

LON PO PO

LON PO PO: A RED-RIDING HOOD STORY FROM CHINA

By Ed Young

Themes: Fairy Tales, Family, Chinese art

Ages: 3-6

Running Time: 11 minutes

SUMMARY

The familiar story of Red-Riding Hood is reset in the Chinese countryside. Three children work together to outsmart a wolf who is pretending to be their grandmother, or Po Po. Set in beautiful watercolor, this movie gracefully and uniquely depicts the classic Red-Riding Hood story with cultural twists and variations. Children will enjoy comparing it to the story that they already know, while looking and listening for the differences between this adaptation and the traditional fairy tale.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will become familiar with the elements of a fairy tale.
- Students will learn about problem solving.
- Students will compare and contrast fairy tales.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Elicit background knowledge about fairy tales. Ask:

- What is a fairy tale?
- What fairy tales do you know?
- What happens in the fairy tales that you know about?
- What do you like about fairy tales? What don't you like?

Read aloud several well-known fairy tales. Identify the main elements of fairy tales: magic, good and evil characters, trickery, and an ending in which justice is served ("happy ending"). Make a chart with these elements and guide students to fill it in for the fairy tales that you read aloud. Encourage children to look and listen for these elements as they view the movie.

Introduce problem solving to the students. Ask:

- Have you ever been in a sticky situation in which you had to use your brain to get out of it? Describe what happened. How did you solve the problem?

- Why is it important to find solutions to problems? Give students different scenarios of problems to solve. Give them choices of reasonable and unreasonable solutions. Discuss why some solutions are more reasonable than others. Ask students to suggest other solutions that you did not provide. Tell students to watch for how the three children solved their problems in the movie.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Use the fairy tale elements chart that you created in the Before Viewing Activity to identify the elements in Lon Po Po. Then, use a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast the elements from different fairy tales. For example, in both Lon Po Po and the Three Little Pigs, there is a wolf. Have students create their own fairy tales using these elements. This could be a whole class exercise in which the students work together to create characters and a plot. Work through the writing process to write at least two drafts. You can transcribe the story for developing writers and the students can illustrate it. Then, you can bind the pages together to make a published piece.

Discuss how the children solved their problem of the wolf in the story. Guiding questions:

- What clues did the children have that there was a wolf in their house and not their Po Po?
- How did the oldest sister trick the wolf into getting into the basket?
- How did all of the children work together to kill the wolf?

Read aloud other Red-Riding Hood stories. Suggested titles:

- *Red Riding Hood* by James Marshall
- *Little Red Riding Hood in the Big City* by John Helfers
- *The Wolf's Story: What Really Happened to Little Red Riding Hood* by Toby Forward
- *Little Red Riding Hood – A Newfangled Prairie Tale* by Lisa Campbell Ernst
- *Petite Rouge: Little Red Riding Hood – A Cajun Twist to an Old Tale* by Sheila Herbert Collins

As you read, use a Venn Diagram or a T-chart to compare these stories with the movie. Discuss why the authors

chose to change major elements or characters in the stories. Guiding questions:

- How are the Red Riding Hood characters in the stories different than the ones in the movie?
- Are the Red Riding Hoods in the stories stronger than the ones in the movie? Why or why not?
- How do Red Riding Hood stories from different cultures vary?

Put on a class play of a fairy tale. You can use either a traditional or non-traditional version of Little Red Riding Hood and expand parts of the movie to either change the story or further develop the characters. For younger children, you can rewrite these parts for them, or older children can help to do this. Alternatively, students can act out one of the fairy tales that you read aloud or the one that was written by the class. There is also a Red Riding Hood musical available for purchase entitled: *Little Red Riding Hood – A Musical for Elementary School Kids*, by Ron Fink.

Learn about traditional Chinese art. Visit the library and ask children to find books about Chinese art. Some students may choose to do their research on the internet. Check out several books and bring them back to the classroom. Help children identify what makes ancient Chinese art distinctive. Over the next several days, ask children to experiment with creating their own artworks, in the styles of ancient Chinese art. Display finished drawings on the wall and invite parents and children from other classes to the exhibition.

Other Weston Woods productions of fairy tales include: *The Elves and the Shoemaker*, retold & ill. by Jim LaMarche
The Emperor's New Clothes, by Hans Christian Andersen, retold & ill. By Nadine Westcott
Hansel and Gretel, by James Marshall
Princess Furball, retold by Charlotte Huck, ill. by Anita Lobel
Rapunzel, by Paul O. Zelinsky
The Ugly Duckling, adapted & ill. by Jerry Pinkney

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