

INDIAN EDUCATION FOR ALL

GRADE LEVEL 9-12

STORYTELLING

Time to complete: Can be adapted: 2 - 50 minute class periods – entire week unit.

National Content Standards

Family and Consumer Science Standards: 4.4.3, 4.4.4, 4.4.5, 4.4.6, 13.13.3, 13.13.5,
Indian Education for All Essential Understanding: 3, 6

Family, Career and Community Leaders of America

STAR events

Focus on Children Event

Illustrated Talk Event

Chapter Service Project Event

Community Service Award

Power of One

Family Ties

Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Interact with Elders from an Indian Nation in the hope of rewriting a children's story in the Elders' native language (fully or translating only key words)
- Synthesize meanings and major aspects of a children's story in order to construct a storyboard.
- Cooperate with others in a group effort to teach younger children about other cultures and about importance of storytelling.

Introduction

In this lesson, students will learn about the importance of storytelling in the Native American lifestyle. Students will, using attached children's story or other story, create a storyboard which they will present to an elementary classroom, preschool, or nursery/daycare, along with a local tribal elder (hopefully). A storyboard may be in the form of felt characters and a dynamic or static felt background OR in separate storyboard panels made of paper. Story boards can be made unique to: a particular language, the background can be made unique to a local geographic area, animal characters can be unique to a local geographic area, human characters can be made unique to local leaders.

During the presentation, the tribal elder could explain the importance of storytelling; help translate the story into their native language, read the story in their native language, etc. Students will be expected to create a safe, positive learning environment for young children and show young children the diversity of the Native American culture. Students will also be expected to learn about the Native American cultures and the importance of oral history and storytelling in

that culture. Students may also choose to incorporate this activity into their FCCLA child development event.

**Note to teacher:* See attachment 1 to contact local elder or tribal member to attend class during this unit.

Body

DAY 1 (50 Minutes)

1. Inform students of lesson objectives and quick introduction to lesson.
2. Do History of Storytelling PowerPoint. 15 Minutes

Power Point Script

Slide 1: Traditional Native stories are based on honoring all life, especially the plants and animals we depend on, as well as our human ancestors.

Indigenous storytelling is rooted in the earth. Years upon years of a kinship with the land, life, water and sky have produced a variety of narratives about intimate connections to the earth.

Native peoples have experienced a relationship of give and take with the natural world.

Slide 2: In the basket of Native stories, we find legends and history, maps and poems, the teachings of spirit mentors, instructions for ceremony and ritual, observations of worlds, and storehouses of ethno-ecological knowledge.

Stories often live in many dimensions, with meanings that reach from the everyday to the divine.

Stories imbue places with the power to teach, heal and reflect. Stories are possessed with such power that they have survived for generations despite attempts at repression and assimilation.

Slide 3: Most stories talk about the living beings within a specific tribe's homeland—the raven of the Pacific Northwest, the coyote from the desert, the buffalo of the Plains, the beaver of the Eastern woodlands. Stories explain why and how certain local plants and animals came to be, such as Narragansett storyteller Tchin's lesson of why rabbits have such long ears. Other stories explain ceremony and ritual, such as Hoskie Benally's story "The Five Sacred Medicines".

Slide 4: Prayers, songs and dances are all types of stories, which can be offered to honor the earth, or as Western Shoshone elder Corbin Harney describes it, the Nature Way.

Some stories provide practical instructions on traditional living, such as Rosella Archdale's lesson about preparing foods with reverence. Other stories tell about child rearing, friendship and love, hunting routes, bird migrations, family lineage, and prophecies that describe and predict major ecological, celestial and spiritual events.

Slide 5: Some Native songs are sung in great cycles, containing over 100 songs for a specific ritual.

The Mojave Creation songs, which describe cremation rituals in detail, are a collection of 525 songs and must be performed for the deceased to journey to the next world.

These stories can take many days to be shared, and within these longer story-song cycles much information is given to instruct, entertain, and heal.

Slide 6: Without our ancestors, we would not have the gift of life. Therefore, one of the most important and common themes among Native stories are creation stories, which are universal among all cultures.

Native creation stories explain how life began on Earth and how a particular tribal nation came to be.

They talk about spiritual and mythical origins within real, physical landscapes and outline the “original instructions” or natural laws of how to live in balance with creation.

Slide 7: Above all, each Native story is a part of a greater whole, a continuum of stories that has neither a beginning nor an end.

Each story in its own way fills in a section of the larger narrative, giving us a fuller sense of life.

Slide 8: Symbolic—refer to larger bodies of oral literature

Lessons—describe how and why things are the way they are

Instructions from spirit mentors—explain how to conduct ceremonies

Descriptions of natural processes—water cycles, inter-species relationships, life cycles of plants, earth movements and soil types

Slide 9: Survival accounts—hunting, gathering, and farming stories talk about how to collect, prepare, and eat foods

Oral maps for travel—describe historic and on-going migrations of tribe for subsistence and holy journeys

Magical tales of transformation—articulate the mystery and complexity of being human

Adventures in love, romance and marriage

Slide 10: *Bring out storyboard and tell story.*

3. Students Create storyboard with felt and/or cardboard. *20 Minutes*

4. Students prepare for presentation and expectations of students. *10 Minutes*

5. Clean-up *5 Minutes*

DAY 2 (*50 Minutes*)

1. Accompany Elder with storyboard and children’s story to younger children’s classroom. *2 Minutes*

2. Explain/Introduce Elder and storytelling culture. *15 Minutes*

3. Read story along with storyboard. *10 Minutes*

4. Elder translates story or gives storytelling history of Native Americans. *20 Minutes*

5. Say goodbyes to younger children. *3 Minutes*

Conclusion

Discuss learning outcomes of children’s story, importance of community interaction in the classroom, and the importance of storytelling in the Native American cultures.

