

Level 2

Suitable for:	young learners who have completed up to 100 hours of study in English
Type of English:	American
Headwords:	400
Key words:	10 (see pages 2 and 4 of these Teacher's Notes)
Key grammar:	present tense, present progressive, possessive form, quantifiers, imperatives, conjunctions, interrogative (<i>who, what, why</i>), determiners (<i>a, the</i>), simple adjectives, prepositions of place

Summary of the story

A peasant woman, after years of waiting for a child, asks for help from a fairy. She is given a seed to plant. From it a flower blooms and within it Thumbelina, a beautiful child the size of a thumb, is born. Every night, Thumbelina sleeps in a small shell on the table by the window, but one night an ugly toad comes and kidnaps her. She manages to escape, but a horrible insect takes her and leaves her in a forest full of flowers. There she helps a lovely bird and together they fly towards a palace amongst these flowers. A flower opens to reveal a handsome prince, the same size as Thumbelina. They get married and live happily ever after.

Background information

Thumbelina is an adaptation of the original fiction title written by Hans Christian Andersen, a Danish writer, in 1835. It was first translated into English in 1846 and is now a popular children's tale all around the world.

The tale has been adapted to various media including song, and animated movie by Warner Brothers. In 1952, Andersen's life was made into a movie by Goldwyn Productions and starred Danny Kaye.

Did you know ... ?

Thumbelina was first published in a collection of *Fairy Tales Told for Children*. The first reviews of these tales were not in any way favorable; they were considered to be too informal as they lacked a poetic style.

Andersen's tales were not only harshly criticized but he was also told to stop writing. He did not give up however, and a year later he went on to publish *The Emperor's New Clothes* and *The Little Mermaid*, which has now become a Disney classic.

The characters

Thumbelina is a beautiful young girl. She is only as tall as a thumb.

Mother is a peasant woman who has always wanted a child. She is Thumbelina's mom.

Fairy gives the old woman a seed to plant which blossoms. It is where Thumbelina is born.

Toad is an ugly toad who kidnaps Thumbelina and wants to marry her.

Bird is a friendly and lovely bird that takes Thumbelina to a palace where she meets the prince.

Prince is a handsome young man who lives in a palace. He is also the size of a thumb.

Topics and themes

Animals In the story, there are different animals that live in the forest and in the water. Talk to the students about the different animals you can find in these places. What do they look like? What do they eat? Where do they live?

Love In the book, there are lots of examples of love. The mother loves Thumbelina, Thumbelina loves her mother, the prince loves Thumbelina, and she loves him. Talk to the students about the different feelings of love we have for different people in our lives. For example, the love we have for our family / siblings / children / friends / hobbies. (See also Activity 2 on page 3 of these Teacher's Notes.)

Growing In the book, Thumbelina's mother plants a seed and it grows and grows and grows. Talk to the students about other things that grow in the world, like plants, people, and animals. Measure the students and record their heights; watch how they grow throughout the year.

Appearance Thumbelina is different from other children because she is very small. Talk to the children about differences that exist between people. Is everybody the same? Is everybody tall? Does everybody have brown hair? Is everyone young? Ask them to compare themselves to people in their class or their family members. Talk to students about how we must accept those differences. (See also Activity 1 on page 3 of these Teacher's Notes.)

Key words

(see page 4 of these Teacher's Notes for the Key words in context)

fairy (n)	safe (adj)
insect (n)	seed (n)
marry (v)	shell (n)
plant (n)	toad (n)
prince (n)	ugly (adj)

Making wishes In the book, the mother wants to have a child, the toad wants to marry Thumbelina, and so does the prince. Talk to the children about what type of things they wish for in life. Do they want to be happy / rich / have a big family? (See also Activity 3 on page 3 of these Teacher's Notes.)

Helping each other In the book, the fairy helps the mother, the fish and Thumbelina help the bird. Talk to the students about the importance of helping each other. Who do we help? Friends? Family? Why do people need help? How can we help? Why is it important to help?

