

## **Teacher Guide**

### **“The Little Match Girl”**

#### **Suggested Lesson Procedure: 2-3 days**

1. Have students complete the anticipation guide independently. (~8 minutes)
2. Review the anticipation guide and have a class discussion. (~8 minutes)
3. Teach the vocabulary and introduction material using the Powerpoint presentation. (~15 minutes)
4. Read the story “The Little Match Girl” by Hans Christian Andersen (~10 minutes)
5. Have your students work in pairs on the reading questions. (~20 minutes)
6. Review the reading questions as a class. (~15 minutes)
7. Have students independently complete the “Draw your own match scene” activity. (~30 minutes)

Name:

Date:

### Before Reading Anticipation Guide

Directions: For each statement below, indicate whether you agree or disagree by putting a check in the appropriate box. Be honest with your responses. There are no right or wrong answers.

Statement	Agree	Disagree
1. People are nicer and more generous during the holiday season.		
2. True compassion can be shown in small, everyday actions.		
3. You should only worry about problems that affect you directly.		
4. Happiness can be found even in the most hopeless situations.		
5. Leaning on your loved ones can help you endure even the most difficult times.		
6. It's easier to look the other way than to confront uncomfortable truths.		
7. The value of a person is determined by their wealth or status.		
8. People can find comfort in their imagination when reality is too harsh.		
9. Poor people are not entitled to assistance or charity.		
10. The world would be different if everyone practiced empathy.		

1. Which statement do you agree with the most? Explain.

2. Which statement do you agree with the least? Explain.

3. Which statement makes you feel the most torn between agreeing and disagreeing? What aspects of the statement make it complicated?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



Before Reading Guide  
“The Little Match Girl” by Hans Christian Andersen

Vocabulary

hitherto	adverb	
farthing	noun	
urchin	noun	
cower	verb	
venture	verb	
capital	adjective	
stark	adjective	
splendor	noun	

The Little Match Girl

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Literary Era: \_\_\_\_\_

Where Written: \_\_\_\_\_

Year Published: \_\_\_\_\_

Genre: \_\_\_\_\_

Setting: \_\_\_\_\_

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# THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL

*Vocabulary*

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**hitherto**

**POS:** adverb

**Definition:** Until now

**Synonym:** previously

**Example Sentence:**

Hitherto, she had kept her opinions to herself, but the heated debate compelled her to speak up.



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**farthing**

POS: noun

**Definition:** a former monetary unit and coin of the UK (equal to  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a penny)

**Synonym:** pittance

**Example Sentence:** The antique dealer valued the brooch at a fortune, though it was originally worth only a farthing.



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# urchin

**POS:** noun

**Definition:** a mischievous young child, especially one who is poorly or raggedly dressed

**Synonym:** beggar

**Example Sentence:**

After a long day, the urchin slept soundly behind the barn.



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**cower**

**POS:** verb

**Definition:** To crouch  
down in fear

**Synonym:** huddle

**Example Sentence:** The dog cowered under the bed, trembling as  
the fireworks exploded in the night sky.



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# venture

**POS:** verb

**Definition:** To dare to do something or go somewhere that may be dangerous

**Synonym:** risk

**Example Sentence:** Despite the full moon, they decided to venture into the dark cave.



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**capital** PREVIEW

POS: adjective

**Definition:** describes excelling or remarkable

**Synonym:** magnificent

**Example Sentence:** Her performance in the play was capital, earning her a standing ovation from the crowd.

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**stark**

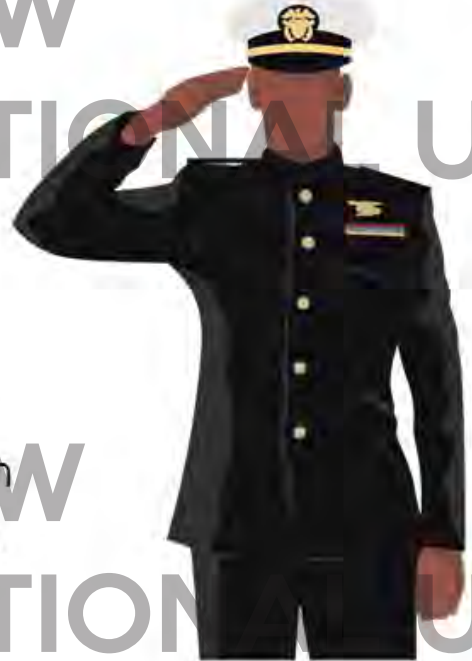
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**POS:** adjective

**Definition:** rigid or incapable of movement

**Synonym:** stiff

**Example Sentence:** The marine stood in a stark pose, as he saluted his superior.



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# splendor

POS: noun

**Definition:** great beauty

**Synonym:** brilliance

**Example Sentence:**

The splendor of the sunset over the ocean took their breath away, painting the sky with hues of orange, pink, and purple.



