

*Discovering the Story:  
A City and Its Culture*

*IMAGINARY PLACES  
AND BEAUTIFUL VASES*

A Language Arts Lesson  
for Grades K-3



Mary Louise McLaughlin (1847-1939), The Cincinnati Pottery Club (1879-1890), Frederick Dallas Hamilton Road Pottery (1865-1882), United States (Cincinnati)  
*Ali Baba Vase*, 1880  
Gift of the Women's Art Museum Association, 1881.239



Maria Longworth Nichols Storer (The Rookwood Pottery Company)  
*Aladdin Vase*, 1882  
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James J. Gardner, 2002.94

The lesson *Imaginary Places and Beautiful Vases* is based on

*Aladdin Vase*

by Maria Longworth Nichols Storer

and

*Ali Baba Vase*

by Mary Louise McLaughlin

*Discovering the Story: A City and Its Culture*  
**IMAGINARY PLACES AND BEAUTIFUL VASES**

A Language Arts Lesson for Grades K-3  
 Based on *Aladdin Vase* by Maria Longworth Nichols Storer  
 and *Ali Baba Vase* by Mary Louise McLaughlin

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## CONCEPT

The genre of folktales will be explored by students in grades K-3, as they learn about two of the Museum's large earthenware vases, the *Ali Baba* by Mary Louise McLaughlin and the *Aladdin* by Maria Longworth Nichols Storer. As students look at McLaughlin's vase, they will learn that its name was inspired by literature. They will read or be read *The Tale of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* by Eric A. Kimmel and illustrated by Will Hillenbrand. Students will also read or be read the tale of *Aladdin* from *The Arabian Nights*, retold by Neil Philip and illustrated by Sheila Moxley. Students will learn to identify the elements of a folktale. Through the use of a graphic organizer, students will compare/contrast the two folktales. As a class, students will create an original folktale that incorporates the Museum vases into their story. Finally, students will construct at least one well-written paragraph about their favorite folktales and will illustrate their writing pieces.

## OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn about the universal genre of folktales.
- As students read folktales and look at the Museum vases, they will learn that authors and artists follow steps to create.
- Students will learn to identify the elements of a folktale using a graphic organizer to compare *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* and *Aladdin*.
- Students will write a class folktale inspired by the Museum vases.
- Students will construct at least one well-written paragraph about their favorite folktales and will illustrate their writing pieces.

*"Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once he grows up."*

Pablo Picasso

## Teacher Preparation

### CLASS PERIODS REQUIRED

- 1 to 2 (30-50 min.) periods for Pre-Lesson Activities
- 1 50-min. class period for Videoconference
- 1 to 2 (30-50 min.) periods for Post-Lesson Activities
- 1 to 2 (30-50 min.) periods for Art Enrichment Activity (optional)

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Refer to [Background Information](#) for more on the *Ali Baba Vase* and the *Aladdin Vase* and the artists who created them. Background Information has been written for teachers to review before the lesson and then share with students.

### VIDEO

Share the [ceramics video](#) with your students prior to the videoconference. The video depicts archival film from Rookwood Pottery and an interview with a Museum curator on the two vases. This video is an excellent resource that will help to prepare students for the videoconference.

Video Duration – approx. six and a half minutes.

*"Art is idea. It is not enough to draw, paint, and sculpt. An artist should be able to think."*

Gordon Woods

## PRE- VIDEOCONFERENCE

### VOCABULARY

Definitions can be found in the [Glossary](#) on the [Discovering the Story](#) Website.

Character  
Climax  
Compare  
Complication  
Contrast  
Exposition  
Folktale  
Moral  
Plot  
Resolution  
Setting

### GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What is a folktale?
- What steps does a visual artist use to create a piece?
- What steps does a writer use to create a finished piece?

### MATERIALS

- Print Reproductions of the Museum's [Ali Baba Vase](#) and [Aladdin Vase](#)
- Eric A. Kimmel's *The Tale of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*
- *The Arabian Nights* retold by Neil Philip
- Graphic organizer

### PROCEDURE

Teacher will:

- Look at photos of both vases. Discuss with students what they see, feel, think about each vase.

- Tell students the names given to each vase; *Ali Baba Vase* to the McLaughlin piece and *Aladdin Vase* to the Storer piece. Explain that both names come from folktales.
- Explain the definition/elements of folktales. Talk about other examples, which might include: *Little Red Riding Hood*, *The Three Little Pigs*, *Rapunzel*, *Puss in Boots*, *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* or *Beauty and the Beast*.
- Read Eric A. Kimmel's *The Tale of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* to the class. As you read, ask students to think about the following questions:
  - Who are the main characters?
  - What is the setting?
  - What is the plot of the story?
  - What is the moral of the story?
  - Why do you think the McLaughlin vase was named the Ali Baba?
- Discuss the answers to these questions in small- or large- group settings.
- Reintroduce the photo of the *Aladdin Vase*. Ask if students have heard of *Aladdin*. Students will probably refer to Disney's animated version of the tale of *Aladdin*. Explain that this vase was created to challenge the *Ali Baba Vase*. Read a version of the *Aladdin* story.
- Have students compare/contrast the *Aladdin* and *Ali Baba* folktales by completing a graphic organizer.
- Remind students that authors and artists follow steps to create their art. Have them listen closely during the videoconference for the steps Cincinnati artists used to create their art.

