

The Tales of Beedle the Bard

• Library Lessons •

Grades
3–6

by | Lynne Farrell Stover

The Tales of Beedle the Bard by J.K. Rowling

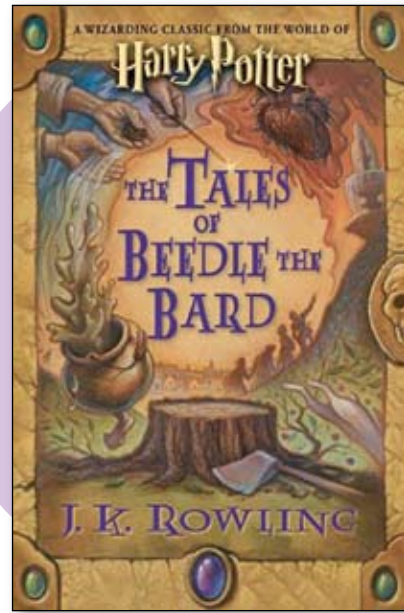
Introduction:

J.K. Rowling's newest book was first introduced as a plot device in *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. When Harry Potter's friends, Ron and Hermione, discover a connection between the evil Lord Voldemort and a favorite bedtime story, Harry finds his ignorance of Wizard World folklore a great disadvantage. Apparently, Beedle the Bard, a combination of Aesop and the Grimm brothers, was an important figure in lives of young witches and sorcerers.

As with Rowling's *Magical Beasts and Where to Find Them* and *Quidditch Throughout the Ages*, *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* was written to complement the world of Harry Potter, not to extend it. Working as both whimsical story telling and social commentary, this multilayered book has a broad reach and will be enjoyed by readers of all ages.

Story Summaries:

"The Wizard and the Hopping Pot," the first tale in the book, would be the best one to read aloud to elementary students. The story is short, action-packed, and has a relevant moral. The commentary that follows is also worth sharing. It could lead to discussions about book banning, prejudice and authors who "write down" to their readers. (Could Beatrix Bloxam be the Wizarding World's Beatrix Potter?) "The Fountain of Fair Fortune" is a *Wizard of Oz*-type tale in which the characters save themselves. The dark and creepy "The Warlock's Hairy Heart" is a story for older students who might be fans of Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* series. "Rabbitty Babbitty and Her Cackling Stump," while first appearing to be a simple trickster tale, is rather profound and includes the rules about magic having no dominance over death. "The Tale of the Three Brothers" is the pivotal tale that was referenced in



Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows. It is the catalyst for *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*.

Note: Students do not need to have read the featured book to successfully participate in these lessons.

Lesson I: Create a Tale Category Challenge

Introduction: Sometimes working within a box helps one think "outside the box". Once the students have completed the concrete portion of this activity, it allows them to be more abstract, and encourages the type of problem-solving skills that will benefit them in the future.

Time Required: 25–30 minutes

Grade Level: 3–6

Objectives

- The students will complete a category grid with appropriate words
- The students will use selected words to create the plot, characters, and setting for an imaginary story.

McREL Standards

Reading

- Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process

Writing

- Uses the general Skills and strategies of the writing process
- Gathers and uses information for research purposes

Materials

- Visual – Create a Tale Category Challenge
- Activity Sheet- Create a Tale Category Challenge
- Writing tools
- Transparency Marker
- Access to atlases, the card catalog, an electronic patron's catalog and/or books on the library shelves
- Optional- Copy of *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* by J.K. Rowling and other books new to the library's collection for students to “check out”

Procedure

1. Prepare and collect materials prior to class.
2. Introduce the lesson by informing the students that storytellers often use tools to help them “brainstorm” ideas for the plot, characters, and setting of their tales. (If time permits, draw attention to fiction books new to the collection.)
3. Display the visual, and read the introduction to the class. Solicit suggestions from the students and fill in the boxes on the grid. Suggestions may include:

- **Person “A”**
Avi; Applegate, A.K.
- **Person “E”**
Eager, Edward; Eastman, P.D.
- **Place “L”**
Louisiana, Lilliput
- **Place “E”**
Ethiopia, Ember
- **Thing “A”**
Antelope, Ash Tree, Amber
- **Thing “L”**
Lion, Lead, Lilac

