

Reading Selection for Assignments 1 and 2

Folk tales are a special kind of short story. There are three important characteristics that make a short story a folk tale.

1. Folk tales often have a **life lesson**. That means that they teach something that is useful in life.
2. Folk tales are **fiction** - they are made up. They were created hundreds and hundreds of years ago.
3. When they were first made up, folk tales weren't written down. Instead, they were passed down by **word-of-mouth**. This means that parents told the stories to their children, who grew up and told them to their children, and so on. As the stories were told over and over, minor details were changed. So nowadays we can find several different versions of the same folk tale.

Folk tales and fables may seem to be very much alike. In fact, they do share some **similarities**.

1. Both of them are fiction.
2. Both of them are handed down by word-of-mouth.
3. Both of them teach some kind of lesson.

However, there are some significant **differences** between the two.

1. Folk tales are **longer** than fables.
2. Folk tales **don't actually state** the lesson they're trying to teach. The person hearing or reading the folk tale has to figure the lesson out.
3. Folk tales contain **more magic** than fables do.
4. There are **different folk tales** from country to country, whereas fables are the same all over the world. "**Folk**" means people. So, these are stories "of the people." Folk tales are particular to the country they were made up in. Each country has its own folk tales. Therefore, folk tales heard by children growing up in France, for example, are different from folk tales heard by children growing up in Brazil, and so on.