What are the elements of a fairy tale?
A fairy tale is a magic story which can not be true.

❖ Fairy Tales are a type of Folk Tale

❖ Fairy tales exist in a range of different cultures
Fairy Tale Conventions

❖ Traditional fairytales tend to have some very similar features in terms of plot, setting and character ideas.

❖ This is because fairy tales were originally used to teach children important moral lessons.
SETTING

Fairy tales take place in made-up times and places called settings.

❖ Set in the past.
❖ Fictional or supernatural world
SETTING EXAMPLES

❖ A land far, far, away
❖ A Magical Kingdom
❖ A cottage
❖ Wood/forest
❖ Castle
❖ Garden
❖ Dungeon
❖ cave

Imaginary forest
Gingerbread house
CHARACTERS

- Clearly defined good and evil characters; some are human and others are magical.
- Characters in fairy tales often have magical powers or magical things.
CHARACTERS

❖ Fairy tales often have royal characters such as queens, kings, princes, princesses and sometimes a castle.

❖ Imaginary characters like dragons, fairies, elves, and giants are often in fairy tales.
CHARACTERS

Victim, Hero, Villain

❖ A good female character, A princess. A beautiful but mistreated young woman. Usually need to be saved or rescued by…
❖ A good male character A handsome prince, A poor but clever young man who is rewarded for saving the princess by becoming a prince/ marrying the princess
❖ An evil male or female character who opposes the hero. Often motivated by greed, revenge or power.
SPECIAL WORDS
A fairy tale often begins and ends with common words or phrases.
❖ Many fairy tales start with the words “Once upon a time…”
❖ And end with the words “…And they all lived happily ever after.”
LESSON or MORAL

❖ A message that can be learned from the story
❖ Demonstrates values important to the culture
PROBLEM/SOLUTION

❖ Plot is focused on a problem caused by the villain that must be solved by the hero
❖ A difficult problem, often very hard to solve, is solved by the end of the story.
ENDING

❖ Has a resolution to the problem and a happy ending

❖ Often, the good guys will be rewarded and how the bad guys will be punished.
MOTIFS
A detail in a fairy tale that is repeated in the story

Common motifs include:
- Special numbers 3 & 7
- Magical creatures
- Magical objects
- Going on a quest
- Chants
- Enchantments
- Transformation
NUMBERS MOTIF

- Recurring numbers and patterns. Usually 3’s and 7’s
- Repetition builds interest or suspense in story
- Number 3 appears frequently
- Number 7 is less frequent but still has special meaning
- Number of characters: 3 little pigs, 3 bears, 7 dwarfs
- Repeated actions or events: making 3 wishes, building 3 houses
MAGICAL CREATURES MOTIF

❖ Characters who possess magical abilities and often serve as “helpers” for the good characters. (they can be bad)

❖ Magical creatures with special abilities include: fairies, elves, trolls, genies, giants, ogres, witches and wizards.
MAGICAL OBJECTS MOTIF

- Objects that have magical properties or cause a magical event
- Used by the main character for help
- Magical objects include: wands, rings, beanstalk, harp, doll, flying carpet and genie’s lamp
ENCHANTMENT MOTIFS

❖ Characters are often placed under magic spells or enchantments
❖ Often broken by acts of love or bravery
❖ Magical creatures often place other characters under enchantment, or spell
CHANT MOTIFS

❖ Short rhymes, or refrains repeated in the story
❖ Examples include:
  “Mirror Mirror on the Wall”
  “Fee, Fi, Fo, Fum…”
  “Then I’ll huff and I’ll puff…”
QUEST MOTIFS

❖ Special journey
❖ Obtain something of value
❖ Save the victim
❖ Might involve completing 3 tasks
TRANSFORMATION MOTIFS

- Magical creatures transform themselves or others into different person, animal or object

- Examples include:
  - Prince changed into Beast
  - Snow White’s stepmother changing into old woman
Not all fairy tales will contain all of these features.

A story can be considered a fairy tale if it contains a selection of these features.

Many modern fairy tales use the conventions of the traditional tales eg: Shrek, Enchanted.