

THE BILLY GOATS GRUFF

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Language Arts: Literary and Dramatic Adaptation

Students will:

- Read “The Characters” and “The Story of the Opera”
- Read or watch the original folktale of *The Billy Goats Gruff*
- Complete and discuss the appropriate portions of the Activity Worksheets

Copies for Each Student and Teacher: The Story of the Opera, The Characters, The Original *Billy Goats Gruff*, Activity Worksheets Parts 1 and 2

Getting Ready

Decide which section(s) of the worksheet you wish your group to complete. Prepare internet access for *The Billy Goats Gruff* online listening systems and video. Gather pens, pencils and additional writing paper as needed for your group.

Introduction

Read “The Story of the Opera” and “The Characters” to your students. Then read or watch the original folktale together. Discuss the concept of dramatic adaptation and have students name a few adaptations they have seen in movies and on TV. Hand out the Activity Worksheets.

Guided/Independent Practice

Depending on your grade level, the ability of your students, and time constraints, you may choose to have students work as a whole class, in small groups, with a partner, or individually. Read the directions on the Activity Worksheet. Provide instruction and model the activity as needed. Have students complete the portion(s) of the Activity Worksheet you have chosen with opportunity for questions.

Evaluation

Have students share their answers individually or by groups and explain why they gave their answers. The teacher may want to guide the discussion with the sample answers provided.

TEKS

English Language Arts and Reading

5th Grade

110.16.B.5 Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Drama

Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of drama and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to analyze the similarities and differences between an original text and its dramatic adaptation.

110.16.B.15.B Writing/Writing Process

Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text. Students are expected to develop drafts by choosing an appropriate organizational strategy (e.g., sequence of events, cause-effect, compare-contrast) and building on ideas to create a focused, organized, and coherent piece of writing.

6th Grade

110.18.B.5 Reading/Comprehension of Literary Text/Drama

Students understand, make inferences and draw conclusions about the structure and elements of drama and provide evidence from text to support their understanding. Students are expected to explain the similarities and differences in the setting, characters, and plot of a play and those in a performance based upon the same story line.

110.18.B.14.B Writing/Writing Process

Students use elements of the writing process (planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing) to compose text. Students are expected to develop drafts by choosing an appropriate organizational strategy (e.g., sequence of events, cause-effect, compare-contrast) and building on ideas to create a focused, organized, and coherent piece of writing.

Correlates: Music, Drama

Gardner's Intelligences: Verbal-Linguistic, Musical, Interpersonal

Bloom's Taxonomy: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Evaluation, and Synthesis

Sources:

The Billy Goats Gruff Libretto

Warrack, John and West, Ewan, *The Oxford Dictionary of Opera*, Oxford University Press, 1992.

Peter Christen Asbjørnsen and Jørgen Moe, [De tre bukkene Bruse som skulle gå til seters og gjøre seg fete](#), *Norske Folkeeventyr*, translated by George Webbe Dasent in *Popular Tales from the Norse*, 2nd edition (London: George Routledge and Sons, n.d.), no. 37, pp. 275-276. Translation revised by D. L. Ashliman.

Online Resources: www.operatales.com; www.oxfordmusiconline.com;
<http://video.nhptv.org/video/2238439557/>; <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/type0122e.html>

The Story of the Opera

The Billy Goats Gruff is a one-act opera adapted from a traditional fairy tale, and features music by Mozart, Donizetti, and Rossini.

The story takes place in a forest clearing, along the road between the Billy Goats' home and school. The road crosses a bridge over a stream, and this bridge is the central focus of all the action.

The story begins as three billy goats named Lucy, Ernesto, and Dandini celebrate on their way home from school. From the other side of the bridge, another billy goat named Osmin watches them sing and play. When they begin a game of hide-and-seek, he declares that he will spoil their game. Hearing his voice, the three billy goats begin to feel afraid, but reassure each other and begin their game. Dandini is the first to count, and Lucy and Ernesto run off to hide.

Meanwhile, Osmin brags about being a bully. When the three friends return, he hides behind a tree. Then they hear Osmin's voice, asking sarcastically if he can join their game. The three billy goats are afraid, and decide to go home, but Osmin declares that he will not allow them to cross the bridge without a fight. He begins calling them names, steals Lucy's doll, and chases them all away. Then he puts up a sign next to the bridge reading "KLOSED," and leaves.

The three friends return, and Ernesto tells Lucy and Dandini that he recognizes Osmin, warning them about all the mean things a bully might do. They decide to avoid the bridge, taking the long way home, but Lucy refuses to leave her doll, which is still "hiding" in the tree on the other side of the bridge. The three billy goats muster up their courage to cross the bridge and get the doll, and declare that they will teach the bully a lesson. Osmin overhears them and steps onto the bridge, scaring the three friends away.

The three billy goats return again, whispering a plan to tiptoe across the bridge. Meanwhile, Osmin listens from a distance. Ernesto manages to sneak over the bridge to retrieve Lucy's doll. Osmin pops up to scare him and Ernesto is so startled that he throws the doll up in the air.

Osmin catches the doll, plays with it in a mocking way, and declares that he will keep it. He puts the doll in the tree and hides again.