Size Thumbelina and the prince are very small. Talk to the children about objects of different sizes. Look around the classroom, what is big / small? Think about the city / town you live in, what is big / small there? Children can find things in the classroom that are big / small, and put them into categories. (See also Activity 4 on page 3 of these Teacher's Notes.)

Notes on the photocopiable activities

Page 6: While-Reading activities, **Activity 3:** Have students find the sentences they have to match in the activity on the correct page number in the Reader, to check their answers. Ask them to read the sentences to their partners.

Page 10: After-Reading activities, **Activity 4:** Ask students to draw their favorite scene from the book. Have them present their work to the class.

Class Activities (After Reading)

Here are some activities to do with your class after reading *Thumbelina*.

1. Everybody is different poster

Materials: large pieces of paper or card; colored pens or pencils; glue; printed out pictures of different people of various ethnic backgrounds, nationalities, sizes, and age. Photos of students.

- Collect the pictures and show them to the class. Encourage students to talk about how they are different from one another in terms of size, gender, and possibly ethnicity.
- Talk to the children about how Thumbelina is different to the other characters in the book.
- Encourage them to include sentences like: *He is tall / he is small / he is African / he is American / he is old / he is young.*
- When they have finished, have students place their work on an “Everybody is different” display in the classroom.

2. Thumbelina and the prince's wedding day

Materials: large sheets of paper or card; colored pens and pencils; safety scissors; glue; colored tissue paper; a variety of printed out wedding pictures

- Before the session, print out different pictures of weddings: pictures of what people wear, eat, and do at weddings.
- Show the children these pictures. Ask them to think about what people usually wear, eat, and do at weddings.
- Talk to pupils about how Thumbelina and the prince are getting married in the book.
- Explain to the class that they are going to plan Thumbelina and the prince's wedding.
- Divide the class into smaller groups to focus on different parts of the wedding.

- One group can produce a poster on the food and drink they are going to eat at the wedding with pictures and labels for each food.
- One group can design the wedding clothes for Thumbelina and the prince. They can label the clothes and colors accordingly.
- One group can produce a poster on the location of the wedding: in a park, in a palace, in a church.
- One group can produce a poster on the activities they are going to do at the ceremony: dance, sing, eat, and play.
- Pupils present their posters to the class and display their posters on the wall.

3. Wish Wall

Materials: small star-shaped yellow card templates; colored pens; pencils; glitter, and safety scissors

- Talk about the different things that people wish for: a nice house, lots of money, to be happy.
- Talk about what Thumbelina's mother wishes for in the book.
- Give each pupil a star-shaped template. Each pupil writes a wish on their template, e.g. *family / happy / big house / car / rich*
- Pupils decorate their wish template and stick it onto the “Wish Wall” display on the wall.

4. Design Thumbelina's bedroom

Materials: A4 pieces of card, colored pens and pencils and safety scissors

- Talk about Thumbelina and her size.
- Ask the students where she sleeps in the book. (*In a shell*)
- Ask pupils to design Thumbelina's bedroom. Explain to pupils that everything must be small enough for Thumbelina, e.g. the bed could be a matchbox, the pillow could be a pebble, the TV could be a postage stamp.
- Ask pupils to label the pictures to explain the real-life objects that they represent.

Key words

fairy.....One day, she visits a fairy. (p. 2)

insect.....Suddenly, an insect flies down and takes her! (p. 10)

marry.....The toad wants to marry Thumbelina ... (p. 7)

plant..... ... she plants the seed. (p. 3)

princeA big white flower opens and there is a prince. (p. 14)

safe.....But Thumbelina is not safe! (p.10)

seedThe fairy gives her a seed. (p. 2)

shell..... ... she sleeps in a shell next to the window. (p. 5)

toadOne night, an ugly green toad comes to the window. (p. 6)

ugly.....One night, an ugly green toad comes to the window. (p. 6)



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While-Reading activities

Activity 1 (pages 1–5)

Match. Draw lines.