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# The Little Match Girl

**Author:** Hans Christian Andersen

**Literary Era:** Victorian Era, Danish Golden Age,  
Industrial Era

**Where Written:** Denmark

**Year Published:** 1845

**Genre:** Fairy Tale

**Setting:** an unnamed city (most likely in Denmark)  
during the winter



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## 19th Century Denmark

- The Industrial Revolution began in Denmark in the early 19th century
- By 1845, Denmark was experiencing significant changes, including the growth of industries such as textiles, manufacturing, and shipping
- The introduction of mechanized processes, such as the use of power looms, began transforming the textile industry
- The development of infrastructure like railroads and advancements in technology also marked this period
- This era led to urbanization, population shifts to cities, and changes in working and living conditions



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## Living & Working Conditions For the Poor

- Labor conditions were characterized by long working hours, low wages, and unsafe working conditions
- Poverty was widespread, particularly in urban areas like Copenhagen, with many people living in cramped, unsanitary conditions in slums, often with inadequate access to food and basic necessities
- Severe overcrowding of cities
- Industrialization led to significant air pollution from factories and coal burning
- Child labor was prevalent, particularly among poor families where children were often forced to work to contribute to household income



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# Hans Christian Andersen

- Danish author and poet best known for his fairy tales
- He was born on April 2, 1805, in Odense, Denmark
- Inspired by the Brothers Grimm, whose dark and moralistic fairy tales were widely known and popular during his time
- Andersen's experiences growing up poor in Denmark influenced his themes of poverty, struggle, resilience, and empathy in his stories
- Known for his popular stories: The Ugly Duckling, The Little Mermaid, The Emperor's New Clothes, The Princess and the Pea, and Thumbelina



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**What characteristics come to mind  
when you think of a fairy tale?**



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## Fairy Tale Tropes

- Embodies the power of childhood imagination
- Includes clearly defined good and evil characters
- Features an impoverished or destitute protagonist who triumphs over his/her circumstances
- Conveys moral lessons and insights into human behavior with an emotional tone
- Incorporates a magical figure or object, such as a fairy godmother, a deceased ancestor, a talking animal, or an enchanted tree, who helps or protects the protagonist
- The protagonist is motherless or experiences abuse
- Starts with "Once Upon a Time" and ends with "Happily Ever After"



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Name:

Class:

**“The Little Match Girl” by Hans Christian Andersen**  
**Reading Questions**

1) Why is the little girl barefoot at the beginning of the story?

2) Why does the little girl not go home?

3) What day does the story take place?

4) What happens when the girl lights the matches?

5) What happens to the girl in the end?

6) What is the dramatic irony in the townspeople's reaction when they find the little girl the next morning?

7) What is the point of view in “The Little Match Girl” and how does it influence the story?

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8) How does the setting of the story contribute to its overall mood?

9) The main types of external conflict in storytelling are "character vs. character," "character vs. society," and "character vs. nature." Provide an example of each in “The Little Match Girl.”

10) How does Hans Christian Andersen use contrast to enhance the emotional impact of the story?

11) What role does the grandmother play in the story, both literally and symbolically?

12) What is the main theme or themes explored in this story?

13) Do you think the townspeople are to blame for the little girl's death, or is it just the result of unfortunate circumstances? Why?

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14) If you were in the little girl's situation, what would you have done differently, if anything?

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15) What do you think Andersen wanted readers to take away from this story?

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16) If you could change the ending of the story, what would you have happened to the little girl, and why?

17) Although "The Little Match Girl" is a sad story, it remains popular, especially during the holidays. Why do you think this is?

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Name:

Date:

### Draw your own Match Scene

When the girl burns her matchsticks, she experiences visions of comforts like: a big iron stove, a table spread with the finest porcelain and a roast goose, a Christmas tree with thousands of candle, and her deceased grandmother, who is the only person who ever showed her kindness.

The girl can only access these comforts in her imagination, symbolizing the distance between her reality and the world of the privileged. If you were to light a match and imagine a happy scene, what would you see? Think of a happy memory from your past or dream about something you hope for in your future.

**Draw your own personal "match scene." Use colors and details to bring your vision to life.**

