

# The Tale of Rumpelstiltskin

A folktale from Germany, retold by Sandra Agard

A video of the story is available at [www.storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/rumpelstiltskin](http://www.storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/rumpelstiltskin)

## Synopsis

When a weaver boasts his daughter is able to spin gold from straw, the king decides to test the maiden and increase the royal coffers. He locks her in a room filled with straw and orders her to spin it into gold overnight or else she will end up in prison.

The poor girl cannot perform such a feat and she begins to cry. Then a strange man enters the locked room and says he can spin the straw into gold for a price. Twice he helps the girl spin gold from straw but on the third night she has nothing to give him. He strikes a bargain for her first born child and again turns the straw into gold.

The king, so pleased with his wealth, marries the girl and a year later they have their first child. The strange man appears, demanding payment. The new Queen is so distraught the man relents and tells her she has three days to learn his name. If she manages it she can keep her child but if she fails he will take the baby. At the last minute she manages to discover his name, and keep the baby.

## Part 1: Share the Story

Watch the clip of Sandra Agard telling the story of Rumpelstiltskin. If you require a transcript for access reasons, please email [learning@storymuseum.org.uk](mailto:learning@storymuseum.org.uk)

See **Resource A** for an illustrated definition of spinning wheels.

## Part 2: Discuss the Story

Use the questions below to begin a discussion about the story.

KS1 questions	KS2 questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Give a word to describe the weaver's daughter. Would you like to be her friend? Why/not? Can you explain your idea to someone else? Do they agree with you?</li><li>• How would you describe Rumpelstiltskin?</li><li>• Why do you think he agreed to spin the straw into gold?</li><li>• How would you describe the weaver? Why do you think he lied to the King?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why do you think the weaver made such a boast about his daughter? What was he hoping to gain from it?</li><li>• If you were the weaver's daughter in the story what would you do?</li><li>• Why do you think Rumpelstiltskin helped the daughter?</li><li>• If he can spin straw into gold why did he accept the ring and necklace as payment? Did he always intend to ask for her child in the end?</li><li>• Why do you think he wanted a baby?</li></ul>

## Part 3: Play the Story

KS1 activities	KS2 activities
<p><b>Story Walk</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students stand in their own space around the room. They have each become Rumpelstiltskin in their own story worlds.</li> <li>• Read out <b>Resource B</b> line by line. As you read, the students use the space to mime the story.</li> </ul>	<p><b>On Trial</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This activity is a little like Hot Seating a character but this time the chosen character is on trial for their deeds.</li> <li>• Selected students may be the judge, and councils for the prosecution and defence. The class/group can be split into two groups to begin with: one for the defence and one for the prosecution. They devise questions to ask the various characters.</li> <li>• Choose as a class the character to put on trial (weaver, daughter, king and Rumpelstiltskin).</li> <li>• A volunteer as the chosen character comes to the front of the class and the judge will read the accusation. This could be based on the following suggestions:  <b>Weaver:</b> You are accused of lying about your daughter's abilities.  <b>Daughter:</b> You are accused of deception, passing others' work off as your own.  <b>Rumpelstiltskin:</b> You are accused of blackmail.  <b>King:</b> You are accused of greed and for making people work for no pay.</li> <li>• The volunteer in role gives a defence as to why they are innocent of the accusation. The 'defence' group can also present evidence in support. The prosecution may try to present a different argument. For example: if the weaver is on trial the case for the defence may try to prove he is a proud father and only exaggerates his daughter's abilities because he loves her so much; the prosecution may try to show that he is reckless and negligent with his daughter's life as she faces imprisonment if she fails in her set task.</li> <li>• At the end, the class must decide if the character is innocent or guilty, and in case of guilty, what the sentence would be.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Rumpelstiltskin's Cousin</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the students comes to the front of the class as Rumpelstiltskin's cousin.</li> <li>• Rumpelstiltskin's cousin thinks of a name, challenges the class to guess their name, and gives a threat if they cannot guess. For example, : 'If you can't guess my name, then I will put you in a saucepan and turn you all into fried bananas!'</li> <li>• Volunteers can ask questions about the name, and Rumpelstiltskin's cousin can only answer 'yes' or 'no'. The questions can range from, 'Is it the name of a celebrity?' 'Is it the name of some one in this class?' but equally it could be related to the spelling, for example, 'Does it begin with J?' 'Does it have more than 4 letters?'</li> <li>• Keep a tally of the number of questions to ask before the class are able to guess the name. If they cannot guess within 20 questions, everyone can mime the threat being carried out – e.g. being fried bananas in a saucepan!</li> </ul>	

