

Ivan and the Frog Princess

A folktale from Russia, retold by Anna Conomos

Further information including a video of the story is available at www.storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/ivan-and-the-frog-princess

Synopsis

A prince has to marry a frog while his two brothers marry daughters of a duke and a general. He soon discovers that appearances are not always what they seem... A story of shape-shifting, magic, and acceptance. (If you require a transcript for access reasons please contact learning@storymuseum.org.uk).

Part 1: Share the Story

Watch the clip of Anna Conomos telling the story of *Ivan and the Frog Princess*.

Part 2: Discuss the Story

Use the questions below to begin a discussion about the story.

KS1 questions	KS2 questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What did you think of the story? Did you like the story? Why/not?• Did the story remind you of any others? <p><i>NB: The students may know the story of the Frog Prince – when a princess loses her golden ball a frog retrieves it from the pond and asks to be taken to the palace. They may know the story of Beauty and the Beast - a prince has been enchanted and looks like a beast until a young woman accepts and loves him for who he is, which breaks the spell.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When the frog caught the arrow, do you think she had an idea of what might happen?• Why do you think Ivan went ahead with the wedding? Why didn't he refuse to marry a frog?• How could the frog turn into a woman?• Do you think Ivan knew that breaking the arrow across his knee would free his wife?• Explore some of the other stories about shape shifters. Are there any similarities to this story?

Part 3: Play the Story

KS1 activities	KS2 activities
<p>Story Walk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students stand in their own space around the room. They have each become the Frog Princess in their own story worlds. • Read out Resource A line by line. As you read, the students use the space to mime the story. 	<p>Story Walk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students stand in their own space around the room. They have each become the Frog Princess in their own story worlds. • Read out Resource A line by line. As you read, the students use the space to mime the story.
<p>Animal Charades</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the clip, Anna Conomos does a brilliant impression of a frog, but who can do better? Play this game in groups within the classroom, or as a family at home. • Each person chooses an animal to act out, or takes an animal from slips of paper. • Take it in turns, or play in teams, to mime your animal – Is it small or large? How can your face take on the expression of your animal? How does it move – slithering along the ground or flapping wings as it flies? How does it eat – does it lick its food out of the air like Anna’s frog or does it stand still and chew grass? Does it groom itself by licking its fur or taking a dust bath? How could you show sharp claws, large flapping ears or hiding in a shell? • Was your mime so good that everyone worked out what your animal was or did you choose an animal no-one could guess? 	<p>Hotseating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A volunteer takes the ‘hot seat’ and pretends to be one of the characters in the story e.g. the King. • Encourage the students to ask some questions linked to the story e.g. Why did you tell your sons they had to shoot an arrow to help them find a wife? What happened when your third son brought a frog back to the palace? • Repeat the hotseat with another student playing another character.
<p>Hotseating</p> <p><i>It’s always a good idea to demonstrate this to younger students so they understand the concept.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An adult takes the ‘hot seat’ and pretends to be one of the characters in the story e.g. the King. Show the class how to ‘become’ the character through the use of posture and voice. Using dressing up clothes or props here can be fun! • Encourage the students to ask questions linked to the story e.g. Why did you tell your sons they had to shoot an arrow to help them find a wife? What happened when your third son brought a frog back to the palace? • If there is a student willing to become a different character then they can take the hot seat and guidance can be given to develop the questions asked. e.g. how they felt at a part of the story, why they chose to act in a certain way, etc. • If the hot seater becomes stuck then the question can be asked of the class/family group to see what responses are given. 	<p>Role Play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In pairs, or small groups, choose a section of the story. e.g. when the prince returns to the palace with the frog – what do his brothers say? What might the prince say to his father? What could the people in the town say when they hear who the third prince will be marrying? Imagine the frog can talk – what might the frog say to the prince to convince him that it should sleep on the prince’s bed? • In the pairs/groups role play conversations between the characters. • The conversations could be performed for other members of the class/family and even built in to a new retelling of the whole story.

