

teacher resource guide

**schooltime  
performance  
series**



# GRIMMZ FAIRY TALES

*"A hip-hop REVELATION FOR THE YOUNGER GENERATION!"*

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## in the spotlight with Ron Lee McGill, Rahsheem Shabazz and Christopher Parks

### How did you pick which stories to include in this production?

All of the stories we chose are about young people who decide to do something to make a difference in their own lives or the lives of someone else. The idea of “Whatcha’ gon’ do?” is the pervasive theme we landed on before we started writing the stories. We felt like we had an opportunity to present to children the possibilities of their voice and the power they have to make a difference in this world. “Whatcha’ gon’ do when the time comes for you? Step up and deliver, or stand there and shiver?” This is the anthem which begins and ends our play.

### Was it hard to write the script because of the fairy tales you wanted to perform?

Some of them were easy. *Rapunzel* just rolled onto the page once we knew what it was about. The characters just spoke to us and we had a lot of fun putting that one on the page. *Snow White* was the same way. *Cinderella* was harder because it deals with such sensitive material. It’s about a little girl who is forced into an abusive situation. We know there are kids who will be in the audience who are silently suffering through some of the same exact things she is suffering through, so it took lots of revisions and rewrites to get to where we got to. *Hansel and Gretel*, where we were dealing with homelessness and foster care, was similar.

### Why did you keep the name “Grimm” in honor of the Grimm brothers?

How cool is it to be able to take these stories everyone is familiar with and find a modern spin on the characters and the subject matter? We thought it was a great way into the conversation for parents, teachers and children to play with these great stories we all think we know, but can find new meaning for today’s audience’s sensibility.

### What’s one thing you want children to take away from seeing this theater performance?

Kids are the change to make a more considerate world — a more empathetic world. This starts with recognizing the true value in life, in yourself and in others.

### Why did you choose hip hop music instead of other genres?

Hip hop is the popular music of today. Its influence is in every top 10 list around the world. In its essence, hip hop is the genre of the youth and revolution.

### What was the hardest part of putting this production together?

The distance during the creative process. There’s a magic that in-person brainstorms have that just can’t be

replicated. We all lived in four different states and so there was a lot that was done remotely, which made it challenging. But when most of us were in the same room, we moved so much faster and what we created was so much richer.

### Would you expand *Grimmz* by adding more fairy tales to this experience?

We are currently in discussions with a few theaters about creating *Grimmz 2: Happening Ever After*.

### Was it hard to write/produce original music for *Grimmz*?

It depends on what you’d consider difficult. Story building and concepts would be more of a “hard part.” Once that hurdle is cleared, the writing and producing flows organically and fills in the gaps.

### What makes *Grimmz* different from other productions that incorporate fairy tales?

Aside from implementing hip hop, the actual stories we chose were given a contemporaneity that tackles issues of today such as cyberbullying. We gave the stories these complexities because fairy tales needed new lessons to be told for today’s youth.

### With the country slowly opening back up, would you all consider doing a tour?

We start a national tour in October 2021 in Bloomington, Illinois. We have six cities lined up so far through January. Theater is slowly coming back and we are super excited. Short answer: Yes!

### What advice would you give to young people that want to tap into their creative side?

Focus on what makes you happy and not what you think others will enjoy. At the end of the day, you won’t truly be satisfied until you have the freedom to express yourself without judgment.

### How important was it for you all to have a diverse team behind *Grimmz*?

Crucial. When we started, there was no question that we would invite a full BIPOC team to be on stage, and call on our friends in the same communities to lead the creative team. As for the cast, we were so honored to have such amazing folks come out and audition. It is nice that Charlotte, North Carolina, where we premiered the show, is an incredibly diverse city.

## about the performance

Jay and Will Grimmz are the hip hop, fable and dance-pop sensations that have come back home to the city where they grew up. The two are known not just for their sounds, but for their powerful storytelling — an inventive remix of familiar classics. They’ll be performing some of their greatest hits including *Snow White and the Seven Shawties*, *Down with Rapunzel*; *Hansel & Gretel: Lost in the Hood*; *Break*, *Cinderella*, *Break* and more.

This production is heavily influenced by hip hop music and choreography. It gives children and exciting opportunity to learn about classic fairy tales.

*Grimmz* creators Ron Lee McGill (Lyricist/Developer) and Rahsheem Shabazz (Choreographer/Developer) play the roles of Jay and Will. They wanted to take classic tales from the Grimm brothers and add their own spin. *Grimmz* is a concert experience made to inspire the younger generation.

