How do folktales show which personal qualities a culture values?

Materials
In this Close Reading Pack, students read folktales that illustrate personal attributes that are valued by different cultures. Students must read closely to understand the story and to locate evidence to support their answer to the Key Question.

- **The Five-Headed Chief** A chief disguises himself in various forms and sees the true character of all who seek him.
- **The Baker’s Dozen** An honest baker learns the importance of generosity to his customers.
- **The Tree That Gave Fish** By caring for a special tree, a village is rewarded with a fruit that will keep them fed.
- **The Invisible Hunter** A great hunter remains invisible until he finds a kind and honest woman.

**CONNECTING PASSAGE**
- **The Empty Pot** The emperor rewards a boy for his honesty in presenting his best work, even though the boy feels he has failed.

**Student Response Sheet**

**Learning Goals**
These stories support student learning of the following Common Core State Standards:

- Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.
- Describe characters in a story and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

**BEFORE READING**

**Introduce the Key Question**

*How do folktales show which personal qualities a culture values?*

- Write the Key Question on the board and read it with students. Ask: *What are some examples of personal qualities or attributes that we value in our classroom?* (being kind, honest, friendly) *What characters do you know who show those qualities?* (Accept reasonable responses.)
- Tell students that they will read some folktales that they can use to answer the Key Question.

**Preview the Passages**
- Divide the group into teams of four and distribute the four passages (not the Connecting Passage) among team members. Have each student preview their passage by reading the title and looking at the illustrations.
TEACHING TIPS FOR CLOSE READING PACKS continued

• Introduce passage-related vocabulary by writing the words on the board and reading them aloud for students. (See Word Work)

• Distribute a Student Response Sheet to each student. Point out the Character Attributes Web on page 1. Ask a student to read the words in the web.

• Tell students to read the story one time to look for hard words and to understand what the folktale is about.

• Then have students reread and look for details in the text or take notes in the margins that help them describe the characters in the story. After they read, they can use the details to write their first answer to the Key Question.

DURING READING

Reading and Discussing the Passages

Each folktale illustrates different characters and cultures but through a similar theme of kindness. Students will first use this information to answer the Key Question about one folktale; team members will then discuss all the folktales to generate a class answer to the Key Question. Use the questions below to guide students as they read individual stories and use information from the story to write their first answer to the Key Question.

WORD WORK

The following words appear in one or more of the stories.

- compassion (n.) feeling for the suffering of others and wanting to help
- charity (n.) a sense of love and generosity toward people in need
- generous (adj.) willing or eager to give more of something than expected, such as time or money; large or plentiful
- honesty (n.) the quality of telling the truth
- kindhearted (adj.) having a caring or generous manner
- worthy (adj.) deserving attention, respect, or effort

- The Five-Headed Chief

1. What words describe the younger sister?
   (kindhearted, loving, giving)

2. What words describe the older sister?
   (selfish, thoughtless, rude)

3. Why did the chief turn into an old woman along the path?
   (He wanted to disguise himself to see each woman’s true character.)

My First Answer Sample: A folktale shows characters that have opposite behaviors, such as being rude and being kind and which attribute is valued.

- The Baker’s Dozen

1. What words describe the baker?
   (honest, hard-working)

2. How does the baker change in the story?
   (The baker learns to be generous.)

3. What is an important message of this folktale?
   (It is good to share kindness.)

My First Answer Sample: A folktale shows characters that learn a behavior, such as how to be generous.
AFTER READING: TEAMWORK

Answer the Key Question

- Have teams gather. Students will need their stories and their Student Response Sheets. If you have not already introduced the Reporter and Discussion Leader roles for teams, you should do so now. (See Using the Close Reading Packs.)
- Each group will share by having members retell key details and messages from their folktales and showing how they completed the Character Attributes Web.
- Tell the teams that their task is to look at each of the webs and decide which details apply to all the folktales they read.
- Discussion Leaders should ask questions from the Student Response Sheet to help teams focus on the information they need to answer the Key Question.

  What personal qualities are valued in the folktales?  
  (kindness, honesty)

  How do the characters show the valued qualities?  
  (through kindness and compassion to other characters; a character learns about valued behavior in a dream or through hardship)

- Tell the teams to write their team’s answer to the Key Question.
• Discuss with students the importance of using general terms rather than specific examples, such as character instead of boy, girl, man, or woman so the answer can apply to all the stories they read.

**Our Team’s Answer Sample:** Folktales show the personal qualities a culture values by telling stories that reward characters for demonstrating these qualities.

• Bring the teams together for a whole-class discussion, and ask each team to share its answer. Ask: *Is there anything you would add to the answer? Why or why not?* (Some students might want to add that the characters may learn through dreams or some supernatural way.)

• Facilitate further whole-class discussion using questions such as those provided on page two of the Student Response Sheet to arrive at a consensus in response to the Key Question.

**Confirm or Revise the Team’s Answer**

• Distribute the Connecting Passage, *The Empty Pot*. Share with students a culminating activity, such as: *Think about how this folktale uses key details to share a lesson.*

• Have students read the story in pairs, independently, or as a team. Tell students to read the story and decide whether this story confirms the class answer to the Key Question, citing details to demonstrate understanding of the culminating activity prompt. If not, ask: *What qualities are valued? How does this story change your idea of how folktales show valued personal qualities of a culture?* (Students may point out that this story emphasizes honesty over kindness.)

• Use the Mini-Lesson to provide additional instruction using the Close Reading passages.

**MINI-LESSON**

**Comprehension: Character’s Motive**

• Tell students that a character’s motive is why a character acts like they do. Explain that motives are based on what a character says and does. Provide students with a familiar example.

• Ask: *Why did Kodep from *The Tree That Gave Fish* want to stop cutting the branches?* (He loved the tree; he believed the voice.) *What words or actions help show his motive?* (He runs and tells the people in the village about his dream.)

• Have pairs of students look at their stories and find a character’s motive. Then have them reread the story to recall words, feelings, and actions of the character that support the motive. Students can record their ideas in a Network Tree to show the motive, and then words, feelings, or actions that support that motive.