From his hiding place, Osmin warns the three billy goats to go away, threatening the doll. Ernesto and Dandini leave to tell an adult about trouble they have been having with the bully, but Lucy still refuses to go anywhere without her doll. She confronts Osmin, asking him to give her doll back. She steps onto the bridge and approaches Osmin to take back the doll. Osmin threatens her and says she's "just a girl," but she does not listen. When Osmin grabs Lucy's arm, she hits him in self-defense, causing him to fall off the bridge. He comes out of the water on the verge of tears, and Lucy reproaches him, telling him never to mess with a mother. Then she asks Osmin if he is all right. He says he is, and then asks Lucy if she is all right. She says she is all right, but that her doll doesn't like to be thrown.

When Ernesto and Dandini return, they are surprised to see that Lucy has her doll back. When they ask how she did it, Lucy says that Osmin was nice enough to give it back. She even claims that Osmin has promised to play nicely and consider others' feelings in the future. When Osmin looks surprised, she whispers to him, asking if he would like her to tell them that a *girl* pushed him into the swamp. He agrees to this understanding, and all four billy goats become friends, joining in a game of hide-and-seek.

The Characters

Osmin: (baritone) A big boy billy goat who has no friends. Osmin is a bully. He is mean and gets enjoyment from making other people feel bad. At the end, he explains that he has been very lonely and really does want to play with the other billy goats. It takes getting knocked off the bridge by little Lucy to get his attention and make him behave.

Lucy: (soprano) A young girl billy goat who loves to play with her doll, Lucy D. Lammermoor, and her best friends Ernesto and Dandini. Lucy is small and not very strong, but she is very brave and not afraid to do the right thing. She is also smart, and is the reason everyone becomes friends in the end.

Ernesto: (mezzo soprano) A young boy billy goat who loves his friends. Ernesto is brave when he tries to get Lucy's doll back, but is also not afraid to ask for help when he needs it.

Dandini: (tenor) A young boy billy goat who also loves his friends, Lucy and Ernesto. Dandini goes with the flow and chooses to accompany Ernesto to ask a grownup for help with the bully.

Link to Musical Excerpts:

<http://www.operatales.com/billy-goat.shtml>

The Original Tale of the *Billy Goats Gruff*

Once upon a time there were three billy goats, who were to go up to the hillside to make themselves fat, and the name of all three was "Gruff."

On the way up was a bridge over a cascading stream they had to cross; and under the bridge lived a great ugly troll, with eyes as big as saucers, and a nose as long as a poker.

So first of all came the youngest Billy Goat Gruff to cross the bridge.

"Trip, trap, trip, trap!" went the bridge.

"Who's that tripping over my bridge?" roared the troll.

"Oh, it is only I, the tiniest Billy Goat Gruff, and I'm going up to the hillside to make myself fat," said the billy goat, with such a small voice.

"Now, I'm coming to gobble you up," said the troll.

"Oh, no! Pray don't take me. I'm too little, that I am," said the billy goat. "Wait a bit till the second Billy Goat Gruff comes. He's much bigger."

"Well, be off with you," said the troll.

A little while after came the second Billy Goat Gruff to cross the bridge.

Trip, trap, trip, trap, trip, trap, went the bridge.

"Who's that tripping over my bridge?" roared the troll.

"Oh, it's the second Billy Goat Gruff, and I'm going up to the hillside to make myself fat," said the billy goat, who hadn't such a small voice.

"Now I'm coming to gobble you up," said the troll.

"Oh, no! Don't take me. Wait a little till the big Billy Goat Gruff comes. He's much bigger."

"Very well! Be off with you," said the troll.

But just then up came the big Billy Goat Gruff.

Trip, trap, trip, trap, trip, trap! Went the bridge, for the billy goat was so heavy that the bridge creaked and groaned under him.

"Who's that tramping over my bridge?" roared the troll.

"It's I! The big Billy Goat Gruff," said the billy goat, who had an ugly hoarse voice of his own.

"Now I'm coming to gobble you up," roared the troll.

Well, come along! I've got two spear,
And I'll poke your eyeballs out at your ears;
I've got besides two curling-stones,
And I'll crush you to bits, body and bones.

That was what the big billy goat said. And then he flew at the troll, and poked his eyes out with his horns, and crushed him to bits, body and bones, and tossed him out into the cascade, and after that he went up to the hillside. There the billy goats got so fat they were scarcely able to walk home again. And if the fat hasn't fallen off them, why, they're still fat; and so,

Snip, snap, snout.
This tale's told out.

Folktales of Aarne-Thompson translated and/or edited by D. L. Ashliman

Link to the text of the original story: <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/type0122e.html>

Link to a PBS video of the original story: <http://video.nhptv.org/video/2238439557/>

Name _____ Date _____

The Billy Goats Gruff

Activity Worksheet Part 1 – *The Original Tale versus The Opera*

Operas often take their stories from literature. In *The Billy Goats Gruff*, John Davies borrowed basic plot elements and characters (not to mention the title!) from the Norwegian folktale of the same name. However, Davies made several changes to his story line and to the characters when writing his operatic version of the folktale. These changes are called literary or dramatic adaptations, and are very common when writers decide to tell a story in a different way. Have you ever seen a movie that was based on a book? It usually has quite a few differences from the original story. Those differences are adaptations.

Using the chart below or the *Venn Diagram* on the next page, list the similarities and differences you find between the original folktale of *The Billy Goats Gruff* and the Story of the Opera.

The Original Folktale	Both	The Opera

Name _____ Date _____

The Billy Goats Gruff
Activity Worksheet Part 1 – Venn Diagram