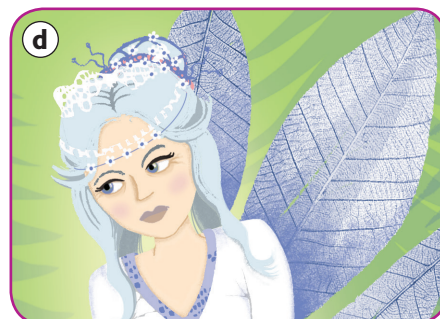
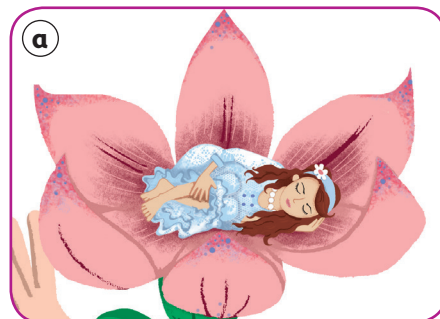
1 This is Thumbelina's mom

2 She visits a

3 She plants a

4 Thumbelina is in a

5 Thumbelina sleeps in a



Activity 2 (pages 6–9)

Put the sentences in the correct order.

- a Thumbelina sees beautiful places. ☐
- b The fish help Thumbelina. ☐
- c The toad wants to marry Thumbelina. ☐
- d The toad takes Thumbelina. ☒
- e Thumbelina wants to go home. ☐

Activity 3 (pages 10–14)

Circle the right answer.

- 1 The insect **takes** / **helps** Thumbelina.
- 2 Thumbelina is very **happy** / **scared**.
- 3 Thumbelina puts a **coat** / **flower** over the bird.
- 4 Thumbelina **doesn't help** / **helps** the bird.
- 5 Thumbelina and the bird **fly** / **walk** over the trees.
- 6 The prince lives in a big **tree** / **flower**.

Activity 4 (pages 12–14)

Match the sentences and the pictures.

- 1 “Marry me!”
- 2 “Look! Flowers!”
- 3 “Yes.”
- 4 “Thank you.”



After-Reading activities

Activity 1

Write the word.

- 1 d e s e _____
- 2 i y a f r _____
- 3 n i r c e p _____
- 4 h l s e l _____
- 5 a d o t _____
- 6 y u l g _____

Activity 2

Write the names.

Thumbelina The prince The bird The mother The toad
The fairy

- 1 Who wants a child? _____
- 2 Who is beautiful? _____
- 3 Who helps the mother? _____
- 4 Who helps Thumbelina? _____
- 5 Who is ugly? _____
- 6 Who lives in a flower? _____

Activity 3

Make sentences.

1 girl / Thumbelina / a / is / .

.....

2 she / small / is / .

.....

3 beautiful / she / is / .

.....

4 sleeps / she / shell / in / a / .

.....

5 she / bird / helps / the / .

