

Teaching Similar and Different Through Multicultural Fairy Tales

Melissa Freeman

Shawmont Elementary School

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Overview

The purpose of this unit is to incorporate multicultural literacy into the kindergarten classroom. In a diverse classroom multicultural literacy has become a requirement. Reading different versions of a well known fairy tale from different areas of the world will be an exciting way to bring multicultural literacy into the classroom. As we read different versions of the fairy tale *Cinderella* we will analyze them and discuss all the things that are the same and different. The students will use different strategies that help them to understand the difference between same and different, an important concept taught to kindergarteners.

Throughout this unit you will visit the rationale for this unit where I describe why multicultural literacy is important in the early childhood classroom. Next I will explain why fairy tales are a great way to incorporate multicultural literacy in the classroom. Furthermore, you will read and understand why I chose to use variants of the classic fairy tale *Cinderella*.

Rationale

Why Multicultural Literacy?

Multicultural Literacy has been defined in a variety of ways in a variety of text. Bishop, the author of *Multicultural Literature for Children: Making Informed Choices*, defines multicultural literature as “literature about people who are members of groups considered to be outside the socio-political mainstream of the United States (Almerico, Barron, & Silverman). This definition eliminates the people who are members of the mainstream of the United States from being multicultural. In *Literature for Children*, the author defines multicultural literature as “stories about people in the United States outside the Anglo-American ethnic group (Almerico, Barron, & Silverman).” This definition eliminates Anglo-Americans from being part of a

multicultural society. The simplest, yet maybe the most correct definition of multicultural literacy was written by Anderson in *Elementary Children's Literature*. Anderson says that multicultural literature is "cross-cultural literature that includes books about and by people of all cultures (Almerico, Barron, & Silverman)." This definition does not exclude any cultures as being part of multicultural literacy, therefore including all cultures.

If we are to limit multicultural literacy to include or exclude certain cultures, that itself takes away from the idea of multicultural. A large assortment of children's books can be found in the United States that represent a variety of cultures. It is up to the teachers and parents to carefully select these texts to represent the cultural diversity of our nation. Representing the cultural diversity of our nation will help children to have a respect for all, to have tolerance of all, and portray inclusiveness (Almerico, Barron, & Silverman).

In order to represent the cultural diversity of your classroom you need to do some research on your students. Find out if the students in your class, their parents, and/or their grandparents speak another language. Where were they born? Where were their parents born? What holidays, if any, do they celebrate? Discovering the answers to these questions will help you to pick the best stories, poems, books, fairy tales, etc. to meet the cultural diversity of your classroom. Also look outside of your classroom to your school and neighborhood and incorporate all the cultures you see to the best of your ability.

Reading multicultural literature to children allows for children to develop a positive attitude about their own ethnicity, to feel as they are part of a community of people, and to develop rich vocabulary. Multicultural literature can be fiction, non-fiction, folktales, fairy tales, poems, etc. as long as it portrays the characters in an accurate, positive, non-stereotypical way. Reading positive stories about a child's own ethnic group can increase one's self esteem and make them feel as if they are part of a whole group.

Multicultural literacy has become a necessity in a diverse classroom. Multicultural literacy represents the variety of ethnic, racial, and cultural groups around the world. Literature in general, can provide children a way in which children can identify and consider their own beliefs, actions, and emotions while also seeing the world through others' eyes. Multicultural literature allows this as well as continuing to affirm children of diverse backgrounds. It can function as a mirror or a window, giving children the opportunity to see a reflection of their own life in the book or to see into someone else's life through the book (Mendoza, & Reese, 2001).

Why Fairy Tales?

Children are able to see through fairy tales a common need for love, hope and security for all as well as the ability for all to possess feeling of happiness, anger, pride, and loneliness (Bosma, 1992). Fairy tales show these feelings and emotions, and show how differently people portray and deal with them. But, no matter what, all people are able to have, project, and deal with these feelings and emotions.

Fairy tales develop rich vocabulary for children. There is beauty and richness found in authentic written versions of fairy tales. Although young children may not understand all the words, they are able to understand the story ideas and develop pictures in their minds. They often can make great predictions due to many of the predictable narrative patterns in fairy tales (Bosma, 1992).

