

Genie-us

Context

1. Fairytales

Read the following and fill in the gaps by changing the word on the right into its correct form.

When the story of 'Genie-us' starts we think it is going to be a normal fairy tale. We all know a normal way a fairy tale, 'Once upon a time' type stories, are supposed to end. This particular one is supposed to have the hero – a peasant or a prince – fighting against evil things (dragons, witches, giants, magicians etc) to finally (and _____) defeat a rival or rivals, take the treasure back to the king and win the princess's hand in marriage with the _____ of her father, the king. Naturally, the peasant or prince will be young and handsome and _____ brave and clever and the princess will be very beautiful and graceful, with perfect manners and probably spend her days combing her long, long hair in front of a mirror or leaning out of a window.

The fact that 'Genie-us' doesn't follow this pattern – it does almost the opposite – is part of the story's charm. But why is it we all know what is *supposed* to happen? Where does this knowledge come from?

Fairytales have been around in Europe for a long time. _____ they were all part of a long oral tradition of folk tales and one generation after another told the tales to the next generation and so on. It wasn't until about 300 years ago that any of these stories were _____ down, though most weren't collected and put into books until the nineteenth century.

These stories were usually handed down by women in the family, not men. They were, in fact, women's stories at a time when women's voices were not supposed to be heard and when censorship was very strong. The _____ system in Europe at the time was very unfair with many injustices, and these stories were a way of protesting about the very real problems most people faced in life. The stories, therefore, were metaphors about wrongs being righted and justice prevailing.

The power of the protest is such that we still know the basic structure of these stories today. Whether they _____ managed to make wrong things right in the real world is quite another matter, but one thing we do know is that when these stories came to be written down, the really cruel and gruesome parts were left out!

HERO

BLESS

EXTREME

ORIGINAL

WRITE

POLITICS

ACTUAL

- Find evidence in the text that shows a) these stories are part of a long tradition b) that women told the stories originally c) that they were told because people felt life was unfair.
- In your own words, explain why 'Genie-us' is unlike traditional fairy tales.

2. Story Making

Now you are going to make your own fairy story for children – you are the story teller. Choose a minimum of two objects or characters from columns A, B and C, and a maximum of 4 from each column. These are the objects and characters that will appear in your story. Once you have chosen these objects or characters you must use them so think carefully before choosing. You cannot add other characters once you have made your choice.

Cut out the characters and place them on a white sheet of paper. Decide how you might describe what you have chosen (e.g. 'there is an ugly witch', 'this is a magic wand'). Now think about the story line. It must have a beginning, where the characters are introduced; a middle section, where action and adventures happen; there must be an end where the story comes to a proper end – there might even be a moral lesson taught here! It might, like the Louise Cooper story Genie-us, have a surprise ending. It's up to you.

This is a story that you have to tell out loud, but it will be useful for you to make notes about the story to remind you about details. Write your notes down here.

The beginning (introducing the characters)	
The middle (action and adventures)	
The end (a conclusion or resolution)	

Rehearse the story and then be prepared to tell it to the class. Start the story 'ONCE UPON A TIME' (of course!). You could illustrate the story as you tell it by holding up the pictures as flash cards. Then find some 7 year old English speaking children to tell the story to!

A	B	C
    	      	     