## 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
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| **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.
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| **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
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| **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.
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| **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
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| **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
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| **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
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