*“Culture is something that evolves out of the simple, enduring elements of everyday life; elements most truthfully expressed in the folk arts and crafts of a nation.”*

Thor Hansen

## VIDEOCONFERENCE

### OBJECTIVES

- Students will interact with the Cincinnati Art Museum staff through a sixty-minute [videoconference](#).
- Students will learn about Cincinnati history from 1850 to 1900.
- Students will use Museum objects to reinforce activities completed in preparation for this [videoconference](#).

### CONCEPT

A [videoconference](#) conducted by the Cincinnati Art Museum staff extends student learning through emphasis on the viewing and discussion of art objects. During this [videoconference](#) with the Museum, students will explore Cincinnati art history and the methods and practices of many of the artists working in the city.

### SCHEDULE

- **5 minutes** Introduction to CAM staff (*This is also buffer time in case of connection complications*)
- **10 minutes** Brief discussion of student pre-videoconferencing activities.
- **10 minutes** Museum staff will lead an interactive discussion with students on the history of Cincinnati from 1850-1900
- **20 minutes** Museum staff will lead students in an in-depth investigation of selected Museum objects.  
**Objects Include**
  - [Bedstead](#) by Benn Pitman, Adelaide Nourse Pitman, and Elizabeth Nourse
  - [Reception Dress](#) by Selina Cadwallader
  - [Aladdin Vase](#) by Maria Longworth Nichols Storer
  - [Ali Baba Vase](#) by M. Louise McLaughlin
  - [Vase and Dedication Medallion](#) by Tiffany & Co.
- **10 minutes** Questions and student sharing of art projects.
- **5 minutes** Closing (*This is also buffer time in case of connection complications*)

## POST- VIDEOCONFERENCE

### MATERIALS

Print Reproductions of the Museum's [\*Ali Baba Vase\*](#) and [\*Aladdin Vase\*](#)

### PROCEDURE

Teacher will:

- Discuss with students what they learned at the videoconference. Ask them to recall the steps Cincinnati artists used to create the earthenware vases. Remind students that the names for the two vases originated from folktales.
- Have students, as a class, use an opening prompt to create a class folktale that incorporates the Museum vases. For example:
  - Long ago, on a hillside overlooking the “Queen City,” Cincinnati, Ohio, two beautiful vases were born of the same Mother Earth. But alas, these sister vases were so jealous of each other’s beauty, that they argued all of the time.
  - Once upon a time, the wise children of (Mr., Miss or Mrs.) \_\_\_\_\_’s class solved a big problem with the help of two magical vases.
  - Once upon a time, a fierce dragon guarded a magical kingdom hidden inside a giant vase.
  - Many years ago, a friendly museum guide offered some good advice to children visiting the Cincinnati Art Museum. She whispered, “Touch only with your eyes,” but curious Carlotta couldn’t resist touching the beautiful and magical vase.
- Suggest that students dramatize their story.
- Have students construct at least one well-written paragraph about their favorite folktales. Instruct students to illustrate their writings.

### ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the elements of a folktale, by completing a graphic organizer comparing *The Tale of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* and *Aladdin*. As a class, students will write an original folktale that includes a connection to the Museum vases. Finally, students will demonstrate writing skills as they tell about their favorite folktales in a paragraph(s), including a beginning, middle and end.

## RESOURCES

### BOOKS ON THE ARABIAN NIGHT TALES

- Early, Margaret. *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1989.
- Kimmel, Eric A. *The Tale of Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*. New York: Holiday House, 1996.
- Mayer, Marianna. *Ali Baba and the Enchanted Lamp*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1985.
- McCaughrean, Geraldine. *1001 Arabian Nights*. Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- McNulty, Walter. *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1987.
- Philip, Neil. *The Arabian Nights*. New York: Orchid Books, 1994.
- Riordan, James. *Tales from the Arabian Nights*. New York: Rand McNally and Company, 1985.
- Wiggin, Kate Douglas. *The Arabian Nights: Their Best-Known Tales (Scribner Classics)*. New York: Atheneum, 1993.

