



## Truth or Legend?

### National Standards > Language Arts

#### **NL-ENG.K-12.2 Understanding the Human Experience (Grades 4-6)**

- Read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.

#### **NL-ENG.K-12.3 Evaluation Strategies (Grades 4-6)**

- Apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts.

#### **NL-ENG.K-12.6 Applying Knowledge (Grades 4-6)**

- Apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique and discuss print and non-print texts.

### Kentucky: Reading (1.2)/Arts and Humanities (2.24, 2.25)

- Apply appropriate reading strategies to make sense of a variety of print and non-print texts (literary, informational, practical/workplace, and persuasive) to reach personal goals, to understand the human experience, to create products, to accomplish authentic tasks, and to develop ideas in written/oral responses.

#### **ELA-4-R-1, ELA-5-r-1, ELA-6-R-1**

- Understand and respond to a variety of reading materials, making connections to student's lives, to real world issues, and/or to current events.

#### **ELA-4-R-2, ELA-5-R-1, ELA-6-R -2**

- Recognize characteristics and elements of different kinds of works.

### Kentucky: Writing (1.11)/Art and Humanities Standards (2.22)

- Use the writing process and criteria for effective writing in pieces developed over time, as well as in on-demand writing situations, to compile a collection of writings for a variety of authentic purposes and audiences and in a variety of forms, including personal, literary, transitive and reflective pieces.

#### **ELA-4-W-3, ELA-5-W-3, ELA-6-W-3 (6.3)**

- Write transitive pieces (writing produced for authentic purposes and audiences beyond completing an assignment to demonstrate learning), based on personal experiences, reading, listening, observing, and/or inquiry.

#### **ELA-4-W-4, ELA-5-W-4, ELA-6-W-4 (5.2)**

- Write literary pieces that show an understanding of characteristics of literary works.

#### **ELA-4-W-6, ELA-5-W-6, ELA-6-W-5**

- Identify and apply characteristics of effective writing in producing and discussing their own work, including awareness of audience and purpose, organization, idea development, and standards of correctness (e.g., mechanics, grammar, spelling).

**Ohio: Language Arts>Reading Applications> Literary Text Standard**

- Enhance understanding of the human story by reading texts that represent a variety of authors, cultures and eras.
- Demonstrate comprehension by describing and discussing the elements of literature.
- Explain, analyze and critique literary text to achieve deep understanding.

**Benchmark(s)**

**Grades 4, 5 &6**

**B.** Analyze the importance of setting.

**F.** Identify similarities and differences of various literary forms and genres.

**Ohio: Language Arts> Writing Process Standard**

- Engage in the major phases of the writing process—prewriting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing.
- Plan writing for different purposes and audiences.
- Apply writing skills in increasingly sophisticated ways to create and produce compositions that reflect effective word and grammatical choices.

**Benchmark(s) (See all)**

**Grades 4, 5 &6**

**A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, and I**

**Ohio: Language Arts> Writing Applications Standard**

- Understand various types of writing require different language, formatting and special vocabulary.

**Benchmarks**

**Grade 4**

**A.** Write narrative accounts that develop character, setting, and plot.

**Grades 5 & 6**

**A.** Use narrative strategies (e.g., dialogue and action) to develop characters, plot and setting and to maintain a consistent point of view.

**Grades 5 & 6**

**E.** Use persuasive strategies, including establishing a clear position in support of a proposition or a proposal with organized and relevant evidence.

**Objective**

Students will recognize the characteristics and elements that contribute to the making of the genre, "legends."

Students will examine how descriptive settings add to the belief in legends.

Students will write original legends.

**Materials**

- Internet access
- Picture book, The Legend of Sleepy Hollow. (Washington, I. 1991. The Legend of Sleepy Hollow. Nashville, TN: Ideals Children's Books)
- *Handout A*, Characteristics of a Legend (graphic organizer)
- *Handout B*, Question Template

