

The Characteristics of Fables (and Fairy Tales)

Properties	Fable	Fairy Tale
length	usually very short (no longer than one page)	usually longer than fables and short stories
realism	more realistic than fairy tales (in spite of speaking animals)	supernatural elements: miracles, fantastic creatures and abilities
characters	mostly speaking animals representing human characters	mostly people, sometimes (speaking) animals
characterization	flat (not complex) human characters	distinct contrast between good & evil
ending	more or less realistic (open?) ending moral: explicit message to readers	happy ending
language	natural, mostly contemporary	old, fixed (stereotyped), repetitive

Interpreting fables: useful phrases ...

In a fable animals In this fable the animals	are personified. behave as though they were human beings. are metaphors for ... stand for ... represent ... are substituted for ...	werden als Menschen dargestellt. verhalten sich, als ob sie Menschen wären. sind Metaphern für stehen für ... stellen ... dar sind Ersatz für ...
Its purpose is	to describe ... to criticize ... to satirize zu beschreiben ... zu kritisieren ... satirisch darzustellen
Here, the author actually	refers to ... alludes to ... explains	bezieht sich auf ... spielt auf ... an erklärt ...
The moral	is not obvious. is explicitly added to the end in an extra line. is implicit / not directly expressed.	ist nicht offensichtlich – ist dem Ende explizit in einer Extra-Zeile hinzugefügt – ist implizit / nicht direkt ausgedrückt.
This fable can be interpreted in different ways:	1. ... 2. ...	1. ... 2. ...
It is full of	humour, irony, ...	Humor, Ironie ...
The author is obviously being ironical when he says