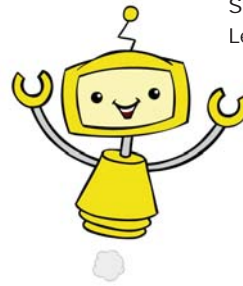


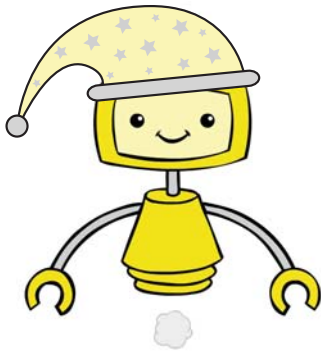
Telling tales

Peter may be fast asleep after all these bedtime stories, but I'm more wide awake than ever! All these stories have got me wondering if storytelling traditions in Indonesia are similar to those in Australia? What do you think?



LINKS TO:
Stage 2, Module 5
Learning Object 3: Storytelling

1 Storytelling traditions



Storytelling traditions exist in every culture around the world as a way of entertaining, educating, preserving culture and instilling moral values. Oral stories were committed to memory and then passed down from generation to generation.

In many cultures, songs, chants, music and poetry were all common forms of oral storytelling. Later, stories were recorded through pictures and, finally, through script.

Although storytelling traditions vary around the world, they also have many things in common. Most cultures have a number of different types of traditional tales, including myths, folktales, fables and fairytales.

2 Storytelling traditions in Indonesia

Most of the Indonesia's traditional stories are related to myth, history and life lessons that aim to teach about codes of moral behaviour. Indonesian storytelling traditions span the wide range of cultures that make up the Indonesian archipelago, and there are also strong links to the stories of other Malay-speaking countries such as Malaysia, Brunei and Singapore.

Ancient Indian civilisation and mythology, in particular, has also had an influence in some parts of Indonesia, as it has had throughout the entire South-East Asia region. In Indonesia, this influence was most profoundly felt on the islands of Java and Bali, where powerful Hindu kingdoms were established. The stories from ancient India were written in two epics, the *Mahabarata* and the *Ramayana*. These epics are still related throughout South-East Asia and Indonesia, through puppetry (*wayang kulit* and

wayang golek), as well as through human theatre (*wayang orang*).



Wayang golek
Shadow puppet



Wayang kulit
Shadow puppet

3

Storytelling genres

Fairytales

A fairytale is a type of short narrative that typically features characters such as fairies, goblins, elves, trolls, dwarves or giants, and usually contains an element of magic or enchantment. Commonly, these stories conclude with a situation depicting blessed or unusual happiness, which has given rise to the term 'a fairytale ending'. The Indonesian term for a fairytale is *cerita dongeng*.

In Indonesia, the stories have been passed down through the years, simplified and adapted for children. The authors of these stories are unknown. Many islands of Indonesia have their own regional fairytales. In Work Sheet 3 you were introduced to a popular Indonesian fairytale, *Timun Mas*, which has its origins in the province of Central Java.

Fables

Fables have many similarities regardless of the country in which they originate. In fact, many fables can be traced back to Aesop, a slave and

storyteller supposed to have lived in ancient Greece between 620 and 560BCE. His stories, cleverly told, presented human problems through the dilemmas of animal characters — a tradition that can be found in the cultures of many different races.

One of the key features of a fable is that it exists not only as a form of entertainment, but that it also contains a moral, or lesson, that can be used to educate. The fables about the deeds of *si Kancil*, the mischievous little mouse deer who steals cucumbers and likes to outwit gullible crocodiles, are well known by all Indonesian children.

Legends

The legend is a narrative that is produced and transmitted orally, or in writing, about an extraordinary, supernatural, or highly improbable, localised event with the intent of entertaining and explaining or validating some phenomenon or world view. One well-known Indonesian legend is the *Legenda Masyarakat Minangkabau*, which explains the origins of the Minangkabau people of West Sumatra province.

4

Exercises

Based on your knowledge and the information in this work sheet, answer the following questions in English.

Exercise 1

What storytelling traditions did you grow up with in your home?

(continued on following page)

(continued from previous page)

Exercise 2

What storytelling traditions in Australia (including oral storytelling) are you familiar with?

Exercise 3

What folktales, fables, fairytales and myths are you familiar with?

Exercise 4

Where do these stories come from?

Hint! Are they Australian?

(continued on following page)

(continued from previous page)

Exercise 5

What types of Australian stories exist?

Exercise 6

Why do you think certain stories continue to be passed down from generation to generation?

What does this tell us about our values, attitudes and beliefs here in Australia?

Exercise 7

Think about what you have learned about storytelling traditions in Indonesia.

What values, attitudes and beliefs are reflected in Indonesian storytelling traditions?

(continued on following page)

(continued from previous page)

Exercise 8

How are storytelling traditions in Indonesia similar to or different from storytelling traditions in Australia?

Why do you think this is?