Part 4: Story Stimulus

KS1 activities	KS2 activities
<p>Royal Frog Furniture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design royal furniture for a frog princess. Use the following questions as a guide:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- If she were to have her own table and chairs to use at meal times - what would they look like?- Would she even have chairs?- What would her froggy bed look like?- What would her furniture be made of? She's royalty but would she like something made from gold and jewels or would her furniture be more natural, made from wood and leaves?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use Resource A to help you create a script to accompany your chosen scene from the 'Role Play' activity in the previous section.• Design costumes and stage sets to accompany your script. What should the characters look like? How would they be dressed? What kind of fabric would be used? e.g. would the prince be dressed in velvet or cotton? Would the king have fake fur on his outfit or gold chains?
<p>Twists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How might the story change if the animal that caught the arrow was not a frog? Can you imagine what might happen if the arrow was caught by a dog or even a bear?<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Think about how your new animal behaves to help you. e.g. A dog might love going for long walks with the prince but then play tug of war with the fabric given to her to make the king's shirt. A bear might snort and snore when she's asleep and keep the prince awake or she could roll over and push him out of bed!	

Part 5: Taking it further

Similar stories to Ivan and the Frog Princess:

The Frog Prince (European folktale)
storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/the-frog-prince

The Selkie (Scottish folktale)
storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/the-selkie

Gull Girl (Siberian folktale)
storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/the-gull-girl

East of the Sun, West of the Moon (Norwegian folktale)
storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/east-of-the-sun-west-of-the-moon

Mother Bear Story (A Haida legend)
storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/mother-bear-story

The Birth of Taliesin (Welsh folktale)
storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/the-birth-of-taliesin

The Raven and the Moon (Native American story)
storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/raven-and-the-moon

Ivan and the Frog Princess

Resource A: Story Walk

Story Walk Prompts

- You are a frog, sitting peacefully in your lovely stinky bog.
- Suddenly an arrow appears in the air before you surprising you so much that you catch it in your mouth.
- Out of the mists stumbles a human – it's a prince (or princess if you wish) so you sit up straight and proudly show the arrow in your mouth.
- The prince scoops you up and takes you back to the palace where everything looks so rich and luxurious that you can't help goggling at it all.
- It's so enjoyable being carried out on a silky cushion. You sit and squirm and love every minute.
- Once you're married to the prince you demand to sleep on his pillow at night so you can lick the little beads of sweat from his forehead. And will only eat if he feeds it to you – push away the bowl of slugs and grasshoppers until he feeds them to you.
- But wait, what's this? The prince is unhappy and crying. You lick the tears from his face and hop about on his fabric trying to make him smile.
- It's night time, jump down off the bed and hop to the window. There's a strange twisty, squirmy feeling inside you. Begin by gently peeling the skin off your face and down your neck. Then roll it all the way down as you turn from a frog into a tall human
- Sling your frog skin over a chair, pick up the fabric and fling it out of the window into the night.
- "Wind, weave a shirt for the king. Moon, spin a shirt for the king," (Class/family group could all say this together)
- Gently lay the new shirt over a chair, collect your froggy skin and climb back in. Roll it up your body and over your head and face, then jump back to the bed and up onto the pillow
- The king loves your shirt, congratulate yourself – high five! Look very happy and a little bit smug.
- Complete the tasks the king sets you – bake fluffy bread – Yes! Sculpt a marble bust of the king's head, don't forget his curly moustache – Brilliant! And then water some lovely plants – Fantastic!
- The prince asks you to do something – look at him and listen carefully.
- Squirm and wriggle your way out of the froggy skin...But, Oh No! The prince has thrown your skin into the fire. You are upset and disappointed with him.
- "Ivan, if only you had waited. Ivan, if only you had trusted me. I will come to the ball but after that I will disappear for ever."
- Get dressed for the ball in a fabulous outfit, don't forget to brush and style your hair.

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Resource A: Story Walk

- Pick some food from the tables, eat a bit then put the rest up your sleeve. The other wives are watching you so try to do it carefully and secretly. Drink some wine then pour the rest up your sleeve.
- There's music playing and people are dancing, sway and move lightly around.
- Duck! Food is flying out of the sleeves of the other wives dresses!
- Now it's your turn to dance. Whirl and twirl, sway and skip lightly. Throw your arms wide and curl up very small as if you have disappeared.
- You're in the hut with chicken legs and in comes your husband, turn into a frog and jump away from him, turn into a snake and slither, now a chicken – peck and cluck at him. Become a bear and roar and gnaw at him. Now, become an arrow.
- He has broken the arrow and the spell, jump up as a human again, look happy and excited to be free.
- Finally give your husband/wife a big sloppy juicy froggy kiss!