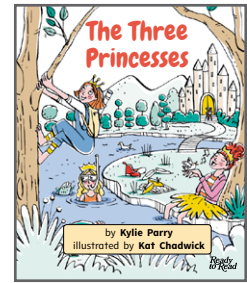


The Three Princesses

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Shared reading

Shared reading provides students with opportunities to behave like readers and to engage in rich conversations about texts that they are initially not able to read for themselves. The focus is on engagement, enjoyment, and comprehension.

Shared reading involves multiple readings of a text, led by the teacher, with increasing interaction and participation by students. After many shared reading sessions, students become able to read the small-book versions of the big books with increasing independence and fluency.

Overview

The Three Princesses is a humorous story based on traditional fairy tale ideas, but with a humorous twist, similar to stories like *The Paper Bag Princess* by Robert Munsch or *Princess Smartypants* by Babette Cole. In this story, the three princesses leave home to find their paths in life, with the youngest princess

having a particularly important role to play. While entertaining for all students, the quirky humour in this story may have more appeal for students in years 2 and 3. This story both builds on ideas about fairy tales and suggests new ones that you and your students can explore through further reading, particularly of other humorous versions of fairy tales.

There is an audio version of the text as an MP3 file at readytoread.tki.org.nz

Cross-curriculum links

Health and physical education (level 1, relationships) – Explore and share ideas about relationships with other people.

Health and physical education (level 2, identity, sensitivity, and respect) – Describe how individuals and groups share characteristics and are also unique.

Text characteristics

Unlike guided texts, shared reading texts are not levelled and may be used with a wide range of students. Many of the text characteristics of *The Three Princesses* are similar to but are more complex than those for guided reading.

A mix of explicit and implicit content within the text and the illustrations that requires students to make connections between ideas within the text and their prior knowledge in order to make predictions and inferences (for example, to predict from the title and cover illustration what sort of story this might be and to use the illustration to make inferences about what the princesses are like)

Frequent use of dialogue and more than one character speaking on a page

Some settings and contexts that may be outside the students' prior knowledge but can be easily related to it

Illustrations that support the meaning and may suggest new ideas and viewpoints, for example, the clues about the princesses' special talents and interests

Shifts in time and place and several characters and events



Once upon a time, there were three princesses. The eldest princess could swim like a fish, the middle princess could sing like a bird, and the youngest princess had strong, sturdy feet.

"Darling daughters," said the queen. "The time has come for you to leave the castle and find your paths in life."
"Go well, my daughters," said the king.

A variety of sentence structures, including complex sentences

Several fairy tale elements – including language (see below), an unspecified setting ("Once upon a time"), three main characters (in this case, princesses), each one having a particular talent or feature, a key role for the youngest character, and the idea of characters leaving home to "seek their fortune"

Literary words and phrases, including fairy tale language (for example, "Once upon a time", "eldest/middle/youngest princess", "swim like a fish", "sing like a bird", "The time has come", "find your paths in life", "Go well, my daughters", "came to a clearing", "happily ever after") and other descriptive language (for example, "strong, sturdy feet", "sparkled", "fluttered all about", "sighed", "toss a pebble", "a great lake", "surrounded by") the meaning of which is supported by the context, the sentence structure, and/or the illustrations

Reading purposes and learning goals

(What opportunities does this text provide for students to learn more about how to “read, respond to, and think critically” about texts?)

Select from and adapt the suggestions in this teacher support material according to your students’ strengths, needs, and experiences – their culture, language, and identity (*Reading and Writing Standards for years 1–8*, Knowledge of the learner, page 6).

Each reading purpose is accompanied by learning goals. The learning goals are the sorts of behaviours that you want your students to demonstrate after multiple readings of this text and when reading other texts.

The focus of the first reading of a shared text is on making meaning. The teacher leads the reading (with students invited to join in as they feel confident) so that they can focus on responding to the content and thinking about the theme or main idea. Deeper understanding of ideas and exploration of language and other text features can be developed over subsequent readings.

A suggested purpose for the initial reading

(What can the students expect to find out or think about as a result of reading this text?)

To find out what the three princesses do in this story (The purpose for reading may change as the story unfolds.)