Fairy tales are an excellent tool for children to develop self-image and their own belief system. Fairy tales have taken adult ideas and have been institutionalized for children. Zipes has marked six key features that show how the fairy tale, that was originally written for adults has been institutionalized for children:

“(a) The social function of the fairy tale must be didactic and teach a lesson that corroborates the code of civility as it was being developed at that time; (b) it must be short so that children can remember and memorize it and so that both adults and children can repeat it orally...; (c) it must pass the censorship of adults so that it can be easily circulated; (d) it must address social issues such as obligation, sex roles, class differences, power, and decorum so that it will appeal to adults, especially those who publish and publicize the tales; (e) it must be suitable to be used with children in a schooling situation; and (f) it must reinforce a notion of power within the children of the upper classes and suggest ways for them to maintain power (Zipes, 1994).”

Fairy tales are a great way to teach shared and guided reading. In most cases, fairy tales contain a clear story structure. The setting, characters, and problem are often clearly stated in the beginning of the story. Fairy tales also help children to comprehend the difference between real and make believe. Finally, because these stories have many layers of meaning, these lessons can be adapted for a variety of developmental levels.

Why Cinderella?

Cinderella is best defined as tale type ATU 510A in the Aarne-Thompson index of folktales. Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, states “The word "cinderella" has, by analogy, come to mean one whose attributes are unrecognized, or one who unexpectedly achieves recognition or success after a period of obscurity and neglect.” This is the commonality with all the Cinderella stories.

Cinderella dates back to 850 CE, written in China titled *Ye Xian* by Duan Chengshi. Following this, there have been hundreds of other variants of Cinderella written all around the world. The one we are most familiar with, the one Walt Disney’s animated film was based on, was Charles Perrault’s *Cendrillon*. In Perrault’s version of Cinderella he add two morals to his

story. The first moral, good grace is worth more than mere beauty, and the second, one needs a good godmother or godfather to succeed in life (Haase, 2008).

Cinderella have been tailored, rewritten, and parodied. It has been taken to different historical periods such as in *Cinderella: An Art Deco Love Story* written by Lynn and David Roberts. Several children's authors have turned the story of Cinderella into an animal tale, creating enjoyable picture books. Most important of all many authors have written Cinderella in cultures around the world. For example the Caribbean version *Cendrillon* written by Robert D. San Souci and Brian Pinkney and the Egyptian version, *Egyptian Cinderella*, written by Shirley Climo. Reading fairy tales from different cultures around the world can be a creative way to develop children's vocabulary. It can also be interesting for children to see how the same story theme can vary from one country to another.

Many children are already familiar with the tale of Cinderella. They may have been read one of the many versions or most likely seen Walt Disney's version of Cinderella. Choosing Cinderella as the main fairy tales to analyze different versions of is a fairy tale that will keep children's interests. It is a fairy tale that encompasses a sense of life, familiarity, surprise, beauty, wonder, magic, success and several other aspects that will keep a child's interest.

I chose three different versions of Cinderella that would work best with the backgrounds of the children in my class this year. The versions of Cinderella can easily be changed and the lessons easily adapted for each version. When choosing your versions you can refer to *Cinderella: A Casebook* by Alan Dundes. This book explores the timeless tale of Cinderella over a period of more than 100 years.

Objectives

This unit is intended for students in kindergarten. The objectives of the unit will include the following:

- The students will discover similarities and differences among different versions of the classic fairy tale "Cinderella".
- The students will develop comprehension skills through listening to and examining different versions of the classic fairy tale "Cinderella".
- The students will apply map skills as we explore different versions of "Cinderella" from all over the world.

Strategies

Shared Reading

During shared reading the entire class is read one story aloud. During this story time all the students are able to hear the story and see the pictures. Shared reading will be used to begin most lessons. Shared reading is a valuable tool to model reading for children. It also gives students rich and authentic literature experience even at their earliest stages of reading. Advanced readers are able to be challenged by the language of the selections and with the support of the teacher, students who are not as developed in reading are still gaining reading skills needed for success.

Think-Pair-Share

Think-Pair-Share is another strategy that will be used. During Think-Pair-Share students will think in their head for several minutes about a question or idea, then they will turn to the person next to them and share their thoughts. Think-Pair-Share allows for an increase in the quality of student responses. It gives students time to think and respond to questions or prompts. It also relieves the pressure off of students who may be intimidated to respond in front of the whole group. As students are discussing their responses they are also talking out their answers and are able to make better sense of their ideas.

