



# The Little Red Hen

An American Fable

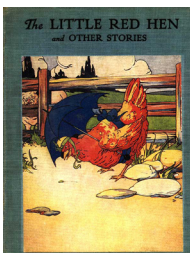
1.

**Watch and listen**  
to the story.  
Click here ▼



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WYwjuufc19Q>

**or read it online.**  
Click here ▼



[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_Little\\_Red\\_Hen](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Little_Red_Hen)

## THE STORY

A hen living on a farm finds some wheat and decides to make bread with it. She asks the other farmyard animals for help planting it, but they refuse. The hen then harvests and mills the wheat into flour before baking it into bread; at each stage she again asks the animals for help and they refuse. Finally the hen has completed her task and asks who will help her eat the bread. This time the animals accept eagerly, but the hen rebuffs them stating that, just as she made the bread herself, she will eat the bread herself, and runs away with the bread.



From Virginia Rep's play, *The Little Red Hen*

**NOTE TO PARENTS:** Information for parents and the URLs for all links in this pdf are on the last page.

The story of *The Little Red Hen* is a **folk tale**. A folk tale is a tale or story passed on from generation to generation. From ghost stories to fairy tales to animal fables, folk tales are beloved by people of all ages in all cultures.

There are many different kinds of folk tales, with thousands of regional and cultural variations, but they all share a few common characteristics. At the most basic level, we can say that a folk tale is a story passed down orally from generation to generation. Let's look more closely at a few defining traits!

**Folk tales usually:**

- **Feature regular people:** The word 'folk' comes from the German word *volk*, meaning 'people.' As you can guess, folk tales are stories about everyday life and the day-to-day issues of people. Sometimes the stories involve magical elements, but they usually happen to people just like you!
- **Are simple:** Think about the word 'folk.' What image comes to mind? Maybe you think of grandmas and grandpas, farm life, and villagers. When we talk about 'folklore,' we're talking about the kind of knowledge used by everyday people. These stories were shared among generations as a way of presenting everyday life lessons and useful information in an easy-to-understand format.
- **Are passed down orally:** Folk tales are meant to be told out loud! They're part of an oral tradition, coming from a time before writing. Today, we have the option to read folk tales in books because of people like the Brothers Grimm! In the 19th century they traveled around Germany to collect folk tales that had never been written down, and they turned those tales into storybooks.
- **Contain a moral:** Most folk tales contain a moral, or lesson, that comes at the end of the story. The moral teaches a specific value, reminding everyone that good is often rewarded, and bad is punished.

## 2. Write your own folktale!

On this **folktale planning sheet**, choose a few characters, one setting, and one moral; then plan your writing below.

Characters	Setting	Moral
<input type="checkbox"/> A person <input type="checkbox"/> A talking animal <input type="checkbox"/> A magical person or animal	<input type="checkbox"/> Forest <input type="checkbox"/> Lake <input type="checkbox"/> Castle <input type="checkbox"/> Cottage <input type="checkbox"/> Under a bridge <input type="checkbox"/> Farm <input type="checkbox"/> On a spaceship <input type="checkbox"/> Under the sea	<input type="checkbox"/> Help a friend in need <input type="checkbox"/> Treat others with kindness and respect <input type="checkbox"/> Don't tell lies <input type="checkbox"/> Our actions affect others <input type="checkbox"/> Put yourself in someone's shoes <input type="checkbox"/> It's OK to make mistakes as long as you keep trying <input type="checkbox"/> Being yourself and being unique is good

What is the <b>problem</b> ?	What is the <b>solution</b> ?


Think about what happens in the beginning, middle, and end in your tale and write down a few ideas.

Beginning	Middle	End

How do your characters learn the moral or lesson of the story?

# Folk Tales

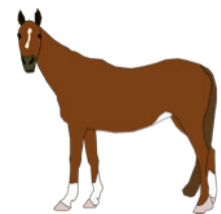
Using the folktale planning sheet on previous page as a guide, write your story below:



A large rectangular area with a rounded border, containing a green line drawing of a farm scene at the top. The drawing shows a house, a barn, a silo, trees, and a fence, with a cloud above. Below the drawing is a large area with horizontal lines for writing, enclosed in a dashed green border.

