8 *Storytelling*

Read It, Write It, Tell It Episode: "Cy Gatton"

Lesson Overview

The purpose of the lessons in this unit is to help Ohio students in grades 3-7 see the interrelationships of all of the Literary Text benchmarks explored in *Read It, Write It, Tell It* units 1-7. The lessons revolve around the fiction genre tall tales and storytelling.

Ohio Academic Content Indicators

English Language Arts: Reading: Literary Text: Character Development, Setting, Plot, Point of View, Theme, Genre, Mood, and Figurative Language: Grades 5-7.

1 *Cy Gatton*

Episode Overview

This episode highlights Cy Gatton, a storyteller and folk hero from Richland County, Ohio. The tall tale portion of the episode tells of Cy's rivalry with Rusty McNabb in the Apple Cider Race. Rusty sabotages Cy's wagon and drives away his horses. Cy needs an alternative way to carry the eleven cider barrels he must transport for the race. He mixes magical Richland County soil with rabbit food to produce gigantic rabbits.

Fact:

- Cyrus Gatton (1836-1916) was a storyteller and entrepreneur who lived in Wildcat Hollow just west of Butler, Ohio in Richland County.
- He was a family man who owned what is now the Wade and Gatton Nursery and a vacation area that was near Gatton Rocks in Richland County.

Vocabulary

The following words used by the storyteller in the *Read It, Write It, Tell It* episode "Cy Gatton" may be unfamiliar to some students.

chores	scoundrel
puny	taunted

②Before Viewing

1. Ask: Of what genre is the tall tale a subcategory? *Tall tales are a part of the fantasy genre.*
2. Ask: What are the elements of a tall tale?
     o *Character*
         - *The hero or heroine is superhuman or larger-than-life.*
         - *The hero uses everyday language.*
         - *The hero often displays character traits most admired by the people who helped create the stories such as courage, strength, honor, thoughtfulness, and intelligence.*
     o *Plot*
         - *A problem is solved in a humorous or outrageous way.*
     o *Hyperbole – Exaggeration*
         - *Descriptions or characters and events are often so exaggerated that they are impossible and/or funny.*
3. Say: As you watch the *Read It, Write It, Tell It* episode "Cy Gatton" think about what is and what is not an element of a tall tale.

③After Viewing

Pre/Post Questions: If the students cannot easily answer the following questions, your may wish to use the Lessons (Section 4) and/or the Extensions (Section 5).

1. List the major elements of a tall tale.
     - *The hero or heroine is superhuman or larger-than-life.*
     - *The hero uses everyday language.*
     - *The hero often displays character traits most admired by the people who helped create the stories such as courage, strength, honor, thoughtfulness, and intelligence.*
     - *A problem is solved in a humorous or outrageous way.*
     - *Descriptions or characters and events are often so exaggerated that they are impossible and/or humorous.*

2. What examples of superhuman characteristics were displayed by Cy Gatton. Support your answer with evidence from the episode.
   Cy Gatton was stronger and quicker than a normal human being. "Cy woke up early to get all of his 1,000 stable chores done, eat breakfast, do 1,000 more chores, then, get ready for the race. Cy began to fill the wagon with the apple cider barrels. He stacked five on each hand and rolled the 11th barrel with his feet."

3. What example of vernacular or dialect did you hear in the "Cy Gatton" episode?
   There are many examples of everyday language. Including "your horses are puny," "that mean ol' Rusty had a plan to do some dirty tricks," "It had to be that no good, no count varmint," "I have to think real fast. I need something really big. Wait a second, real big and fast," etc.

4. Describe the character traits of Cy Gatton.
   Cy Gatton was physically strong, fast, agile, and intelligent. He could do thousands of chores in single day, carry more than a normal human, ride bareback and he quickly thought up a way to outwit Rusty McNabb.

5. What was the conflict and how was the conflict resolved?
   Rusty McNabb stole Cy's wagon wheels and chased away his horses making it impossible for Cy to compete in the Apple Cider Race. Rusty found a way to overcome the losses by growing giant rabbits that were capable of carrying apple cider barrels around their necks.