Activating Prior Knowledge

The teacher will activate prior knowledge through each lesson. Through activating prior knowledge teachers are helping children to connect the text to what they already know. Activating prior knowledge helps students to begin to make connections to the new text they will be reading. When students are able to make connections to text they become more invested in the text they are reading or listening to.

Graphic Organizers

Students will use graphic organizers throughout this unit. Graphic organizers are a tool that allows students to visual express ideas and concepts. When students use graphic organizers they are able to see undiscovered patterns and relationships that they may not have seen by only simply reading or listening to a story. Graphic organizers also help to facilitate conversation about the story and make an excellent reference.

Modeling

Modeling will be used by the teacher to help convey understanding of new ideas and methods. Modeling is when the teacher demonstrates how to complete different activities by saying aloud the thought process.

Classroom Activities:

This unit has six activities based on different variations of Cinderella. The time frame for each lesson is approximately 45 minutes.

*Lesson 1: Cinderella -- France*Objectives:

- Students will listen and respond to the story *Cinderella* by Charles Perrault.
- Students will be able to locate France on the world map.
- The students will be able to identify the characters, setting, and plot of the story.
- The students will create a story map showing the characters, setting, and the plot.

Materials:

- *Cinderella* by Charles Perrault
- A story map best suited for your students showing characters, setting, and plot.

Procedure:

Introduce the story *Cinderella* told by Charles Perrault. Tell the children this story was written in France more than 300 years ago and takes place in France. Together find France on a world map. Activate any knowledge of France with students by using photographs and discussing famous French landmarks such as the Eiffel tower and/or French foods such as croissants. Then read the story aloud to the children.

After reading the story *Cinderella* told by Charles Perrault ask the students several questions about the story. Some questions you might ask are:

- Who are the main characters?
- What kind of person was Cinderella?
- What problem did she face? How was it solved?
- How did her godmother help?

- How did the Prince find Cinderella?

Then have the students complete a story map for *Cinderella* told by Charles Perrault. The map should show the characters, setting, and plot.

Extension:

Discuss with children all the jobs Cinderella had to do for her step-mother and sisters. Discuss the jobs that their family does in their home. Which chores are theirs? Create the sentence starter, “At home, my job(s) are...” Have students complete the story starter.

Lesson 2: Cinderella: Ireland – Day 1 of 2

Objectives:

- The students will be able to listen and respond to the story *The Irish Cinderlad* by Shirley Climo.
- The students will be able to locate Ireland on the world map.
- The students will be able to identify the characters, setting, and plot of the story.
- The students will create a story map to show the characters, setting, and plot.

Materials:

- *The Irish Cinderlad* by Shirley Climo
- Pictures of Ireland
- A story map best suited for your students showing characters, setting, and plot.

Procedure:

Introduce the story *The Irish Cinderlad* by Shirley Climo to the children. Tell children that this story is from Ireland and locate Ireland on the map. Activate any knowledge of Ireland to your students by showing them pictures. Explain that Ireland is completely surrounded by water making it an island. Ireland has been called Emerald Isle because it is an island that is known for its infinite green fields.

Read the story *The Irish Cinderlad* aloud to the students. After reading the story ask the students several questions about the story. Some questions you might ask are:

- Who are the main characters?
- Where does this story take place?
- What emotions does Princess Finola have in this story? Why?
- Why does it take so long for Princess Finola to find Becan?

Then have the students complete a story map for *The Irish Cinderlad* by Shirley Climo. The map should show the characters, setting, and plot.

Extension:

Connect the words from the Irish language to their English translations. On sentence strips write several of the Irish words from the story. For example, Becan, wee, and lad. Then write their English translation. Have students help match the Irish word to its English translation using a pocket chart.

Lesson 3: Cinderella: Ireland – Day 2 of 2

Objective:

- The students will be able to recall information for the story *The Irish Cinderlad* by Shirley Climo and *Cinderella* by Charles Perrault.
- The students will create a venn diagram to show the similarities and differences in the two versions of Cinderella.

Materials:

- *The Irish Cinderlad* by Shirley Climo
- *Cinderella* by Charles Perrault
- Prepare a large venn diagram to compare the similarities and differences of the two versions of Cinderella.

Procedure:

Display both *Cinderella* by Charles Perrault and *The Irish Cinderlad* by Shirley Climo. Review with the students the characters, setting, and plot in each different story. Begin to discuss how these stories have things that are the same and things that are different. Show the students a venn

diagram. Explain how the middle where both circles are we will write the things that were the same in both stories. Then on the left circle we will write only the things that happened in *Cinderella* and on the right circle we will write only the things that happened in *The Irish Cinderlad*. Complete the venn diagram as a class.

