Sample English 099 Assignment on Fairy Tales

English 099
Dr. R. Morris
Assignment on Fairy Tales

Find a fairy tale on the net or in a book; find one that isn’t too simple or too short, too long or too complicated. Find one that is just right, one that you can work with. In this essay I want you to analyze and interpret ONE fairy tale. **You must have your fairy tale approved by me.** As usual, in doing this assignment, I want you to consciously engage the writing process.

Think about your audience. For this assignment, I want you to write for parents who read fairy tales to their children. Choose a person or persons you know. As with the Concept Paper, you will need to get them interested in your subject and then briefly describe the tale to them.

Your purpose is to analyze your fairy tale at a deeper level than most parents may realize. You will need to reveal what you have discovered about your fairy tale and the lessons it teaches children. Your job is to justify your interpretation using evidence from your fairy tale. How do you do this? Remember the Invention strategies we have discussed in class. Use several of these—including some you might not usually use. We will work with some new critical tools and analysis methods in class. As with the Concept Paper, discuss your fairy tale with others; that input will give you more ideas to look into as well as write about. And remember to use other strategies such as clustering or more focused freewriting. I want you to turn in all of these Invention exercises when your final draft is due, so keep/print out/record these.

Use the following questions to help you develop ideas and areas to write about. Is your tale organized around particular images, character traits, familiar plot lines, repetition of works, or notable settings? These areas may help you organize your essay. What images, values, or beliefs are privileged (set up as positive values or traits)? What is absent or not valued (set up as negative values or traits)? What stereotypes and expectations do you notice? What cultural positions or roles do you find: sisters, mothers, or even step-sisters/mothers? kings, princesses, poor people, servants? particular kinds of animals? How are they portrayed? Why are they used? What messages do their depictions send to you? Moreover, what values, behaviors, and attitudes do you find in the story? Is there a contradiction between the overt values and the more subtle or hidden values? Why? **Do not be afraid if someone disagrees with your interpretation.** That’s ok; in fact, you may also use an interpretation you disagree with to help you defend yours. Your job is to use evidence from the tale to support your deeper interpretation of this fairy tale.

As you move towards your conclusion, make a larger application. How do the values, behaviors, and attitudes that you have uncovered in this seemingly simple fairy tale relate to the society at large? Do these codes have implications in relation to our society’s views on gender, race, class, age, body type, sexuality, etc.? Would you want your tale to have an impact upon a child? Why?

As you get ready to write, remember that you cannot write about everything in this story. Furthermore, these questions are just to get you started thinking; you should not just answer them in writing. In moving to Arrangement, think about what areas you want to discuss and how you want to present them. Look at the Writing Process Tip Sheet I gave you. Use some of these strategies to help you find a pattern. I will also give you Organization Maps to help you start finding a sequence or order. Refer to The Little Brown Handbook—especially pages 42-46—for good organization strategies/tips. We will work on this process in class; we will especially work on development and arrangement of ideas together.

(over)
These papers should be a minimum of 4 pages long, word-processed, standard 12 point font, double spaced, MLA format.

You must turn in all your Invention and Arrangement exercises, early writing/paragraphs, rough draft, and all materials you have used to put this paper together, or your paper will fail. Remember, you will also be graded on writing process. If you miss days during this unit or come in without your work done, you will lose points.

I will give bonus points to those students who get help in the Writing Center for Invention or Arrangement work. Be sure to take this assignment sheet and have specific areas/problems you wish to discuss with the tutor. Make sure you have the tutor sign and date this sheet.

These essays will be due ________________________.

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Writing Center Bonus Points

____________________________________ (print your name) visited the Writing Center on
_____________________________ (write in date), and we worked on

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Signed _______________________________________ (tutor’s name)

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____________________________________ (print your name) visited the Writing Center on
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