6. Give an example of hyperbole from the "Cy Gatton" episode.
   Examples include:
   - *"Paul Bunyan heard they needed water in five different areas. So, Paul stuck out his hand in the earth and helped create the Great Mohican from his palm. It had five forks from his fingers: the Black, Rocky, Muddy, Cedar, and Clear Forks."*
   - *"Cy woke up early to get all of his 1,000 stable chores done, eat breakfast, do 1,000 more chores, THEN, get ready for the race. Cy began to fill the wagon with the apple cider barrels. He stacked five on each hand and rolled the 11th barrel with his feet."*
   - *"I'll mix some soil in with the rabbit's food. Maybe, they'll grow super fast too; just like the carrots!" They grew all right, big as horses, all 11 of them."*
   - *"Skip, kicked him so hard, he flew up in the air and landed in the Great Mohican."*

4 Lesson

Materials:
- *Read It, Write It, Tell It* episode "Cy Gatton"
- Student Handout "Cy Gatton"
- Student Handout "Tall Tale Story Matrix"
- Rubric "Tall Tale Rubric – Written or Oral"

Procedure:
1. Group Activity:
   o Work with the students to develop a list of the major elements of a tall tale. Display the completed list for the students.
   o Review the *Read It, Write It, Tell It* episode "Cy Gatton" and watch for the elements of a tall tale. The instructor may wish to stop or pause the video at appropriate scenes to help the students identify specific tall tale elements.
   o Give the students the complete "Cy Gatton" matrix based on the *Read It, Write It, Tell It* "Cy Gatton" episode. Compare the classes' results to the completed matrix.
   o Create an original tall tale. Display a blank copy of the "Tall Tale Story Matrix" handout for the class. As a group, brainstorm the elements for an original tall tale and complete the matrix.
2. Small Group or Individual Activity:
   o Write a tall tale. Allow students time to write a tall tale individually or in groups.
   o Students may use the details created during the class brainstorming session or create their own tall tale.
   o They may use individual blank copies of the "Tall Tale Story Matrix" as they desire to assist them in their pre-writing, organization and writing. They may simply refer to it without filling it in at all, make brief notes on it, or fill it in completely before they begin writing.
3. Evaluate the tall tales using the "Tall Tale Rubric – Written or Oral" included with this unit.

Tall Tales Rubric

Name: **Date:**

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Characters	The main characters are named and clearly described. Most listeners or readers could describe the characters accurately.	The main characters are named and described. Most listeners or readers would have some idea of what the characters looked like.	The main characters are named. The listener or reader knows very little about the characters.	It is hard to tell who the main characters are.
Action	Several action verbs (active voice) are used to describe what is happening in the story. The story seems exciting!	Several action verbs are used to describe what is happening in the story, but the word choice doesn't make the story as exciting as it could be.	A variety of verbs (passive voice) are used and describe the action accurately but not in a very exciting way.	Little variety seen in the verbs that are used. The story does not hold the reader's/listener's interest.
Problem	It is very easy for the listener or reader to understand the problem the main characters face and why it is a problem.	It is fairly easy for the listener or reader to understand the problem the main characters face and why it is a problem.	It is fairly easy for the listener or reader to understand the problem the main characters face but it is not clear why it is a problem.	It is not clear what problem the main characters face.
Conflict	The solution to the character's problem is easy to understand, and is logical. There are no loose ends.	The solution to the character's problem is easy to understand, and is somewhat logical.	The solution to the character's problem is a little hard to understand.	No solution is attempted or it is impossible to understand.
Solution	Exaggeration is evident and developed.	There is some exaggeration.	There is a little evidence of exaggeration.	There is no evidence of exaggeration.
Resolution	Humor is very evident.	There is some humor.	There is a little humor.	There is no humor
Exaggeration	The main characters are named and clearly described. Most listeners or readers could describe the characters accurately.	The main characters are named and described. Most listeners or readers would have some idea of what the characters looked like.	The main characters are named. The listener or reader knows very little about the characters.	It is hard to tell who the main characters are.
Humor	Several action verbs (active voice) are used to describe what is happening in the story. The story seems exciting!	Several action verbs are used to describe what is happening in the story, but the word choice doesn't make the story as exciting as it could be.	A variety of verbs (passive voice) are used and describe the action accurately but not in a very exciting way.	Little variety seen in the verbs that are used. The story seems a little boring.

