**Genre: Parables and Proverbs**

Parables and proverbs are classified as folktales - stories that have been told and passed along by word of mouth then sometimes written down.

**Parable:** Definition:

* “an illustrative story answering a question or pointing a moral or lesson…it is parallel with the situation which calls forth the parable for illustration” (from Thrall, Hibbard and Holman, *A Handbook to Literature*, 1960, Odyssey)

Purpose:

* To teach a lesson through something or someone’s experiences
* To present an abstract idea through credible and everyday situations

Form and Features:

* Actions and consequences are key to the form.
* Comparisons between characters are usually important.
* There is usually more than one incident.
* The moral may be presented in the character’s dialogue or thought at the end or left to the reader to determine.

**Proverb:** Definition:

* “a sentence or phrase which briefly and strikingly expresses some recognized truth or shrewd observation about practical life and which has been preserved by oral tradition.” (from Thrall, Hibbard and Holman, *A Handbook to Literature*, 1960, Odyssey)
* “a truth based on common sense” (Margaret Mooney, Text, Forms and Features, 2001, Richard C. Owen.)

Purpose:

* To encapsulate a major idea within a few words
* To present a commonplace truth or useful thought

Form and Features:

* Often linked to everyday happenings
* Often handed down through oral tradition

It is interesting to distinguish between parables (often associated with Christianity) and proverbs; parables like fables have more straightforward lessons while proverbs need to be interpreted and applied in ones’ life like the messages of an oracle.

 adapted from: Margaret Mooney, *Text, Forms and Features*, 2001, Richard C. Owen.

Appendix #33

### Sinbad the Sailor

### The setting - Sinbad the Porter and Sinbad the Sailor

The *Arabian Nights*, the collection of stories in which the cycle of Sinbad is found, takes the form of tales told by the beautiful maiden [Scheherazade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scheherazade%22%20%5Co%20%22Scheherazade) over a period of a thousand and one nights. Each tale must so capture the interest of the King Sharyar that he will wish to hear it continued the next evening, for he has sworn to wed each night and have his wife executed the next morning, so convinced is he that a woman of good virtue cannot be found. At the close of the 536th night Scheherazade gives the setting for the tales of Sinbad: in the days of [Haroun al-Rashid](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haroun_al-Rashid%22%20%5Co%20%22Haroun%20al-Rashid), [Caliph](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caliph) of [Baghdad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baghdad%22%20%5Co%20%22Baghdad), a poor porter (one who carries goods for others in the market and throughout the city) pauses to rest on a bench outside the gate of a rich merchant's house, where he complains to [Allah](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allah%22%20%5Co%20%22Allah) about the injustice of a world which allows the rich to live in ease while he must toil and yet remain poor. The owner of the house hears, and sends for the porter, and it is found they are both named Sinbad. The rich Sinbad tells the poor Sinbad that he became wealthy, "by Fortune and Fate," in the course of seven wondrous voyages, which he then proceeds to relate.

### The First Voyage of Sinbad the Sailor

After dissipating the wealth left him by his father, Sinbad goes to sea to repair his fortune. He sets ashore on what appears to be an island, but this island proves to be a gigantic fish on which trees have taken root. The fish dives into the depths, the ship departs without Sinbad, and Sinbad saves his life only by the chance of a passing barrel sent by the grace of Allah. He is washed ashore on an island, where the king befriends him and appoints him harbor-master. One day Sinbad's own ship arrives in port, he reclaims his goods - still in the ship's hold - the king makes him rich presents, and he returns to Baghdad where he resumes a life of ease and pleasure. With the ending of the tale Sinbad the sailor makes Sinbad the porter a gift of a hundred gold pieces, and bids him return the next day to hear...

### The Second Voyage of Sinbad the Sailor

On the second day of Sinbad's tale-telling - but the 549th night of Sheherezade's, for she has been breaking her tale each morning in order to tease the interest of the homicidal king - Sinbad the sailor tells how he grew restless of his life of leisure, and set to sea again, "possessed with the thought of travelling about the world of men and seeing their cities and islands." Accidentally abandoned by his shipmates, he finds himself stranded in an inaccessible valley of giant snakes and even more gigantic birds, the [rocs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roc_%28mythology%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Roc%20%28mythology%29), which prey upon them. The floor of the valley is carpeted with diamonds, and merchants harvest these by throwing huge chunks of meat into the valley which the birds then carry back to their nests, where the men drive them away and collect the diamonds stuck to the meat. The wily Sinbad straps one of the pieces of meat to his back and is carried back to the nest along with a large sack full of precious gems. Rescued from the nest by the merchants, he returns to [Baghdad](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baghdad%22%20%5Co%20%22Baghdad) with a fortune in diamonds, seeing many marvels along the way.

