

# Little Red Riding Hood

1. How would you describe the roles played by women and men in the Grimms' Red? How do these roles relate to our expectations of adult women and men today, as they interact with a child --if that is what you conceive Red to be?
2. Look at the character of Red. What's she like? Why is she this way? From what clues do you judge her age? What are some of the variations in warnings (moral or otherwise) given or not given to Red in the Grimms' tale.
3. Fairy tales have often been used to "scare" children away from certain behaviors - while at the same time delighting them with talking wolves and other magical events. Can you think of other examples in our society when we use fear to teach a lesson? Under what circumstances is a society justified in creating tales of warning to socialize its young?
4. Eating is a big theme in the Red variants. Discuss the references to food, drink, and stomachs. What do you think the story is trying to tell us?
5. Why is a wolf used in the story? Why not a fox? A bear? A man? What connotations do each carry?
6. Examine the character of the wolf. What does the wolf symbolize in the tale? Does the wolf represent something outside of us, or something inside of us? How could the wolf be perceived differently depending on the timing of the story? For example, currently the wolf is on the endangered species list. Does this change your perception of this character?
7. Aesop's Fables, Disney movies, and many other entertainments depict animals as having human traits. What happens when storytelling humans project their own traits onto animals? Does it change the way we think of animals or of some of our own traits? Is the effect different when all the characters are animals from the case where one animal interacts with several humans?
8. In the original story, there was no hunter. Men entered this tale late in its progress. How does the hunter change the tale's effect on the reader? Does his presence change the behavior or the effect on us of the female characters?
9. Why does the Grimms' version offer two endings (in your interpretation)?
10. Not only hunger, but sexuality is a primal drive covertly handled in the Little Red Riding Hood. Which textual details or language styles in the various versions tell us that sex might be part of the subject matter here? What message are we the readers to receive? Is the message different according to our gender?