




## Sharing Stories; Discovering Cultures

### Lesson 3 Nature Stories—How the Natural World Came to Be

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#### Lesson Three Objective

In this lesson, students will explore the various myths that explain natural events. Students will also have an opportunity to develop research strategies and to present their findings to a small group.

 **Time** Two 60-minute class periods

#### **Materials**

- Student Handouts 1 and 2
- Overhead 1
- Materials for making posters

#### Getting Started

##### Knowledge Now/Engaging Interest

Review with students the definition of myths: an imaginative effort to explain the natural world in human terms. Discuss the idea that ancient and primitive people use myths to help explain the mysteries of the world that they cannot explain through scientific means. Myths also reinforce a people's beliefs and values.

Ask students to conduct a three-step interview to discover if students were ever told fantasy stories as children to help explain natural events. For example, when students were afraid of thunder, what story did their parents tell them to ease their fears? What other myths about natural events are students familiar with?

They should answer these questions in pairs, then join with another pair and exchange answers and stories.

Once students have had time to share, invite them to share with the large group.

Mention to students that they will have an opportunity to learn a nature myth from another culture and present it to a small group.

## **Learning Activities**

Lecture: Myths to explain natural events are common in all cultures. Often, these myths also reflect the environment of the culture. For example, Inuit culture has many myths associated with light and darkness, reflecting a concern with the loss of light during the long winter months. The Greeks had myths about the sea and the changing seasons, and Native American myths explain many of the landforms in the areas where the Native people lived. For example, there are myths about the formation of the Three Sisters mountain peaks and the Southern Alberta Chinook. In Native American myths, animals often play key roles as befits their important role in Native spirituality. In Greek myths, the heroes, gods and goddesses of the Greek pantheon take primary roles in the myths.

To further explain the role of animals in Aboriginal Spirituality, see Overhead 1.

Distribute Student Handout 1 “Discovering More About Nature Myths”. Go over the assignment with students.

Distribute Student Handout 2 “Assessment of Myth Presentations” so that students will know how they will be marked on this assignment. Note that they will be marked by a small group of peers.

Students should be given some class time to work on their presentations. The websites on the handout are a good starting point to search for nature myths. Students may also be directed to some of the text resources in the Supplementary Resources list of this lesson.

## **Assessment/Analysis**

If possible, divide students into presentation groups by creating diverse groups based on the myths they have chosen to present. Groups should consist of no more than five persons. Each person will have a chance to present and will be assessed according to the criteria on the marking guide. You will need to make extra copies of Student Handout 2 so that each group member has one for each presenter.

## **Application**

Students should add to their portfolio as described in lesson 1. They may want to include their assessments from the presentation and some samples of the work they did to prepare for the presentation on a summary of the myth they presented to the group.

## **Activities for Extension and/or Integration**

Students could present their myths to an elementary-level class.

## **Subject and Level Learner Outcomes for Subject and Level**

- English Language Arts 10-1 and 10-2
- 1.2 Extend awareness.
- 1.2.1 Consider new perspectives.
- 2.1 Construct meaning from text and context.
- 2.1.1 Discern and analyze context.
- 2.1.2 Understand and interpret content.

- 2.1.3 Engage prior knowledge.
- 2.1.4 Use reference strategies and reference technologies.
- 2.3.1. Connect self, text, culture and milieu.
- 4.1 Develop and present a variety of print and non-print texts.

## Safe and Caring Topics and Concepts

- Respecting Different Points of View
- Building Respect for Diversity

## Teaching Strategies

	Cooperative Learning	Inquiry Learning	Direct Instruction
Go to <a href="http://www.sacsc.ca">www.sacsc.ca</a> Click on Resources, Strategies for strategy descriptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three-step interview</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lecture</li> </ul>

Generalization and Transfer	Peer Teaching	Empathy/Affective Education	General Teaching Activities/Ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer assessment</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creating visuals</li> </ul>

## Supplementary Resources

ewkes, WT, and N Frye, 1973. “The Beginning of Things.” *In Man of the Myth-Maker*, 2. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

Lottridge, CB, and A Dickie. 1991. “The Woman Who Fell from the Sky.” *In Mythic Voices: Reflections in Mythology*, 10. Scarborough, Ont’’: Nelson Canada

Ford, TM, ed. 1979 “How Coyote Stole Fire: *In Tales Tall and True*, 15. Edmonton, Alta: Alberta Education.

If you do not have textbooks with myths and legends available, try these Web-sites.

[www.2learn.ca](http://www.2learn.ca)

This site can lead you to Web links for Native American stories and Greek myths, as well as other cultural stories.

