Teacher's notes and answer key

Baba Yaga – Monster or Guardian?

Subjects: English · Ethics | recommended from age 12 (B1) | Video: 9:13 min

Answers B

1. The stories were passed on by word of mouth for centuries and changed each time; they were only written down in the 19th century. There are hundreds of contradicting variants.
2. How the visitor behaves: the polite, hard-working girl is rewarded, the rude, lazy one is punished.
3. She doesn't fly on a broom but in a mortar; she only uses the broom to sweep away her tracks.
4. “Old woman” or “grandmother” – not a personal name. So every Baba Yaga could be a different old woman.
5. To Slavic burial huts built on charred tree stumps that looked like bird legs and held the ashes of the dead.

Answer C

Correct numbers from top to bottom: 4 – 7 – 1 – 6 – 2 – 8 – 3 – 5

Notes on D and E

E – Propp (1946): originally a guardian of the dead and an examiner in initiation; clues: the hut resembles burial houses, her tests resemble initiation rites. Name theory: originally a demonic figure; clue: “Yaga” may be related to “jędza” (horror, illness). Uncertain: linguists dispute this link, and names change meaning over centuries. There is no final proof for any theory.

Other readings in the video: a pre-Christian goddess of death, winter and rebirth; the “Mistress of Animals”.

Content note and age

Recommended from age 12. The video is explanatory; it mentions that Baba Yaga eats children in some tales and talks about burial customs.

Sources: Russian folk tales (Afanasyev's collection), Vladimir Propp (1946), Andreas Johns, “Baba Yaga: The Ambiguous Mother and Witch of the Russian Folktale” (2004).

The narrator's voice and the illustrations in the video are AI-generated; the script follows the established tradition. You are welcome to copy and share this worksheet for classroom use.

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