

The Elves and The Shoemaker

A folktale from Europe

Recommended Key Stage: 1/2

Synopsis: A poor shoemaker has just enough leather to make one pair of shoes. He cuts out the material and leaves it on the workbench ready for the morning. But what he and his wife find the following morning is astounding. There is a pair of the most finely made shoes waiting. These are quickly sold, and the shoemaker has enough leather to make two pairs of shoes. The same thing greets them the next morning – two pairs of beautiful shoes. This continues for a while until the shoemaker, and his wife decide to find out who is helping them. From their hiding place they see two raggedly dressed elves making the shoes in the night. They decide to thank the elves with some new clothes and tiny shoes of their own.

Part 1: Share the Story

Watch the video **Stories from the Woodshed: The Elves and the Shoemaker**.

Part 2: Discuss the story

Use the questions below to begin a discussion about the story

KS1	KS2
- What did you think of the story? Which was your favourite part? - Was there anything you didn't like about the story? - Why do you think the elves came to help the shoemaker and his wife? - Would you have helped the shoemaker if you were an elf? Why/not?	- What did you think of the shoemaker? What three words can you think of to describe him? - Why do you think the elves chose to help the shoemaker? - Did the elves expect to gain some reward for their help? How do you know?

Part 3: Play the Story

KS1 Activities	KS2 Activities
<u>Story Walk</u> - Students stand in their own space around the room. They have each become the shoemaker and his wife in their own story worlds. - Read out Resource A line by line. As you read, the students use the space to mime the story using their bodies and facial expressions. <u>Elf Role Play</u> - Imagine you are elves, sewing shoes together for the shoemaker. - They come in singing (as Amantha Edmead does in the video) but what do they talk about as they sew? - In pairs, work out what each elf will say. - Practise the conversation and don't forget to include actions to show the elves sewing and creating the shoes. - Share the role play with others.	<u>Elf Role Play</u> - Work in pairs – decide which part of the story you would like to focus on: - the elves deciding on who to help before they first appear in the shoemaker's shop - the elves chatting to each other while they sew shoes - the elves deciding what to do with themselves after they are freed by the gift of clothing - Work with your partner to create a conversation. Don't forget to include the reasons behind the decisions the elves made. A script could be written - Practise and perform for others.
<u>Elven dance</u> - Use the song the elves sing as they enter the shop (watch the video – around the 4-minute mark) create a dance to accompany the song – remember the elves are quick and dart round. - Later on, when the elves have their lovely new clothes, they do another dance (around the 6.20-minute mark). What will this dance look like? - Perform your dance for someone else. You might choose to sing along with the video or even sing your own version.	<u>Elven Music</u> - In the story Amantha sings whenever the elves enter the shoemaker's shop. Create music to accompany the elves singing and dancing. - What instruments could you use? If you have access to instruments, think about the sounds they make and how they can be woven together to create music. If you don't have access to instruments, you can find them everywhere. For example: Your voice is an instrument, clapping, tapping hands and body parts can produce a rhythm as can tapping on different objects (be careful not to tap too hard), crinkling paper or plastic wrapping produces lovely sounds. - If you are able to work with others, you can use different sounds and layer them together.

Part 4: Story Stimulus

KS1 Activities	KS2 Activities
<u>Different point of view</u> - Tell the story from the elves' point of view. Explain how they found out about the shoemaker and describe why and how they chose to help the shoemaker. <u>Thank you</u>: Make a Thank You card or write a Thank you letter from the shoemaker or his wife to the elves to go with the clothes that were made. What might the shoemaker want to say to the elves? Would his wife say anything different?	<u>Elven Clothes:</u> - Design clothes for the elves to reflect what they have done for the shoemaker. - Consider what the clothes could be made from – natural materials e.g. leaves, flowers, sewn with grass stalks or more traditional fabrics like leather, cotton, linen and jersey. Could recycled materials be used in the clothing? - Annotate the design to show fabric used and why it has been added to the clothing

Part 5: Taking it Further

Similar Stories

The Drum Maker and the Aziza (Africa)

Yallery Brown (England)

Wider Curriculum Links

PSHE

KS1 - about the different roles and responsibilities people have in their community

- that jobs help people to earn money to pay for things

KS2 - to value the different contributions that people and groups make to the community

Learning Resources

Resource A: Story Walk

Story Walk for The Elves and The Shoemaker

- You are a poor shoemaker or the shoemaker's partner. You're hungry and very worried about your business.
- Cut the last piece of leather carefully into pieces ready to make the last pair of shoes. Off to bed – yawn and rub your tired eyes
- Oh my gosh! Look at the beautiful shoes! Hold them up. Who made them? Look around your shop - is anyone hiding?
- They've been sold! High five one person! Give a cheer!
- You can now cut out leather for two pairs of shoes. Then off to bed – Yawn and rub tired eyes
- WOW! Two more beautiful shoes. Hold them up in wonder. Hunt round again for the maker of the shoes.
- Put the shoes on display and... they've been sold! High five one person and give a cheer!
- Cut out the leather for more shoes but this time don't go to bed, hide somewhere to keep watch.
- In dance two elves, rub your eyes in disbelief as they sew your leather into shoes. Off they go.
- Climb out of your hiding place and examine the beautiful shoes.
- Collect a large heavy roll of fabric from the corner of your workshop. Lay it down on the floor and unroll some of it.
- Begin to cut out some clothes from the roll of fabric. Then carefully thread a needle, it's tricky so concentrate
- Sew the fabric together (you could use actions like Amantha in the video)
- Nod your head, high five one person, yes, you've done a good job. Give a little jig of happiness. All is ready for the elves
- Hide again and wait for the elves. Watch silently as they try on the clothes.
- Get up and wave goodbye to the elves as they dance away.