

A Mother's Blessing

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Vocabulary

Grammar

Punctuation

Composition

Past tense verbs.

The night Vasilisa's mother died she gave her daughter a small doll.

"Here is my blessing," she sighed. "Promise me you will look after it and feed it, for it will help you if ever you are in need."

Prepositional phrases add detail.

Vasilisa always kept the doll in her pocket, but she never needed to ask for help until the day her new stepmother came storming out of the house.

Paragraph changes indicate a change of time or scene, described in the first sentence.

"Go into the forest and ask Baba Yaga for a light. And don't come back with out it." Vasilisa was frightened. Baba Yaga was a witch.

Vasilisa took out her doll and fed it with a crumb of bread. "Mother's blessing what shall I do?" she whispered.

"Do as your stepmother asks," replied the doll.

This model text is a folktale involving the Baba Yaga character from Russian and Slavic storytelling. Pupils should draw inspiration from this text to create their own retelling of Baba Yaga or an original story following similar themes.

Noun phrases add detail.

Sentences extended to include more than one clause using a wider range of conjunctions.

Vasilisa followed the twisting path into the darkness of the forest. From all around came howls and growls, but no wild animal attacked her. She walked until the sun was high in the sky.

Through the pine trees, Vasilisa saw a strange house hopping and jumping on chicken legs. Around the house was a fence made of old, dry bones and skulls. Vasilisa felt the windows watching her as the gate swung silently open to let pass. The door, like a narrow mouth,

Fronted adverbials correctly punctuated with commas.

Time, place and cause indicated by adverbials.





suddenly opened and out strode Baba Yaga. Vasilisa stared in fear at the witch's long, bony legs and her warty, toad-like skin. And how could Vasilisa fail to notice that Baba Yaga had a mouth full of large, iron teeth?

Figurative language enhances description.

Lists of adjectives separated with commas.

"My stepmother has sent me for a light," she stammered.

Imperative verbs for commands.

Baba Yaga stared at the little girl and licked her lips. "Sweep the yard, separate this bowl of wheat grains and poppy seeds, cook my dinner before my return and only then may you have your light. I'm going out." Baba Yaga jumped into her stone mortar, gave two quick swishes with her giant pestle, and was gone.

Vasilisa wanted to cry, but instead she gave the doll a crumb of bread.

"Mother's blessing what shall I do?"

"Sleep now and leave the jobs to me," replied the doll.

Time and cause indicated by adverbials.

When Vasilisa woke up, the yard was swept, the seeds were sorted and dinner smelt delicious.

Reporting clauses use a range of synonyms for said.

Baba Yaga swept into the house. "I don't believe it! How did you finish those tasks so quickly?"

Fronted adverbials correctly punctuated with commas.

"My mother's blessing helped me," smiled Vasilisa.

Baba Yaga handed Vasilisa a skull lamp. "Run home before I eat you!" she snarled.

Direct speech correctly punctuated.

Vasilisa ran home as fast as her legs would carry her, and when she gave the lamp to her stepmother the light burned her up, turning her to dust. But Vasilisa, with the wisdom of her mother to guide her, lived happily ever after.