Appendix #34a

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### The Third Voyage of Sinbad the Sailor

Restless for travel and adventure, Sinbad sets sail again from Basra. But by ill chance he and his companions are cast up on an island where they are captured by "a huge creature in the likeness of a man, black of color, ... with eyes like coals of fire and eye-teeth like boar's tusks and a vast big gape like the mouth of a well. Moreover, he had long loose lips like a camel's, hanging down upon his breast and ears like two arms falling over his shoulder-blades and the nails of his hands were like the claws of a lion." This monster begins eating the crew, beginning with the Master, who is the fattest.

Sinbad hatches a plan to blind the giant with the red-hot iron spits with which the monster has been kebabing the ship's company, and so he and the remaining men escape. After further adventures (including a gigantic python from which Sinbad escapes thanks to his quick wits), he returns to Baghdad, wealthier than ever, where "I gave alms and largesse and clad the widow and the orphan, by way of thanksgiving for my happy return, and fell to feasting and making merry with my companions and intimates and forgot, while eating well and drinking well and dressing well, everything that had befallen me and all the perils and hardships I had suffered."

### The Fourth Voyage of Sinbad the Sailor

Impelled by restlessness Sinbad takes to the seas again, and, as usual, is shipwrecked. The naked savages amongst whom he finds himself feed his companions a herb which robs them of their reason, prior to fattening them for the table. Sinbad refuses to eat the madness-inducing plant, and, when the cannibals have lost interest in him, escapes. A party of itinerant pepper-gatherers transports him to their own island, where their king befriends him and gives him a beautiful and wealthy wife.

Too late Sinbad learns of a peculiar custom of the land: on the death of one marriage partner, the other is entombed alive with his or her spouse, both in their finest clothes and most costly jewels. Sinbad's wife falls ill and dies soon after, leaving Sinbad trapped in an underground cavern, a communal tomb, with a jug of water and seven pieces of bread. Just as these meager supplies are almost exhausted, another couple - the husband dead, the wife alive - are dropped into the cavern. Sinbad bludgeons the wife to death and takes her rations.

Such episodes continue; soon he has a sizable store of bread and water, as well as the gold and gems from the corpses, but is still unable to escape, until one day a wild animal shows him a passage to the outside, high above the sea. From here a passing ship rescues him and carries him back to Baghdad, where he gives alms to the poor and resumes his life of pleasure.

### The Fifth Voyage of Sinbad the Sailor

"When I had been awhile on shore after my fourth voyage; and when, in my comfort and pleasures and merry-makings and in my rejoicing over my large gains and profits, I had forgotten all I had endured of perils and sufferings, the carnal man was again seized with the longing to travel and to see foreign countries and islands." Soon at sea once more, while passing a desert island Sinbad's crew spots a gigantic egg that Sinbad recognizes as belonging to a [roc](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roc_%28mythology%29%22%20%5Co%20%22Roc%20%28mythology%29). Out of curiosity the ship's passengers disembark to view the egg only to end up breaking it and having the chick inside as a meal. Sinbad immediately recognizes the folly of their behavior and orders all back aboard ship.

Appendix #34b

However, the infuriated parent rocs soon catch up with the vessel and destroy it by dropping giant boulders they have carried in their talons. Shipwrecked yet again, Sinbad is enslaved by the [Old Man of the Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Man_of_the_Sea%22%20%5Co%20%22Old%20Man%20of%20the%20Sea), who rides on his shoulders with his legs twisted round Sinbad's neck and will not let go, riding him both day and night until Sinbad would welcome death.

Eventually he makes wine and tricks the Old Man into drinking some, then he kills him after he'd fallen off - Sinbad escapes. A ship carries him to the City of the Apes, a place whose inhabitants spend each night in boats off-shore, while their town is abandoned to man-eating apes. Yet through the apes Sinbad recoups his fortune, and so eventually finds a ship which takes him home once more to Baghdad.

