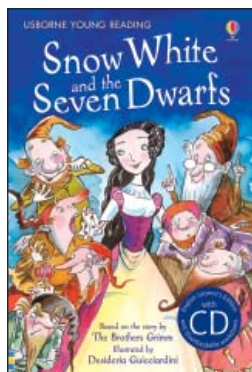


Snow White • Teacher's notes



Author: based on a story by the Brothers Grimm

Reader level: Upper Intermediate

Word count: 1730

Lexile level: 570L

Text type: Traditional fairy tale

About the story

One of the most famous fairy tales of all, Snow White tells of a Queen who wishes for a child “with skin as white as snow, lips as red as blood and hair as black as ebony”. The Queen’s wish comes true, but she dies soon after her daughter is born. The King marries a new Queen who is only interested in being the most beautiful woman in the land. One day she asks her magic mirror, “Who is the fairest of them all?” and, to her horror, the mirror answers: “Snow White!”

The Queen orders her huntsman to kill Snow White, but the huntsman lets her escape, and she finds the Seven Dwarfs’ cottage. For a while, she is safe; but then the Queen finds out she is still alive. Disguising herself as an old pedlar, the Queen tries to murder Snow White with a suffocating belt, a poisoned comb and a poisoned apple. Twice, the dwarfs save her, but the third time they are too late. They place her in a glass coffin, and a year later, a prince rides by and falls in love. He persuades the dwarfs to let him build a tomb for her, but when his servants lift the coffin, they dislodge the poisoned apple and Snow White miraculously revives. Hearing of this, the wicked Queen smashes her magic mirror into pieces.

About the authors

Many of our best-known fairy tales were collected and retold by the brothers Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm (1785-1863 and 1786-1859), from Hanau in north-west Germany. After studying law, the brothers became interested in philology and linguistics. They began collecting folk tales originally as part of their study of the German language, publishing these “Children’s and Household Tales” in 1812-14. The brothers’ collections were hugely popular even in their own lifetime, and have since been translated into over 160 languages, as well as inspiring countless movies, musicals, opera, ballet and other artworks, and being retold, adapted and reinvented over and over again for both children and adults.

Key words

Your students might not be familiar with some of these words in the story.

p3	sewing	horrified	curled	collapsed	heap
	snowflakes	obey	p20 trooped	p29 squeezing	p41 sprawled
	needle	p12 oak	p22 gathered	whipping	p42 sobbed
p4	ebony	alarm	sighed	sliced	bury
p5	misery	p13 tears	p23 panic	splattered	coffin
p6	vain	p15 brambles	disgusted	p30 gasped	p44 leaping
p7	fairest	tangled	p25 spat	p31 grave	tomb
p8	dreadful	p16 thorny	fury	p33 poisoned	p45 tripped
p9	rage	barely	p26 plotting	refused	astonishment
	snarled	cottage	disguised	sparkly	p46 overjoyed
p10	huntsman	p17 dismay	pedlar	entranced	meanwhile
	jealousy	stumbled	p27 cackled	p34 darted	p47 saucily
p11	lungs	p19 yawned	stroking	p36 envy	splinters
	liver	pillows	p28 looped	p39 crumpled	chorused

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Key phrases

p4	Her wish came true	p13	let me go	p32	all the way
p8	to pay [no] attention		to take pity on [someone]	p36	she set to work
p9	I won't have it	p17	to catch your breath	p41	Not again!
	she could bear it no longer [more colloquially,		her mouth watered	p43	he fell in love
	"she couldn't bear it any longer"]	p18	to help yourself	p46	to fling open
		p23	We'll take care of you		to sweep [someone or something] up
p11	I can't stand her	p25	no doubt about it		
		p27	Try it on	p47	Ask me another

Before reading

Your students will almost certainly have come across Snow White already, in other books or movies. Write up the title and ask what they know about her and her story. Explain that different versions of the story emphasize different details, and see if you can agree on which are the essential elements (for example, the wicked stepmother, the magic mirror, the seven dwarfs and their cottage, the prince...).

Reading or listening

You can listen to the story on CD or read it aloud to the students, take turns to read or read together silently. Each double page spread in the book is one track on the CD, so that you can pause between tracks or repeat tracks if your students need it. The first reading is in a British English accent, and it is followed by an American English reading. The words are exactly the same. After the story, there is a short selection of key phrases that can be used for pronunciation practice.

During reading: you might like to ask some of these questions.

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|-----|---|---------|---|
| p6 | Do you think that's a good reason for getting married again? The King didn't make the best choice – how do you think he could tell if the new Queen would make a good mother? | pp19-21 | Do these pages remind you of any other fairy tale? [Goldilocks and the Three Bears] |
| p8 | What do you think makes Snow White more beautiful than the Queen? [The Queen is so angry and jealous, it makes her face ugly.] | p22 | Why do you think the dwarfs aren't angry with Snow White? |
| p11 | Why does the huntsman have to obey the Queen? | p25 | The mirror seems to have quite a personality... do you think it likes annoying the Queen? |
| p18 | Would you do what Snow White does? [In real life, going into strange houses and eating other people's food isn't such a great idea!] | p35 | Snow White doesn't seem to learn – why do you think she keeps letting the Queen in? |
| | | p41 | Can you think of some words to describe how the dwarfs feel? |
| | | p45 | How do you think the prince feels now? How about the dwarfs? And Snow White? |

After reading

Ask your students: if they had a magic mirror, what questions would they ask? You could write down the best questions on the board.

Do you think there are people like the Queen in real life, who are obsessed with being the most beautiful (even if they don't try to kill people for it)? How could you write a modern-day Snow White? For instance, you might have a magic website or a magic photo magazine instead of the mirror.

In some versions of the story, the wicked Queen dies. In this version, she smashes her mirror. Do you think she can learn her lesson? What do you think could help her?