Tall Tales Rubric

The following sections may be included for tall tales shared orally

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Voice	Speaks with an appropriate volume. Employs clear enunciation. Uses non-monotonous, vocal expression to clarify the meaning of the text. Voice differentiates between narrator and characters.	Speaks with a volume that has appropriate volume but lacks some expression. Employs clear enunciation. Voice tries to differentiate between narrator and characters.	Speaks with a voice that is inappropriate in volume part of the time. Usually enunciates clearly. Voice does not differentiate between narrator and characters.	Speaks with inappropriate volume. Does not enunciate clearly. Makes no attempt to differentiate between narrator and characters.
Non-verbal Communication	Eye contact with audience is engaging. Maintains a charismatic presence in space (stage presence). Seems comfortable, relaxed and confident in front of listeners.	Maintains eye contact with audience. Seems comfortable, confident, and relaxed in front of listeners but is not charismatic. Able to use some gestures and body movement.	Usually maintains eye contact with audience. Shows some signs of discomfort and/or lack of confidence in front of listeners. Seems rooted to one location and uses few gestures or body movements.	Does not maintain eye contact with audience. Is obviously uncomfortable in front of listeners. Shows no stage presence.

Tall Tale Story Matrix

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions:

Some of the general elements of tall tales are listed below. Write the title of the tale you are reading or writing and then write details that correspond to each of the elements listed.

Title:

Literary Text Element:		
Character:	*Character names*	Main Character (Good Guy/Girl): Antagonist (Bad Guy/Girl): Other Characters (if any):
Character:	*Main Character's strengths*	Circle one or more (and/or add your own): Physically Strong | Brave or Courageous | Honorable Thoughtful or Caring of Others | Smart, Wise or Intelligent
Setting	*Time & Place*	
Plot:	*Main Problem to Solve*	
Plot:	*Action(s) or Event(s) that take place*	
Plot and/or Character:	*Exaggerations*	
Plot:	*Humor or Funny thing(s) that will happen*	
Plot:	*How Problem will be solved in the end*	

Example Tall Tale Matrix: Cy Gatton

Name: Jamie Smithson		Date: 2/1/2010

Directions:

Some of the general elements of tall tales are listed below. Write the title of the tale you are writing and then write details that correspond to each of the elements listed.

	Title:	**Cy Gatton**
Literary Text Element:		
Character:	*Character names*	Main Character (Hero/Heroine): Cy Gatton Antagonist (Bad Guy/Girl): Rusty McNabb Other Characters (if any): none
Character:	*Main Character's strengths*	Circle one or more (and/or add your own): (Physically Strong) | Brave or Courageous | Honorable Thoughtful or Caring of Others | (Smart, Wise or Intelligent)
Setting:	*Time and Place*	The story will take place in north central Ohio, around 1880
Plot:	*Main Problem to Solve*	Cy has to win the Apple Cider Race and Rusty is cheating to make sure Cy can't win.
Plot:	*Action that will take place*	• Cy will have to finish his chores before the race. • Rusty will take the wheels off Cy's wagon and chase away his horses. • Cy will mix soil with rabbit food • The rabbits will grow to giant size very quickly.
Plot and/or Character:	*Exaggerations*	• Cy is so fast and strong that he can do 1000 stable chores, eat breakfast and do 1000 more chores before the race. • Rusty McNabb is so tough that he cleanes his teeth with a sharp knife and flosses with barbed wire. • Each rabbit is so big it can carry a cider barrel around its neck just like the St. Bernard dogs. • The rabbits grow as big as horses from eating Richland County soil and are faster than horses. • Cy is so strong that he stacks five [cider barrels] on each hand and rolls the 11th barrel with his feet.
Plot:	*Humor or Funny thing(s) that will happen*	Huge rabbits racing against horses – and winning. Huge rabbits with cider barrels under their chins.
Plot:	*How Problem will be solved in the end*	The rabbits will grow large enough and fast enough to carry the apple cider barrels for Cy and win the race.

5 *Extension Activities*

Provide group and individual learning activities. Provide a variety of resources to accommodate various modalities. Suggested resources are listed below

Storytelling · Internet Resources

Books · Suggestions, Booklists, and Online Access to Ohio's School Libraries and Public Libraries

- A Storytelling Bookshelf for Teachers: http://www.storyarts.org/store/bookshelf/index.html
- INFOhio's K-12 School Online Catalogs: MultiLIS and SirsiDynix K-12 Sites: http://www.infohio.org/web2/web2.html
- State Library of Ohio: Ohio's participating public libraries: Locate Books of Line in your area: http://seoweb.seo.lib.oh.us/Library%20Info/participating%20librarys.htm
- Children's Book Awards and Other Literary Prizes: http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/awards.htm
- ATN Booklists
  - http://nancykeane.com/rl/
  - These recommendations are harvested from a variety of listserv such as LM_NET, Childlit, Booktalkers@egroups.com, YALSA, etc. The reading lists were started as part of a librarian collaborative project, All Together Now, begun by Dale Copps.
- Books for Younger Students:
  - *Peggony Po: A Whale of a Tale* by Andrea Pinkney.
  - *Dona Flor* by Pat Mora
  - *Snickerdoodle!* By Clare Ham Grosgebauer
  - *Sitka Rose / Shelley Gill* by Shannon Cartwright