## Part 4: Story Stimulus

KS1 activities	KS2 activities
<p><b>Spin Your Own Story</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In groups, use <b>Resource C</b> to think of an impossible task set by the King:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On the left-hand side of Resource C, write down examples of arts, crafts and household tasks – such as sewing, carpentry, gardening, washing up.</li> <li>- On the right-hand side of Resource C, write a list of impossibilities, such as ‘humans can fly,’ ‘dolls can walk,’ ‘plates can dance,’ etc.</li> <li>- Now mix and match examples from the left-hand side of the page with the right hand side, to create impossible tasks.</li> <li>- For example: ‘grow flowers that can talk,’ ‘wash the plates until they’re made of gold.’</li> <li>- Share impossible tasks with each other and choose favourite ones.</li> <li>- Act out a scene in which a King orders a poor servant to complete the task overnight. Who comes to help the servant? What must the servant do in return?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><b>Spin Your Own Story</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In groups or independently, use the Anti-Hero character from the above activity and storyboard a story using Rumpelstiltskin as a structure, following these key questions:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- what impossible task does the King set the servant?</li> <li>- What anti-hero or magical being helps the servant?</li> <li>- What does the anti-hero demand in payment?</li> <li>- What does the anti-hero demand on the second night?</li> <li>- On the third night, the anti-hero demands something even more precious, unless the servant can discover the anti-hero’s name.</li> <li>- How does the servant discover the anti-hero’s name? What is his name?</li> <li>- What happens to the anti-hero?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Resource D</b> can be used as a template to plan and storyboard the story.</li> <li>• Prepare and perform the story as a role play in groups, or write it as a story independently.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Anti-Heroes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rumpelstiltskin is a type of superhero: He has an amazing skill and uses it to help another. However, the fact he demands payment makes him more of an anti-hero. A character who has an unusual skill and is willing to help others – for a price. Draw your character and write a description of their skill and preferred method of payment.</li> </ul>

## Part 5: Taking it further

Other stories by the Brothers Grimm

### Cinderella and Aschenputtel

[storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/cinderella-or-aschenputtel](http://storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/cinderella-or-aschenputtel)

### Hansel and Gretel

[storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/hansel-and-gretel](http://storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/hansel-and-gretel)

### Little Red Riding Hood

[storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/little-red-riding-hood](http://storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/little-red-riding-hood)

### Sleeping Beauty

[storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/sleeping-beauty](http://storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/sleeping-beauty)

### Snow White

[storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/snow-white](http://storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/snow-white)

### The Elves and the Shoemaker

[storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/the-elves-and-the-shoemaker](http://storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/the-elves-and-the-shoemaker)

### The Frog Prince

[storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/the-frog-prince](http://storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/the-frog-prince)

### The Twelve Brothers

[storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/the-twelve-brothers](http://storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/the-twelve-brothers)

### The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids

[storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/the-wolf-and-the-seven-little-kids](http://storymuseum.org.uk/1001-stories/the-wolf-and-the-seven-little-kids)

# The Tale of Rumpelstiltskin

## Resource A: Spinning Wheels

### A Spinning Wheel

A **spinning wheel** is a tool for spinning thread from wool or flax. It can help to speed up the spinning process.

