Thumbelina

Based on the classic tale by Hans Christian Andersen
Book, Music and Lyrics by Bruce Craig Miller

TEACHER RESOURCES

Thumbelina and this study guide are produced in support of the teaching of English and Math.

AT THE LIBRARY

Hans Christian Andersen: Prince of Storytellers (Rookie Biographies) by Carol Greene

ON THE WEB

Hans Christian Andersen
Fairy Tales and Stories
hca.gilead.org.il/

Thumbelina
by Hans Christian Andersen
(digital version)
hca.gilead.org.il/li_tiny.html

ABOUT THE PLAY

The tale of Thumbelina, written by the famous author Hans Christian Andersen, is a story of a young maiden no larger than a person’s thumb. The story’s characters are mostly animals, and include a frog, a bird, a mouse, and a mole. Thumbelina lives inside of a beautiful flower, but is soon stolen away to become the wife of a frog. After escaping, Thumbelina meets a mouse who gives her a place to live until a neighbor, a mole, wants to marry Thumbelina. Again, she escapes, this time on the back of a bird. The story’s setting changes when Thumbelina and the bird fly to a land that stays warm all year around. The bird later returns to Denmark, where the story begins. This play is one of many adaptations of the Thumbelina story. At your local library, you can find many versions of Thumbelina, all with different authors and illustrators. We hope you enjoy this tale as told by Virginia Rep.
SILLY ADAPTATIONS First, read one of these silly fairy tale adaptations:

- *Kate and the Beanstalk* by Mary Osborne
- *The Runaway Tortilla* by Eric A. Kimmel
- *The Horned Toad Prince* by Jackie M. Hopkins

Then read the original story. Next, diagram what was the same and what was different using the boxes below:

Original:  

Adaptation:
GET TO KNOW THE AUTHOR

Hans Christian Andersen wrote plays, novels, poems, travel books, and several autobiographies, but his fairy tales achieved wide renown and are the most frequently translated works in all of literary history. Hans Christian Andersen was born in Denmark in April 1805. His father was a shoemaker and his mother washed clothes. They were a poor family, and he was sent to a school for poor children where he received a basic education. By the age of 14, he moved out of the family home to find work. He wanted to be an actor or dancer, but he wasn’t very talented, so he took to writing.

In 1822, his first story was published. It was called The Ghost at Palnatoke’s Grave. His first book of fairy tales was published in 1835. He went on to write and publish stories until 1872.

His stories were popular all over Europe, and he was invited to many homes of powerful and rich people to read his stories aloud. Despite many having unhappy endings, his stories were so well-received that they have been translated into more than 125 languages around the world, and have been made into many movies, television programs, ballets, and plays.

Hans Christian Andersen’s fairy tales continue to get recognition, almost 150 years after his death. Take a look at the list of some of the stories he wrote. Do you have a favorite?

The Emperor’s New Clothes
The Little Mermaid
Little Ida’s Flowers
The Ugly Duckling
Thumbelina
The Princess and the Pea
The Little Match Girl
The Nightingale
The Steadfast Tin Soldier
The Red Shoes
FACTS AND CULTURE

Thumbelina came from Denmark. Let’s take a look at some interesting facts about this small country!

Surrounded on most sides by water, Denmark is a small country in northern Europe that has been voted the happiest country on Earth.

Denmark is a country of more than five and a half million people in a region of northern Europe called Scandinavia. To the south, Denmark touches Germany. Norway is to the north but separated by the sea. Denmark is connected to Sweden by a bridge.

Most of the country is surrounded by the sea. In fact, no matter where you stand in Denmark, you are usually less than 30 miles away from the sea. Swimming lessons are a requirement in Danish schools, so nearly every Dane knows how to swim!

Denmark is famous for many things. Have you ever eaten a delicious Danish pastry or played with Legos? Denmark is famous for creating both of those things. In fact, there’s even a place in Denmark called Legoland, where there are exact replicas of many famous buildings, like the White House, made entirely out of Legos!

Denmark also has Copenhagen, its beautiful capital city, and lots of bikes. In fact, Denmark has twice as many bicycles as cars.

