

A Simple Story: Capturing a Classic with Minimalism

Society shares a collective consciousness of classic stories: fairy tales, myths, fables, and folklore that are retold and understood across cultures and generations. In this Design Brief, you will interpret a scene from a story, communicating its meaning through simple shapes and colors.

Before You Begin

Think back to the stories you loved as a kid. What characters, settings, scenes, and other images come to mind? Select one of these stories or another myth or fairy tale in the public domain for your design. Research the story to inform your thinking. How have other authors, illustrators, animators, and designers interpreted this classic source material? Be inspired by, but don't imitate, these interpretations.

Materials

- pencil and paper
- drawing media
- colored construction paper
- scanner
- computer with photo editing and layout software

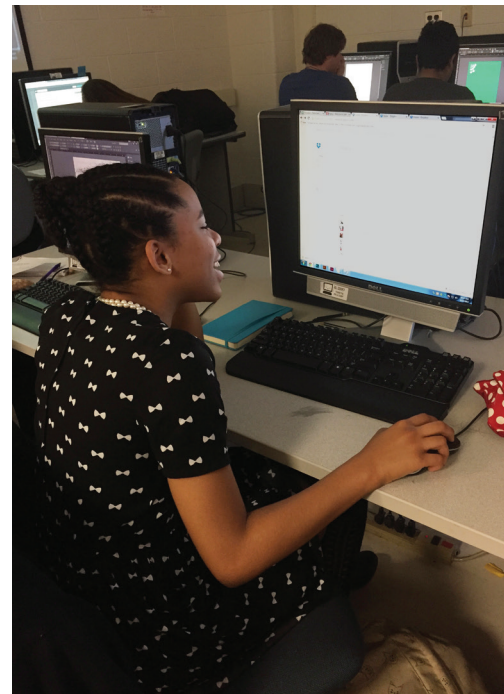


Fig. 2-X.
Student
working
on Simple
Story
project.

Create It

- 1 **Brainstorm:** What are some key moments in the story you selected? Pick three iconic, memorable scenes that you could simplify visually. Brainstorm any colors and shapes that come to mind for each scene. Consider reading or watching an interpretation of the source material you're familiar with, or even tracking down the original. Note aspects of the story that are changed in each version.
- 2 **Sketching:** Create at least three thumbnail sketches to simplify the moments you selected into basic shapes. How can you use design principles to organize shapes within a space to create a recognizable scene? Compose your illustration carefully; the placement and size of each object is extremely important when there are a few other details.
- 3 **Review and Revise:** Present your sketches to classmates and other peers for feedback. Can they recognize the story? Which moment do they think is the most iconic? Which sketch best captures that moment in a clean, graphic way?

- 4 Refine** Streamline your design even further. Limit your color palette to a maximum of four colors, plus black and white, if needed. How can you use color to create meaning? Where can you repeat colors throughout the design for continuity? Where can you omit extraneous details without compromising clarity?
- 5 Create** Using cut paper, graphics software, or both, create your finished simple story. Keep only the details that are absolutely necessary and be precise with your choices in shape and color to communicate your story effectively.

Check It

After you draft your final version of your simple story, but before you glue everything down or flatten your digital file, take one more look at your artistic decisions. Reassess your color choices: have you used a maximum of four unique colors? Could your shapes be further streamlined or simplified without compromising your idea? Are any shapes confusing or misleading? Ask a peer unaware of your story selection if they can recognize the story to make sure your idea is being communicated effectively.

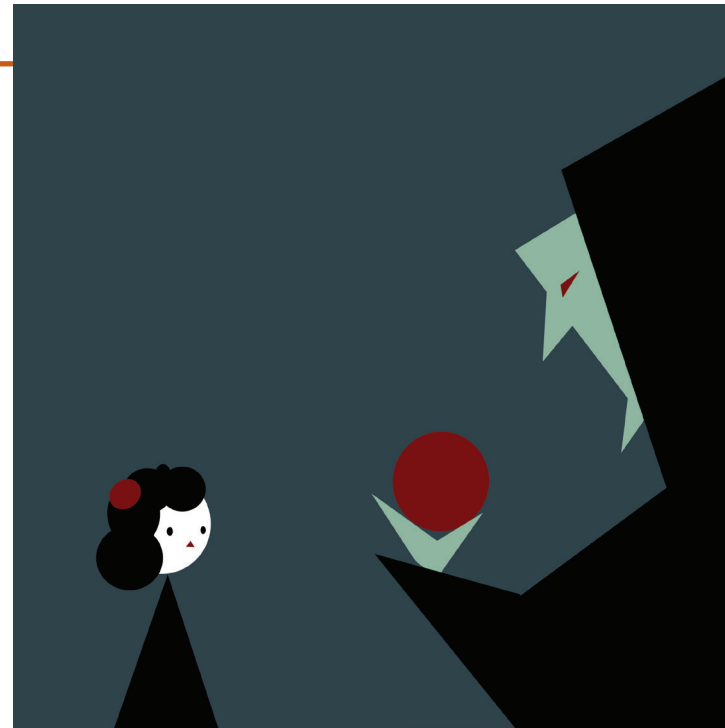


Fig. 2-X. Jarrin Jacobs, *Snow White simple story*, 2014.

Digital artwork, 8" x 8" (20.32 x 20.32 cm).

Design Journal Connection

Research at least two other artists who have visually interpreted the story you chose, such as an illustrated book or film. Sketch or collage examples of their work into your journal. Then compare and contrast the moment you chose to illustrate with their images. What details are similar? What details did you focus on that are distinct from the other artists' interpretations?



Fig. 2-X. Ella Johnson, *Rapunzel simple story*, 2019.

Digital artwork, 8" x 8" (20.32 x 20.32 cm).

Rubric: Design Brief Assessment

ADVANCED	PROFICIENT	DEVELOPING	INCOMPLETE
PREPARE			
Researches stories in the public domain to determine iconic imagery, at least three interpretations, and key scenes.	Researches stories in the public domain to determine imagery, one or two interpretations, and key scenes.	Researches stories to determine some imagery and scenes.	Does not research stories.
CREATE			
Generates at least five sketches and gathers feedback to develop a strong, minimalist composition; offers an innovative story interpretation.	Generates at least three sketches and gathers feedback to develop a simplified composition; offers a clear story interpretation.	Generates one or two sketches and gathers some feedback to develop composition; story interpretation is unclear or uses too many colors and details.	Does not generate sketches, gather feedback, or create final composition.
REFLECT/EVALUATE			
Offers insightful reflection on own work and process, identifying successful aspects and areas that need improvement. Shares ideas and takes interest in others; eagerly participates in class discussions.	Offers meaningful reflection on own work and process, identifying successful aspects and areas that need improvement. Shares ideas and shows interest in others; participates in class.	Reflects on own work and process, but has difficulty identifying successful aspects and areas that need improvement. Shares a few ideas and sometimes listens to others; reluctant to participate in class discussions.	Does not reflect on or evaluate own work. Does not participate in class discussion.
WORK PROCESS			
Works independently in each class and remains on-task at all times. Uses time management to complete project on time.	Usually works independently and remains on-task. Work completed on time with some time-management issues.	Works somewhat independently and usually remains on-task. Rushes through project and completes almost on time.	Does not work independently and is off-task most of the time; disruptive behavior. Project not completed.