Extension:

Give students a venn diagram on 8 ½” by 11”. Have them complete their venn diagram for the two stories choosing one element that is the same and one element that is different for each story.

Lesson 4: Cinderella -- Africa

Objectives:

- The students will be able to listen and respond to the story *Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale* written and illustrated by John Steptoe.
- The students will be able to locate Africa on the world map.
- The students will be able to make predictions.
- The students will be able to identify the characters, setting, and plot in the story.
- The students will create a story map to show the characters, setting, and plot.

Materials:

- *Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale* by John Steptoe
- A story map best suited for your students showing characters, setting, and plot.

Procedure:

Introduce the story *Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale* written and illustrated by John Steptoe. Tell the children this story is an African tale that takes place in an African rainforest. Together find Africa on a world map. Explain to the students that this version of Cinderella is a little different than the others. For example it takes place in an African rainforest. Show the students pictures of Africa, specifically of African rainforests. Ask the students how to predict what this version of Cinderella might be like. Then read the story aloud to the children. Confirm any accurate predictions made. Stop throughout the reading for students to point out similarities and/or differences from the previously read versions of Cinderella.

After reading the story *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale* ask the students several questions about the story. Some questions you might ask are:

- Who are the main characters?
- What kind of person was Nyasha?
- What kind of person was Manyara?
- What problem did she face? How was it solved?

Then have the students complete a story map. The map should show the characters, setting, and plot.

Extension:

The continent of Africa has a variety of beautiful animals. Have each student pick an animal to research at home. Have the students bring in three facts about their animals. Then have each student create a book about their animal with a cover page and a page for each fact. Students can share their books with the class.

Lesson 5: Cumulative Project (Part 1 of 3)

Objectives

- Students will begin to brainstorm their own version of Cinderella.
- Students will complete the first step of pre-writing, completing a story web with their characters, setting, and plot.

Materials:

- *The Irish Cinderlad* by Shirley Climo
- *Cinderella* by Charles Perrault
- *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale* by John Steptoe
- The venn diagrams previously completed by the class
- Blank story webs

Procedure

Review with the children the three different versions of Cinderella that have already been read as a class. Review the venn diagrams showing similarities and differences. Explain to the children that it will now be their turn to be the author and the illustrator! Have the students close their eyes for a couple minutes and just think about what they would want their version of Cinderella to be like. Remind them to think about the characters, the setting, and the plot. Then have students Think-Pair-Share about their idea for a story. Show students a pre-writing story web. Instruct students to write or draw the characters they want in their story, the setting, and then the plot.

Lesson 6: Cumulative Project (Part 2 of 3)

Objectives

- Students will complete the second step of pre-writing and begin their first draft.

Materials:

- Students completed story webs for their own version of Cinderella from part 1.
- Blank lined paper

Procedure:

Model to students how they will use their story web to create their own story. Begin by reviewing a web that you have made prior to the lesson. Then model how to start a story. After modeling, instruct students to begin their first draft of the story.

Lesson 7: Cumulative Project (Part 3 of 3)

Objectives:

- Students will complete a final draft of their fairy tale.

Materials:

- Students first drafts from part 2
- Blank lined paper
- Drawing paper

- Colored pencils
- Card stock for book covers

Procedure:

The teacher will model to students how to turn their rough draft with the corrections made by the teacher into a final draft. Be sure to explain to students that a final draft is their best work. Show students how to draw their pictures to match the words on each page, just like the authors in the stories you have read did. After students complete their final draft have each student create a cover. On the cover should be the title of their story and their name as the author as well as a picture. Have students read aloud their version of Cinderella to the class.

Extension:

This extension requires work with another kindergarten or pre-k classroom. First, have the kindergarten class vote on their favorite version of Cinderella, *The Irish Cinderlad* by Shirley Climo, *Cinderella* by Charles Perrault, or *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters: An African Tale* by John Steptoe. You can make a tally chart, picture graph, or whichever way is best suited for your classroom needs. Then read that version aloud to another kindergarten or pre-k classroom. Following the reading have the kindergarten students pair up with the new class and read their versions to the other children. Encourage children to discuss the similarities and differences in the version that was read aloud to their version.