## Vocabulary

- Gossip
- Legend
- Rumor
- Gullible
- Apocryphal

## Activity

### **Guided Reading: What is a legend?**

#### **Teacher will:**

- Write the word “legend” on the board and ask students to provide a definition for the term.
- Facilitate student discussion of the genre and elements of legends.  
*Elements of legends:*
  - Fictional stories that are part of a particular culture.
  - Handed down from generation to generation.
  - Include information about the culture and the region of a people.
  - Share information about the past.
  - Non-historical, but accepted as history.
  - Possess elements of folklore and myth.
  - Often exaggerated or spread by gossip and rumor; unverified.
  - Usually tells the deeds of a hero.
- Ask students to brainstorm other titles of other legends with which they are familiar (e.g., Legend of Tarzan, Bluebonnet, John Henry, Merlin or Johnny Appleseed, etc.).
- Read out loud to the class the picture book, The Legend of Sleepy Hollow. Have students complete the graphic organizer handout to identify the elements of a “legend” found in the story of Sleepy Hollow. (See attached)
- Facilitate student discussion with the following question prompts:
  - Why is the tale, The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, considered fiction (made-up) and not truth?
  - What story elements provide evidence of this fact?
  - Does the tale’s setting affect the tale as being fiction vs. non-fiction?
  - Did the play’s settings, props, and character costumes add to your belief of the validity of the tale and events?
  - How has this tale traveled from generation to generation?
  - Do you think the telling of the tale may have changed over time?
  - What information did the tale provide about the culture or way of life in Sleepy Hollow?
  - What information does the tale provide that illustrates how people perceived legends in the past?
  - Why may some people hold a belief in an actual Headless Horseman?
  - Do you think the characters in the play were gullible for believing the legend of the Headless Horseman?
  - How is the play different from the written version of the tale?
  - Does one format have more impact for adding a sense of mood and reality to the tale?

### **Self-Selected Reading**

#### **Students will:**

- Choose and read a story to answer the following questions. (\*See resource list for suggested book titles at the end of the lesson.)
  - Is the story considered a legend?
  - What elements are evident that makes the story a legend?
  - Could this story be true? Why or why not?
- Choose a position and write a persuasive paragraph to validate their chosen story as truth or legend.

### **Writing: Tiered Activities**

#### **Introductory**

The Legend of Sleepy Hollow is a tale about a ghost without a head. Students will change the narrative of this legend and write their own "Sleepy Hollow" tale about a ghost without something other than a head (e.g., a tale about a ghost without arms or a ghost without a heart). Students will answer the following question prompts, "How would the story change?" "Would the setting and characters be the same?" "Would the ending be the same?" "Would Ichabod Crane still disappear?"

#### **Intermediate**

Students will write a personal legend by creating a mystery that might have happened in their own hometown (e.g., The Legend of Cincinnati as a tale about a haunted riverboat that swallows up smaller boats on the Ohio River). The tale will include elements about Cincinnati's cultural heritage and setting for what life is like in a river town. Students will think about how their legend will change as it is handed down from generation to generation.

#### **Advanced**

Students will write an "urban legend", a tale that appears mysteriously and spreads in many forms, by word-of-mouth, e-mail, Internet, newspapers and television. Many urban legends contain elements of humor or of horror. Urban legends are usually untrue, but some are real. Urban legends are told as if they were true; although no supporting evidence is given apart from the word of another (e.g., a friend of a friend).

- Characteristics of an urban legend:
  - . It is a narrative.
  - . The truthfulness of the story is questionable, although it is alleged to be true
  - . It actually could happen.
  - . There are several varieties of the same tale.
  - . The source is listed as a trustworthy secondhand source (e.g., "a friend of a friend," "my cousin's cousin," etc.).
  - . It is passed from individual to individual orally or in written form.
  - . It may serve as an alert to others to take future caution in preventing the same thing from happening.
- Urban legends need to start somewhere. After reading several urban legends, students will provide the origin for new legends, and write their own modern urban legends to reflect our culture today. Emphases are on descriptive detail of setting.

### **Urban Legend Web Sites**

<http://urbanlegends.about.com/cs/classics/index.htm>

<http://www.truthorfiction.com/index-animals.htm>

Urban Legend Web Quest

<http://coe.west.asu.edu/students/jdonner/webquest/>

### **Extension: Technology**

Students will use a digital camera to take pictures to illustrate their legends. Images are uploaded to a word-processing program or presentation software, such Microsoft PowerPoint, to accompany story text. A suggested end product is a student created slide show of their authentic legend.

### **Performance Assessment:**

**Teacher will evaluate students' abilities to:**

- Create an original, authentic tale that includes detectable evidence and use of the characteristics of a "legend" (Teacher and students together create rubric criteria for evaluation of the original composition and writing.)