Extension

Students re-write European/American story to fit Native American storytelling processes (with morals to be learned).

Students write story of their own outlining a lesson to be learned.

Alternative

If Indian Elder or tribal representative isn’t available, the educator could use native words integrated within a story. For example, using the native word for buffalo, you could use the storyboard and tell the story, replacing buffalo with a native tribe’s word for buffalo.

Assessment

Observation of students’ cooperation with Elder.

Completion and quality of storyboard.

Observation of children’s presentation.

Materials

Indian Story: Attachment 2

Cardboard (or other flat hard surface)

Felt (for making story characters and for having as a background)

Scissors

Markers

Paper (perhaps)

Resources

Elder contact information:

<http://www.native-languages.org/montana.htm>

<http://www.geocities.com/aaninin/info.html>

<http://www.mtwytlc.com/>

Native American Stories:

<http://www.msubillings.edu/library/Speccoll/nativebooksinfo.htm>

<http://www.his.state.mt.us/pub/press/children.asp>

<http://www.ewebtribe.com/NACulture/articles/aurora.html>

<http://www.dreamcatchers.org/dcat16.html>

Many more are available. Just Google.

Native American Storytelling Resources:

<http://www.ilhawaii.net/~stony/lore122.html>

<http://www.pbs.org/circleofstories/voices/index.html>

<http://www.firstpeople.us/>

Native Words (categorized by tribe)

<http://www.native-languages.org/vocabulary.htm>



RACE WITH BUFFALO
CHEYENNE



NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN LORE
A STORY OF THE CHEYENNE OF THE GREAT PLAINS

There was a time when all the animals lived in peace, when no one ate anyone else. All the animals were the same color, because they had not yet painted their faces.

Buffalo was the largest and strongest of the animals, and he was getting hungry, He wanted to be the chief of all the animals. He wanted to draw strength from all the other animals by eating their flesh. Buffalo wanted to become the eater of all the animals.

The Human People also said that they should become the chief of all the animals. People wanted to draw strength from all the other animals by eating their flesh. People wanted to become the eaters of all the other animals.

Buffalo challenged the Human People to a race, the winner of the race would become the chief of all the animals. The People said that they would accept such a challenge, but since buffaloes have four legs and People have only two, the People claimed the right to have another animal run the race in the People's place. The buffaloes consented.

The People chose the Bird People to represent them in the race. They chose Hummingbird, Meadowlark, Hawk, and Magpie. All the other animals and birds wanted to join the race, too, each of them thinking that just maybe they too had a chance to become chief of all the animals. All the animals took paint and painted the faces for the race, each according to his or her spiritual vision.

Skunk painted a white strip on himself and his symbol for the race. Antelope painted himself the color of the earth for the race. Raccoon painted black circles around his eyes and around his tail. Robin painted herself brown with a red breastplate.

The race was to be held at the edge of the Black Hills at the place known as Buffalo Gap. The competitors would race from the starting line sticks to the turn around stick and then back to the starting line. All the animals, painted according to their vision, lined up between the sticks. Among the animals were the Bird People, who would run the race with their wings for the Human People, and Runs Slender Buffalo, the fastest runner of all the buffaloes.

The cry was given to begin and all the animals and birds set out on the race. Hummingbird took the lead, ahead of Runs Slender Buffalo, but his wings were so small that he soon fell behind. As the animals neared the turn around stick, Runs Slender Buffalo took the lead. Then Meadowlark came up beside Runs Slender Buffalo, and the two went along side by side right into the turn. Runs Slender Buffalo wheeled around the stick, her hooves thundering, and she pulled away from Meadowlark, who went wide to make the turn.

The animals in the lead passed the late runners who were still headed for the stick. Meadowlark fell behind and cheered on Hawk as he passed her. Hawk gained on Run Slender Buffalo, and it looked like he might pass her. Her heart was pounding and her legs were tiring. But Hawk's wings were tiring also, and he soon fell behind.

Runs Slender Buffalo was nearing the finish line as the winner. It looked like the Buffalo People would become the eaters of all the animals!

Then, behind the buffalo woman, wings beating steadily, came Magpie. She was not a quick starter, but her wing beats were hard and true. Her heart was strong. Her eyes did not wander from the finish line. She never looked back. Her wings were wide and she drove herself forward with beat after beat after beat. All the other animals had fallen behind. Runs Slender Buffalo looked over at the magpie, but the magpie never looked away from the starting sticks.

With each beat of her wings she moved past Runs Slender Buffalo by no more than the length of her bill. At the starting sticks, many animals began to line up to watch the finish. Raccoon, who had fallen out of the race early, had returned to the starting sticks. Now he stood up between the sticks and put out his little hands for the runners to touch as they passed. He would feel the touch of whoever was in the lead, and turn toward the winner.

Closer and closer came Runs Slender Buffalo, and some of the animals feared Raccoon would be trampled. Magpie gradually flew nearer to the ground so she could brush Raccoon's little hands as she flew past. Raccoon did not move, but stared straight at the onrushing pair. Magpie seemed to be pulling ahead. Runs Slender Buffalo leaned forward as she ran to touch Raccoon's hand with her great nose.

Magpie's wingtip touched Raccoon's little hand and he turned toward her and instant before Runs Slender Buffalo thundered past and he was surrounded by a great cloud of dust. All the animals waited breathlessly for the dust to settle. At last, there stood Raccoon with his little hand raised toward the path of Magpie.

The Human People had won the race!

The Buffalo wandered the great plains and ate grass and the people became the great hunters, the chief of all animals.