

Unit 5, Lesson 3: My Own Story

Maryland Social Studies Standards and Framework

Standard: Peoples of the Nations and World

Topic: Elements of Culture

Standard: Social Studies Skills and Processes

Topic: Answer social studies questions

MCCR Grade 4

MCCR Standards: RI.4.8, W.4.4, SL.4.3

Objective:

Students will:

- Compare and describe the elements of culture including shelter, recreation, education, oral traditions, art, music, and language of Native American societies.
- Present social studies information in creative ways.

Essential Questions

How do the listed elements above differ from how they are presented today?

How important is it to be accurate when presenting information without a written language?

Grade Level:

3rd – 5th

Overview:

This lesson directs students to examine the uses of storytelling and oral history in Woodland Indian culture. They will then apply those lessons by developing their own personal history, increasing their understanding of using stories to pass on culture.

This lesson also contains an Extension Activity, *Making a Story Bag*, which directs students to create a bag of tokens and markers to help them tell and illustrate their own personal story.

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.

Lesson Procedure: Developing your own story

1. Student homework assignment: Interview an older family member or family friend about a particularly interesting or important time in their life.
2. From that interview, write a story to present to the class. Ask students to consider the following while preparing their story.

Unit 5, Lesson 3: My Own Story



- a. Who is your audience? Why is that an important question to keep in mind as you prepare your story?
 - b. Who is your story about? How can you present the characters in a way that makes them real for your audience?
 - c. How can you present your story so that your audience understands and appreciates it?
 - d. What would you like to teach with your story? What sorts of lessons are there to be learned?
 - e. How can you best use your story to convey these lessons?
 - f. What is the art of storytelling?
 - g. What kinds of audio visual materials could supplement your presentation?
3. Once the stories are complete, either allow the whole class to present their stories or allow a selected group of students to present.
4. After presentations have been made, lead a discussion of the stories. Questions might include:
- a. Are there any similar themes or lessons that run through any of the stories?
 - b. Are there any similar to the Native American story?
 - c. What kinds of universal lessons could apply to all people?
 - d. What are the advantages/disadvantages to a society based on oral tradition? What advantages/disadvantages are there to our society with a vast array of storytelling methods and technologies?
 - e. What role, if any, does traditional storytelling have in our future?
 - f. Do you think that storytelling is an art form worth saving and protecting? Why or why not?

Extension Activity: “Make a Story Bag”

*Adapted from *Earth Maker’s Lodge* edited by E. Barrie Kavasch

Storytellers in many different tribes carry a story bag or basket to help them to remember a variety of different stories that they might tell. The bag or basket would be made from readily available materials, but would be decorated according to the owners taste. Inside would be small items that would jog the memory of the storyteller to a particular special story. Items included might be shells, stones, small animal figures, or the drawings of characters from stories. A storyteller would collect these items over years of collecting stories. Students can make a story bag of their own. The only materials necessary are a brown paper bag for each student and any variety of decorating material available.

1. Give each student a brown paper bag. Encourage each student to decorate their bag in whatever way they choose. Decorating materials might include markers, crayons, construction paper, glue, yarn, or any other craft material available.
2. After they have completed their bags, students can fill them with item or items that help them to tell their personal family history story. Sample items may include: a hair ribbon, a picture, a small doll or toy, or a piece of fabric.

Materials:

Extension Activity

Unit 5, Lesson 3: My Own Story



- Brown Paper Bags (1 per student)
- Crayons, Markers
- Glue
- Assorted craft material (Construction Paper, Yarn, etc.)
- Items associated with the individual students' various stories

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