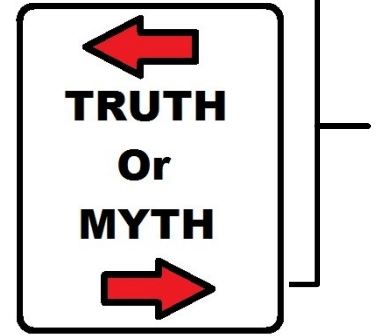# MYTHS

A **myth** is a well-known story which was made up in the past to explain events that happen in nature, or to justify religious beliefs or social customs.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MYTHS

- Explain natural phenomenon (ex: earthquakes, stars, etc)

- Explain origins of Earth, good, or evil

- About gods or goddesses, monsters & heroes & their interactions with humans

- Teach a lesson

- Come from different cultures

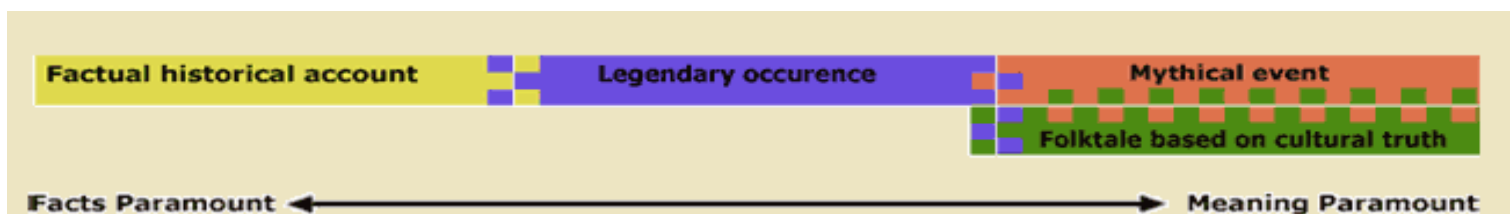- Often passed down orally over hundreds or thousands of years

What really is a myth?

Myths are stories that are based on tradition. Some may have factual origins, while others are completely fictional. But myths are more than mere stories and they serve a more profound purpose in ancient and modern cultures. Myths are sacred tales that explain the world and man's experience. Myths are as relevant to us today as they were to the ancients. Myths answer timeless questions and serve as a compass to each generation. The myths of a golden age give people hope that there are great leaders who will improve their lives. The hero's quest is a model for young men and women to follow, as they accept adult responsibilities. Some myths simply reassure, such as myths that explain natural phenomena as the actions of gods, rather than arbitrary events of nature.

Fun Fact: Every culture has some type of mythology. The classical mythology of the ancient Greeks and Romans is the most familiar to people. The same types of stories, and often the very same story, can be found in myths from different parts of the world.

What is the difference between legends, myths and folktales?

Myths, legends and folktales are hard to classify and often overlap. An event that might happen as a historical fact can change over time. The further away from the event a person or culture is, the more the story has taken on a life of its own and the facts of the original event, if there ever were any, have become almost irrelevant. It is the message that is important.

Factual historical account	Legendary occurence	Mythical event
		Folktale based on cultural truth

Facts Paramount ← → Meaning Paramount

FAIRY TALES

A **fairy tale** is a story for children involving magical events and imaginary creatures.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF FAIRY TALES

- Good vs evil
- Magic and special powers
- Talking animals and royalty
- Things come in 3s or 7s
- Special beginning...Once upon a time
- Special ending...They all lived happily ever after
- Take place in far away kingdoms or forests

What really is a fairy tale?

In order to understand the history of fairy tales, readers need to be aware of for whom original fairy tales were really written. While today parents love relating their favorite fairy tales to their own children, the dark and often gruesome plot lines of the original stories were intended for adult audiences, not youngsters.

Many of the fairy tales that are repeated today date back to the 17th century and earlier. As these tales were passed down from one century to the next, they were often altered to remove some of the more ghastly and frightening elements and to make them more appropriate for a younger audience.

While writers like the Grimm Brothers, who collected German tales, Perrault, and often Hans Christian Anderson are often the first authors named when discussing the history of fairy tales, their origin goes back much further than the 17th century, and many of these stories are actually just retellings of age-old tales, many created by women and retold throughout history.

"Life itself is the most wonderful fairy tale," (Hans Christian Andersen)

Fascinating Fairy Tale Facts:

♦ In the early centuries, the story of the *Little Red Riding Hood* was used to warn children of the dangerous wild animals in the woods. People were really afraid of wolves back then!

♦ The very first tale of *Cinderella* was recorded in China at around AD 850. That Cinderella is Yeh-hsien. She wears a dress made of kingfisher feathers and her shoes! Cinderella is one of the most well-known stories around the world. This story appears in the folklore of many cultures. There are between 350 and 1500 different versions of this story in the world today.