### The Sixth Voyage of Sinbad the Sailor

"My soul yearned for travel and traffic." Sinbad is shipwrecked yet again, this time on an island whose rivers are filled with precious stones and whose streams flow with [ambergris](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ambergris%22%20%5Co%20%22Ambergris). Yet there is no food to be had anywhere, and Sinbad's companions die of starvation until only he is left. By his wits he escapes, and finds the city of the king of [Serendib](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serendib%22%20%5Co%20%22Serendib) (Ceylon, [Sri Lanka](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sri_Lanka%22%20%5Co%20%22Sri%20Lanka)), "diamonds are in its rivers and pearls are in its valleys." The king marvels at what Sinbad tells him of the great Haroun al-Rashid, and asks that he take a present back to Baghdad on his behalf, a cup carved from a single ruby, with other gifts including a bed made from the skin of the serpent that swallowed the elephant ("and whoso sitteth upon it never sickeneth"), and "a hundred thousand miskals of [Indian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India%22%20%5Co%20%22India) lign-aloesa," and a slave-girl "like a shining moon". And so Sinbad returns to Baghdad, where the Caliph wonders greatly at the reports Sinbad gives of the land of Ceylon.

### The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad the Sailor

The ever-restless Sinbad sets sail once more, with the usual result. Cast up on a desolate shore, Sinbad makes a raft and floats down a nearby river to a great city. Here the chief of the merchants weds Sinbad to his daughter, names him his heir, and conveniently dies. The inhabitants of this city are transformed once a month into birds, and Sinbad has one of the bird-people carry him to the uppermost reaches of the sky, where he hears the angels glorifying God, "whereat I wondered and exclaimed, "Praised be Allah! Extolled be the perfection of Allah!" But no sooner are the words out than there comes fire from heaven which all but consumes the bird-men. The bird-people are angry with Sinbad and set him down on a mountain-top, where he meets two youths who are the servants of Allah and who give him a golden staff; returning to the city, Sinbad learns from his wife that the bird-men are devils, although she and her father are not of their number. And so, at his wife's suggestion, Sinbad sells all his possessions and returns with her to Baghdad, where at last he resolves to live quietly in the enjoyment of his wealth, and to seek no more adventures.

Here the tales of Sinbad the Sailor conclude with King Shahryar well pleased with [Sheherazade](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sheherazade%22%20%5Co%20%22Sheherazade)'s telling, and with no further mention of Sinbad the Porter.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinbad>

Appendix #34c

**Character Rating Scales**

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| **Scale 1: Humble vs. Arrogant** |
| **Okonkwo** | **Unoka** | **Ikemefuna** | **Nwoye** | **Ezinma** | **Uchendu** |  |
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| --- |
| **Scale 2: Selfless vs. Selfish** |
| **Okonkwo** | **Unoka** | **Ikemefuna** | **Nwoye** | **Ezinma** | **Uchendu** |  |
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| --- |
| **Scale 3: Follower vs. Leader** |
| **Okonkwo** | **Unoka** | **Ikemefuna** | **Nwoye** | **Ezinma** | **Uchendu** |  |
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| **Scale 4: Impulsive vs. Reflective** |
| **Okonkwo** | **Unoka** | **Ikemefuna** | **Nwoye** | **Ezinma** | **Uchendu** |  |
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| --- |
| **Scale 5: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ vs. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** |
| **Okonkwo** | **Unoka** | **Ikemefuna** | **Nwoye** | **Ezinma** | **Uchendu** |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Appendix #35

**Folktale: Pourquoi Story**

A pourquoi story explains why something is the way it is. Pourquoi stories have story elements: characters in settings with problems, attempts to solve problems or events, resolution and lessons or theme.

Definition:

* A folktale that explains the “why” (French, Pourquoi = why) of certain customs, physical events, or animal behavior. (from Harris, et al. The Literacy Dictionary, IRA, 1995)
* Pourquoi stories are short narratives that have been passed orally in all cultures to provide an explanation for creation, nature’s elements, people’s actions, and animal characteristics. (Kathleen Buss and Lee Karnowski. Reading and Writing Literary Genres, IRA, 2000)

Purpose:

* To tell why something is the way it is
* To explain natural and social phenomena

Form:

* A short story with a setting emphasizing a culture or a country; characters who are either people, animals, or nature; and a conflict centering on change

Features:

* Patterned beginnings emphasize the time of the story.
* The setting emphasizing a culture or a country.
* Characters (people, animals, or nature) are flat or not developed (not needing a lot of explanation). The main character will change by the end of the story.
* Conflict is one-dimensional and centers on how something has changed to the way it is now.
* The plot is not developed but linear, revolving around the character’s actions to solve the question of why or how.

Appendix #36