4. Review the concepts of **Plot** (what happens), **Character** (who it happens to), and **Setting** (where it happens).
5. Encourage students to select a favorite row of words and create a story idea similar to that in the Part II example. Have them write down their ideas and ask them if what they’ve written sounds like an interesting story.
6. Distribute the activity sheets and writing tools. Review the directions with the students. Students may work independently or in small groups.
7. Allow the students to use reference materials such as dictionaries, atlases and the card catalog in their search of appropriate words to fill in the grid.
8. Encourage the students to share their work with their classmates. Answers will vary. It is possible that some students may not be able to complete the grid during the time allocated. They may either fill it in the grid while other students are sharing their work, or complete the assignment on their own and turn it in later.

Possible Activity Sheet Grid responses include:

	Person (Author-Last Name)	Place (Real <u>or</u> Imaginary)	Thing (Animal, Plant <u>or</u> Mineral)
B	Judy Blume Betsy Byers	Boston Bermuda Triangle	Bear Burch Tree Brass
A	David Adler Lloyd Alexander	Arizona Azkaban	Aardvark Apple Tree Aluminum
R	J.K. Rowling Pam Muñoz Ryan	Romania Rivendell	Rabbit Rose Bush Rock Salt
D	Roald Dahl Kate DiCamillo	Denver Diagon Alley	Deer Daisy Diamond

Lesson II: Silly School Superstitions Create a Couplet

Introduction: Most Muggles know that walking under a ladder, crossing paths with a black cat, or stepping on a sidewalk crack are activities to be avoided. In the Wizard World, it's thought to be a lucky thing to see lots of owls flying in the daylight, but extremely unlucky to say a certain dark wizard's name aloud. Superstitions have been around for a long time, and students will enjoy creating their own school-themed silly superstitions.

Time Required: 20–25 minutes

Grade Level: 3–6

Objectives

- The students will be introduced to the definitions for the terms superstition and couplet
- The students will create a superstition in the form of a rhyming couplet

McREL Standards

Writing

- Uses the general Skills and strategies of the writing process

Materials

- Visual- Silly School Superstitions: Create a Couplet
- Activity Instruction Sheet- Silly School Superstitions: Create a Couplet
- Writing tools- pencils, markers and/or crayons
- Paper
- Optional- Copy of *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*

Procedure

1. Prepare and collect the materials prior the class.
2. Introduce the lesson* by asking the students if they know what a superstition is. Ask them to give some examples of superstitions. Common responses include: the good luck symbols of a rabbit's foot, horseshoe, and rainbow; and the bad luck symbols such as black cats, broken mirrors and spilled salt.

* Note: If a copy of *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* is available the lesson may be introduced by reading an excerpt found on pages 100-101. Start with "It is hardly surprising that old superstitions..." and end with "...much favored among wandmakers."

3. Display and review the information on the visual.
4. Distribute paper, writing tools and the Activity Instruction Sheet. (The instructions can be copied on card stock for reuse.)
5. Review the information on the instruction sheets with the students. They may choose any school word from the list or, if they have trouble choosing, they are to pick the word that starts with the first letter of their first or last name.
6. Encourage students to share their couplets with the class.
7. Display the illustrated couplets on a bulletin board entitled, "Students' Silly School Superstitions".

Lesson III: Dumbledore's Detailed Dictionary

Introduction: True to form throughout *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, the tales are written in a simple and straightforward manner. It's in the commentary and footnotes that the vocabulary becomes more complex. (Reader's familiar with the Harry Potter series will be able to hear Professor Dumbledore's "voice" in the notes he writes following each story.)



Time Required: 20–25 minutes

Grade Level: 4–7

Objectives

- The students will be introduced to new vocabulary words.
- The students will review dictionary definitions, pronunciations, and guide words.