[www.bigisland.com/~stony/loreindx.html](http://www.bigisland.com/~stony/loreindx.html)

Although this has a Hawaiian name, it is an excellent site with numerous Native American stories. If the URL isn't working, you can find the link on the 2learn site, or just enter a portion of the URL into a Google search and it will usually find the site. "How Coyote Stole Fire" is on this site.

[www.kstrom.net/isk/stories/myths.html](http://www.kstrom.net/isk/stories/myths.html)

This site has a collection of Ojibwa myths.

[www.greekmythology.com](http://www.greekmythology.com)

A good site to find Greek myths in story form.

<http://mythicjourneys.org/bigmyth/>

This site presents stories from many different cultures through audio visual presentations. Students might enjoy visiting this site to add to their knowledge of world mythology.

## Student Handout 1

### Discovering More About Nature Myths

**Purpose:** In this assignment you will become an expert on one nature myth from a culture of your choice. You will present this myth, using both visuals and print material, to a small group.

**Instructions:**

- (1) Using the Internet sites listed below, or the texts available in the classroom, find a myth that fits the criteria for a nature myth. It needs to explain how some natural element came to be.

[www.bigisland.com/~stony/loreindx.html](http://www.bigisland.com/~stony/loreindx.html)  
This site has many Native American myths.

[www.kstrom.net/isk/stories/myths.html](http://www.kstrom.net/isk/stories/myths.html)  
This site has a collection of Ojibwa myths.

[www.greekmythology.com](http://www.greekmythology.com)  
A good site to find Greek myths in story form.

<http://mythicjourneys.org/bigmyth/>  
This site presents stories from many different cultures through audio visual presentations.

- (2) Carefully read over the myth so that you have a good understanding of it.
- (3) Plan a method of presenting this myth to your small group. Your presentation should include all of the following:
  - An explanation of the culture from which the myth originates.
  - A retelling of the story. You could read the myth, have members of the group read parts, rewrite it as a script and have people take part, or simply tell it in your own words.
  - An explanation of what natural event the myth is describing.
  - Connect the myth with the culture of the people that created it. Why would this be an appropriate myth for this culture to create?
  - Visuals to enhance your presentation; for example, pictures, artifacts, images or graphics.
- (4) You may present your myth using posters, images, PowerPoint or by any other technique that fulfills the assignment and will be interesting to the group.

## Student Handout 2

### Assessment of Myth Presentations

You will assess the presentations of each person according to two criteria: content and presentation.

#### Content

	<b>5–Excellent</b> The information was interesting and clear. The presenter mentioned the culture of the myth, retold the myth in an interesting way, described the natural event the myth explained and the connection of the myth to the culture. Visuals helped enhance the presentation.
	<b>4–Proficient</b> The information was clear. The presenter mentioned the culture of the myth, retold the myth and described the natural event the myth explained. Visuals were used effectively in the presentation.
	<b>3–Satisfactory</b> Information was clear. The presenter retold the myth and mentioned the culture from which it originated. At least one effective visual was used.
	<b>2–Limited</b> The information was not clear. The presenter retold the myth but did not develop any further ideas nor explain the culture from which the myth originated.
	<b>1–Poor</b> The presenter did not fulfill the requirements of the assignment.

#### Presentation

	<b>5–Excellent</b> The method of presentation was interesting and effective. Visuals were clear, creative, precisely used and interesting. The information was readable and easy to understand.
	<b>4–Proficient</b> The method of presentation was effective. Visuals were clear and helped provide information about the topic. I understood what was being presented.
	<b>3–Satisfactory</b> The method of presentation was clear. Visuals were used.
	<b>1–Limited:</b> The presentation was hard to follow. I did not clearly understand the myth nor the culture being presented.
	<b>1–Poor:</b> The presentation was absent or confusing. Visuals were not effective or were nonexistent.

#### Overhead 1

## **Aboriginal Spirituality**

- **All creation is beautiful, powerful and sacred.**
- **Everything in the universe possesses a kind of power and energy that it is capable of transferring to other birds, animals and humans.**
- **Human beings are not always as close to the Creator as are birds, animals and trees because humans can reason, scheme, lie and rationalize.**
- **Aboriginal peoples can use animals and birds to act as messengers to speak to the Creator and to bring the Creator's messages back to humans.**
- **Tobacco plays a sacred role. It is used in religious and social ceremonies to commune with the spirit world and the Creator.**
- **The eagle feather is a highly revered symbol.**
- **The sacred circle is an important symbol. Life, the seasons and the earth all move in circles.**
- **Sweet grass is used to cleanse the body and to enhance communication with the Creator.**