

Title of Session: High Fantasy
Creator: Janet Beasley
Curriculum: ADVANCED

Definition:

High Fantasy is a fictional story that takes place in a fictional or secondary world. It may start on Earth, but then travel to another world. Though most fantasy worlds hold mostly the same concepts of the real world, it will differ in the fact that laws of certain elements will be different i.e. a day may consist of 15 clock-hand rotations rather than 24 hours. Night time may not appear as black, but rather dark green.

- Fantasy in general is considered the most difficult realm of fiction to write. It is not for the fainthearted, nor is it for those who love to pound out novels every 30 days. It is an investment of time, creativity, research, and the author must possess a passion for the craft.
- The fun part is that it gives a highly creative author the liberty to open their imagination further than they ever have before, create new worlds, magic, character types, and creatures. But there is one important feature which the creative genius must take heed and pay full attention to. That feature being that the author, among all of the fantastical imagery and happenings, must connect on a familiar plain with their readers by weaving associable situations and elements throughout the fantasy.
- All elements of fantasy must be believable.
- Exposition plays a very important part in describing the elements. And the stories themselves can be epic.

Goal: By the end of the session enthusiasts will be able to distinguish elements within a story to classify it as High Fantasy.

Tools:
Wipe off board or flip chart and appropriate markers

Ice Breaker:
Ask each enthusiast why they chose to write high fantasy.

Activity:

- **Play video - Fantasy Genre Meet Author Janet Beasley**
- **Write on wipe off board of flip chart the following bullet points only and see if enthusiasts can come up with the details of each component.**

High Fantasy Components:

- **Another World**

- Created by the author (See Fantasy Maps Session in the Journey To Publication Advanced curriculum)

- **Magic**

No matter the kind of magic being used it must abide by laws. These laws are set forth by the author. The key thing to remember with magic is that it must be believable i.e. a magic wand cannot be used to fix or destroy all – this would make for a very short and not believable story. Magic can also include props that the user can control such as wands, staffs, hands and fingers, eyes, etc.

- Enchanted
- Wild
- Mystical
- Ancient
- Mythological
- Legend (created by back story)
- Dirty
- Black
- Herbal

- **Fantastical Imagination**

Including a character's fantastical imagination can be a twist to use instead of, or in addition to, magic. Using a fantastical imagination does not use magic or props to achieve the goal, but rather encompasses the characters abilities to perform. Below are some ideas that enthusiasts can build on to bring about using a fantastical imagination in a high fantasy. Have enthusiasts give their ideas and add them to the list.

- Mind bending
- Altering elements of weather through using imagination
- Seeing the future
- Seeing the past
- Imagining rocks turning to dust and they do
- Having the ability to decipher a map with no legend
- Being able to devise a strategy from seeing it in a vision
- A character learning from an old “woodsman” how to use a bow and arrow then enhancing the talent using his or her own inward unction

- **Characters**

Certain style characters (both good and evil) reveal that the story is high fantasy. Whether you use the established type characters or create your own they must all be believable. Listed below are some of the many established types. See how many the enthusiasts can name. Then have enthusiasts take a few moments to create their own to add to the list

- Elves
- Fairies
- Dwarves
- Wizards
- Demons
- Orcs
- Wraiths

- **Creatures**

Creatures in high fantasy are created by the author. A caution to heed is that parts of the creature are recognizable i.e. even though your cheetah has extra long back legs, a tuft of hair on his crown, and his spots are dark plum, he still has spots and runs as fast as a cheetah – a familiar creature to your readers.

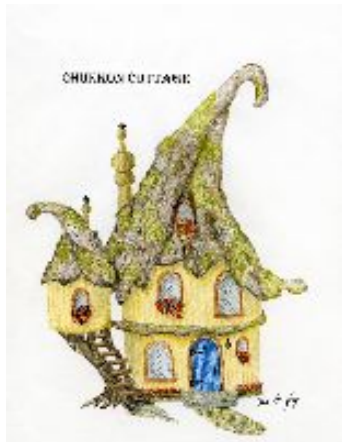
- Dragons
- Mammals
- Amphibians
- Reptiles
- Insects

- **Structures**

Dwellings and other structures in high fantasy have an enchanted (good or evil) feel to them. Plants on top, darkness, echoes, floating, odd shapes, and colorful are some examples an author can use to describe his or her fantasy dwellings.

- Castles
- Crypts
- Caves
- Bridges
- Villages
- Trees or tree houses
- Houses underground

High Fantasy dwelling example. Taken from author Janet Beasley's Hidden Earth Series



- **Serious Tone**

A serious tone is important if you are wanting to have your story classified as High Fantasy. A few humorous lines used effectively can help ease the tension for your reader when need be. Relating to a “human” situation can with humor can also help in making the reader feel as though the characters “are human” after all. For an example of such use read the following to your enthusiasts.

