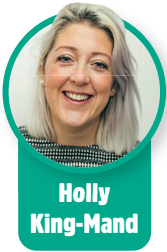


How to...

Write a fantastic fairy tale



Holly King-Mand

Holly King-Mand is a writer, presenter and campaigner for literacy (the ability to read and write). She has inspired thousands of

children to write. Here, Holly gives ideas on how to write a fantastical fairy tale, in time to tell it during National Storytelling Week (1–9 February):

When you think about storytelling, a fairy tale might be the first thing that pops into your mind. After all, most people know them from a young age – and they have inspired many films. In fact, researchers have traced classic fairy tales like *Beauty and the Beast* back thousands of years. Full of excitement and danger, magic and disaster, fairy tales captivate people of all ages.

Below are four key ingredients to help you write your own fairy tale – but remember, you don't have to follow the rules. Your hero could end up being the villain and your "magic" could be the everyday wonder of kindness.



Use your imagination to write a fairy tale.



Create heroes and villains

Kings, queens, witches, wizards and magical creatures are common fairy tale characters. They don't have to be, though; a more ordinary cast and setting can also work. Heroes are usually brave, clever and kind. Villains, on the other hand, are usually spiteful, foolish or weak, and often have a grudge against the hero. Make sure your hero isn't perfect. Their flaw (weakness) could be that they are too romantic or greedy for chocolate. Flaws create problems, which lead to drama.

Sprinkle some magic

Most fairy tales have some element of magic. You may choose to include a magical moment, such as a spell being cast or a spirit or mystical creature being conjured to life. Alternatively, you could include a magical object, such as a cursed chalice (cup) that causes those who drink from it to turn to stone, or a toy that grants wishes. Perhaps your characters have magical abilities. Your hero could be able to time travel or your villain might have the power to become invisible and spy on people.



Is there a moral lesson?

Fairy tales have a tradition of teaching moral lessons to their readers. Consider what lesson yours could teach and weave this into your plot. If your protagonist (main character) is ungrateful and temporarily loses the support of their best friend, this might teach your reader to be more humble and thankful for what they have. Alternatively, a shape-shifting villain who tricks the protagonist might teach your reader that everything is not always as it seems.

A happy ever after

Usually, fairy tales set a scene ("once upon a time"), followed by a problem or disaster that must be overcome, and then a "happy ever after" for the hero. This might be them finding love, reclaiming a fortune that is rightfully theirs, or perhaps just being allowed to be true to themselves. Consider your villain's end, too – will they run away or be punished? If they learn a lesson, perhaps they deserve a happy ending as well. Make sure your reader isn't left wondering about anyone's fate.



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