The spinner feeds the wool or flax into the **bobbin**, and then presses the **treadle** with their foot to make the wheel spin. This tightens the wool so that it turns into thread.



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"spinning wheel" by hans s is licensed under CC BY-ND 2.0

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## Resource B: Story Walk

### Page 1

## Story Walk Prompts

- You are Rumpelstiltskin. You wake up one morning and do your wicked dance! And your wicked cackle!
- Stop! Listen carefully. You can hear crying. Crying is a GOOD sound! It means UNHAPPINESS Ha ha ha! Who is crying? Have a search.
- Aha. A door! Try the handle. It is locked!
- You will need to use your special magic movement to open it. Done. It's open!
- There's a girl with a spinning wheel. She needs help to spin straw into gold and you know how. Demand payment from her – examine the ring she offers then put it on your finger. Hold your hand out and tilt it to make the light sparkle on the ring.
- Sit at your spinning wheel and spin the gold. Finished! Now go to sleep.
- It's morning, yawn and stretch your body. Congratulate yourself – the room is full of gold!
- Now use your magical movement to get you out of the locked room and the palace.
- At your campsite build the fire and dance around it.
- The day has passed and you hear the crying again.
- Go back to the palace; perform your magical movement to get into the room with the crying girl.
- There's more straw! Look around in amazement then hold your hand out for your payment.
- It's a necklace, examine it carefully and fasten it round your neck. Pose wearing the necklace
- Sit at your spinning wheel and spin the gold. Done! Now sleep.
- It's morning again. Stretch your body, give a great big yawn and high five someone nearby – you've filled the room with gold!
- Use your magical movement to get you out of the locked room and the palace.
- Back at your campsite build the fire and dance around it.
- This day passes and suddenly you hear the crying again. Look annoyed, hands on hips then perform your magical movement to arrive in the third room.
- The room is enormous so spend a bit of time looking around. Be careful of all the straw.
- Demand your payment and look cross when the girl can't give you anything.
- But you have an idea so tap the side of your nose, give her a big smile and use your arms to look like you are rocking a baby. Then rub your hands together like an evil genius.

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## Resource B: Story Walk

### Page 2

- Sit at the spinning wheel and spin the straw into gold. Done! Now sleep.
- It's morning again. Stretch your body, give a great big yawn and jump up and down in excitement at all the gold.
- Look at the girl, rub your hands together again and give an evil laugh before using your magical movement to get you out of the locked room and the palace.
- A year goes past...flit around the space quickly.
- Carry out your magical movement to get you into the palace and to the Queen.
- Make large 'give me' movements because you are demanding the baby.
- Then point to yourself, show 3 fingers and perform you magical movement.
- At your campfire, dance around very pleased with yourself, she'll never guess your name!
- Back at the palace hold out your arms for the baby. Shake your head; she's guessed your name wrong.
- Drop your arms, look very angry and stamp your foot!
- The ground has opened up and is swallowing you. ARRRGH! Sink down to the ground and rest.

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Resource C

## Arts, Crafts and Household Tasks

*Fill this space with words or pictures showing examples of arts, crafts and household tasks, such as painting, sewing, gardening, or washing up.*

## Impossibilities!

*Fill this space with words or pictures showing examples of impossibilities, such as pigs flying, plates dancing or flowers talking.*

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## Resource D

<i>A King sets a servant an impossible task: to _____</i>	<i>A strange magical being, a _____, helps the servant complete the task.</i>	<i>The magical being demands payment of a _____</i>	<i>The next day, the King is delighted, and sets the task again with double the target.</i>
<i>The magical being returns to help the servant, and demands payment of _____</i>	<i>The third day, the magical being demands something even more precious, that the servant can't bear to part with: _____ unless the servant can find out the name.</i>	<i>The servant discovers the magical being's name, which is _____</i>	<i>The magical being disappears to _____</i>