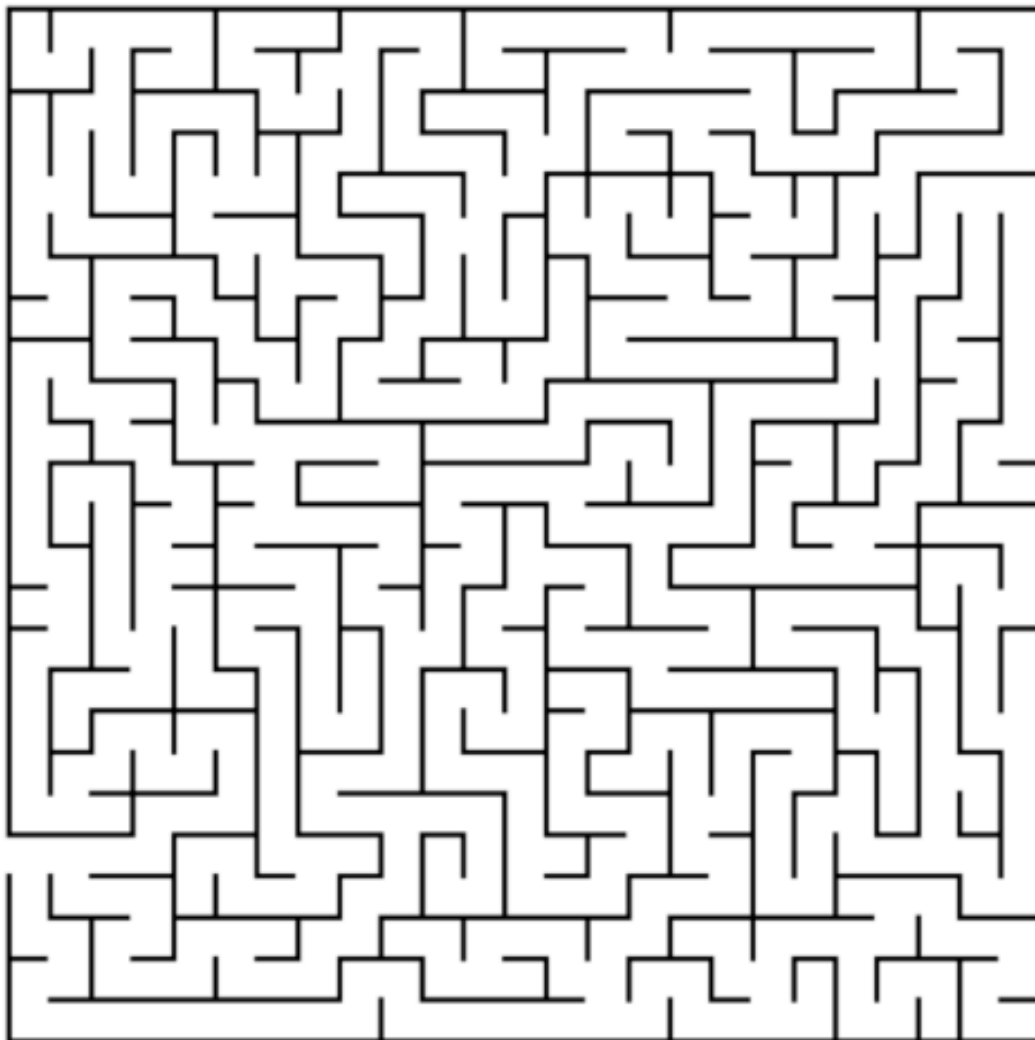
# From the Farm

3. The Little Red Hen lives on a farm. Circle the items below that Little Red Hen can see on the farm!



# Fox Maze

4. The Hen gets lost in the forest. Help her find her way out of the forest and back to the farm!



START

FINISH





# Make a Book

## 5. Make a Book about Wheat



First, go online and take a look at The Plant Life Cycle for Kids: <https://www.thoughtco.com/plant-life-cycle-for-kids-4174447>

You can also check out this amazing video of wheat germination and growth: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yOoMtZWczqO>

Next, illustrate each stage of the wheat growing process, cut and sequence the pages to create a book, add a book cover with an illustration, and staple the book pages together.

	<p>1</p> <p>The wheat seeds are planted.</p>
	<p>2</p> <p>The wheat seeds germinate and sprout from the soil, becoming seedlings. During the seedling stage, small leaves are just emerging and beginning to unroll, and there are as many as six roots.</p>
	<p>3</p> <p>The seedlings grow <b>tillers</b>, which are new shoots that are sent up from the roots. Each tiller can grow its own stalk and seed head, so the number of tillers will determine the growth of the plant! Sometimes the plants will go dormant in cold weather.</p>

# Make a Book

	<p>4</p> <p>When the weather warms a bit, the next stage is the heading and pollination stage. The wheat plants start growing again, and as they grow, they produce a seed head- one for each stalk.</p>
	<p>5</p> <p>After pollination, the ripening stage begins. Ripening is divided into four levels of maturity: milk, soft dough, hard dough, and mature. It is during this time that the wheat plant turns to a straw color and the kernel becomes very hard.</p>
	<p>6</p> <p>The next stage of a wheat's life cycle is harvest. The wheat stalks are harvested when they turn brown, and the grain kernels are collected off the stalks.</p>



## 6. Word Problems Write your answers in the column on the right.

1. A combine harvester travels 3 miles in 1 hour as it harvests wheat. It spends 3 hours each morning harvesting wheat. How many miles does the combine harvester travel each morning?
2. A farm truck drove 64 miles to town in 2 hours. How many miles did the tractor travel each hour?
3. The farm has 105 animals in a pasture. This pasture can only hold 65 animals. How many animals need to be moved to another pasture?
4. There are four piglets per mama pig in the barn. There are three mama pigs. How many pigs total are there?
5. The Little Red Hen has 23 wheat seeds.
  - a. She accidentally drops 14 seeds on her way to the farm. How many seeds does Little Red Hen have left?
  - b. Little Red Hen goes back to find the seeds she dropped, and only finds 8. Now how many seeds does Red Hen have?