Bibliography and Resources

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Teacher Resources

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Student Resources

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Appendix 1

Standards

The Core Curriculum of the School District of Philadelphia is aligned to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Literacy. These standards include instruction on the following topics: Learning to Read Independently; Reading Critically in All Content Areas; Reading, Analyzing, and Interpreting Literature; Types of Writing; Quality of Writing; Speaking and Listening; Characteristics and Functions of the English Language; and Research. A few of the main standards are will be focusing on are:

1.2.C. Reading Critically in All Content Areas: Identify different types of genre.

1.3.A. Reading, Analyzing, and Interpreting Literature: Respond to and discuss a variety of literature through Read-Alouds and Shared Reading.

1.3.B. Reading, Analyzing, and Interpreting Literature: Describe the characters, setting and main idea of a story.

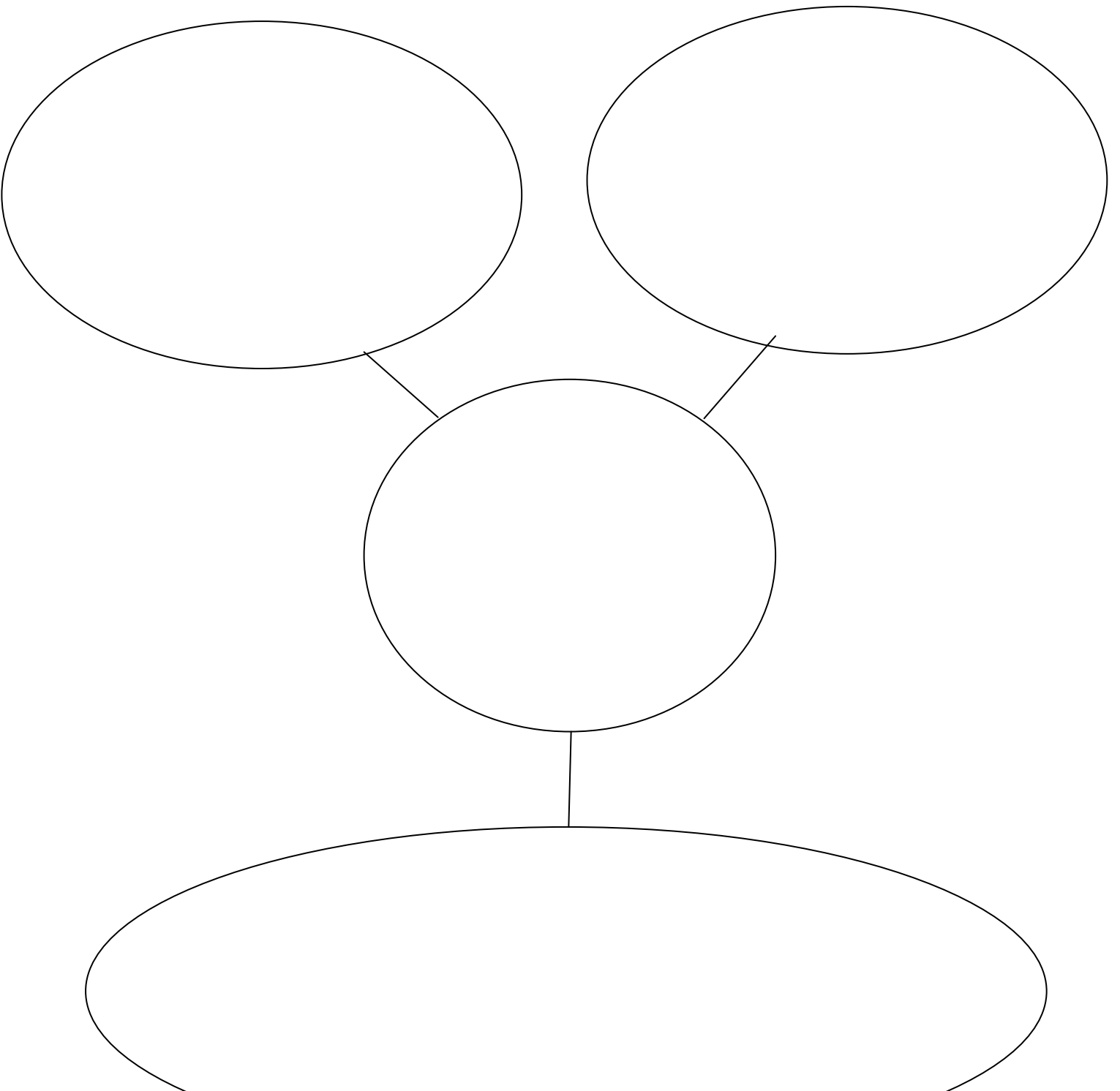
1.3.E. Reading, Analyzing, and Interpreting Literature: Identify dialogue in simple text being read.