Possible learning goals

During the first reading, the students can:

- **make connections** to their knowledge of fairy tales and use clues in the text and illustrations to **ask questions** and **make predictions and inferences**
- **identify** the main elements in the story (for example, who, where, what, why)
- form an opinion about (**evaluate**) the ending.

Introducing the story

- This story draws on students’ familiarity with both traditional fairy tales and humorous versions of them. Before reading *The Three Princesses*, you could revisit some favourite examples, such as “The Three Little Pigs” (which has three main characters setting out to seek their fortunes – to “find their paths in life”) or the Ready to Read shared book *The Hole in the King’s Sock* (which has a “royal” context and a similar mix of traditional and humorous content).
- Use the title and the illustrations on the cover to establish the fairy tale context. Discuss the students’ ideas about fairy tale princesses, traditional or modern. *What ideas do these illustrations give you about the three princesses?* As part of this discussion, you could start building a word bank of fairy tale

vocabulary (for example, princesses, castle, crown, Once upon on a time, king, queen, happily ever after). This would be particularly supportive for English language learners.

- Use the title page to review the students’ inferences from the cover illustration. Encourage them to ask questions or make predictions about possible connections to the new clues on the title page (the book about fish, the singing princess, and the globe). You could use their questions or predictions to help set the initial purpose for reading.
- Share the purpose for reading. Note that this might change as the students find out more about the story.

Reading and discussing the story

- Adapt the following suggestions according to your students’ interests and prior knowledge. This book is rich in opportunities for asking questions and making predictions and inferences, so allow time for students to share ideas as the story unfolds. You could split the initial reading over more than one session.
- Before reading, you could have the students draw on their knowledge of fairy tales to predict the opening words.
- Pages 2 and 3 – Have the students look for any clues in the illustration that might answer their questions or confirm their predictions. Expect them to infer that the new characters here are the princesses’ parents, the king and queen.
- Use a pointer to track the print as you read. Page 3 establishes who the characters are and confirms what is special about each princess. Stop at the end of the first paragraph and encourage the students to share their ideas and questions. Discuss the meaning of “strong, sturdy feet”. *Is this what a fairy tale princess usually has? I wonder why strong, sturdy feet might be useful ...*
- At the end of the page, discuss the meaning of “find your paths in life”. Clarify that the princesses are grown up and that “finding your path” is about finding out what you want to do when you grow up. You could make connections to other fairy tales such as “The Three Little Pigs” where the characters set out to “seek their fortune”.
- Recap (summarise) what the students have found out about the princesses so far and ask if they have any new questions or predictions. They may want to update the reading purpose, for example: To find out if the princesses find their paths in life and live happily ever after.
- Pages 4 and 5 – *What are you noticing about the differences between the first two princesses and the youngest princess?*

- Page 5 – Use intonation to emphasise the word “my” (in italics) within the middle princess’s dialogue. (There is a similar use of italics on page 7.)
- Pages 6 and 7 – You may need to explain what a clearing is. Expect the students to notice the new problem in the story: they have found the paths but now have to choose. Encourage them to predict what will happen. *I wonder how the princesses will decide which path to take.* Observe whether any students make connections to what they have already found out about the princesses.
- Pages 8 and 9 – Allow time for the students to explore the illustration and think about what the princesses are doing before reading these pages. Expect them to make connections to the idea of choosing paths. You could have them share their ideas about what they imagine each path might lead to. Alternatively, you could stop the reading session here and have the students draw or write about their predictions.
- Pages 10 and 11 – Allow time for the students to explore and respond to the new information about the paths in the illustration. After reading the page, prompt the students to review their earlier predictions. *How did the first two princesses know that these were the right paths for them? What about the youngest princess?*
- Page 12 – Note that the author doesn’t give a full answer. Ask the students to share their ideas about where “happily ever after” might be for the youngest princess.
- Remind the students of the reading purpose/s. Together, summarise what the princesses did in the story. You could create a quick summary chart of who, where, what, why, or the students could retell the story to a partner. *What are some things we didn’t find out?* Draw out the idea that the author has left a lot of unanswered questions so that anyone who reads the story can add their own ideas.
- Ask the students to share their opinions about the story. *What did you think of the ending? Do you think there is a message in the story?*
- You could explore ideas about the princesses over several more shared reading sessions. Together, you could create a web for each princess, recording what the students have learned about her, for example, her interests, her actions, her feelings, and what she said. Each student could choose a princess and write about what her “path in life” could be and what “happily ever after” looks like for her. Some of these ideas are explored further in the following suggestions.
- Make the audio version available for students to listen to and enjoy. Students can build their comprehension and fluency by rereading the text while listening to the audio version. Audio versions also provide English language learners with good models of pronunciation, intonation, and expression.