# inspired ideas in the classroom

## Teacher Focus

## Student Activity

## NJ Student Learning Standards

P

### Prepare for the performance

Begin by asking students to recall their favorite fairy tales and stories as children. Compile their responses into a class chart which you can reference later. For each story or character, have students brainstorm the themes or lessons learned.  
**Note:** This is also a great opportunity for students from different backgrounds to share fables from their cultures!  
 Introduce *Grimmz Fairy Tales* and the performance students will experience. Share that this performance reimagines some popular fairy tales through hip hop dance and music.

Brainstorm with your classmates to compile a list of your favorite fairy tales and stories as children. Why were they your favorite? What lessons did they teach you?

English Language Arts  
 NJLSA.SL2.  
 Visual & Performing Arts  
 Anchor Standard 1  
 NCAS  
 Anchor Standard 1  
 SEL  
 Social Awareness 8  
 Relationship Skills 13  
 21st Career Readiness  
 9.4.8.GCA.2

E

### Experience the performance

Prepare students to be active audience members. Provide students with the following prompts:  
 1. What fairy tales are reimagined by the performers?  
 2. How is the story similar and different to the original?  
 3. What lessons do the characters learn?  
 4. When have you been in a situation where you learned the same lessons?

While watching the show, be an active audience member. Be on the lookout for familiar fairy tales and how they are reimagined. Be prepared to discuss with your class after the performance!

Visual & Performing Arts  
 Anchor Standard 7  
 NCAS  
 Anchor Standard 7

R

### Reflect, respond and read

Guide students through a reflection of the performance using the prompts from above. Look back at the class chart of fairy tales.  
 1. Were any fairy tales mentioned by the students reimagined in the performance?  
 2. What did they find surprising?  
 3. What was their favorite part?

Reflect on the performance using the prompts from above. Look back at the class chart of fairy tales.  
 1. Were any fairy tales mentioned by the students reimagined in the performance?  
 2. What did they find surprising?  
 3. What was their favorite part?  
 4. What were some recurring themes?

English Language Arts  
 NJLSA.SL2., NJLSA.R9.  
 Visual & Performing Arts  
 Anchor Standard 7, 8, 9, 11  
 NCAS  
 Anchor Standard 7, 8, 9, 11  
 SEL  
 Social Awareness 8  
 Relationship Skills 13  
 21st Career Readiness  
 9.4.8.GCA.2

F

### Focus

Have students complete **Activity Sheet #1** where they will reimagine or create a fairy tale.  
**Lower elementary school students:** Choose a character or fairy tale from the class chart. Have students work in groups to complete.  
**Upper elementary and middle school students:** Choose a role model in your life to imagine a new fairy tale. Have students work in pairs.

Complete **Activity Sheet #1** where you will reimagine a fairy tale.  
**Lower elementary students:** Choose a character or fairy tale from the class chart. Work in a small group to complete the activity.  
**Upper elementary and middle school students:** Choose a role model in your life to imagine a new fairy tale. Work with a partner to complete the activity.

English Language Arts  
 NJLSA.SL2.  
 Visual & Performing Arts  
 Anchor Standard 1, 2  
 NCAS  
 Anchor Standard 1, 2  
 SEL  
 Relationship Skills 13  
 21st Career Readiness  
 9.4.8.GCA.2

O

### Originate

Have students complete **Activity Sheet #2** where they will bring their reimagined or modern fairy tale to life! With their partner(s), have students illustrate a picture of their modern fairy tale character. This could be an illustration of the character or design of the new fairy tale book cover.  
 Additionally:  
**Lower elementary students:** Have them write one sentence about the lesson this character learns.  
**Upper elementary and middle school students:** These students will have an additional step to write their new, modern fairy tale in the form of a poem.

Complete **Activity Sheet #2** where you will bring your reimagined or modern fairy tale to life! With your partner(s), illustrate a picture of your modern fairy tale character.  
 Additionally:  
**Lower elementary students:** Write one sentence about the lesson this character learns.  
**Upper elementary and middle school students:** Write your new, modern fairy tale in the form of a poem.

English Language Arts  
 NJLSA.W3.  
 Visual & Performing Arts  
 Anchor Standard 2, 6  
 NCAS  
 Anchor Standard 2, 6  
 SEL  
 Relationship Skills 13  
 21st Career Readiness  
 9.4.8.GCA.2

R

### Rehearse

**Lower elementary students:** Have students practice presenting their reimagined fairy tale to the class. One student may introduce the title and original fairy tale, while another student reads the two sentences. Encourage students to add color to bring their illustrations to life!  
**Upper elementary and middle school students:** Have students practice reading their poem as a rap to present to the class.  
**Note:** If students want to enhance their performance, there is a free app for Apple and Android called **SMULE** on which students can record themselves reading their poem and it will play back as a rap with background beats

**Lower elementary students:** Practice presenting your reimagined fairy tale to the class. One partner may introduce the title and original fairy tale, while another partner reads the two sentences. Make sure every student participates in the presentation and add color to bring your illustrations to life!  
**Upper elementary and middle school students:** Practice reading your poem as a rap to present to the class. Consider adding a rhythm to your poem and beats in the background.

