## Folklore definitions: Myths, Legends, Fables, and more (Key)

**Directions:** Fill out the chart for each type of folklore based upon the examples you read**from the *Source:***[*www.americanfolklore.net*](http://www.americanfolklore.net)

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| .**Folklore Type** | **Characteristics** |
| **Folktale:** | * Simple and straightforward * Includes magic or supernatural powers * Characters represent human qualities, such as good, evil, wisdom, foolishness, laziness * Problems and conflicts are clear * Ending usually happy or satisfying * Good usually rewarded, evil punished |
| **Tall Tale:** | * A larger-than-life, or superhuman, main character with a specific job. * A problem that is solved in a funny way. * Exaggerated details that describe things as greater than they really are. * Characters who use everyday language. |
| **Myths:** | * Stories told as fact * Usually have gods and goddesses and supernatural powers * Often deal with the creation of the world and/or natural events * Provide lessons about good and bad behavior * Often metaphoric * Promotes social action: tells people how to act or how to live |
| **Legends:** | * - A NARRATIVE of human actions that are believed by the storyteller and the reader/listener to have taken place in HUMAN history. * - Written in such a way as be at least potentially real/true; includes no happenings outside of the realm of possibility. * - Legends have a specific SETTING: a time, and a place. They often include beliefs and ideas of a culture. * - Legends have flexible guidelines, and therefore, can begin with miracles that are believed to have really happened. * - Legends transform over time. Facts will change or be stretched, HYPERBOLE will enter the PLOTLINE, and colorful details will remain and/or get more colorful. * - Legends evolve over the years and are kept fresh, lively and exciting. * - Legends can be prose or poetry. They combine a real event or real person’s unusual life story with the exaggeration and heroic actions that we associate with stores of heroes and great national events. * - Legends read like Folk Tales but have a least a bit of historical truth. * - Legends are different than myths because they portray a historical hero rather than one who is a god or goddess. |
| **Urban Legends:** | * usually a story with an unknown origin * could take form of a cautionary tale * is said to be true but hasn't been proven * spreads through mouth or writing * is heard from a trustworthy second hand source * varies with each telling |
| **Fable:** | * Teach a lesson or moral * Animal characters with human characteristics * Stress themes such as the value of cooperation, looking at problems from different viewpoints * Some have several layers of meaning * Listener must find their own moral in the tale |
| **Fairy tale:** | * Include good and bad characters * A hero and/or heroine * Magic and/or fantasy * Includes predictable beginnings and endings: “Once upon a time…” and “they lived happily ever after.” * Problem which is usually solved through kindness, courage, and/or intelligence |