**FUN FACT:** Through the invention of the **combine harvester**, you can harvest **900 bushels** of wheat per hour! A **bushel** is a dry unit of measurement that equals **approximately 8 gallons**. So if one bushel of wheat makes about 70-73 loaves of bread, in one hour we can harvest enough wheat to make **65,000 loaves of bread!** How cool is that?







**Where Wheat is Grown** Color in states with specific colors based on what type of wheat they grow.



**Color in red** the states that grow hard red winter wheat: Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas

**Color in yellow** the states that grow soft red winter wheat: Alabama, Arizona, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee

**Color in blue** the states that grow hard red spring wheat: Minnesota, Montana, South Dakota

**Color in purple** the states that grow soft white wheat: Idaho, Michigan, New York, Oregon, Washington

**Color in green** the state that grows the most durum: North Dakota

# The Setting

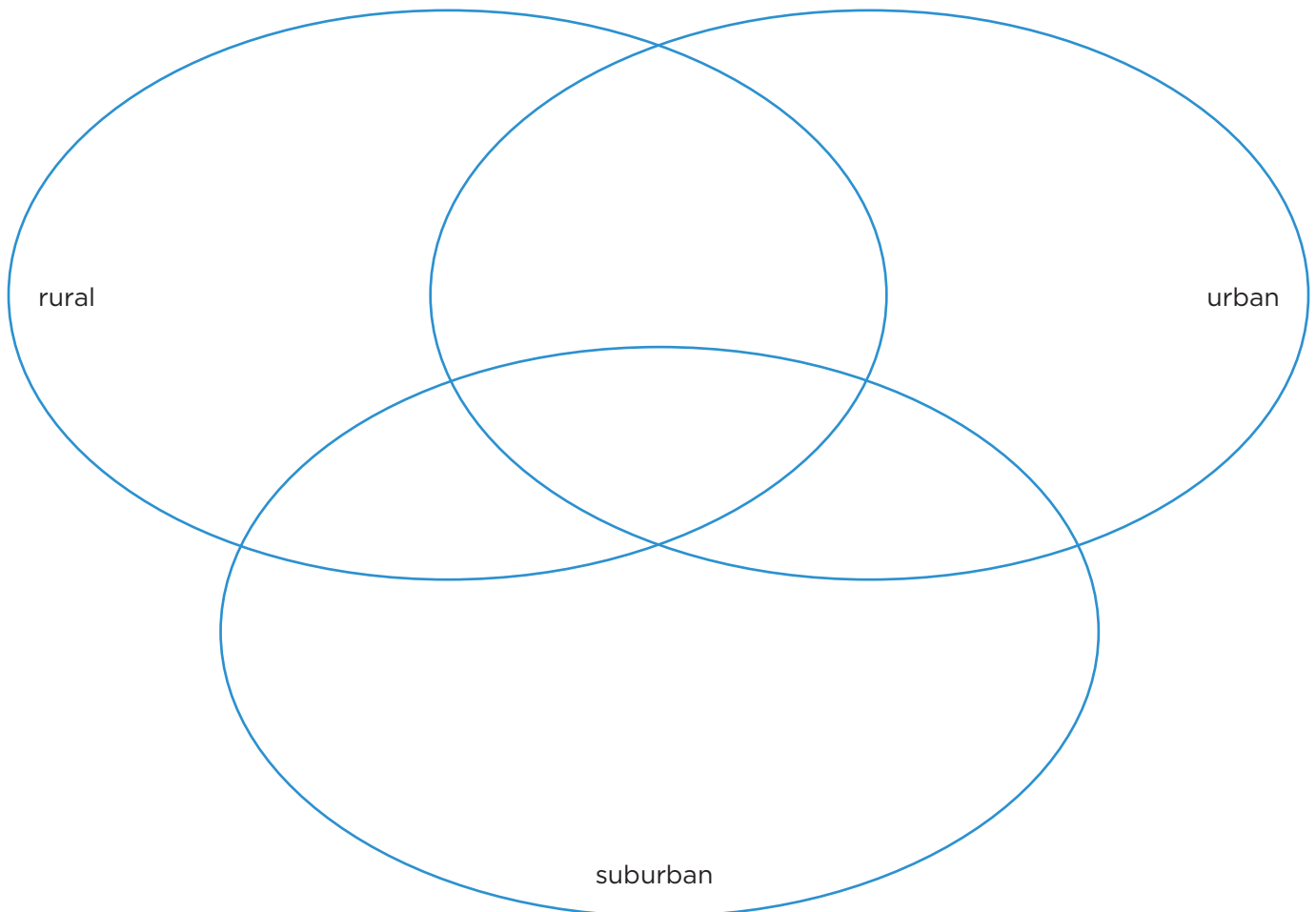


**8. The Setting** Read the descriptions below, then categorize each picture into a category on the Venn diagram. Remember, some items will be used on two or more categories. Then write a description of the play setting. Explain whether the setting is rural, urban, or suburban.

**rural:** The homes in rural communities are separated by farms, woodlands, and meadows. People living in rural communities usually have to drive into a suburban community to do their shopping at stores. Rural communities are very quiet places.

**urban:** Urban communities include cities. They have more apartment buildings than houses, many office buildings, skyscrapers, stores, and lots of people. They also have cars, subways, buses and other forms of public transportation. Urban communities are very busy places.

**suburban:** Suburban communities are usually located near urban communities or cities. They are towns where people live in homes or apartment buildings. There are stores in these communities to meet the needs of the residents, but no large skyscrapers. Some people living in suburban communities drive to the cities to work.



# The Setting

## 9. What did you notice?

1. In what ways were the characters in the story you saw or listened to online different from the characters in the book? Why do you think different authors choose to change the characters in a story?

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2. What lesson does the story of *The Little Red Hen* teach? Is the lesson the same in the book as in the video?

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3. If you were to write your own version of the story, what kinds of characters, settings, or events would you include that might be different? Write your own version below!

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## 10. Bread Around the World

Use the word bank below to fill in answers.



pita

wonton



bagel

tortilla

scone

frybread



croissant