The following is taken from Hidden Earth Series Volume 1 Maycly the Trilogy Book 1 Two Altered Worlds, author Janet Beasley

“GRUMNERS?” Charleo yelled over the atrociously escalating noise, then thought, *This be not good. I canna believe that what SUL revealed ta Denton and me in secret years ago now be a-comin’ ta pass.*

“AYE! BOPPER JUST TOLD ME!”

“BOPPER? WHO BE BOPPER?” shouted Keegan.

“NO TIME TA BE EXPLAININ’ NOW...JUST KEEP A-PULLIN’ THE REINS! WHOA! WHOA!”

The sight of the grumners was intimidating. Their viper-green eyes with deep red blood vessels and yellow pupils pierced the eyes of Charleo, Keegan, and Artie from every side.

The grumners ceased their violent movements for no reason that was apparent to the three leaders, but the ugly beasts continued to growl. There were enough of them to make a complete circle around the wagon, spacing themselves about one foot apart. Halo and Scepter steadied themselves with their ears laid back, their eyes wide, their breathing fast and shallow, and their front feet marching in place as they continued their low-pitched whinnying.

When the dust had settled, a silhouette advanced over the crest of the hill. Imps scurried about the silhouette’s legs as it strutted awkwardly using a crooked staff for balance. It approached Charleo’s side of the wagon.

Charleo remained confident and never flinched when it breathed its foul hot breath in his direction.

Artie’s heart skipped a beat when he recognized the stench he had smelled during his solo journey into the woods.

Keegan...well, he peed his pants. He desperately wanted to be brave but still needed a lot of work on that technique.

The hideous silhouette gagged, coughed, then coarsely spoke while simultaneously giving a hand signal. "You may back away." The grummers quieted and submitted to their master with faint whimpers and whines as they moved away from the wagon.

The silhouette turned its attention from Charleo to the back of the wagon. "Tsk, tsk. What have we here?" A rasping, wheezing voice came from where a face should be.

The creature again zeroed in on Charleo and raised its head into the crimson light coming from the lava ball perched atop its staff. Charleo could now see its facial features in vivid detail. Its eyes were devilish red, its pale pink lips were distinctly outlined in contrast to its ghostly skin. It wore a regal deep burgundy robe with an oversized hood protruding from a wide fur-lined collar. Charleo's eyes dropped to the creature's chest and noticed its necklace holding many bizarre charms that magically faded, changed, and reappeared time and again. Its fingers were adorned with gaudy rings doing the same.

The raspy sound returned as the creature inhaled and spoke to Charleo. "I am Lucasphair. Do you know of me?"

After reading this, ask the enthusiasts how the humor (Keegan...well he peed his pants) helped them relate to the characters as well as break the tension.

- **Massive Struggles**

Struggles bring wonderful conflict to every fantasy story. A massive struggle can be something a character has to go through something such as a life changing experience before they become "the wizard." Massive struggles can also be found in tangible things the protagonist and other crucial characters must conquer to move forward during the quest.

- Battles – inner, small, or epic in proportion (There are two additional Battle sessions available in the Journey To Publication Advanced curriculum)
- Terrain
- Beasts
- Divination
- Other characters
- Love
- Enchanted forces

- **Quest**

A quest is the journey the protagonist must endure to reach a final goal. The protagonist can go it alone, take friends, or make friends (or enemies) along the way.

A quest is usually grueling, long, filled with danger and suspense, and ends in such a way it leaves your reader cheering, sobbing, or gasping at the protagonist's results.

High fantasy readers expect to invest their time and are huge fans of quests that bring a sense of journeying right beside the character(s). This is achieved through the feelings, dialogue, and actions of the protagonist. High fantasy fans are not afraid of long stories as long as the stories hold their interest. They also want to see how the

character(s) conquer heavy-hitting obstacles as conquering “the impossible” brings hope.. Again, finely-tuned exposition is a key to laying out the quest in detail, and it all must seem real.

A quest can also make for an attention grabbing hook line or a cliff hanger.

- *Example (hook line) Manny leapt from the castle’s tower to escape the rushing evil that pounded on the door behind him. He had to get the golden vile back to the wishing well or all would be lost.*
- *Example (cliff hanger) Everything had worked out the way the king had envisioned, but the knight whispered into the king’s ear, “I do not mean to dampen the gala of celebration, but I saw it with my own eyes your highness. There is another.”*

Below are some other scenario examples of what a quest could be. Read these then ask the enthusiasts to come up with others of their own.

