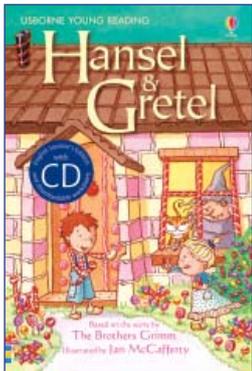


## Hansel and Gretel • Teacher's notes



**Author:** based on a story by the Brothers Grimm

**Reader level:** Upper Intermediate

**Word count:** 1636

**Lexile level:** 490L

**Text type:** Traditional fairy tale

### About the story

Hansel and Gretel are the children of a poor woodcutter, and the family never has enough to eat. One night they hear their stepmother plotting to lead them into the forest and abandon them. Hansel sneaks outside and collects white pebbles, and the next day he leaves a secret trail which helps the two to find their way home. The following night, however, Hansel finds the house door locked; this time, when they are led into the forest, he leaves a trail of breadcrumbs, but the crumbs are all eaten by birds.

The children stumble upon a house made of gingerbread and candy. An ugly old woman welcomes them, but they soon discover that she is a witch. She imprisons Hansel in a shed, planning to cook and eat him. However, Gretel tricks the witch into climbing into her own oven, killing her and setting Hansel free. The children collect jewels from the witch's house and make their way home, where they find their stepmother is gone. With the jewels, father and children can live happily ever after and never be hungry again.

### 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 stories were published as "Children's and Household Tales", originally between 1812-1814, but the brothers continued to add stories and adapt existing ones until 1857.

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, referenced 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	starving	p14	gloomy	crumbled	p32	toffee	p41	twig	
p4	grumpy		clearing	p24	blocked	doorknocker	p43	dawn	
p7	tummy	p16	moss	p25	panic	hobbled		brat	
	rumble	p18	snarled		pecking	bulging	p44	puff and pant	
	nagging	p19	moaned	p26	twittered	p33	croaked	clambered	
p8	sneered		scowled		shivering		visitors	slammed	
p10	pebble	p20	relieved	p27	suggested	p34	tricked	p45	frazzled
	nightmares		trust	p28	stumbled	p36	streaming	p46	goodies
p11	gleamed	p22	trembling		spooky	p37	hatch	p47	overjoyed
p12	pretending	p23	stale	p29	staggered	p38	confused		brick
p13	hunched		grumbling		distance	p40	plump		feast

# Hansel and Gretel • Teacher's notes

## Key phrases

p4	all we can afford Here we go again	p9	fell silent You never know	p34	couldn't believe their luck
p5	It's not my fault What with...	p11	wide awake	p37	bossed ... around
p8	The children will have to go How has it come to this?	p15	Oh no we won't	p41	Dear me all bone [more usually, "all skin and bone"]
		p22	Wakey-wakey, rise and shine	p44	Quick as a flash
		p24	He couldn't bear to...	p46	Taking pity
		p28	faint from hunger	p47	You don't need to worry

## Before reading

It is likely that some or all of your students will be familiar with the story already. You could capitalise on this by collecting images and showing them one at a time for students to guess the name of the story. You might use: forest, white pebbles, crumbs, witch (or a witch's hat), two children, gingerbread house.

What do students remember from the story? Make notes, and at the end you can see whether the points they raise are the same or different in this version.

## 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.

- pp8-9 Can you think of some words to describe the stepmother? And the woodcutter?
- pp14-17 Find all the words and phrases that help to create atmosphere in these pages (e.g. gloomy clearing, ghostly mist, shadowy forest).
- pp18-19 How does the children's father feel when Hansel and Gretel come back? How does their stepmother react?
- p23 Will the breadcrumbs make a good trail? What can you predict from the picture?
- pp29-31 How do you think Hansel and Gretel feel when they see the house? (Try to elicit a range of answers, e.g. happy, relieved, excited, amazed).
- p32 Why do you think the old woman's teeth are rotten?
- pp34-37 Compare these two double pages. What has changed from one day to the next? (Look for changes both in the text and in the illustrations.)
- pp40-43 Interesting question: why do you think the witch chooses to eat Hansel and not Gretel? (There isn't necessarily a "correct" answer to this.)
- pp46-47 Find all the words and phrases that show the story ends happily (e.g. safe at last, overjoyed, don't need to worry).

## After reading

What do students think is the scariest part of the story? What is the most exciting?

Have you ever been lost, or separated from your parents? What happened?

Hansel and Gretel is a story that really lends itself to creative follow-up. Students could make their own gingerbread house pictures using craft paper, and cut out pictures of cakes and candies from magazines to decorate them.