

A Reader's Guide for
RUMP: *The True Story of Rumpelstiltskin*
by Liesl Shurtliff

About the Book:

Rump has never known his full name—his mother died before she could tell him. So all his life he's been teased and bullied for his half-a-name. But when he finds an old spinning wheel, his luck seems to change, for Rump discovers he can spin straw into gold. His best friend Red Riding Hood warns him that magic is trouble, and despite his best intentions, Rump weaves himself deeper into a curse with every thread he spins.

Rump decides that the only way to break the spell is to go on a quest to find his true name. Following whatever clues he can find about his mother's past, he embarks on a dangerous journey that leads him far away from all he has ever known. As he searches for the answer that will release him from the curse, he learns about family, trust, friendship, and the freedom that comes from knowing who you really are.

Discussion Questions:

The discussion questions provided in this section are designed to address Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts (SL.3-8.1a-d), with applicable standards noted in parentheses after each question.

1. In the magical kingdom where *Rump* is set, a name determines a person's destiny. How do you think names affect people? If you had a different name, do you think you or your life would be different? (RL.4-8.2)
2. Rump thinks he isn't smart, mostly because of his name. Do you agree? Does Rump's belief about himself change how he sees the world? How does this affect the choices he makes? (RL.3-4.3)
3. What events or actions from the original Grimm Brothers' tale of *Rumpelstiltskin* are explained or clarified in *Rump*? What liberties did the author take in changing the original tale? (RL.4.9)
4. The original fairy tale of *Rumpelstiltskin* is written from a third-person point of view, while *Rump* is written from Rump's first-person point of view. How does that affect the two stories and what we understand about them? How might point-of-view affect other stories, or even history? (RL.3-5.6)
5. Who is Red? What do we know about her? What things do she and Rump have in common? In what ways are they different? How do those things shape their friendship? (RL.5.3)
6. What are pixies? Would you consider them to be helpful or harmful? How does their presence change the story or cause certain events to happen? (RL.3-8.3)

7. Throughout the story, there are many secrets that are kept and revealed. Find at least five instances of someone keeping an important secret from someone else. What reasons do each of the characters have for keeping a secret? Does trying to keep the secret end up accomplishing what each character hoped it would? (RL.3-8.1)
8. Red repeatedly warns Rump that magic has dangerous consequences, and the trolls go to great lengths to protect The Kingdom from the use of magic. List at least three examples of the effects of using magic in *Rump*. Do you think these consequences make sense? How are the workings of magic in *Rump* similar or different from other stories about magic that you have read? (RL.4.9)
9. What other fairy tales were mentioned in *Rump*? (RL.3.2)

Writing Exercises:

The writing topics provided in this section are designed to address Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, with applicable standards noted in parentheses after each question.

1. **Rhyme Time:** Rump loves making up rhymes for every day things. Take a task you have to do every day and make up a rhyme about it. It could be your homework, practicing, dealing with friends or parents, sports, or chores. (RL.5.1) (W.3-8.4)
2. **Fairy-tale Answers:** Pick a favorite myth, legend or fairy tale. Go through it in detail, taking note of things that don't make sense or need additional explanation. Ask why, what, where and how the events of the original tale take place, and then come up with your own answers. Write a new version of the story, incorporating your ideas. (W.4-8.9a) (W.3-8.4)

Additional Activities:

The activities provided in this section are designed to address Common Core State Standards, with applicable standards noted in parentheses after each question.

1. **Sludge Recipe:** Use chocolate sandwich cookies, chocolate instant pudding, milk, whipped topping and gummy worms to make an edible version of sludge – see sample recipes at <http://www.ohnuts.com/blog/dirt-pudding-cups-with-gummy-worms-recipe/> or <http://www.kraftrecipes.com/recipes/dirt-cups-57763.aspx>. (Math 3.NF.A.1) (Math 3.MD.A.2) (Math 4.MD.A.1) (Math 5.MD.A.1)
2. **Watch Your Words:** Choose a partner and read a conversation between two of the characters out loud, such as the conversation between Red and Rump on p. 26 or on p. 34. Try reading it as you imagine them saying it in the story, and then try reading it with different expressions or interpretations of the sentences to see how the delivery can change how a conversation feels or conveys meaning. (RF.3-5.4b)