A Comparative Study
of Cinderella Stories Based Upon American
and Chinese Versions
A lesson prepared for Grades 5 & 6
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Background Information: More that 1500 Cinderella stories appear throughout the world's cultures. There are interesting similarities and differences which seem to capture the imagination of students of all ages. A good way to understand a culture is to become familiar with its literature and using something as familiar as a Cinderella story makes for a great beginning. The books chosen are *Smoky Mountain Rose-An Appalachian Cinderella* and the Chinese version *Yeh-Shen:A Cinderella Story from China.*

Lesson Notes: Part of our district's QPA requirements is to have students develop graphic organizers of all types on a regular basis. A compare/contrast format seems most challenging to many learners, so the Venn Diagram will be used in this lesson. This lesson fits well into the 6th grade unit on Ancient China as well into the literature component of the 6th grade curriculum.

Introductory Paragraph: Although this lesson uses fewer of the actual texts from *East Asia Institute for Teachers*, the materials contained in them cannot be separated from the lesson presented here. This is a lesson that specifically teaches a skill from our school improvement plan. The enthusiasm for the subject has been heightened by the background information I have gained from my participation in the *Kansas Consortium for Teaching about Asia.* I have thoroughly enjoyed my participation, and will continue to utilize what I have learned whenever it fits into my school district's curriculum, regardless of the level I teach. I thank the *Freeman Foundation* for this wonderful opportunity.

Goals, Objectives, and Desired Lesson Outcomes:
The student will be able to:
• identify the similarities and differences contained in both versions of the Cinderella stories.
• create a Venn Diagram to demonstrate understanding of both versions of the story.
• write a composition (based and graded on the 6-Trait model) demonstrating the learner's understanding of both cultures presented in the books.
• orally share both the Venn Diagram and the written work within a small and large group setting.
• read one more version of a Cinderella story and compare/contrast that story with the Chinese version and create an additional Venn Diagram to demonstrate understanding.
Resources Used:

*Smoky Mountain Rose—An Appalachian Cinderella.* Alan Schroeder. Paperback version copyright 2000. $6.99 available from Amazon.com


*Cinderella Skeleton.* Robert D. San Souci. Available Amazon.com for $11.20 in the hardback version.


Kansas Curriculum Standards:

**Reading and Writing: Standard 1:** Learners demonstrate skills in reading for a variety of purposes. **Benchmark 1:** The proficient reader comprehends whole pieces of narration, persuasion, and technical writing. **Indicator:** The student will compare and contrast information in texts. **Standard 2:** Learners write effectively for a variety of audiences, purposes, and contexts. **Benchmark 3:** The proficient writer uses organization that enhances the reader’s understanding. **Indicator:** The students will use a variety of organizational strategies which may include webbing, concept mapping, graphic organizers, clusters, and brainstorming. **Standard 3:** Learners demonstrate knowledge of literature from a variety of cultures, genres, and time periods. **Benchmark 1:** The proficient reader demonstrates knowledge of the effects of culture on literature. **Indicator:** The students will recognize the impact of culture on a character. The students will compare and contrast customs and ideas within literature from a variety of cultures.

**Vocabulary to be Taught:**

Unusual vocabulary or work usage will be addressed during the reading of the books.

**Lesson Procedure:**

**Day #1:** Introduce the two books to be read aloud to the class. Discuss what
story elements of Cinderella that the students are familiar with and put them on the board for reference during the read aloud time. Read the American version (*Smoky Mountain Rose*).

Fill out the left hand side of the Venn Diagram with the important story elements.

**Day #2:** Review the story elements from day #1 and read aloud the Chinese version (*Yeh-Shen*). Afterwards call attention to the various “clues” given to the culture at that time, such as, the importance of tiny feet, gold, bones (oracle bones), beauty, good vs evil, etc. Hand out the partially completed Venn Diagrams and allow students time to fill them out completely. Allow students access to the read aloud books.

**Day #3:** Discuss the Venn Diagrams in a large group setting then allow student the time to write their rough drafts of the compare/contrast assignment. Review writing process if necessary.

**Day #4:** Allow time for peer and teacher editing. Write final copies.

**Day #5:** Hold an Author’s Chair for students to share their final piece. Teacher completes an evaluation of the oral presentation based upon a rubric. Students from the audience will be invited to comment Positively on the presentation. Example: ______, I liked how you used interesting verbs” or “________, I think you had really good voice.”

**Note:** Students who talk and discuss using the 6-Trait vocabulary become more aware of its meaning and tend to use it more effectively when they write. I use the terms like “Good writer aren’t satisfied with over-used or uninteresting verbs.”

This lesson is intended to be used over the course of a week, during the communications time allowed in a block schedule.

Long Term Assignment: Due no later than one week following the completion of the writing assignment: Read one additional Cinderella story and complete another Venn Diagram comparing it to the Chinese version. Have these books available in the classroom or on reserve in the school library for easy access.