someone nice and stupid, someone gullible, who doesn't suspect a thing" (word meanings).
- Discuss traditional tales with the students and together compile a list of their common features of these texts. This could be a group reference resource that can be added to later (for example, talking animals, magic, wishes granted, good versus bad, a happy ending, a princess and a prince, a love story, a land far away, castles, a forest setting, a journey, dragons, evil, bravery, spells, godmothers, fairies). Have the students discuss and highlight the features used in "Red, the Pig, and the Automobile".
- Have the students compare the story with the original tale using the **Innovations** template provided or a T-chart to look at individual elements in each. Clarify or reread the traditional tale if necessary. Allow a short period for the students to scan one page at a time, talk with a partner, and write bullets identifying what is the same or different. Together, share and record points on a master chart and ask the students to add any details they missed to their own chart. If you used a T-chart, you may wish to colour-code the bullets according to the features of a narrative, such as character, setting, plot, and theme. Discuss any patterns. *What was changed the most? What was left unchanged?* Ask them to think about why the author might have wanted us to recognise the original tale. *How is innovation useful when we write?* Alternatively, the students could use a Venn diagram to show the similarities and differences.  You could provide the template as a Google Doc for the students to edit as a group.
- Clarify the students' understanding of why the author might have written this tale. *What do you think the author wanted us to think after reading this? Do you agree with the author's decision to allow the wolf to live and later rejoin the other animals? Why do you think the author chose an ending like that? Is there a message the author is trying to tell us? What do you think it is? Can that message relate to humans and our behaviours? How?*
- Use the **Innovations** template as a model for students to use to innovate their own stories, either selecting another tale or using this one. Ask them to discuss which elements they think are most important to change and which to keep so that it's possible to recognise the original.
- Ask the students to imagine that they are Red and have them write a journal or diary about their adventure, emphasising what she is thinking and what she does when she realises the pig is tricking her. Alternatively, the students could choose a different character.
- You could give English language learners a template to explore any unfamiliar vocabulary. It could have space to write the word and these five headings for them to complete: What is it?, What is it like?, An example in a sentence, My definition, My picture of the word.

“Red, the Pig, and the Automobile” Innovations

Features	“Little Red Riding Hood”	“Red, the Pig, and the Automobile”
<p>Characters</p> <p>Names</p> <p>Good or evil</p> <p>Traits</p>		
<p>Setting</p> <p>Place</p> <p>Objects</p> <p>Time</p>		
<p>Special/magical elements</p>		
<p>Plot</p> <p>Events</p> <p>Climax</p> <p>Ending</p>		
<p>Theme</p>		