



## *Folklore Secondary*



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# Standards

Standards as developed by the Louisiana Department of Education. Available online at <http://www.vermilionville.org/vermilionville/educate/lesson-plans>.

## Grade 8

### English Language Arts

- **Literacy.RL.8.2:** Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text
- **Literacy.RL.8.9:** Analyze how a modern work of fiction draws on themes, patterns of events, or character types from myths, traditional stories, or religious works such as the Bible, including describing how the material is rendered new
- **Literacy.W.8.1:** Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence
- **Literacy.W.8.4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience
- **Literacy.W.8.9:** Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research
- **Literacy.SL.8.1:** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly
- **Literacy.L.8.1:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking
- **Literacy.L.8.2:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing
- **Literacy.L.8.3:** Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening

# Objectives

1. Compare and contrast Louisiana's Beauty and the Beast and Disney's Beauty and the Beast in order to determine the effect of culture on folklore.
2. Participate in teacher-led discussions about various Louisiana folktales.
3. Interpret, identify, and clarify questions to develop knowledge of familial folktales to compare and contrast to those heard at Vermilionville.

# Pre-Visit Activity

**Materials needed:** Family History Questionnaire (document #1)

Teachers. We have made two introduction documents available to you on our website – a word document as well as a PowerPoint with pictures depicting the cultures that we represent. Please take some time to review these two documents with your class prior to your visit here. You can access them [here](#), by clicking on



- Introduction to Vermilionville and
- Vermilionville PowerPoint

Allow students 10 minutes to answer questions in the questionnaire (see document #1). Once they have completed the exercise, allow students to discuss their answers with the class.

# Anchor Lesson

**Materials needed: see references after each headline**

Students will gather on the porch. Ask them if they have any examples of folklore amongst their families and/or friends.

First, students will learn about folklore. Then, they will be divided into three groups and rotate the three different stations inside the house. If you do not have three adults leading the visit, you can stay in one big group and go through the rotations one after the other.

## Folklore

Dr. S. Ingram. Personal Interview. 29 March 2014.

Today we're going to talk to you about folklore. Although you might have heard the word "folklore" in your English classes before, today we're going to show you how it is a bigger part of your lives than you may realize. "Folklore" is the things we make, say, do, and know from the people in our groups.

Have two students hold two ends of a string. Each student should additionally hold a card. One card will have " $2+2=4$ " and the other will say " $2+2=$  (drawing of a rainbow)." Teacher will stand in the middle of the string.

This is where folklore comes from. Folklore comes from the things you do to carry on the beliefs of your group. It creates a rule book of behavior for people to follow so they know how to act to be part of your group. Folklore exists in our traditions, our recipes, and the stories we tell each other over and over again.

There are three different ways folklore is expressed within groups.

- Oral (what we say)
- Behavioral (what we do)
- Material (what we do with the things we own)

The "folk" of folklore is any group of people that shares any common factors. We are all part of groups. We belong to families, teams, churches, schools. Do you do something special every Christmas, like decorate a tree or open one present on Christmas Eve? That is behavioral folklore your family shares. Before a big game, do you gather with your teammates, all hands in? That is oral and behavioral folklore. Have you ever heard about the *tataille* that steals little children who don't behave? That is another example of oral folklore.

When you walk into the Boucvalt house at Vermilionville, pay attention to the blue ceiling in the bathroom. It is blue because the Acadians believed that insects would think it was the sky and would not build their nests there. There is a wreath of hair in the second bedroom. They say that the Acadians would often make wreaths out of the hair of their loved ones when they died or entered the convent. These are examples of behavioral folklore of the Acadian people, the things they did that marked them as a group. Today we will be talking about treasure folklore, fairy tale folklore, and the lore of the *loup-garou*-the Acadian werewolf. By the end of our lesson, we hope you realize that folklore is a huge part of our lives.





## Station 1 (oral folklore)

Saucier, C. "Beauty and the Beast". *Folk Tales From French Louisiana*. Baton Rouge: Claitor's Publishing Division, 1972. Print.

Teacher will read the French Louisiana Folktale of Beauty and the Beast, which is similar to the Disney version. Students will be listening and extracting themes as teacher reads. After finishing the story, teacher will ask the students what themes they found and will have a discussion on them, and on common themes found in folklore in general. The themes that will be discussed are after the story.