McREL Standards

Writing

- Uses the general Skills and strategies of the writing process
- Gathers and uses information for research purposes

Materials

- Visual- Dumbledore's Detailed Dictionary
- Activity Sheets- Dumbledore's Detailed Dictionary, Word Cards
- Writing tools
- Dictionaries
- Optional- Copy of *The Tales of Beedle the Bard* for reference
- Optional- Folk and Fairy Tale story collections for student checkout.

Procedure

1. Prepare and collect the materials prior to class. The word cards will be reusable if copied onto card stock, cut into individual pieces, and laminated.
2. Introduce the lesson by telling the students that they will be reviewing their dictionary skills using interesting words found in J.K. Rowling's new book *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*.
3. Hold up a dictionary and explain that it is a book of alphabetically listed words that includes definitions, pronunciations, and other information. Point out the specific title of the dictionary and where to locate its copyright date. Randomly open a dictionary and point out the guide words that are printed at the top of the page. Explain that in a dictionary or other reference book, these words are used to indicate the first or last words listed on that page.
4. Display the visual. Review the content with the students. Tell the students that the word nincompoop is found on page eleven of the book in the "commentary" that follows the story, "The Hopping Pot". Explain that the vocabulary words they will be studying are not found in the tales, but in the commentaries that were written by Professor Albus Dumbledore. At this point, you should reveal that the book is a work of fiction and J.K. Rowling is actually responsible for Dumbledore's commentaries. (Most students will know this intuitively.)
5. Inform the students that they will be using a dictionary as their reference tool.
6. Distribute activity sheets, word cards and dictionaries. **Note:** A classroom set of dictionaries is not necessary. The activity sheet takes into consideration that the dictionaries may have different titles and copyright dates.
7. Completed activity sheets can be alphabetized and assembled to create a unique class dictionary that can be displayed in the library.
8. If time allows, direct the students' attention to the section of the library where the 398.2 books are shelved, and tell them this is where they may locate books containing collections of fairy tales and folk tales.





Storytellers, such as the imaginary Beedle the Bard, often use practical tools to help them create exciting stories. Complete the chart below by filling in the empty spaces with words that fit the listed category at the top of the column and begin with the same letter at the beginning of the row.

Part 1

	Person (Author-Last Name)	Place (Real or Imaginary)	Thing (Animal, Plant or Mineral)
T	Twain, Mark	Treasure Island	Turquoise
A		Atlantis	
L	Lewis, C.S.		
E			Elephant

Part 2

After completing the chart, select your favorite row and write a sentence describing an idea for an exciting story that uses your word choices.

Example:

Story Idea: Follow the adventures of Mark Twain and his team of riverboat captains as they explorer the swamps of Treasure Island searching for the mysterious turquoise treasure chest.

List the story's

CHARACTER(S): Mark Twain and his team

SETTING: Treasure Island

PLOT: A group searches for a mysterious treasure

Class Story Idea:



Directions: Using the reference tools available complete the chart below by filling in the empty spaces with words that fit the listed category at the top of the column with an interesting word that begins with the same letter at the beginning of each row. Be prepared to share your answers with the class.

Part 1

	Person (Author-Last Name)	Place (Real or Imaginary)	Thing (Animal, Plant or Mineral)
B			
A			
R			
D			

Part 2

After completing the chart, select your favorite row and write a sentence describing an idea for an exciting story that uses your word choices.

Story Idea:

List the story's

CHARACTER(S): _____

SETTING: _____

PLOT: _____

Extra Credit:

What would be a great title for this story?

Silly School Superstitions

Create a Couplet

A *superstition* is a belief that is based on fear of the unknown, good luck charms, or a false idea.

Here is an example:

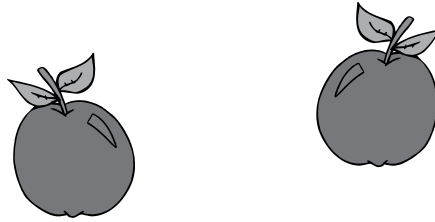
**See a penny, pick it up and all the day you'll have good luck.
See a penny, let it lie and all the day you'll have to cry.**



A *couplet* is a two-lined poem that states one idea and usually rhymes.

