



Lesson Extensions and Activities for *The Wild Swans*

Age Range: 8 – 12 years

Reading Is Fundamental

Google Voyager Folktales Unit

Book Description

Elisa and her eleven brothers live a charmed life with their father, the King — that is, until their father marries an evil Queen who is not nice to the children at all! Fortunately, though they're each cast out of the castle and sent on separate paths, Elisa and her eleven brothers meet up again in unique circumstances. Elisa is the only one who can return their life to normal, but it is going to take strength and perseverance to do so. Does she have it in her?

Vocabulary

- Sabre (or saber) – A heavy sword with a curved blade and a single cutting edge.
- Procession – People and vehicles moving forward in an orderly fashion.
- Nettle – A herbaceous plant with jagged leaves and stinging hairs.
- Plummet – To drop straight down at a high speed.
- Mail – Armor made of metal rings or plates that are joined together flexibly.

Prior to Reading

- Ask students if they've heard of Hans Christian Andersen, and note on the board what they share about him.
- Share with students that the folktale *The Wild Swans* was written by Hans Christian Andersen and that Hans Christian Andersen was born in Odense, Denmark.
- Walk students through the Denmark [Google Voyager Experience](#).

While Reading

- Have each student read a paragraph until the full story has been read.

Post Reading Activities

- Lead a discussion about the tale. Ask students such questions as:
 - What do you think the Queen's motivation is for sending Elisa and her brothers away?
 - Why does the Archbishop think Elisa is a witch?
 - Elisa has to persevere through pain to save her brothers. Why do you think she is willing to do this?

- Have students complete the Criss Cross, Memory Matching, and Word Search puzzles about *The Wild Swans* on RIF’s Literacy Central (<https://www.rif.org/literacy-central>).

Lesson Extensions and Activities

Here are some ways to further explore the story:

- **Arts** – Fata Morgana tells Elisa that she must make eleven coats of mail with long sleeves in order to save her brothers. Have students create their own versions of these coats using a range of materials.

Objective: Students will design and create artistic works based on a description.

Standards: National Core Arts Standards, Anchor Standard #3 (Refine and complete artistic work.)

Materials:

- Artificial feathers
 - Glue
 - Markers
 - Colored pencils
 - Ribbons and other pieces of other materials (e.g., cloth)
 - Construction paper
 - Pencils
 - Magazines that can be cut
 - Scissors
- **Science** – Elisa’s brothers take her on a perilous flight across the sea! Is what’s described in the story actually possible? Have students explore this idea by completing the “balloon ride” experiment from howthingsfly.si.edu.

Objective: Students will explore how flight works.

Standards: NSES Physical Science Standards Levels 5-8 (Motions and forces.)

Materials:

- Helium balloon
 - String
 - Small metal paper clips
 - Calculator
- **Writing** – Elisa and her brothers’ lives change when their father marries the evil Queen. The story’s heroine must persevere through uncomfortable circumstances to save her loved ones. Have students recall other stories that they’ve read that have a similar premise, and instruct them to write a comparison of the stories in their journals.

Objective: Students will recall themes from stories that they've read in order to compare major themes.

Standards: CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.9 (Compare and contrast the treatment of similar themes and topics (e.g., opposition of good and evil) and patterns of events (e.g., the quest) in stories, myths, and traditional literature from different cultures.

Materials:

- Journals
- Pens