Suggested purposes for subsequent readings

You can return to this text many times to build students’ understandings and explore different purposes. Subsequent readings of the big book may be with a group of students who have similar learning needs rather than with the whole class. Note that there is some overlap in the following suggestions. **Select from and adapt** them according to your students’ responses and interests.

Suggested reading purpose

To think about how this story is like a fairy tale

Learning goals

Over a number of sessions, the students can:

- **make connections** to their knowledge of fairy tales (for example, the setting, characters, structure, or language)
- **identify** some elements in this story that are similar to those in fairy tales and some that are different
- **explore** the fairy tale language.

Choose one of the suggestions below for each session.

- Enjoy exploring the fairy tale elements (and the humorous departures from them) in *The Three Princesses*. Discuss some common elements of fairy tales. Use questions to prompt the students’ thinking, for example: *What words do fairy tales often have at the beginning and the end? Are fairy tales true? Where do they happen? What sorts of things happen?* Support students in identifying the fairy tale elements. For example:
 - the text structure: Draw attention to the beginning (the initial situation); the middle (the problem to be solved – the finding and choosing of the paths); and the happy ending (following their paths). Prompt the students to make connections to fairy tales they know where there is a problem to be solved (for example, Jack needs to escape from the giant in “Jack and the Beanstalk”; the three little pigs need to get rid of the wolf).
 - fairy tale language: Ask the students to identify examples on page 3, such as “Once upon a time”, “The time has come”, “find your paths in life”, “Go well, my daughters”. *What do they mean?* Discuss how the king and queen might speak. Have the students act out the conversation with a partner. They could use the audio version for ideas. You could also reread the shared book *The Hole in the King’s Sock* and enjoy the “royal” vocabulary.
 - the characters: Prompt the students to notice that the characters are described by their position in the family, not by their names. Help them make connections to characters named in a similar way (for example, “first, second, third” in “The Three Little Pigs” and “The Three Billy Goats Gruff”).

- the setting: Help the students make connections to their prior knowledge of fairy tales in identifying (in text and illustrations) aspects of the fairy tale setting (“castle”, “forest”, “clearing”, “lake”, “trees”). Discuss similar settings in other fairy tales, for example, forest settings in “Little Red Riding Hood” and “The Three Bears” and a mix of castles and forests in “Sleeping Beauty” and “Snow White”.

You could record and display the students’ ideas on a comparison chart. Add examples over several sessions as you reread and discuss the story and as the students discover them in their wider reading. (A reference chart with examples of fairy tale elements can be found at the end of this teacher support material.)

Suggested reading purposes

To explore some of the ways the writer has used language in this story

To explore how the illustrations help us understand and enjoy the story

Learning goals

Over a number of sessions, the students can:

- **explore** what the language and the illustrations tell us about the princesses
- **explore** word meanings.

Choose one of the suggestions below for each session.

- As you reread the story, have the students look for information in the text and illustrations that helps them infer what the three princesses are like, for example, what they love to do, how they feel about their parents and about each other, and how they react to the idea of “finding their paths in life”. The students could each choose a princess and compare her with another fairy tale princess such as Sleeping Beauty or Snow White. They could draw and write about one or two things that are the same and one or two that are different. Alternatively, they could draw and write about how their chosen princess is the same as or different from a non-traditional princess, such as *The Paper Bag Princess* or *Princess Smarty Pants*.
- The students could focus on how the youngest princess is different from her sisters. As you read, encourage them to compare the sisters’ actions and feelings. Draw attention to how the writer uses similar language to describe the first two princesses and then makes a change when describing the youngest princess, for example, on pages 3, 5, and 7–9.

