

Focus ON READING

Vocabulary

READING
COMPREHENSION

Ella
Enchanted

Gail Carson Levine

ACTIVATE PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Reproducible Activities

Focus Your Knowledge

Every book you read belongs to a particular genre, or class, of literature. For example, you might choose to read a mystery over a romance. Other people prefer poetry, biographies or autobiographies, historical fiction, or “how-to-do-it” books.

Do you remember any folktales or fairy tales? Most people are familiar with Snow White, Jack and the Beanstalk, Goldilocks and the Three Bears, and other colorful characters from the fictional world. In fact, folk- and fairy tales belong to the literary genre known as *fantasy*. A fantasy is a story in which fanciful, impossible things happen. Strange creatures, such as giants, ogres, and imps, make trouble for helpless humans, and magical creatures like fairies and elves clean up the mess. In most cases, the hero or heroine lives “happily ever after.”

- Think of some familiar fairy tales. In what time and place is each one set? Can you always tell what the specific setting is? Why or why not?
- What kinds of creatures appear in these stories? What special powers—for good or for evil—do they possess?
- Now think of the heroes and heroines of these tales. What strengths and weaknesses do these characters have? What special dilemmas do they face? How do they solve their problems? How much “outside” help do they need?

One of the most famous fairy tales of all time is *Cinderella*. The Cinderella story, in fact, is told all over the world in over a thousand different versions. The version that we know, however, is a blend of a French fairy tale (written down by Charles Perrault in 1697) and a German tale (recorded by the Brothers Grimm in 1812). In the novel *Ella Enchanted*, you will read yet another version of the Cinderella story—one in which the heroine is a little bit different.

- As you read, compare Ella of Frell with the traditional Cinderella. How do they differ?

Focus Your Reading

Questions to Think About

The following questions will help you understand the meaning of what you read. You do not have to write out the answers to these questions. Instead, look at them before you begin reading, and think about them while you are reading.

1. What clues in the text suggest the time and place in which this novel is set?

2. What details in the text add to the fantasy element in the story?

3. How does the author contrast Ella's relationship with her mother to Ella's relationship with her father?

4. What examples in the text begin to reveal Ella's character?

5. What happens when Ella tries to resist an order?

Check Your Understanding

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

- What “gift” does Lucinda give to Ella shortly after Ella’s birth?
 - curiosity
 - obedience
 - language ability
- What command does Mother give after Ella punches Pamela in the nose?
 - She orders Ella never to tell about the curse.
 - She orders Ella never to use violence.
 - She orders Mandy to make curing soup.
- How does Father’s palm feel to Mandy when they hold hands at the funeral?
 - cool and scaly
 - cold and clammy
 - moist and hot
- How did Prince Charmont learn of Ella?
 - Ella’s mother told him at a party.
 - Ella’s cook talked to the prince’s cook.
 - The king spied on Ella and her family.
- What does Ella put on when she and her father return from Mother’s funeral?
 - an embroidered black mourning dress
 - a dress of dove gray and scarlet
 - a dress of spicy green
- What does Ella find “disgusting to watch” when Dame Olga and her daughters pay their respects?
 - Dame Olga’s flirtation with her father
 - the way Hattie and Olive eat
 - Hattie’s method of counting all the windows in Ella’s manor
- Why, in Mandy’s opinion, has Ella’s mother died?
 - She took the unicorn hair out of her bowl of curing soup.
 - She went out too often and didn’t get enough rest.
 - Ella’s father has been too cruel.
- When Ella’s father first talks about finishing school, what reason does he give?
 - He wants her to not walk like an elephant.
 - He wants her to learn enough to help him with his business.
 - He hopes that she will become much better friends with Hattie and Olga.
- How does Father respond when Ella says he can hire a governess instead of sending her to finishing school?
 - There are no suitable governesses in the kingdom.
 - He is afraid Ella would be too lonely at home with a governess.
 - A governess would be much more expensive than finishing school.
- What two gifts does Mandy give Ella before leaving for finishing school?
 - a necklace and a pair of slippers
 - a book of fairy tales and a little porcelain castle
 - a necklace and a book of fairy tales

Check Your Understanding

Short Answer

Write a short answer for each question.

1. At what age, and under what circumstances, does Ella first learn that she has been cursed?
2. What does Ella remember as she walks down the spiral staircase when Mother is ill?
3. What does Father do when Ella begins to cry at her mother's funeral?
4. What happens when Char hands Ella into the carriage after the funeral, and how does Char respond?
5. What does Ella experience when she tries to resist her father's order to change her clothes after the funeral?
6. What does Hattie tell Ella about Father when the two girls first meet?
7. When Ella asks Mandy about the unusual carpet in the hall, what does Ella learn about Mandy herself?
8. According to Mandy, how has Ella already begun to show that she has some fairy blood?
9. How does Mandy respond when Ella asks her to help break Lucinda's spell?
10. When Father is angry, of what kind of toy does Ella say he reminds her, and why?

