

Clues in Stories

Use story details to distinguish traditional genres.

5.9.A “demonstrate knowledge of distinguishing characteristics of well-known children's literature such as folktales, fables, legends, myths, and tall tales;”

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline at least two words or phrases in each paragraph that help you tell one traditional story genre from another. Number the genre names 1 through 5 as you find them.

Five Kinds of Story

- ① Traditional stories often carry clues about where they came from and what they are meant to do. A folktale is a story passed down by ordinary people, often with different versions in different places. It may explain a custom or show a clever character solving a problem. A fable is usually brief, uses talking animals or objects, and ends with a clear lesson, called a moral.
- ② A legend connects to a real person, place, or event, but details may grow more amazing as the story is retold. Legends often show why a community remembers someone as brave or important. A myth takes place in a sacred or ancient world and may feature gods, goddesses, or other powerful beings. Myths often explain a natural event, a belief, or how part of the world began.
- ③ A tall tale is an exaggerated adventure, often set in the American frontier or another familiar place. Its larger-than-life hero can do impossible things, such as lassoing a tornado or digging a river with one shovel. To identify a genre, look for several clues, not one detail. A talking animal alone does not prove a story is a fable, but a clear moral is a stronger clue.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE _____ Use the passage

1 Which two traits in the passage are clues that a story is a fable?

2 How is a legend different from a myth, according to the passage?

3 Why does the passage say that one talking animal does not prove that a story is a fable?

4 A story is set in a real town and tells of a local firefighter whose rescue becomes more extraordinary each time it is retold. Which genre best fits this story? Explain your choice.

3 YOUR TURN _____ Your own words

Write a 3 to 4 sentence original example of a folktale, fable, legend, myth, or tall tale. Name the genre and include at least two characteristics that show why your example fits it.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline at least two words or phrases in each paragraph that help you tell one traditional story genre from another. Number the genre names 1 through 5 as you find them. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which two traits in the passage are clues that a story is a fable?	It uses talking animals or objects and ends with a clear moral.
2	How is a legend different from a myth, according to the passage?	A legend connects to a real person, place, or event. A myth may feature powerful beings and often explains nature, beliefs, or beginnings.
3	Why does the passage say that one talking animal does not prove that a story is a fable?	Readers should look for several genre clues. A clear moral is a stronger fable clue.
4	A story is set in a real town and tells of a local firefighter whose rescue becomes more extraordinary each time it is retold. Which genre best fits this story? Explain your choice.	Legend. It connects to a real person or place, and its details become more amazing as it is retold.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

My genre is a fable. A hungry fox asked a wise owl to share her berries. The owl said, "Work before you ask," and the fox gathered his own food. Moral: People should try to solve their own problems before asking others to do the work.

Accept answers that use details from the passage to identify and explain genre characteristics. For Part 3, accept any named genre when the student includes at least two accurate characteristics in a 3 to 4 sentence original example.