

Fable-Find a traditional fable. Write your own version of it either by giving it a twist, as Thurber has done, or by adding to it. You could, for example, rewrite the fable of the fox and the crow so that the crow keeps the cheese, perhaps outsmarting the fox and teaching him a lesson, or you could continue the story of the fox to show how he outsmarts another animal, getting food by exploiting the weakness or vanity of another animal. As an alternate assignment, make up your own fable. Start with a moral that you want to teach, such as “Be satisfied with what you have” or “You have to work to succeed.” Then think of animals and situations with which to teach the moral.

*Prewriting suggestion-1st create a “story map”

Tall Tale-Write a tall tale with Paul Bunyan as the main character. Here are two ideas for situations: how Bunyan put out a huge forest fire or how he re-planted a forest that was destroyed by a fire. As an alternative, you might write a description related to Paul Bunyan’s life similar to the one of the cookstove at Little Gimlet in the story. For example, you might write about what Bunyan’s bed looked like. If you are feeling really adventurous, you can invent a character of your own for a tall tale.

*Prewriting suggestion-Make a list of events for your tall tale. Then, next to each event, describe how it might be exaggerated to achieve a humorous effect.

Oral History-Paul Bunyan is part of American oral history. What do you know about the history of your family? Interview one or two family members about a particular event in your family history. Use the information that you gather to write a brief account of the event.

Comic Strip-Paul Bunyan was a hero of the past, particularly for Americans who were pioneers and struggled with the natural environment as part of their daily living. Invent a hero for contemporary times, perhaps even one that would be a hero in your school setting. Give the hero a name, and list his or her qualities in a chart. Then produce a comic strip telling particular adventures of the hero in which his or her strengths or special powers are revealed.

Fantasy-In fables and fairy tales animals speak. What would happen if your pet or another animal you encountered suddenly talked? What do you think the animal would want to tell you? What could the animal tell you that might be particularly interesting or unusual? Write a short story about a talking animal. Be sure to include dialogue in which the animal talks.

*Prewriting suggestion-Think about the characteristics the animal would have. Would it be shy, helpful, arrogant...? Write five key adjectives to describe the animal. Make sure that the animal’s characteristics come across in the dialogue you write.

Fairy Tale-Many people have rewritten fairy and folk tales as if they occurred in modern times. Rewrite the fairy tale “The White Snake,” but change it to take place in the present. For example, you can change the challenges that the hero faces and how he meets them. You can also include modern machinery to help the hero, but make sure to retain some supernatural elements to make your story fit the fairy tale genre.

*Prewriting suggestion-Make a chart that lists the characters, settings, and events of the fairy tale. Note those elements that you plan to change and how you plan to change them.

Modern-Day Myth-Invent a modern-day “monster” and write a myth about a contemporary hero who destroys it. Include powerful helpers who come to the hero’s aid.

A Hero/Heroine’s Journey-Write a story that includes the stages of the hero’s (or heroine’s) journey we studied in class.

Alternate Point of View-Rewrite a story from the point of view of the protagonist.