Visual & Performing Arts  
 Anchor Standard 5, 6  
 NCAS  
 Anchor Standard 3, 5, 6  
 SEL  
 Relationship Skills 13

M

### Make magic

Have students present their illustrations and written work – sentences for lower elementary students and raps for upper elementary/middle school students. Remind observing students to be respectful audience members. Ask audience members to reflect on what they saw and heard.  
**Extension Activity:** Display the illustrations and corresponding sentences/poems in the hallway or create a virtual gallery to share with the community.

Present your illustrations and written work – sentences for lower elementary students, raps for upper elementary/middle school students. Support your peers in their performance by being a respectful audience member and sharing constructive observations.

Visual & Performing Arts  
 Anchor Standard 6, 7, 9  
 NCAS  
 Anchor Standard 6, 7, 9  
 SEL  
 Relationship Skills 13



## curriculum standards

### National Core Arts Anchor Standards

- 1:** Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- 3:** Refine and complete artistic work.
- 5:** Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.
- 6:** Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
- 7:** Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- 8:** Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- 11:** Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

#### FIND THE STANDARDS

For more detailed information on the standards, visit these websites:

NATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS STANDARDS  
[corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy](https://corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy)

NATIONAL SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS  
[socialstudies.org/standards](https://socialstudies.org/standards)

NATIONAL CORE ARTS ANCHOR STANDARDS  
[nationalartsstandards.org](https://nationalartsstandards.org)

## common core state standards

### English Language Arts

- NJLSA.R.2.**  
Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- NJLSA.R.9.**  
Analyze and reflect on how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
- NJLSA.W.3.**  
Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

### NCAS

- Anchor Standard 1**  
Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.
- Anchor Standard 2**  
Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- Anchor Standard 3**  
Refine and complete artistic work.
- Anchor Standard 5**  
Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.

### (NCAS continued)

- Anchor Standard 6**  
Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.
- Anchor Standard 7**  
Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- Anchor Standard 8**  
Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- Anchor Standard 9**  
Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.
- Anchor Standard 11**  
Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.

### Visual & Performing Arts

- Anchor Standard 1**  
Generating and conceptualizing ideas.
- Anchor Standard 2**  
Organizing and developing ideas.
- Anchor Standard 5**  
Developing and refining techniques and models or steps needed to create products.
- Anchor Standard 6**  
Conveying meaning through art.
- Anchor Standard 7**  
Perceiving and analyzing products.
- Anchor Standard 8**  
Interpreting intent and meaning.
- Anchor Standard 9**  
Applying criteria to evaluate products.
- Anchor Standard 11**  
Relating artistic ideas and works within societal, cultural, and historical contexts to deepen understanding.

### SEL

- Relationship Skills 13**  
Utilize positive communication and social skills to interact effectively with others.
- Social Awareness 8**  
Recognize and identify the thoughts, feelings and perspectives of others.

### 21st Career Readiness

- 9.4.8.GCA.2**  
Demonstrate openness to diverse ideas and perspectives through active discussions to achieve a group goal.

## resources

How the Grimm Brothers Saved the Fairy Tale  
[neh.gov/humanities/2015/marchapril/feature/how-the-grimm-brothers-saved-the-fairy-tale](https://neh.gov/humanities/2015/marchapril/feature/how-the-grimm-brothers-saved-the-fairy-tale)

5 Facts About the Brothers Grimm  
[biography.com/news/brothers-grimm-facts](https://biography.com/news/brothers-grimm-facts)

Who Were the Brothers Grimm?  
[wonderopolis.org/wonder/who-were-the-brothers-grimm](https://wonderopolis.org/wonder/who-were-the-brothers-grimm)

The Brothers Grimm Brought German Folklore to the World  
[thoughtco.com/brothers-grimm-german-Folklore-4018397](https://thoughtco.com/brothers-grimm-german-Folklore-4018397)

Hip Hop Dance  
[centralhome.com/hip-hop-history.htm](https://centralhome.com/hip-hop-history.htm)

Birth of Hip Hop  
[history.com/this-day-in-history/hip-hop-is-born-at-A-birthday-party-in-the-bronx](https://history.com/this-day-in-history/hip-hop-is-born-at-A-birthday-party-in-the-bronx)

History of Hip Hop Music  
[englishclub.com/vocabulary/music-hip-hop.htm](https://englishclub.com/vocabulary/music-hip-hop.htm)