### Beauty and the Beast

Excerpt from *Folk Tales from French Louisiana*

Once upon a time there was a man who had three daughters, the eldest of whom was poorly treated. The other daughters thought they were superior to her. One day their father went to town. The youngest daughter asked him to bring them two beautiful dresses; then he went to the eldest and in a very rough manner asked her what she wanted. She answered that she wanted the most beautiful rose he would see. To this, he said: "All right".

The father went to town, and returning he passed by a beautiful unoccupied house around which there was a beautiful flower garden. The roses reminded him of his daughter's wish. He got out and went into the garden to pick a rose. There came to him a large and fat black beast that asked him what he wanted to do with that rose. He replied that it was to please his daughter. "Well", said the beast, "you may have it, but your daughter will have to come and sleep alone in this house tonight if she wants that rose".

So he went home, gave his daughter the rose and told her the story. "Well", she replied, "as long as I am so unhappy here, I had just as well try this experiment". So he took her to the big house. She sat down in a chair in the dark. After her father left, the fat beast appeared and went around her chair, not saying a word.

A while later she started crying. The beast returned and walked around the chair again and then retired to the rear of the house. All was quiet for a while. Then she heard groans in the rear, very mournful sounds, and she decided to investigate at the risk of being killed.

She advanced toward the source of the plaints until she got to the spot and asked for help because she was dying from fright. She heard a human voice. It was a prince in a bear's skin. He said: "This was a test to see if you loved me enough to stand it". He was the king's son, a prince. He married her and she was now richer than any of them.

He said to her: "The rose which you have there, that I gave you, is a magic rose. Whenever you wish to go to your father's, just hold the rose in your hand and say: "I wish to be at father's", and you will be there immediately without walking. Do likewise to return and whatever you wish the rest of your days, you can have".

Common Themes found in Folklore:

1. Magic objects – the rose
2. Acquisition and possession of wisdom – when Beauty finds out that the Beast is actually a prince and the prince realizes she does love him
3. Death Preferred to other evils – girl may have preferred death to her current situation in life (she was extremely unhappy)
4. King or Prince in love with a lowly girl
5. Beautiful exterior does not make beautiful soul



6. Generosity – girl wanted a rose rather than a pretty dress
7. Religion – purity/good morals

## Station 2 (behavioral folklore)

Dreyer, Edward, Lyle Saxon, and Robert Tallant. *Gumbo Ya-Ya: A collection of Louisiana Folk Tales*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1945. Print.

Teacher will read a *rougarou* (also called *loup-garou* or *werewolf*) folktale and then discuss behavior and why it is tied into folklore.

How many of you remember being told a story by an elder that scared you into behaving as a child? Do any of you know why you were told these stories or where they came from? Well, the story I will tell you today connects with Louisiana behavioral folklore. The rougarou has the body of a human, but it is covered in fur. He is seen as a human during the day, but at night, he turns into this ugly character with the head of a wolf. What other creature do we know that looks like this? (possible answers are werewolf, sasquatch, and bigfoot)

"The loup-garou is them people what wants to do bad work, and changes themselves into wolves. They got plenty of them, yes. And you sure know them when you seem them. They got big red eyes, pointed noses and everything just like a wolf has, even hair all over, and long pointed nails. They rub themselves with some voodoo grease and come out just like wolves is. You keep away you see any of them things, yes! They make you one of them, yes, quick like hell. They hold balls on bayou Goula all the time, mens and womens, both together. They dance and carry on just like animals them. If you see one, you just get yourself one nice frog and throw him at them things. They sure gon' run then. They scared of frogs. That's the only way to chase a loup-garou away from you. Bullets go right through him".

The story telling of this creature is often used to provoke fear and obedience. Elders will tell of the rougarou to persuade the children to behave otherwise, it will come get you! This is where the behavioral aspect of folklore comes into play. Children would obey their parents' wishes so that they wouldn't get attacked. A common tale is that the creature will hunt down and kill any Catholic who doesn't follow the rules of Lent. Other versions of the story detail the loup-garou to be under a spell for 101 days. When those days are up, they pass the spell on to the next victim by sucking his or her blood. What other creature do we know of that sucks blood? (Dracula, vampires, mosquitos)

Since folktales are told orally, details of a story often change according to audience, culture, and time period.

