

FOLKLORE = FOLKTALES,  
MYTHS, LEGENDS, AND EPIC  
POEMS



# Folklore and Traditional Literature

**Folklore** consists of a people group (or “folk”) and all of its accumulated facts (“lore”) including: traditional customs, beliefs, knowledge, values, and attitudes of the ordinary people.



Folk + Lore = Folklore





A folk's lore is communicated by word of mouth until it is transcribed (written down); this is called “oral tradition.” Before people groups had written languages, oral tradition was the only means of preserving the history of a people and its culture.

# TRADITIONAL LITERATURE

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**Folklore** = Stories that have been handed down from generation to generation.

# Folklore

**legends**

values

**Epic  
Poem**

**myths**

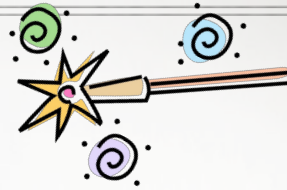
Facts

**Folk-  
tales**

Customs

# SOME COMMON FOLKLORE TRAITS:

❖ **Magical powers**



❖ **Battles with mythical creatures**



❖ **Making a deal with the devil**

❖ **Wishes**



❖ **Trickery**



# TYPES OF FOLKLORE

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- ❖ Folk tales
- ❖ Myths
- ❖ Legends
- ❖ Epic poem

# WHAT IS A FOLK TALE?

A folk tale is a story with no known author that usually teaches a lesson.

Examples of American folktales include:

Brer Rabbit, Paul Bunyan, and Three Billy Goats Gruff.



# WHAT IS A MYTH?

*A myth is a story that usually explains something about the world and involves gods and other superhuman beings. The Greek culture has the most famous collection of myths.*



# WHAT IS A LEGEND?

*A legend is a story often believed to be true and in which the characters are usually considered historical by some. Examples include Robin Hood, King Arthur, and Pecos Bill.*





## WHAT IS AN EPIC POEM?

An epic poem is a long, often book-length, narrative in verse form that retells the heroic journey of a single person, or group of persons. Elements that typically distinguish epics include superhuman deeds, fabulous adventures, highly stylized language, and a blending of lyrical and dramatic traditions.



## THE ODYSSEY

The Odyssey is one of ancient Greece's two great epic poems. The other is The Iliad. Both poems feature a larger than life hero, deeds of great valor, and the gods' interference in human affairs.

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## MOST IMPORTANT ODYSSEY CHARACTERS

- ❖ Odysseus – protagonist; has been away at war, and is trying to return home to his wife in Ithaca
- ❖ Penelope – Odysseus’s wife – she stays loyal even though Odysseus is away for 20 years
- ❖ Telemachus – son of Odysseus and Penelope
- ❖ Poseidon – God of the sea

# The Journey of Odysseus