- To find a certain person, place, or thing
- To discover the protagonist’s true destiny
- To enter a fantastical world and learn to survive, fit in, or become a ruler to
- To discover the history of why things are happening the way they are in the story
- A search for a missing family member, friend, or the last standing dragon
- Finding a mystical or magical object and journeying to return it to its rightful owner

- **Mythologies (popular)**

Mythology is used as the cruxes of many high fantasies. Below are some of the most popular.

- Greek
- Norse
- Chinese

- **Religions / Societies**

Some high fantasies use a religion or society as a base. There are times when the base is altered to fit the story. The key is, once again, it must be believable.

- Catholicism
 - Christianity
 - The Gods
 - Secret Societies
 - Paths
 - Traditions
 - Cults
-

Read aloud, the following written by Janet Beasley

Throbbing anticipation had driven the chosen minion general of the wathers to the threshold of insanity. He watched the sparse, rising flames shoot toward the sky. The thick billowing smoke was taking its time in clearing.

The wait had been daunting, but he had done as he had been instructed. And when the third monza of the rising moons arrived, since the battle had ended, Bengal rode his gnarly air born beast to a mountain top. His tarred armor repelled the light of the glowing spheres in the sky as he dismounted, climbed the jagged rocks, and stood high on a ledge overlooking his new kingdom. His smug expression said it all.

The smoldering of the land had finally dwindled, revealing the extensive desolation. It was not the unsurpassable destruction that grabbed Bengal's attention, nor the thought of having to rebuild village that caused him to swell with pride, but rather the power he had now been awarded.

Had the approaching wretched being been an enemy, Bengal would have been dead. The familiar gruff voice of his leader gurgled from behind, "I see you have waited, just as I asked. That shows obedience, and that I admire."

Bengal turned and bowed to his dark master and replied, "And I am honored not only by your presence, but also your words." Bengal stood to attention. "I am ready to take full control, my lord."

Bengal stiffened when Vog, his wicked orc-ish leader, encircled him with great speed and snapped his next words, "Do not get ahead of yourself, Bengal. There is much to conquer. This is only one dwarf village; the whole world of Wellbane is vast in comparison." Vog clicked his pointed black-green nails on his broken, yellowed teeth. Bengal could only assume the rugged admiral was in deep thought. Vog glared and said, "We will see how well you handle the rebuilding of this before you move onward and upward. Your impatience could very well be your downfall."

~ ~ ~

On the opposite side of Wellbane the young peasant girl rushed into her mother's arms. After an outstretched hug she said, "Mother, when I turn 10 tomorrow may I ride Samson, the biggest horse we own?"

Heidi's mother warmly smiled. "Oh sweetie, I don't know. You're still so small and delicate." She felt Heidi push back, then chuckled at her daughter's harassed expression.

"I'm not small. I'm almost 10! And that's the first age of having two numbers in it. I want to be a warrior like father."

The mother said to Heidi, “We will ask your father first.” She pulled Heidi back in and hugged her. “Perhaps if he rides with you it will make me feel better about the whole thing.” She felt Heidi tighten her grasp, and sighed with a smile.

- Go around the room asking the enthusiasts to state some of the components they recognized.
 - Have them then come up with different quests, and as the overseer write them down on the wipe off board or flip chart.
 - Next have the enthusiasts give their ideas of massive struggles that could occur for Bengal, Vog, and Heidi. Write these down.
 - After massive struggles have been determined, have the enthusiasts add in some magic or fantastical imaginal doings or un-doings. Write these down as well.
 - Finally have the enthusiasts share their ideas on an ending to the story, and list them.
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Discussion:

- What do you see as your biggest challenge in taking on high fantasy?
- If you could live in a high fantasy what type character would you be, human or not, and why?
- If you could live in an enchanted dwelling (good or wicked) what would it be and why? What would it look like? How would it smell? How big would it be?

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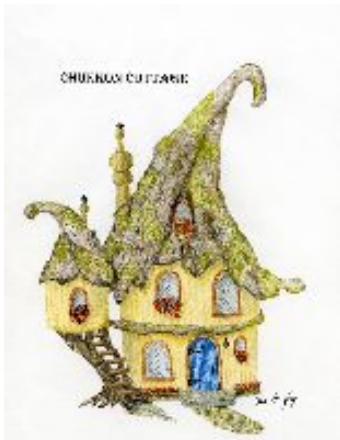
High Fantasy Components: These components are not all necessary. Using all or a variety of them will distinguish whether or not your story falls in the High Fantasy genre.

As your overseer begins to discuss each of these components be sure to take notes to fill in the details

- **Another World**
- **Magic**
- **Fantastical Imagination**
- **Characters**

- **Creatures**
- **Structures**

High Fantasy dwelling example. Taken from author Janet Beasley's Hidden Earth Series



- **Serious Tone**
- **Massive Struggles**
- **Quest**
- **Mythologies (popular)**
- **Religions / Societies**