Summers in Denmark are pleasant and warm. September is often a very rainy month, and winters can be extremely cold. It’s possible to have a snowstorm even as late as April. During the winter, snow, ice, and icy winds dominate the country. From October to March, the days are short and dark.

Denmark’s major industries are iron, steel, chemicals, food processing, textiles and clothing, electronics, construction, furniture and other wood products, windmills, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment. The country’s top agricultural products include barley, wheat, potatoes, sugar beets, dairy products, fish, and pork.
Activities

MEASURING IN “THUMBS”
Cut out this picture of Thumbelina to measure objects in your classroom or at home. Classify objects as “Taller than” or “Shorter than” Thumbelina.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Taller Than Thumbelina</th>
<th>Shorter Than Thumbelina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

SIZING THINGS UP
Thumbelina’s size gets in her way, but brings her happiness in the end. There are certain things Thumbelina can do because of her size, and there are certain things she cannot do. She can ride on the back of a bird because of how tiny she is, but she cannot escape from the lily pad because of her size!

Make a list of the things that you can do because of your size, and things that you cannot do because of your size.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Can Do</th>
<th>Cannot Do</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
WRITE YOUR OWN FAIRY TALE

What is a fairy tale? Fairy tales are a genre in literature. It is a story that usually involves imaginary creatures and magic! Fairy tales exist all over the world, and some with very similar plots and characters.

Fairy tales usually include:
• Once upon a time...
• ...and they lived happily ever after.
• Good character
• Evil character
• Royalty
• Poverty
• Magic and enchantments
• Recurring numbers or patterns
• Universal truths

You can create your own mixed-up fairy tale by using elements borrowed from a variety of stories! By using familiar characters, plot, and settings from traditional fairy tales, you can create a fractured version of a tale. By altering the story line, adding unexpected twists, or creating a contemporary spin, you can experiment with satire, irony and parody!

Consider different perspectives of stories. For example, what if the big bad wolf was actually a home inspector? What if the big bad wolf was scared of the three little pigs? What if the big bad wolf was actually just clumsy, or had bad allergies?

Use the story elements on the following page to create your own fractured fairy tale stories. Here’s how it works:

Divide into four teams. Each team gets one of the following short stories by Hans Christian Andersen:
The Ugly Duckling
The Princess and the Pea
The Little Mermaid
The Snow Queen

This is the overall plot to your fairy tale.

Print out the following pages and cut apart the story elements, placing them into different bags. Each group picks one piece of paper from each bag and must use those elements to create a new fractured version of the tale.

For example: The story of The Little Match Girl, set on a pirate ship, with a magician, and fairy dust. What kind of new story can we tell with those elements?

Print out the script template on the following page to help write your story.
### Activities

**WRITE YOUR OWN FAIRY TALE** Print out this page and cut apart the story elements, placing them into different bags. Each group picks one piece of paper from each bag and must use those elements to create a new fractured version of the tale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settings:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Airport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zoo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witch’s House</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruise Ship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granny’s House</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characters:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teenager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball Player</td>
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<tr>
<td>Astronaut</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evil Genius</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Magic:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wand</td>
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<tr>
<td>Magic Sword</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairy Dust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magic Shoe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking Animal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WRITE YOUR OWN FAIRY TALE

Print out this template page and use the script below to help write your story. Have fun with the ending! Did they live dangerously ever after? Hungrily ever after? Stinkingly ever after?

Once upon a time there was....

And everyday...

Until one day...

And then...

And THEN...

And ever since that day...

And they all lived ______ ever after

The end!
When you are in an audience at Thumbelina or any play, pay attention to the following:

**Cue**
1) Command given by stage management to the technical departments.
2) Any signal (spoken line, action or count) that indicates another action should follow.

**House Lights**
The auditorium lighting, which is commonly faded out when the performance starts.

**Blackout**
The act of turning off (or fading out) stage lighting.

**Curtain Call**
At the end of a performance, the acknowledgment of applause by actors — the bows.

**Build / Check**
Build is a smooth increase in sound or light level; check is the opposite — a smooth diminishment of light or sound.

**Fade**
An increase, decrease, or change in lighting or sound.