♦ In the French version of *Rapunzel*, the story does not have a happy ending. Rapunzel is turned into a frog and the prince is cursed with a pig's snout.

♦ The original versions of fairy tales can be gruesome, so they are often rewritten and toned down to appeal to the masses. For example, in the Disney movie *Snow White*, the evil queen sought Snow White's heart. But in the Grimm brothers' original tale, the evil queen wanted to consume her lungs and liver. What a huge appetite !

TALL TALES

A **tall tale** is a long and complicated story that is difficult to believe because most of the events it describes seem unlikely or impossible.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TALL TALES

- Superhuman characters who have done great things
- Characters that use everyday language
- Problems that are often solved in humorous ways
- Exaggerated details
- Takes place during a real time in history

What really is a tall tale?

"Tall tales" are stories that are told as if they were true but contain exaggerated or unbelievable parts. Some tall tales are exaggerations of real events, while others are completely make-believe. Tall tales are usually very funny because the exaggerations in the story tend to be the main focus of the whole story.

A key part of American folk literature, tall tales are believed to have started from the bragging contests that tough American frontiersmen would start when they gathered around a fire. Most tall tales come from the 1800s, when courageous explorers had exciting adventures on their way to the Wild West.

Popular tall tale characters from American folklore include Johnny Appleseed, Pecos Bill, Paul Bunyan and John Henry. For example, Paul Bunyan is a legendary lumberjack of gigantic proportions.

Although no one knows for sure, many people believe these stories are called tall tales because they describe heroes that are larger than life. The heroes of tall tales are taller, bigger and stronger than real people — even if the tall tale is based on a real person!

Famous American Tall Tales

AnnieOakley JohnnyAppleseed JohnHenry PecosBill PaulBunyan DavyCrockett

Hyperbole

HUGE exaggeration that takes place in tall tales.

That food was so hot my ears were smoking!

My dad can lift over two tons!   He cried so long that he made a lake!

I'm so hungry I could eat a horse!

It's a MYSTERY

A **mystery** is an imaginative story dealing with the solution of a secret, problem, or crime, and involving suspense or intrigue.

Mystery Books

CHARACTERISTICS OF MYSTERIES

- Main character who is a detective trying to solve the problem.
- Suspects and motives
- Clues about the crime presented
- The reader usually has to fill the gaps, the full story isn't always told.
- Suspense
- Foreshadowing– clues left by the author as to possible outcomes

Sherlock Holmes by Arthur Conan Doyle

Nancy Drew by Carolyn Keene

The Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler by E.L Konigsberg

The Westing Game by Ellen Weskin

The 39 Clues series by Rick Riordan

Encyclopedia Brown by Donald J. Sobol

Red Herring:

Mystery authors will sometimes include a literary device called a red herring. No, not like the fish, but rather something that misleads or distracts the reader and leads them off track from the true solution to the mystery!
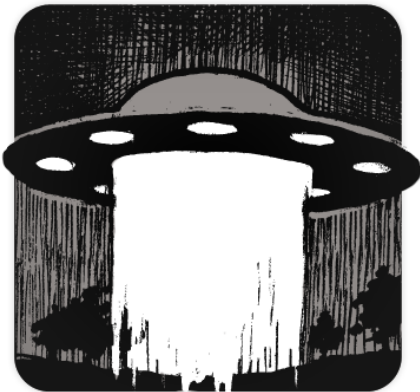
Mystery Vocabulary:

- Alibi
- Clue
- Crime
- Deduction
- Detective
- Evidence
- Hunch
- Motive
- Mystery
- Red herring
- Sleuth
- Suspect

Science Fiction

Science Fiction is a genre of fiction in which the stories often tell about science and technology of the future .

Is it really Science Fiction?

In a science fiction story there is a relationship with the principles of science—these stories involve partially true-partially fictitious laws or theories of science. It should not be completely unbelievable, because it then ventures into the genre fantasy.

The plot creates situations different from those of both the present day and the known past. Science fiction texts also include a human element, explaining what effect new discoveries, happenings and scientific developments will have on us in the future.

Science fiction texts are often set in the future, in space, on a different world, or in a different universe or dimension.
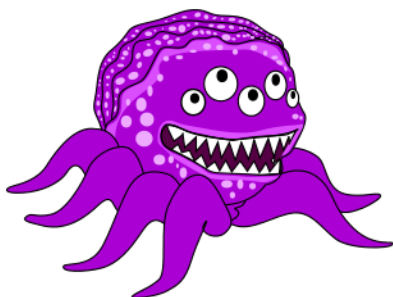
Futuristic Concepts in Sci-Fi:

⇒ Technology

⇒ Space travel

⇒ Time travel

⇒ Faster than light travel

⇒ Parallel Universes

⇒ Extraterrestrial Life

Characters:

Aliens

Mutants

Robots

Enhanced Humans