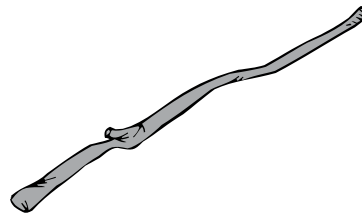
Such as:

**An apple a day
Keeps the doctor away!**



So when Professor Dumbledore relates a well-known saying about wands in *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, Dumbledore is revealing a *superstition* written in the form of a *couplet*:

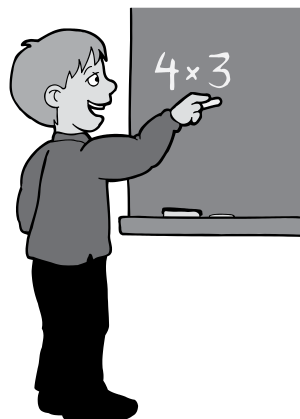
**When his wand's oak and hers is holly,
Then to marry would be folly**



Your challenge is to create a silly school *superstition* in the form of a *couplet*.

For example if you used the word **CHALK**, your new silly school superstition could be:

**A piece of chalk, new and white,
Will always get the answer right**



Silly School Superstitions

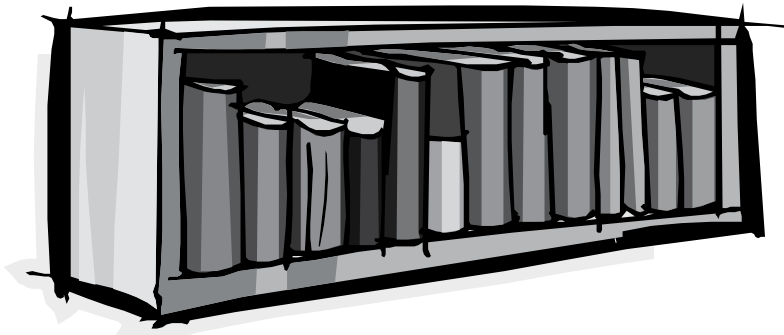
Create a Couplet

A *superstition* is a belief that is based on fear of the unknown, good luck charms, or a false idea.

A *couplet* is a two-lined poem that states one idea and usually rhymes.

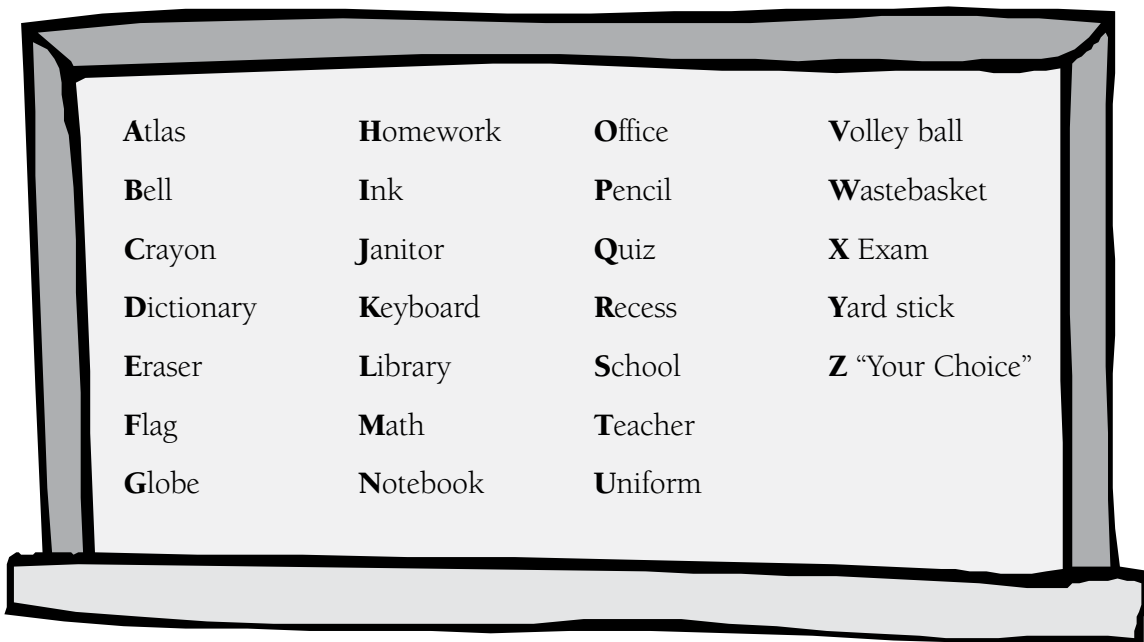
Example:

**Some of the best books can be found
On the library shelf nearest the ground**

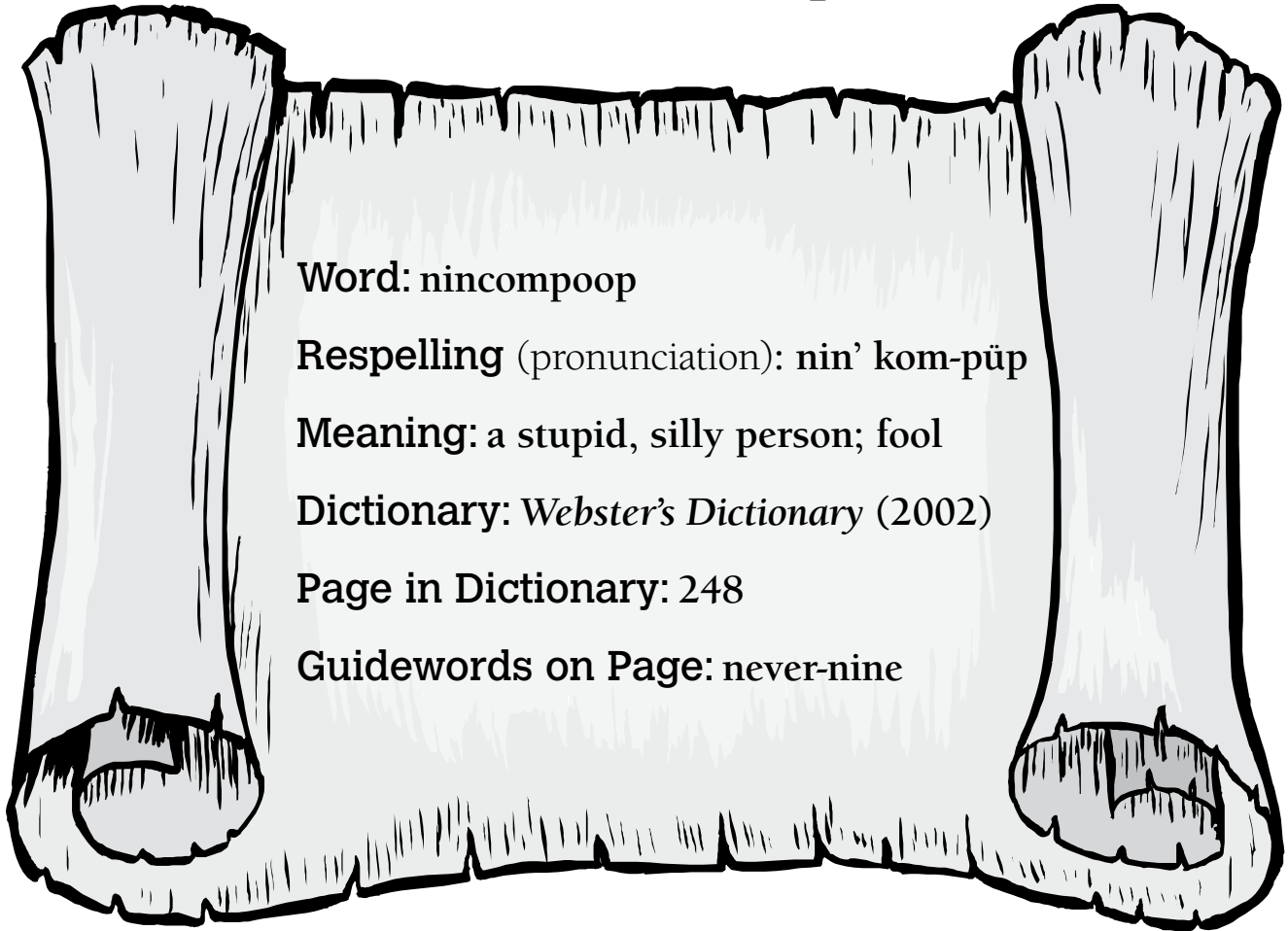


Directions: Using one of the words below, create a rhyming couplet about a new silly school superstition. Illustrate your work.

