

## Folk Tale Literacy

Using fossils together with folktales allows you to cover several content areas at once. As we discovered, and you may have too, some of the fossils have the appearance of scales; in our view, dragon scales. This observation led us on an adventure searching for folk tales related to dragons from around the world. The following folktales incorporate a variety of dragons. You may find these online or in your school's library: "The Lambton Worm," "Penshaw Hill," *Beowulf*, and "St. George and the Dragon." Your librarian may be able to find a number of other children's books related to dragons. Scholastic also provides some very good resources. You can find the link to their materials here:

<http://www.scholastic.co.uk/assets/a/20/a9/dragon-pcps-217327.pdf> . These books could form a wonderful literature unit to go alongside your fossils.

***Virginia Language Arts Standards of Learning*** related to folktales and reading are below:

K.8 The student will expand vocabulary.

K.9 The student will demonstrate comprehension of fictional texts.

1.9 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of a variety of fictional texts.

2.8 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fictional texts.

3.5 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fictional text and poetry.

4.5 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fictional texts, narrative nonfiction texts, and poetry.

5.5 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fictional texts, narrative nonfiction, and poetry.

6.5 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of a variety of fictional texts, narrative nonfiction, and poetry.

7.4 The student will read to determine the meanings and pronunciations of unfamiliar words and phrases within authentic texts.

7.5 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of a variety of fictional texts, narrative nonfiction, and poetry.

8.4 The student will apply knowledge of word origins, analogies, and figurative language to extend vocabulary development within authentic texts.

8.5 The student will read and analyze a variety of fictional texts, narrative nonfiction, and poetry.

10.4 The student will read, comprehend, and analyze literary texts of different cultures and eras.

12.4 The student will read, comprehend, and analyze the development of British literature and literature of other cultures.

**Activities:** There are many directions for a folktale literacy unit. You might focus on narrative content or type of literature (poetry, prose, historical fiction, etc.); use them as a foundation to teach something else; or combine all of these functions. Understanding the basic characteristics of folktales is valuable for beginners, but you might also tackle the difference between fact and opinion or the creation of original tales. Additionally, you may address that folktales often appear in many versions and change over time; with this in mind students may create unique endings to their favorite tales or compare and contrast different versions of the same tale. Dragons may be a catalyst for engagement for students who do not generally excel at reading and writing activities.

There is an opportunity to incorporate **visual arts** as well with a play on the word tale/tail. Students may design dragons with unique tails that are large enough to allow them to write a summary of the day's tale on the tail of their dragon.

**Kinesthetic engagement** in the folktale activity might include a revised version of the traditional game "Mother May I..." substituting "Dragon May I..." to allow the students some time to move around.