If you had to adapt this story to tell to your niece, nephew, cousin, or future children, how would you incorporate some of the modern culture?

Finally, here are some interesting facts about the loup-garou.

- The Audubon Zoo in New Orleans has an exhibit that features a life-sized mannequin of what the creature might look like.
- When the New Orleans NBA team formally known as the Hornets was filing for new name trademark, "The Rougarous" was one of them.
- There's a festival held in Houma, Louisiana during the last Saturday of October that celebrates the folktales of the bayous.
- The rougarou was featured in the AE Television show Cajun Justice.
- It was also featured in Supernatural as monster of the week.

## Station 3 (material folklore)

"Barataria and Privateering". n.d. Web. 4 April 2014. <[www.jeanlafitte.net](http://www.jeanlafitte.net)>.

"The Battle of New Orleans". n.d. Web. 4 April 2014. <[www.jeanlafitte.net](http://www.jeanlafitte.net)>.



Daigle, V. P. "Finding Jean Lafitte's Cave". *Les Raconteurs: Treasure Lore and More*. Langley, Linda, Susan LeJeune, and Claude Oubre. Eunice: Louisiana State University at Eunice, 1995. Print.

## Jean Lafitte



This man is Jean Lafitte. Jean Lafitte was a French man born in either France or Haiti. He is known as a legendary pirate, but he preferred to be called a privateer. A privateer was someone who was hired by the government to seize enemy ships and take their belongings and crew during times of war. However, pirates would also seize traveler's ships and take their belongings and crew without the government's permission as a means of gaining wealth.





This picture is the building that Jean Lafitte and his brother did business out of. It still stands in New Orleans. It was known as a blacksmith shop, but it was also the place where Lafitte would sell his stolen goods. Not only were goods sold, but slaves as well. Jean Lafitte gained much of his wealth from selling slaves.

In American History, Jean Lafitte is also remembered for his assistance during the War of 1812. The British tried to make a deal with Jean Lafitte. The British offered Lafitte money to fight on their side against the United States. So, Jean Lafitte took the money, but did not fulfill Britain's request. Instead, Lafitte told the Governor of Louisiana about Britain's offer and plans to attack the United States. Jean Lafitte offered a deal to the Governor to fight for the United States against the British in exchange for a clear record of all crimes of piracy against him. The deal was made and Lafitte offered his artillery and his crewmen to fight in the War of 1812. His assistance helped the United States win the Battle of New Orleans.

This picture shows Jean Lafitte's travels. The areas in red mark the route where he traveled and did business for years. Legend has it that Lafitte buried treasure all along this route. The treasure has never been found. Maybe you can be the first to find the treasure?



Below are two excerpts that the teacher will read to the class before leading a discussion.

### Finding Jean Lafitte's Cave

Excerpt from *Les Raconteurs: Treasure Lore and More*

Historians say that Jean Lafitte at one time had a small boat which he used to sail up the Calcasieu and Mermentau Rivers. He and his band buried a treasure on the banks of these rivers. On the banks of the Mermentau, Lafitte and his men buried the booty in a cave in the riverbank, where it lies to this day, waiting for someone to claim it. It is not enough just to find the cave, though. You must be pure of heart and unselfish of motive to be able to get the gold.

My grandparents often had visitors. Several people, both men and women came often because they loved to share old tales of adventure and ghosts. From these people my father heard a strange story of Lafitte's treasure.

One day two men of the community asked a saintly woman of the neighborhood to come with them to the spot where Lafitte's treasure was supposedly buried. They wanted her to go along to help them pray so that the door to the cave would open for them. You see, at that time, the cave was clearly visible, but there was a steel door guarding the entrance that supposedly could be opened only with the right kind of prayers. When they arrived at the site, the three of them knelt and prayed for hours.

Eventually, the door slowly began to open. Looking through the narrow opening, they could see the cave was filled with silver and gold and even a queen's dress that Lafitte had stolen.