School-Related Words A-Z



Dumbledore's Detailed Dictionary



Word: nincompoop

Respelling (pronunciation): nin' kom-püp

Meaning: a stupid, silly person; fool

Dictionary: *Webster's Dictionary* (2002)

Page in Dictionary: 248

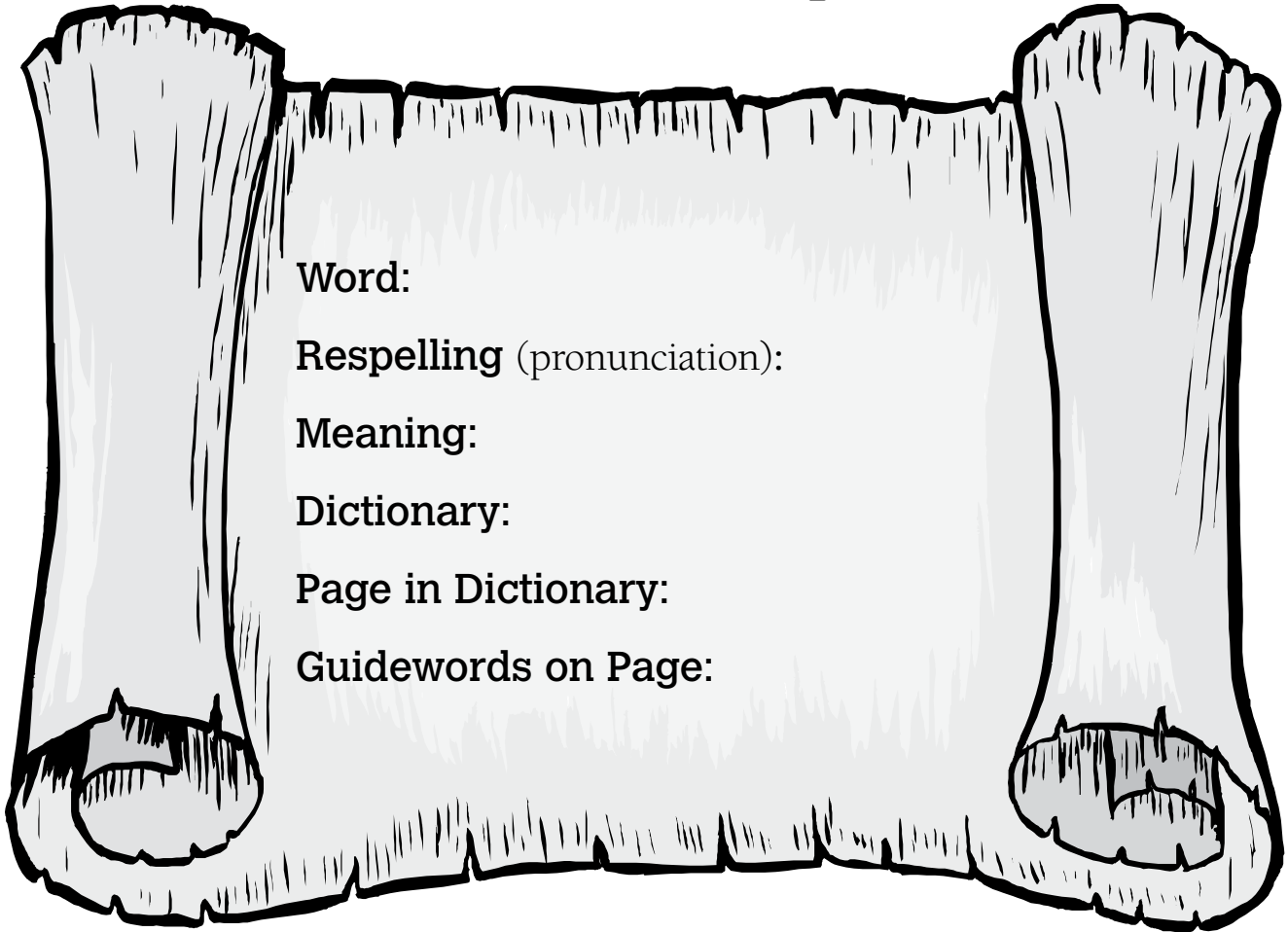
Guidewords on Page: never-nine



Write an original sentence to demonstrate word meaning: (extra points if it's silly)