1. From a country in Asia, these noodle-dough dumplings are filled with spiced meat. Then they are boiled in soup or fried and eaten as a side dish. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Made from corn or flour dough patted into thin, flat rounds, and fried on a hot griddle. It is a daily bread in a country on the same continent as the U.S. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Nifty little bread pockets from the Middle East are round, flat, and hollow on the inside. They make great sandwiches. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Flaky, tender, crescent-shaped rolls from the country of the Eiffel Tower. \_\_\_\_\_
5. Brought to America by Polish immigrants, these chewy baked rolls with a hole are often eaten with cream cheese or other tasty toppings. \_\_\_\_\_
6. They have been made by the thousands for pow-wows and other special occasions, these are small round bread fried in hot oil. \_\_\_\_\_
7. From a country on the island of Great Britain, these biscuit-like breads are cut into big, thick triangles and baked. They are usually served with tea. \_\_\_\_\_

# Answers



## #3 Answers

carrot, tractor, horse, corn, hay bales

## #6 Answers

1. 9 miles
2. 32 miles
3. 40 animals need to be moved
4. 12 piglets; 15 total pigs (including mama pigs)
5. 9 seeds; 17 seeds

## #10 Answers

1. Wonton
2. Tortilla
3. Pita
4. Croissant
5. Bagel
6. Frybread
7. Scone

Click here to download more  
Virginia Repertory Theatre  
**At-Home Activities**  
at  
[www.virginiarep.org/aha](http://www.virginiarep.org/aha)

### Online resources to enhance and extend learning can be found throughout this guide and below:

- Page 1: Listen to and watch the story here  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WYwjuufc19Q>
- Page 1: Read it online!  
[https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The\\_Little\\_Red\\_Hen](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Little_Red_Hen)
- Page 6: The Plant Life Cycle for Kids  
<https://www.thoughtco.com/plant-life-cycle-for-kids-4174447>
- Page 6: Wheat germination and growth  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yOoMtZWczq0>

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## About Virginia Rep, a trusted educational resource

Education has been a cornerstone of our organization — since its founding as Theatre IV in 1975 through today. Virginia Rep is committed to exploring and expanding the ways in which theatre can positively impact education and children's health. Each year, we tour plays and musicals to hundreds of schools and public venues in Virginia and across the country, reaching children in grades K-12. We provide study guides for educators to use in classrooms for all these plays. With an expanding repertoire of over 30 plays, we have quite a library of study guides.

## About this activity guide

We have created a series of At-Home Activity Guides for parents to use as a home learning resource, referencing the study guides we create for educators to use with our plays. Though most of the activities do not require knowing the story, online resources are provided so children can read or hear the stories. Many activities are meant to be printed out, but many can also be done without printing.

*The Little Red Hen* At-Home Activity Guide is produced in support of Language Arts, Music, Science, and Character Development.