1.3.F. Reading, Analyzing, and Interpreting Literature: Respond to and discuss a variety of types of literature.

1.4.A. Types of Writing: Use early forms of writing, dictation, or illustrations (e.g., story, personal experience, poem) to express ideas.

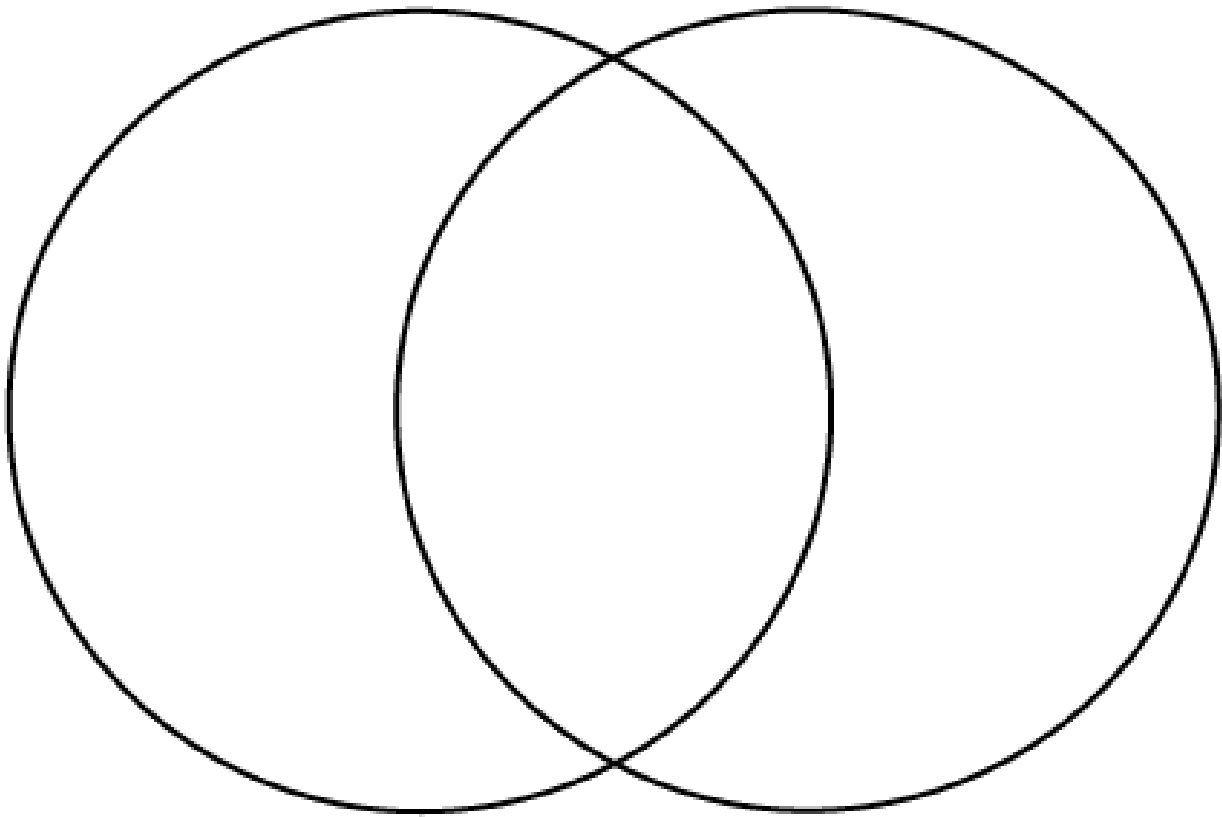
Appendix 2

Story Map



Appendix 3

Venn Diagram



Appendix 4

African Animals

Aardvark

Black Rhinoceros

Blue Whale

Buffalo

Cheetah

Chimpanzee

Elephant

Giraffe

Hedgehog

Hippopotamus

Hyena

Jackal

Porcupine

White Rhinoceros

Wildebeest