Ohio Resource Center • Reading http://www.ohiorc.org/search/search_adv.aspx

- Advanced Search: Choose Free Text and ORC Number from the drop down menus and type the ORC Lesson number in the center box. Scroll down and click Submit. For example:
  Search for resources that…contain | Free Text ▾ | 93 | in the | ORC Number ▾ |

- "Born on a Mountaintop: Davy Crockett, Tall Tales, and History," Grades 3-6
  - ORC Lesson# 93
  - This resource, maintained by the National Endowment for the Humanities, uses historical documents and tall tales about Davy Crockett as the focus for a unit on American tall tales. The suggested lessons allow students to examine the characteristics of tall tales and how these tales reflect historical events.
- "Exploring American Tall Tales" Grades 4-5
  - ORC Lesson# 4542
  - In this lesson, students explore the common elements of folktales and tall tales, while learning how these stories built the spirit of American pioneers. Students identify the elements of tall tale and write responses to these tales, including a composition in the form of a monologue or a news report.
- "A Variety of Unwise Characters," Grades 4-5
  - ORC Lesson # 4539
  - In this lesson, students explore the common elements of folktales and tall tales, while learning how these tales built the spirit of the American people. Students also identify the common characteristics of tall tales.
- "Myths, Folktales, and Fairy Tales: Writing with Writers," Grades 2-3

- o ORC Lesson# 216
- o This promising practice, part of Scholastic's "Writing With Writers" series, provides strategies for teaching students to craft their own fairy tales. Designed for implementation within writing workshop, this cross grade level writing project features several components, including fractured fairy tale activities inspired by Jon Scieszka.
- "Fairy Tale Autobiographies" Grades 6-8
  - o ORC Lesson# 1350
  - o URL: http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=1
  - o This lesson uses fairy tales as a vehicle for story analysis and discussion. Students work together in small groups to read, discuss, and analyze three fairy tales for characters, setting, conflict and theme.

Storytelling · Other Online Resources

- "The Value of Storytelling:" http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/content/cntareas/reading/li4lk28.htm
- "Developing Literacy Skills Through Storytelling:" http://www.nationalserviceresources.org/resources/newsletters/resource_connection/volume_2_number_4/developing_literacy.php
- "Story Arts Online:" http://www.storyarts.org/index.html
- Arts Edge • Kennedy Center
  - o "Weaving Words: The Art of Storytelling:" http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/3481/
  - o "Storytelling Stage:" http://www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/3520/stage.html
  - o "Spinning Stories, Telling Tales:" http://www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/3448/story.swf
  - o "Coaching Youth Storytellers:" http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/content/3266/
- Storytelling Educator Resources List:
  - o http://www.multcolib.org/events/tales/educators.html
  - o Multnomah County Library, Portland, Oregon
- National Storytellers Network Resources: http://www.storynet.org/Resources/index.html
- Storytelling Workshop with Gerald Fierst: http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/storyteller/index.htm
- Tim Sheppard's Story Links: http://www.timsheppard.co.uk/story/storylinks.html
- Center for Digital Storytelling: http://www.storycenter.org/index1.html
- "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" by Mark Twain.
  - o Audio book from Wired for Books
  - o www.wiredforbooks.org/twain
- "The Art of Storytelling: Tall Tales"
  - o Clearvue & SVE. ©1986. 29 minutes. Grades 3-6.
  - o Educational video from Power Media Plus
  - o http://www.powermediaplus.com
- "O.O.P.S! The Ohio Order for the Preservation of Storytelling"
  - o http://www.oopstorytelling.org/index.htm
- Southern Ohio Storytelling Festival: http://www.sostoryfest.com/
- What is Storytelling?
  - o For Parents
  - o KYBU, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah
  - o http://www.callofstory.org/en/storytelling/

Cy Gatton Follow Up Activities

Research factual details mentioned in the episode:
- Where in Ohio is Richland County? Learn about the geography and/or history of Richland County.
- What kind of soil does Richland County have?
- Where is the Mohican River? Is it in or near Richland County? Are there forks of the Mohican called Black, Rocky, Muddy, Cedar, and Clear Forks?