Unable to wait any longer for the door to open completely, one man jumped up and yanked it fully open. The door suddenly slammed shut. It was impossible to open after that. The man had shown impurity of heart when he became impatient. As a result, they lost the treasure forever. Now the cave is no longer visible, and its location has been lost. High water many years ago softened the bank, which collapsed over the opening, covering it up. Lafitte's treasure is still there, waiting to be discovered by someone pure of heart.

### Superstitions in Finding Treasure

Excerpt from *Gumbo Ya-Ya: A collection of Louisiana Folk Tales*

- The best day to find treasure is the second day of the full moon.
- The best time to dig for treasure is during a full moon.
- The best time of day to dig for treasure is between 9am and 4 pm.
- If you talk, spit, curse or sweat while digging you will find none.
- A sleep walker will eventually lead you to buried treasure.
- Lights bobbing up and down in the swamps will lead you to treasure or will get you lost.
- A dream of light over a spot means treasure is there.
- No one who has ever shed blood can hope to find treasure.

Teacher will now lead a discussion on the previous readings using these ideas.

- What theme is found throughout the tale and superstitions?
  - Possible answers: virtue/purity of heart/religious beliefs. One must be pure of heart to open the cave. Many superstitions surrounding treasure lore indicate the belief that you must be virtuous to find a treasure.
- Is it a belief or a truth that there is a buried treasure on Mermentau River?
  - In folklore, people may so strongly believe something to be a truth that it becomes one to them.
- Custom of burying treasure found throughout Acadian life
  - Anywhere you go, there will be a tale about buried treasure





- Many old people still bury their money or hide it in their homes
- During Civil War, people buried money because homes were being taken over by troops, burned down, etc.
- During the Great Depression, banks crashed and people lost their money. Buried money and hidden money was better than putting it in a bank.

Ask students to share stories about family members hiding valuables. Have them contemplate where they would hide their valuables and sketch their own treasure map of where they would hide it.

### **Exquisite Corpse Activity (see document #2)**

After students have gone through Stations 1-2, they will gather on the porch to participate in a cooperative learning activity called "The Exquisite Corpse". This is a fun, guided writing activity creating individual poems from the students.

## **Post-Visit Activity**

Students will conduct an interview with a family member, friend, mentor, or care giver and ask them if they know of any folktales. This activity can be written or it can be recorded. Students will use the interview for the assessment.

## **Evaluation**

Students will write a one-page paper explaining why one of the stories taken from the pre-activity or post-activity was an oral, behavioral, or material type of folklore. The students will also compare and contrast their example with one of the folklore examples presented to them at Vermilionville.

## **Differentiation of Instruction**

Teacher will provide the following for differentiated instruction: Preferential Seating, Multiple Media and Formats, Read Aloud, Opportunities to Practice with Support



## Document #1 - Family History Questionnaire

Answer the following questions. Once you have completed, we will share some of your answers.

1. Are there any traditional first names, middle names or nicknames in your family? Is there a naming tradition, such as always giving the firstborn son the name of his paternal grandfather?

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2. Do you have a notorious or infamous character in your family's past? Do you relish stories about him/her? Do you feel that the infamy of the ancestor may have grown as stories passed down about him/her have been elaborated?

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3. Are there any stories in your family about how a great fortune was lost or almost (but not quite) made? Do you believe them? Are these incidents laughed about or deeply regretted? If a fortune was made, who was responsible and how was it achieved?

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4. What expressions are used in your family? Did they come from specific incidents? Are there stories which explain their origin? Is a particular member of the family especially adept at creating expressions?

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5. How did your parents, grandparents, and other relatives come to meet and marry? Are there family stories of lost love, jilted brides, unusual courtships, arranged marriages, elopements, run away lovers?

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## Document #2 - Exquisite Corpse

Use the following prompts to start your exquisite corpse activity.

It is Christmas, cold but cheerful

we gather round the tree,

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There is a story my grandma always told us

to make us behave, make us listen

it starts with

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The Hook Man lives under the bridge on the outside of town

waiting, waiting for

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Beware the Loup Garou  
the fearsome beast who

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Let me tell you about my family's treasure

we hid it

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This is what I know about where I'm from.

we are people who

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