The selfish boy proved what a nincompoop he was when he was outwitted by a talking mushroom.

Dumbledore's Detailed Dictionary



Word:

Respelling (pronunciation):

Meaning:

Dictionary:

Page in Dictionary:

Guidewords on Page:

Write an original sentence to demonstrate word meaning:
(extra points if it's silly)

Dumbledore's Detailed Dictionary

Word Cards

Persecution [pg. 12]	Oblivious [pg. 37]	Subsequently [pg. 82]
Tantamount [pg. 12]	Pungent [pg. 38]	Preposterous [pg. 83]
Jettison [pg. 13]	Probation [pg. 39]	Invulnerable [pg. 96]
epithet [pg. 15]	detractor [pg. 39]	tantalize [pg. 99]
perpetuated [pg. 15]	hypocrisy [pg. 41]	persistently [pg. 101]
effusion [pg. 17]	adversely [pg. 57]	hypothetical [pg. 103]
perennial [pg. 35]	elixir [pg. 57]	affinity [pg. 104]
devotee [pg. 35]	simulacrum [pg. 58]	notorious [pg. 105]
pantomime [pg. 35]	eminent [pg. 79]	subsequent [pg. 106]
Yuletide [pg. 35]	surreptitious [pg. 81]	imbued [pg. 106]

The Tales of Beedle the Bard

Interdisciplinary Extension Activities

J.K. Rowling is a gifted storyteller. The five tales in her new multi-layered book offer interesting opportunities for extension activities and interdisciplinary instruction.



ART: While Mary GrandPré is the artist of the colorful cover of the U.S. edition of *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, J.K. Rowling is responsible for the pen and ink illustrations within the text. Have the students study the book's artwork and create a bookmark using one of the styles. The book's title and author's name should be incorporated into the bookmark's design.



BIOGRAPHY: Sometimes storytellers create characters that become so well-known that the characters become part of our culture. Most everyone knows that Harry Potter is a boy wizard with a scar on his forehead. Fewer people know that J.K. Rowling is Joanne Rowling, the imaginative author who invented him. Have the students research the following storytellers to discover what well-known characters they have created: Aesop, Hans Christian Andersen, L. Frank Baum, Lewis Carroll, Roald Dahl, Charles Dickens, Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm, Beatrix Potter, A. A. Milne, Theodor Geisel, Jonathan Swift, Robert Louis Stevenson, Mark Twain, and H. G. Wells. (See the "Famous Fictional Characters" bonus worksheet, which can be used as either an introduction or follow-up activity. Answers: 1. J, 2. D, 3. G, 4. L, 5. K, 6. B, 7. F, 8. H, 9. C, 10. A, 11. E, 12. I)



CREATIVE WRITING: In his commentary following "The Tale of Three Brothers", Professor Dumbledore states that his younger brother Aberforth preferred the story "Grumble the Grubby Goat." This tale is not included in *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*. In fact, J.K. Rowling may not have written it. Encourage the students to write a fable based on the character "Grumble the Grubby Goat." Remind them that a fable is a short tale, which usually includes talking animals and a moral or lesson.



DRAMA: "Babbitty Rabbitty and Her Cackling Stump" would be an excellent tale to dramatize. Assign the roles of the Foolish King, the Charlatan, Babbitty, and the Captain of the Brigade. They are to pantomime their parts as the story is read aloud. The rest of the class can be the Brigade of Witch Hunters, the black hounds, and the Lords and Ladies. They are to holler "**Get them!**" every time they hear the word **Witch Hunter** read, **bark** every time they hear **hounds**, and shout "**Ha-Ha**" when the phrase **Lords and Ladies** is mentioned in the story.

