

Unit 5, Lesson 2: A Long Time Ago

Maryland Social Studies Standards and Framework

Standard: People of the Nations and World

Topic: Elements of Culture

Standard: Social Studies Skills and Processes

Topic: Organize social studies information

MCCR Grade 4

MCCR Standards: W.4.7, RI.4.2

Objective:

Students will:

- Compare and describe the elements of culture including shelter, recreation, education, oral traditions, art, music, and language of Native American societies.
- Find relationships between gathered information

Essential Questions

How does storytelling in the past relate to how information is passed along today?

How do you and your family pass on traditions?

What are the pros and cons of passing along information orally?

Grade Level:

3rd – 5th

Overview:

This lesson directs students to examine the many uses of stories. Many cultures, including Eastern Woodland Indians, practiced storytelling as a way to teach morals, pass on history, and entertain. This lesson will look at stories as a way to preserve and to impart a group or family's history. This lesson will also allow students to discuss if they believe storytelling is still being used today as a way of passing on oral traditions.

Teacher Background:

Eastern Woodland Indian culture did not include a written language. Other methods were used to record and impart history. As a result, the stories of their ancestors and history were handed down through a well-developed oral tradition. Storytelling was an integral part of the preservation of the tribe's traditions, as well as a tool used to teach lessons and morals to children. Members of the tribe would have been familiar with these stories. Consequently, storytelling developed into an art form. Many of these stories continue to be handed down through families from generation to generation.

The story included in this lesson is a creation story that tells how the Earth was created. This story derives from the Lenni-Lenape, an Eastern Woodland group from the Delaware River drainage, in what is modern-day New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania.

Lesson Procedure: Storytelling as Oral History

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1. Read “How Kishelemunkong Made the People and the Seasons” aloud, or select a student to read to the class, or copy the sheet for students to read individually.
2. Lead a discussion of the story and its meaning to assess student comprehension of the story and to allow them to express their opinions. Questions might include:
 - a. What was the story about?
 - b. Do you think that the story has any other meanings?
 - c. Why would a story like this be told? To whom?
 - d. What is this story trying to teach?
 - e. Why is an oral tradition so important to societies like that of Maryland’s Woodland Indians?
3. Compare this story to modern versions of oral history using family stories with which the students will be familiar. Discussion questions might include:
 - a. Do you know any stories that have been handed down through your family?
 - b. How much do you know about your family’s history?
 - c. What did/do your grandparents do for a living? Where did they live?
 - d. Are there any legends about the town that you live in?
 - e. How is information conveyed and recorded today?
 - f. What affect does that have on the existence of stories and storytelling?
 - g. Would you describe storytelling as a lost art? Why or why not?

Materials:

“How Kishelemunkong Made the People and the Seasons”

Related Resources:

Caduto, Michael and Joseph Bruchac. *Keepers of the Animals: Native American Stories and Wildlife Activities for Children*. Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, Inc. 1988

Caduto, Michael and Joseph Bruchac. *Keepers of the Earth: Native American Stories and Environmental Activities for Children*. Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, Inc. 1991

Caduto, Michael and Joseph Bruchac. *Keepers of the Night: Native American Stories and Nocturnal Activities for Children*. Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, Inc. 1994

Kavasch, Barrie, ed. *Earth Maker’s Lodge: Native American Folklore, Activities and Food*. Cobblestone Publishing, Inc. 1994