- Explore how the author and the illustrator have made the story more interesting and humorous by mixing modern ideas into a traditional fairy tale. *What things do you notice on page 4 (for example) that wouldn’t have been around in the olden days?*
- As you reread the story, have the students listen and look for words and phrases that the writer has used in interesting ways. For example:
 - Enjoy experimenting with the similes “swim like a fish” and “sing like a bird”. Together, think of other interesting examples, for example, “run/squeak/fly/bounce/roar/eat like a _____”.
 - Explore the meanings of the adjectives “eldest, middle, youngest” in relation to the princesses and to the students’ own families.
 - On page 12, have the students use the noun phrases “biggest puddles” and “best mud” to visualise the look and feel of the mud. *What would you like to do in the biggest puddles?* The students could write and draw their ideas.
 - Explore the noun phrase “strong, sturdy feet”. The students could share their ideas about when strong, sturdy feet would be useful.
 - Explore other examples of noun phrases (for example, “soft grass”, “healthy lunches”, “good raincoat”) and discuss how they add useful and interesting details. Enjoy finding examples in other stories, such as in the shared texts *Haere Atu* and *A Good Idea*.
 - Use some of the adjectives in the story to explore families of comparative adjectives: strong, stronger, strongest; muddy, muddier, muddiest; sturdy, sturdier, sturdiest; big, bigger, biggest; good, better, best.
 - Prompt the students to notice how the author has used descriptive verbs (“sparkled”, “fluttered”, “squish”, “wondered”, “sighed”, “toss”, “squished”) to help them visualise what is happening.

Fairy tale elements

This chart has some suggestions about fairy tale elements that you could explore according to your students' knowledge of fairy tales and their particular interests.

Common elements of fairy tales	Fairy tale examples	The Three Princesses
They happen in the olden days, and they start with words like "Once upon a time" or "Long ago".	The Three Little Pigs Sleeping Beauty Jack and the Beanstalk Little Red Riding Hood	The story starts with "Once upon a time", but the princesses wear modern clothes and have backpacks.
They happen in faraway places, sometimes in castles or forests.	Sleeping Beauty Little Red Riding Hood Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs	It happens in a castle and a forest.
They often have kings, queens, princes, and princesses.	Sleeping Beauty Snow White The Frog Prince	It has a king, a queen, and three princesses.
The characters don't always have proper names.	The Three Little Pigs The Billy Goats Gruff	The princesses don't have names in the story. They are the eldest, the middle, and the youngest.
There may be something special about the main characters.	Rapunzel (long hair) Rumpelstiltskin (could spin straw into gold) Thumbelina and Tom Thumb are tiny The Five Chinese Brothers all have special talents.	The eldest princess could swim like a fish, the middle one could sing like a bird, and the youngest had strong sturdy feet.
Sometimes characters need to seek their fortune.	The Three Little Pigs Jack and the Beanstalk	The princesses need to find their paths in life.
There is a big problem to be solved.	The three little pigs need to get rid of the wolf. Jack needs to escape from the giant	The princesses have to choose the right paths.
Things often happen in threes.	Three little pigs, with three houses Three bears, three bowls of porridge, three chairs, and three beds Three billy goats and three attempts to cross the bridge	There are three princesses and three paths.
Magical things happen.	The fairies cast spells in Sleeping Beauty. There is a magic bean, and a goose lays golden eggs in Jack and the Beanstalk. There is a magic mirror in Snow White.	No magic
Sometimes they have talking animals.	The Three Little Pigs The Three Bears	No talking animals
Often they have scary, dangerous characters (villains).	There is a wolf in The Three Little Pigs and Little Red Riding Hood, a bad fairy in Sleeping Beauty, a wicked queen in Snow White, and a giant in Jack and the Beanstalk.	No villains
The youngest or smallest character is often important.	The third little pig tricks the wolf. Baby Bear's porridge, chair, and bed are "just right" for Goldilocks.	The youngest princess has the idea of climbing the tree, and she solves the problem of which paths to choose.