The Tales of Beedle the Bard

Interdisciplinary Extension Activities

- ★ **EXPOSITORY WRITING:** Expository writing is writing that is used to explain, describe or inform. Professor Dumbledore is assuming that the reader has little prior knowledge concerning the five tales featured in the book when he writes his commentaries. These commentaries discuss the history and possible meaning of each tale. The professor explains the significance of some of the objects in the stories and what they might actually represent. He also makes fun of authors who “sugar coat” folk tales so as not to upset young readers. Read the commentary for “The Wizard and the Hopping Pot” (pages 11-19) to the students. Then instruct the students to choose an unfamiliar folk tale from the library’s collection, read it, and write a commentary on what they think the tale might mean. Encourage pretend knowledge and pretentious remarks.
- ★ **LITERATURE:** In Professor Dumbledore’s commentary following “The Fountain of Fair Fortune” he notes that Lucius Malfoy wrote a letter demanding that this book be removed from Hogwarts’ library. (His demand was not met.) This is rather humorous because many of the Harry Potter books have also been challenged. Either have students research the history of banned and challenged books, or show them some examples of books that have been banned. Then conduct a class discussion about why these books may have been considered inappropriate. Titles to display and discuss could include *Bridge to Terabithia* by Katherine Paterson, *The Giver* by Lois Lowry, *A Wrinkle in Time* by Madeleine L’Engle, *Blubber* by Judy Blume, *A Light in the Attic* by Shel Silverstein, and *How to Eat Fried Worms* by Thomas Rockwell.
- ★ **MUSIC:** As a class, create song lyrics based on one of Beedle the Bard’s tales. Use a tune with a British flare such as “London Bridge”, “Ring around the Rosie,” or “My Bonnie Lies over the Ocean”.
- ★ **PHILANTHROPY:** J.K. Rowling is the cofounder of the Children’s High Level Group, an organization which helps improve the lives of abandoned children in Europe. This charity will receive the net proceeds from *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*. Have the students research local charities, pick one they consider to have merit, and devise a way to help it achieve its goals.

Famous Fictional Characters

Sometimes the characters that authors create are more recognizable than the authors themselves. Can you match the character(s) to the creator?

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ___1. The Cat in the Hat | A. Aesop |
| ___2. The Cheshire Cat | B. Hans Christian Andersen |
| ___3. Hansel and Gretel | C. L. Frank Baum |
| ___4. Huckleberry Fin | D. Lewis Carroll |
| ___5. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde | E. Roald Dahl |
| ___6. The Little Mermaid | F. Charles Dickens |
| ___7. Ebenezer Scrooge | G. Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm |
| ___8. Peter Rabbit | H. Beatrix Potter |
| ___9. The Tin Woodsman | I. A.A. Milne |
| ___10. The Tortoise and the Hare | J. Dr. Seuss |
| ___11. Willie Wonka | K. Robert Louis Stevenson |
| ___12. Winnie the Pooh | L. Mark Twain |

Famous Fictional Characters

Answer Key

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| <u>J</u> 1. The Cat in the Hat | A. Aesop |
| <u>D</u> 2. The Cheshire Cat | B. Hans Christian Andersen |
| <u>G</u> 3. Hansel and Gretel | C. L. Frank Baum |
| <u>L</u> 4. Huckleberry Fin | D. Lewis Carroll |
| <u>K</u> 5. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde | E. Roald Dahl |
| <u>B</u> 6. The Little Mermaid | F. Charles Dickens |
| <u>F</u> 7. Ebenezer Scrooge | G. Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm |
| <u>H</u> 8. Peter Rabbit | H. Beatrix Potter |
| <u>C</u> 9. The Tin Woodsman | I. A.A. Milne |
| <u>A</u> 10. The Tortoise and the Hare | J. Dr. Seuss |
| <u>E</u> 11. Willie Wonka | K. Robert Louis Stevenson |
| <u>I</u> 12. Winnie the Pooh | L. Mark Twain |