### **Rubric Web sites**

Ohio Proficiency Test Writing Rubric

<http://www.lkwdpl.org/gr4test/gr4test.htm>

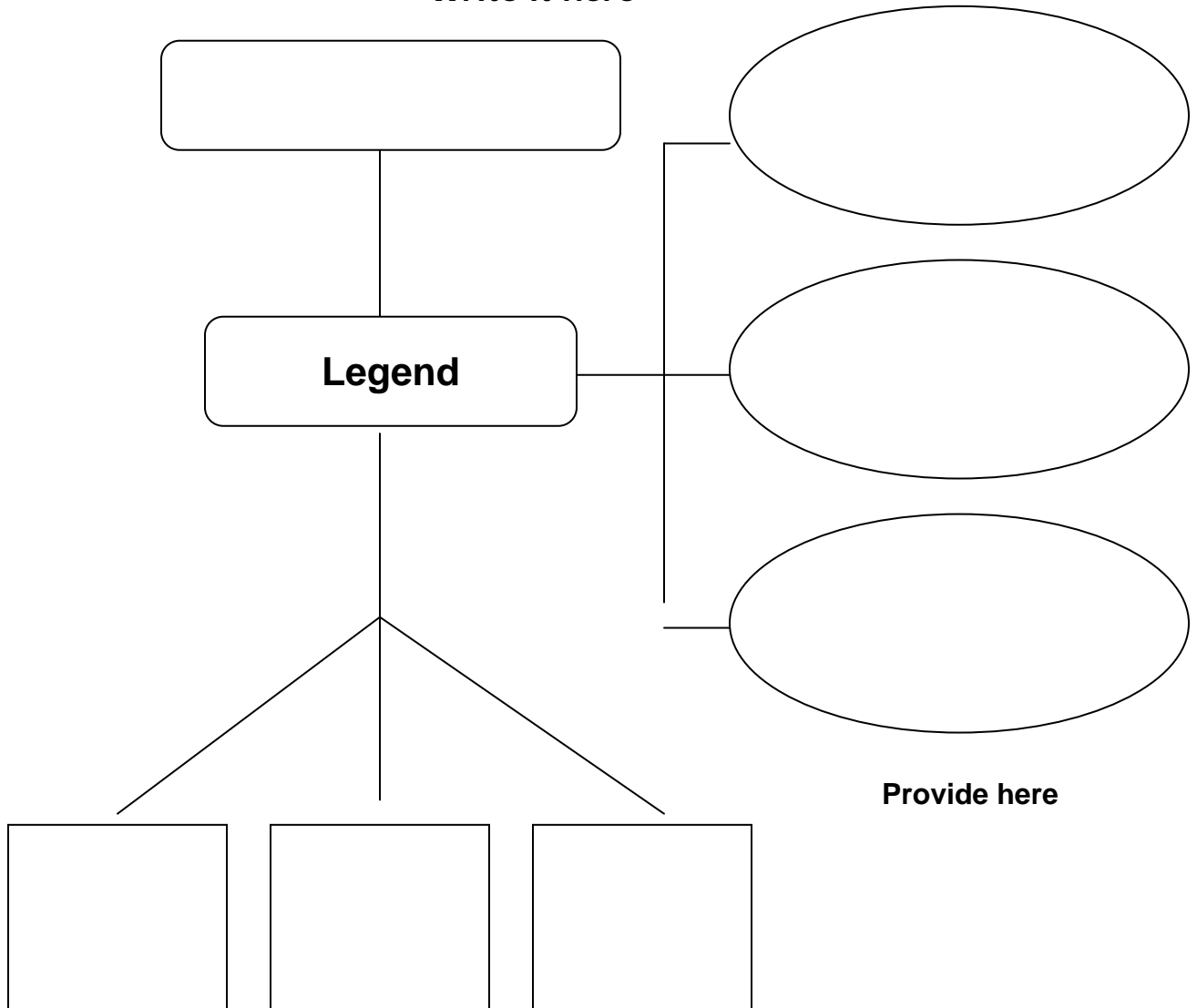
Story writing rubric

<http://www.eduplace.com>



## Identifying Elements of a Legend

Your definition of the genre:  
Text examples  
Write it here



Provide here

Characteristics of a legend:

Identify three characteristics of a legend in the boxes that are evident in the story or tale that you have read.



## Elements of a Legend:

### Authentic Legend Writing

Please consider the following questions in the writing of your legend or tale.

Name:

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Legend Title:

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What information in your legend explains its culture of origin and setting?

What descriptive information do you provide about the geographical region in which the culture of the story develops?

What information does your legend offer about the past?

What elements of folklore, myth or heroism are included in your legend?

How will others hand down your legend from generation to generation?