### ADDITIONAL FOLKTALE RESOURCES

- Bordewich, Fergus M. *Peach Blossom Spring*. New York: Green Tree Press, 1994.
- Caduto, Michael J. *Earth Tales from Around the World*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1997.
- Gavin, Jamila. *Our Favorite Stories*. New York: DK Publishing, Inc., 1997.
- Ingpen, Robert and Barbara Hayes. *Folktales & Fables of the Americas & the Pacific*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1999.
- Leeming, David Adams. *The Dictionary of Folklore*. New York: Franklin Watts, 2002.
- Martin, Rafe. *Mysterious Tales of Japan*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1996.
- Matthews, John. *The Beautiful Book of Giants, Ghosts and Goblins: Traditional Tales from Around the World*. New York: Barefoot Books, 1999.
- Milford, Susan. *Tales Alive: Ten Multicultural Folktales with Activities*. Charlotte, VT: Williamson Publishing, 1995.
- Miller, Moira. *The Moon Dragon*. New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1989.
- Pearson, Maggie. *The Fox and the Rooster & Other Tales*. Waukesha, WI: Tiger Lily Press, 1997.
- Shannon, George. *The Oryx Multicultural Folktale Series: A Knock at the Door*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 1992.
- Sierra, Judy and Robert Kaminski. *Multicultural Folktales: Stories to tell Young Children*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 1991.

### WEBSITES

#### Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves

<http://www.2020site.org/robbinhood/alibaba.html>

<http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/alibaba.html>

**Aladdin:** <http://lang.thefreelibrary.com/Arabian-Knights/1-28>

#### Folktales

[http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/folktale\\_allfolktale.htm](http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/folktale_allfolktale.htm)

<http://www.pantheon.org/areas/folklore/folktales/articles.html>

## ACADEMIC CONTENT STANDARDS

### NATIONAL STANDARDS: LANGUAGE ARTS

#### Grades K-2

**Standard 1:** Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process.

**Benchmark 7:** Writes in a variety of forms of genres (e.g., picture books, friendly letters, stories, poems, information pieces, invitations, personal experience narratives, messages, responses to literature).

**Standard 6:** Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts.

**Benchmark 1:** Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of familiar literary passages and texts (e.g., fairy tales, folktales, fiction, nonfiction, legends, fables, myths, poems, nursery rhymes, picture books, predictable books).

**Benchmark 2:** Knows the basic characteristics of familiar genres (e.g., picture books, fairy tales, nursery rhymes).

**Benchmark 3:** Knows setting, main characters, main events, sequence and problems in stories.

**Benchmark 4:** Knows the main ideas of theme of a story.

### OHIO STANDARDS: LANGUAGE ARTS

**Concepts in Print, Comprehension Strategies and Self-Monitoring Strategies:** Students develop and learn to apply strategies that help them to comprehend and interpret informational and literary texts. Reading and learning to read are problem-solving processes that require strategies for the reader to make sense of written language and remain engaged with texts. Beginners develop basic concepts about print and how books work. As strategic readers, students learn to analyze and evaluate texts to demonstrate their understanding of text. Additionally, students learn to self-monitor their own comprehension by asking and answering questions about the text, self-correcting errors and assessing their own understanding. They apply these strategies effectively to assigned and self-selected texts read in and out of the classroom.

**Benchmark D:** Applies reading skills and summarizes, compares and contrasts information in text, between text and across subject areas.

**Literary Text:** Students enhance their understanding of the human story by reading literary texts that represent a variety of authors, cultures and eras. They learn to apply the reading process to the various genres of literature, including fables, folk tales, short stories, novels, poetry and drama. They demonstrate their comprehension by describing and discussing the elements of literature, analyzing the author's use of language, comparing and contrasting texts, inferring meaning and responding to text in critical and creative ways. Strategic readers learn to explain, analyze and critique literary text to achieve deep understanding.

**Benchmark A:** Compares and contrasts plot across literary works.

**Benchmark B:** Uses supporting details to identify and describe main ideas, characters and setting.

**Benchmark C:** Recognizes the defining characteristics and features of different types of literary forms and genres.

**Benchmark E:** Identifies the theme of a literary text.

**Writing Process:** Students' writing develops when they regularly engage in the major phases of the writing process. The writing process includes the phases of prewriting, drafting, revising and editing, and publishing. They learn to plan their writing for different purposes and audiences. They learn to apply their writing skills in increasingly sophisticated ways to create and produce compositions that reflect effective word and grammatical choices. Students develop revision strategies to improve the content, organization and language of their writing. Students also develop editing skills to improve writing conventions.

**Benchmark C:** Uses organizers to clarify ideas for writing assignments.

**Writing Applications:** Students need to understand that various types of writing require different language and formatting, and special vocabulary. Writing serves many purposes across the curriculum and takes various forms. Beginning writers learn about the various purposes of writing; they attempt and use a small range of familiar forms (e.g., letters). Developing writers are able to select text forms to suit purpose and audience. They can explain why some text forms are more suited to a purpose than others and begin to use content-specific vocabulary to achieve their communication goals. Proficient writers control effectively the language and structural features of a large repertoire of text forms. They deliberately choose vocabulary to enhance text and structure their writing according to audience and purpose.

**Benchmark B:** Writes responses to literature that demonstrate an understanding of a literary work.