

The Foolish Wishes (also known as The Three Wishes)

This story has travelled round the world. The best-known version is by Charles Perrault in France, who wrote it down in 1693. An earlier version appeared in the story of the 1001 Nights, and even before that in The Panchatantra, an ancient collection of Indian fables.

Recommended Key Stage: KS1

Synopsis

A poor couple are given three wishes. However, they foolishly waste them and end up no better off than they were before. The Foolish Wishes is a cautionary tale about not wasting good fortune when it happens, with hilarious consequences.

Part 1: Share the Story

Share the audio of **The Foolish Wishes**, told by **Peter Chand** on The Story Museum website or tell the story yourself.

Top storytelling tips:

- Learn the story beforehand so that you can be expressive and maintain eye contact with the students.
- Use actions and sound effects and encourage the students to join in.

Find one or two moments in the story to stop and ask the students to predict what is going to happen next, or how they would feel if they were the characters.

Part 2: Discuss the story

Use the questions below to begin a discussion about the story

KS1 Questions

- What did you think of this story? What was your favourite part?
- How would you feel if you were given three wishes?
- What would you wish for if you were in the story?
- What is the worst wish you can think of? (Worse than having a sausage for a nose)
- What advice would you give to the Woodcutter now that you know the ending?
- How would you describe the Woodcutter or his wife?
- Have you ever made a decision that you regretted? What happened?
- Do you feel sorry for the Woodcutter? Why/ why not?

Part 3: Play the Story

Activities	
Whoosh! Retell the story as a whoosh with the whole class. Sit in a circle with the children and start telling the story. As you get to a character or part of the setting, point to a child in the circle and ask them to come to the middle to act as that part. Support the children in making faces, using body language, etc. After you have told a part of the story, call 'whoosh!' and ask those children to sit down, as you continue the story, point to more children to take their place. This way, everyone gets a chance to be in the story.	Phone call Retell the story in pairs, or in small groups with an adult leading. Pretend you are on the phone together and one person is telling the story of The Foolish Wish as if they are a character in the story. This will be conversational, so might sound like: 'You won't believe what happened today! So, I was out in the forest, chopping trees, when I suddenly saw a fairy!' The other person on the phone can react and ask questions, such as: - What happened next? - How did you feel? - What did you think about that? If working in pairs, swap over when instructed, if working in a group, the adult might 'hang up' and call on another child to tell the story until it is finished. The child could act as another character in the story to get their point of view.
Quickfire Class Tableau Have the children mill around the room in neutral. Call out 'freeze' then a word or phrase for them to show in freeze that relates to the story. Give them a short countdown to get into position and then freeze again. For example: • Surprised • Greedy • Angry/ furious • Disappointed You might choose any other emotions/ moments from the story that you want to explore deeper with the children.	Take A Wish Game Choose one person to be the Fairy from the story. The Fairy will sit at the front of the room with their eyes closed or wearing a blindfold. Under their chair, should be an object that represents another wish – this could be marbles, gems, pieces of coloured paper, etc. Another person should be chosen as the Woodcutter. After the story, the Woodcutter wants more wishes! But he is too foolish to think to ask for them. So, he must sneak up to the Fairy to collect a wish. The person should move quietly and slowly to avoid being caught. If the Fairy hears them or senses that they are near, they will point at the person sneaking. If they correctly point at them, they have been caught and must sit down, if they don't, the person can continue sneaking. If they manage to take a wish, they might take over the role of Fairy. Share what your wishes would be.

Part 4: Story Stimulus

Activities	
Become a Wish Collector Find or create a receptacle to store wishes – this could be a bag, a jar, a box. You may want to work together to decorate the special wish store. Children all record a wish on a piece of paper – this could be written down in words, or drawn, however they are able. Secretly, so as not to spoil their wish, they can fold up their paper and put it in the wish store. Throughout the term/ year, children could keep adding wishes and dreams to the store.	Persuasion Write a letter or act out a conversation, from the Woodcutter or his wife to the Tree Fairy asking for more wishes. This should persuade the Fairy that the character is deserving of more wishes, so you should think carefully about what will convince them. • What arguments could be made? • What language will you use to persuade the fairy? • What persuasive techniques will be used? (e.g. bribery, nagging, pleading)
Become an Advisor The Woodcutter and the woman were both very foolish and didn't think before they made their wishes! Become an advisor and help the characters by making suggestions of what they should do next time. This could be a letter, a drawing or comic strip, or the conversation could be acted out. Questions to get started: • Why did everything go wrong in the story? • What could the woodcutter/ woman have done differently? • What would happen as a consequence? What would be different?	
Innovate the story • Tell a new story, using The Foolish Wish to help. Here are some prompt questions to get you started: - What if the Fairy had cursed the Woodcutter instead? - What if the Woodcutter cut down the wishing tree? - What if the Woodcutter had made sensible wishes? • Children could work individually, in pairs, in small groups or as a whole class to tell their story. This could be through drama, oral storytelling, puppetry, drawing, etc. • How have they used the original story to influence their new story?	

Part 5: Taking it Further

Similar Stories

Stories about magic:

The Wise Wish

The Coming of the Unicorn

The Golden Fish

Stories about foolishness:

Misery and Honey (or Honey and Trouble)

Anansi and The Magic Stools

Wider Curriculum Links

PSHE

- learn about different types of families including those that may be different to their own
- how to talk about and share their opinions on the things that matter to them.
- how people and other living things have different needs; about the responsibilities of caring for them
- about things they can do to help look after their environment
- to recognise the ways they are the same as, and different to, other people