Focus Your Reading

Vocabulary Words to Know

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

menagerie—a collection of wild or exotic animals that can be visited and viewed

ferocity—fierceness; violence

disdainful—looking down one’s nose; scornful

relished—enjoyed greatly

diversion—something that draws one’s attention away from the present situation

prosperous—successful; enjoying good fortune

succumb—to give in; to die

stupor—a dazed state that can be caused by extreme stress

epithets—abusive words addressed to other people

ciphering—arithmetic; mathematical calculations

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

A **bailiff** is an assistant to a British sheriff. Bailiffs can serve people with official legal notices, including arrest warrants. In the Middle Ages, they could even carry out executions.

A **hydra** was a snakelike monster from Greek mythology. A hydra had many heads.

A **gryphon** (or griffin) was a creature from folklore that was half eagle, half lion.

A **centaur** was another creature from Greek mythology. It was half man, half horse.

Focus Your Reading

Questions to Think About

The following questions will help you understand the meaning of what you read. You do not have to write out the answers to these questions. Instead, look at them before you begin reading, and think about them while you are reading.

1. How does Ella's second meeting with Prince Charmont at the menagerie affect their budding friendship?
2. How might Ella's foreign-language skills prove helpful in the world beyond the manor?
3. What does the mother gnome see in Ella's future? What does she particularly warn Ella about?
4. How does the journey to school affect Ella's relationships with both Hattie and Olive?
5. What subjects are taught at Madame Edith's school? Why are these considered important?

Check Your Understanding

Multiple Choice

Circle the letter of the best answer to each question.

1. What does Ella do when she visits the dragon at the menagerie?
 - a. She accidentally lets it out of its cage.
 - b. She speaks to it in a special language.
 - c. She toasts some cheese in its flames.
2. Why does Ella try to break her curse at the menagerie?
 - a. She does not want Char to order her around.
 - b. She thinks the centaur will command her to do something dangerous.
 - c. The ogre orders her to come closer with the young gnome.
3. What do the Gnomic words mean that Ella uses to calm the young gnome?
 - a. “Every gnome likes to be at home.”
 - b. “Digging is good for the wealth and good for the health.”
 - c. “Early to bed and early to rise makes a gnome healthy, wealthy, and wise.”
4. What does Hattie get Ella to do during the coach ride to school?
 - a. She makes Ella give her the silver necklace from Ella’s mother.
 - b. She makes Ella give her all of her KJs.
 - c. She tells Ella to sit with the coachman.
5. What does Hattie see when she demands to look at Ella’s book of fairy tales?
 - a. information about centaur ticks and gnomish mining
 - b. “The Shoemaker and the Elves”
 - c. a map of Frell and a picture of Sir Peter
6. Why does Ella eat only a bite of bread for breakfast on the trip to school?
 - a. Traveling makes her stomach ill.
 - b. Hattie orders her not to eat.
 - c. She is afraid of looking as greedy as Hattie and Olive.
7. How does Ella help break the spell cast by the ogres’ voices on the way to school?
 - a. She tells everyone in the coach to start yelling so that they cannot hear them.
 - b. She speaks to them in their language, asking them to go away in peace.
 - c. She helps the coachman whip the horses into a faster gallop.
8. How does Sewing Mistress punish Ella for sewing three messy stitches in one hour?
 - a. She makes her stay after class to do the work over again more neatly.
 - b. She rips the stitches out and tells her to do one hundred neat stitches.
 - c. She sends Ella away without supper.
9. Not including Ella, how many girls sleep in Ella’s bedroom at school?
 - a. four
 - b. five
 - c. six
10. Why does Ella not excel at penmanship?
 - a. She finds it boring.
 - b. Hattie orders her not to do her best.
 - c. Writing Mistress never gives orders.

Check Your Understanding

Short Answer

Write a short answer for each question.

1. What kinds of creatures live in the royal menagerie?
2. According to Ella, in what ways are ogres dangerous?
3. How does Char get Ella to stop moving toward the ogre?
4. What does Ella do when Hattie orders her to pick up the dust in the carriage?
5. When Olive demands a present from Ella in the carriage, what does Ella give her?
6. Why does Hattie allow Ella to drink Tonic on the trip to school?
7. What finally makes Olive stop screaming after the ogres disappear from sight?
8. How does Ella look when she first arrives at school and joins the embroidery lesson?
9. How do Ella and Areida communicate when they do not want anyone else to listen?
10. According to Mandy's letter, what has the prince brought Ella as a gift?

Focus Your Reading

Vocabulary Words to Know

Study the following words and definitions. You will meet these words in your reading. Be sure to jot down in your word journal any other unknown words from the reading.

condescension—a superior air

odious—hateful; disgusting

devise—to invent

posturing—posing; acting in an affected manner to impress someone

skirmish—a small fight

paltry—inferior; trivial

vouchsafed—granted or given graciously

woebegone—miserable; sorrowful

convulsively—with abnormally strong contraction of the muscles; violently

biddable—easily controlled or taught

Things to Know

Here is some background information about this section of the book.

A **topiary** is a group of trees or shrubs that are cut and trimmed into special ornamental shapes.

The **phoenix** was a legendary bird that lived for hundreds of years, burned itself up, and then rose from its ashes to live again.

A **stirrup** cup was a cup that was offered with a farewell drink to someone leaving on horseback.

Knights were an important part of feudal society during the Middle Ages. They worked and fought for the lord and lady of the manor to whom they swore their loyalty.