The Historical Roots of Hip Hop  
[teachrock.org/lesson/the-historical-roots-of-hip-hop/](https://teachrock.org/lesson/the-historical-roots-of-hip-hop/)

Review (*The Charlotte Observer*)  
[charlotteobserver.com/entertainment/arts-culture/article240469166.html](https://charlotteobserver.com/entertainment/arts-culture/article240469166.html)

TV Interview  
[qclife.wbtv.com/grimmz-fairy-tales-brings-hip-hop-to-kids/?fbclid=IwARooMoKIJjZ-oHigs6oKYiv64RhGRn\\_JhVear1BlpgBmuWvcdGXbFVLT6A](https://qclife.wbtv.com/grimmz-fairy-tales-brings-hip-hop-to-kids/?fbclid=IwARooMoKIJjZ-oHigs6oKYiv64RhGRn_JhVear1BlpgBmuWvcdGXbFVLT6A)

“Chopped Rhymes” Music Video  
[dropbox.com/s/iu8wor8fttoxi07/Chopped%20Rhymes.mp4?dl=0](https://dropbox.com/s/iu8wor8fttoxi07/Chopped%20Rhymes.mp4?dl=0)

Opening Number (Promo)  
[dropbox.com/s/y8jev6xabzxoutd/GRIMMZ%20Fairy%20Tales%202021%20%28Opening%29.mp4?dl=0](https://dropbox.com/s/y8jev6xabzxoutd/GRIMMZ%20Fairy%20Tales%202021%20%28Opening%29.mp4?dl=0)



## cultural connections

Brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm were German librarians that collected and published local folklore. They specialized in philosophy but were interested in collecting and researching stories. During the 19th century, the brothers took stories that were passed down from generation to generation through word of mouth and wrote them on paper. From there they published a book called *Nursery and Household Tales* in 1812, otherwise known as *Grimms' Fairy Tales*.

Earlier editions of the stories weren't meant for children, and there were no illustrations. Because some of the stories had dark subject matter, they were revised for children. The first edition of the *Fairy Tales* collection had 86 stories. By the time Wilhelm Grimm died in 1859, the collection had 211 stories, along with illustrations in its seventh edition. There are some claims that the collection has only been outsold by Shakespeare and the Bible.

Jacob and Wilhelm not only published fairy tales, but books on linguistics, medieval times and mythology.



Brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm

They were even working on a German dictionary, which the brothers were unable to finish.

*Grimms' Fairy Tales* has been translated into over 160 languages. There are over 120 different editions of *Grimms' Fairy Tales* in the United States alone. To date, fairy tales have been adapted into films, plays and much more. *Grimms' Fairy Tales* was the Grimm brothers' most famous work, and has continued to be a bestseller throughout the ages.

*Grimmz* bridges the gap between the oral tradition of storytelling from the Grimm brothers to modern day. *Grimmz* uses a mixture of spoken word and hip hop music to tell a story. Spoken word is an oral poetic performance where someone is reciting poetry. This is another version of storytelling through words and movement. It usually includes poetry readings that can be used in hip hop, jazz, comedy routines and more.

Looking even further back in history, ancient Africans called their storytellers Griots. They were known in the villages as the source of mythical stories. The art of storytelling is still as important as it was back then. *Grimmz* is keeping the tradition together through the arts as it connects to reach the masses today.

## vocabulary

### Fable

A short story, typically with animals as characters, conveying a moral.

### Fairy tale

A children's story about magical and imaginary beings and lands.

### Folklore

The traditional beliefs, customs, and stories of a community, passed through the generations by word of mouth.

### Medieval

Relating to the Middle Ages, a period of time which lasted from the 5th to the late 15th centuries.

### Mythology

A collection of myths, especially one belonging to a particular religious or cultural tradition.



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**In-School Residencies:** NJPAC teaching artists come right to your school — online — to teach the performing arts to your students. Our super-flexible virtual residencies are designed to meet your needs, and you'll have a dedicated program manager to help you every step of the way. It's the perfect program to keep your students creating, connecting and expressing themselves through the magic of the arts.

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**Saturday Programs:** NJPAC's Saturday programs are geared towards students at every level — from those who dream of starring on Broadway to those who are still learning their scales. Students work with professional artists to build technique and develop their own creative style in hip hop, jazz, devised theater and symphonic band.

**Summer Programs:** Want to begin to explore the arts? Or immerse yourself in the study of one genre? Then join us at NJPAC next summer in one of seven programs that spark the creativity in every child through the study of music, dance and theater.

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Visit [njpac.org/education](http://njpac.org/education)

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+ deceased