

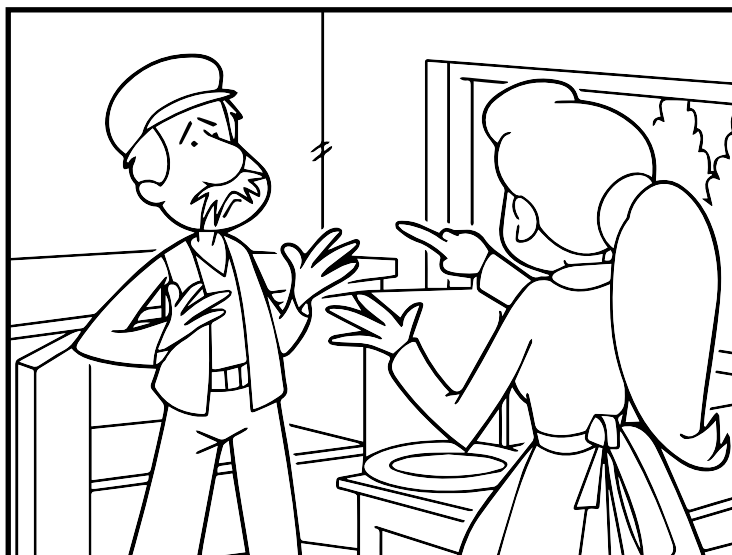
# Hansel and Gretel

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

Listen to the story.

## Hansel and Gretel by The Brothers Grimm

A poor woodcutter, his two children, and his new wife, the children's stepmother, lived at the edge of a vast forest. The two children, a boy and girl, were named Hansel and Gretel.



Every day, the woodcutter struggled to earn enough to take care of his family. One year, a famine struck the land, and he couldn't even afford to buy food.

Sleepless with worry, he said to his wife one night, "How can we feed our poor children, when even you and I have nothing to eat?"

"Here's what we'll do," answered the woman. "Tomorrow morning, we'll take Hansel and Gretel deep into the forest and leave them there. I'm sure they won't be able to find their way back, and then we'll only have to feed ourselves."

"I can't do that," said the man. "How can I abandon my children in the forest, to be killed by wild animals?"

"You foolish man," she scolded him. "If you won't get rid of the children, we'll all starve."

She continued to nag him until he finally agreed to her plan.

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The two children, too hungry to sleep, had heard what their stepmother had said to their father.

Gretel said to Hansel, "I don't want to be left in the forest!"

"Don't worry, Gretel," soothed Hansel. "I have a plan."

The woman awoke her two stepchildren just before sunrise the next morning by shouting, "Get up! We're going into the forest to collect firewood."

She gave each child a little piece of bread and said, "Here's your lunch; don't eat it right away, because you won't get anything else."

Gretel put her bread in her apron. Hansel put his bread in his coat pocket and secretly crumbled it all up. Then they all went to the forest. As they walked, Hansel kept stopping.

His father said, "Hansel, why do you keep stopping? Get moving!"



"Sorry, father," said Hansel, "I'm just looking back at my little white cat sitting on the roof of our house."

Hansel's stepmother said, "Stupid boy, that's not your cat; it's the morning sun shining on the chimney."

But Hansel hadn't really been looking back at the cat; each time he'd stopped, he'd thrown some of the breadcrumbs from his pocket onto the path.

When they reached the middle of the forest, the father

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said, “Now, children, pile up some wood, and I’ll light a fire to keep you warm.”

Hansel and Gretel gathered a big pile of sticks. Once the fire was burning brightly, the woman said, “Rest by the fire, children, while we go and cut some more wood. When we’re done, we’ll come back and take you home.”

Hansel and Gretel sat by the fire and shared Gretel’s piece of bread. After a while, the two children fell asleep. When they woke, it was already night.

Gretel began to cry and said, “How will we find our way home?”

But Hansel comforted her and said, “Wait until the moon rises, and then we’ll follow my trail of breadcrumbs home.”

However, when the full moon rose, they saw no trail, because the birds of the forest had eaten all the crumbs!

Hansel tried to find the way home, but he and Gretel were soon lost in the forest.



Then they saw a lovely white bird flying above their heads and followed it all the way to a small house, where it perched on the roof. As the children approached the house, they saw it was built entirely of gingerbread!

“Let’s eat, Gretel!” cried Hansel, and he nibbled at part of the roof while Gretel tried a windowsill.

Suddenly the door opened, and an ancient woman leaning on a crutch limped outside. Hansel and Gretel

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were so scared that they dropped the gingerbread they'd been eating.

But the old lady smiled and said, "Oh, you poor children, come inside, and I'll take care of you."

She led them into her little house, and fed them a wonderful dinner. Then she ushered the two children into two pretty little beds, and Hansel and Gretel happily fell asleep.

Unfortunately, the seemingly kind old woman was really a wicked witch! She used the house to trap children. Then, she would place her captives inside her magic oven, which transformed them into enchanted gingerbread, the witch's favourite dessert.

Early in the morning before the children were awake, the witch grabbed Hansel and locked him in a closet. Then she shook Gretel awake, and cried, "Get up, lazy thing, and help me get the oven ready. I'm going to bake your brother into gingerbread!"

Gretel wept at the witch's words, but she had no choice but to do as the old woman commanded.

Once a fire had been lit beneath the oven, the witch pushed poor Gretel toward the oven.

"Creep inside," said the witch, "and see if the oven is hot enough." Once Gretel was inside, she intended to shut the oven and turn Gretel into gingerbread, too.

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But Gretel saw what she had in mind, and said, "I'm not sure what to do; how do I get inside the oven?"

"Silly goose," scolded the old woman. "The door is big enough; just look, I can get in myself!"

The witch opened the oven door and put her head in; Gretel sneaked up behind her and pushed her all the way inside. Then Gretel shut and bolted the oven door.

The witch shrieked loudly, but it was no good; she was soon turned into her own magic gingerbread!

Gretel quickly freed Hansel from the closet, crying, "Hansel, we're saved! The old witch is dead!" The two children hugged each other in their joy.

After exploring the witch's house, they discovered a chest full of jewels. Happily, the two children stuffed their pockets with gems.

Then they left the witch's house, searching for a way out of the forest. Gradually, the forest seemed to be more and more familiar to them, and finally, they saw their house in the distance.

They ran inside and embraced their amazed father. The man hadn't known one happy hour since he'd left the children in the forest. Meanwhile, his selfish wife had left him. Gretel and Hansel showed the happy father the jewels in their pockets, and all three of them lived in peace, comfort, and happiness forever after.



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**Answer questions about the story:**

1. Have you ever been lost?
2. How did you feel when you were lost?
3. What can you do if you get lost?
4. What did Hansel try to do to find the way back home?
5. Why didn't Hansel's plan work?
6. How did they escape from the witch?

# Hansel and Gretel

Listen to your educator read the story.

Cut out the pictures and put them in the correct order of the story.

Hansel left a trail  
of breadcrumbs.



Hansel and Gretel went into the woods  
with their father and stepmother.



# Hansel and Gretel

Hansel and Gretel  
escaped from the witch.



Hansel and Gretel saw a  
gingerbread house in the woods.