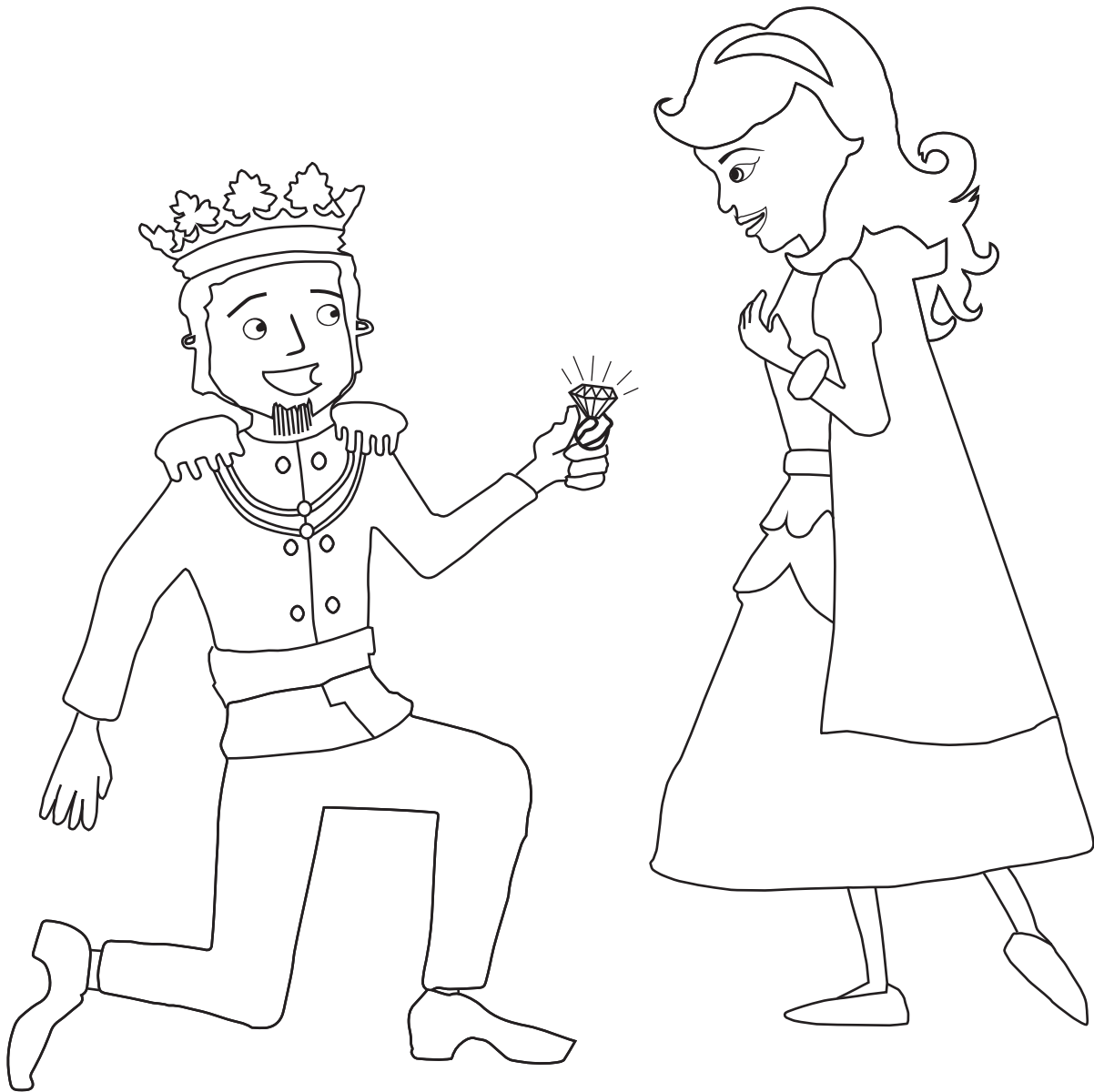
.....

6 marries / she / prince / the / .

.....

Activity 4

Color Thumbelina and the prince.



Answer Key

In the back of the Reader

Before You Read

- 1 **a** a prince **b** a mother **c** a bird **d** a fairy
e a girl

After You Read

- 1 **a** Bad
b Good
c Good
d Good
e Good
f Bad
2 **a** No
b Yes
c No
d Yes
e No

In these Teacher's Notes

While-Reading activities

Activity 1

- 1 **c** 2 **d** 3 **b** 4 **a** 5 **e**

Activity 2

d, c, e, b, a

Activity 3

- 1 The insect **takes** Thumbelina.
2 Thumbelina is very **scared**.
3 Thumbelina puts a **coat** over the bird.
4 Thumbelina **helps** the bird.
5 Thumbelina and the bird **fly** over the trees.
6 The prince lives in a big **flower**.

Activity 4

- 1 "Marry me!" – **b** Prince
2 "Look, flowers!" – **c** Thumbelina
3 "Yes" – **a** Thumbelina
4 "Thank you" – **d** The bird

After-Reading activities

Activity 1

- 1 seed 2 fairy 3 prince 4 shell 5 toad 6 ugly

Activity 2

- 1 The mother
2 Thumbelina
3 The fairy
4 The bird
5 The toad
6 The prince

Activity 3

- 1 Thumbelina is a girl.
2 She is small.
3 She is beautiful.
4 She sleeps in a shell.
5 She helps the bird.
6 She marries the prince.

Activity 4

Thumbelina and the prince colored in.