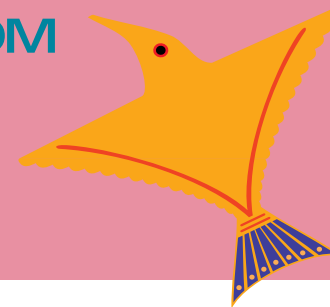
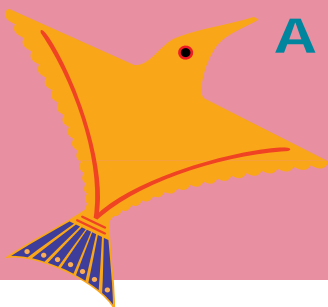
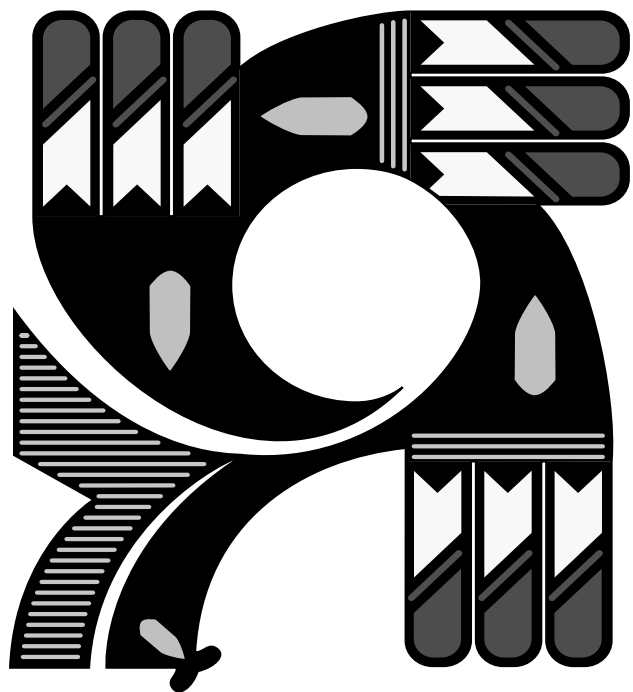


AMERICAN INDIAN READERS THEATER



A HOT TOPICS SUPPLEMENT FROM





READERS THEATER: A PLAY WITHOUT A STAGE?

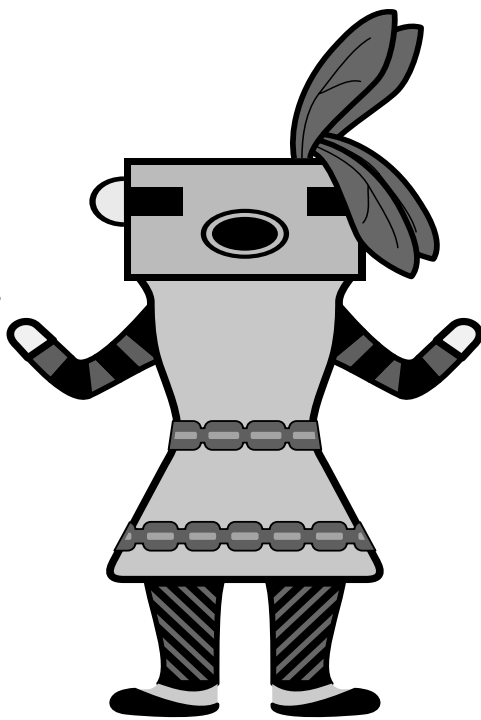
When you close your eyes and listen to someone read a play aloud, your imagination soars. That's what Readers Theater is all about — plays read aloud without fancy sets, stages or props. These plays invite the listeners to be as much a part of the play as the actors, because the listeners in the audience must imagine what things look like as they hear the words. While you listen to these plays, you can, for a moment, become the characters and experience their sights, sounds and feelings. Readers Theater is easy and fun because you don't need much rehearsal. What counts is a good reading of the script, not a dramatic, memorized presentation. You don't have to remember all the lines because they're right there for you to read aloud and enjoy! There are not usually props or movement, although adding some could make the play more lively and fun.

THE AMERICAN INDIANS

By reading the scripts in this special newspaper section, you can enjoy Readers Theater and learn about American Indians. (Some people call them Native Americans, but in this section we will use the term American Indians.) You will learn about the different groups, or tribes, and you will discover many contributions they made to the American way of life.

GETTING STARTED

Read along through the play while your teacher reads aloud. Decide who will read each part and give each person some time to get ready to read aloud. When you are ready for the performance, readers usually stand in a formal presentation style. They may also sit on stools, chairs or the floor. The narrator may stand with the script placed on a music stand slightly off to one side. Readers hold their folders quietly.

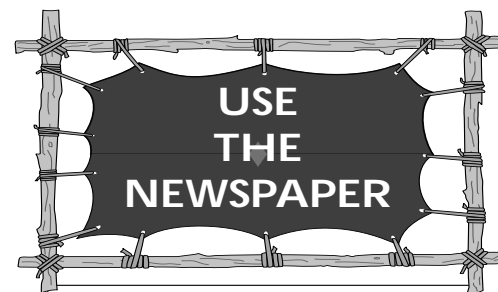


The position of the reader shows the importance of the role. For a reading of Cinderella, for example, the Cinderella character would be in the front center of the stage, with the stepsisters to the sides and a little bit behind her. Readers of short parts may enter or leave the stage before and after their parts. Or, readers may stand for a reading and sit down for the rest of the script.

After each play reading, talk about what you think the story meant and what you learned from reading or listening to it.

BREATHE!

While reading aloud, your breath and voice should come from your diaphragm. (That's the part of your body between your stomach and your ribs.) Touch your fingertips to your diaphragm while breathing in. If you are breathing properly, your diaphragm will puff out. Some American Indians believe that this area is the center of power for the body. It certainly is the center of power for good speaking skills, and if you do it right, your voice will be stronger and will sound great when you read aloud.



Skill: enhancing listening skills, categorizing

To test your listening skills, close your eyes and remain quiet. What noises do you hear around you? Do a newspaper search of items that make noise. Write down all of the noisy items, and rank them from most to least noisy.

Skill: organizing information

Readers Theater is entertainment. Look through the newspaper to find other entertaining events. Make a chart to show the events and other important information.

CREDITS

The text for this Hot Topics supplement was written by **Debby Carroll**

The three plays by **Joseph Bruchac**

"Escape" courtesy of **Storycart Press**
See *Storycart Press Web site*, www.storycart.com for lots more *Readers Theater*.

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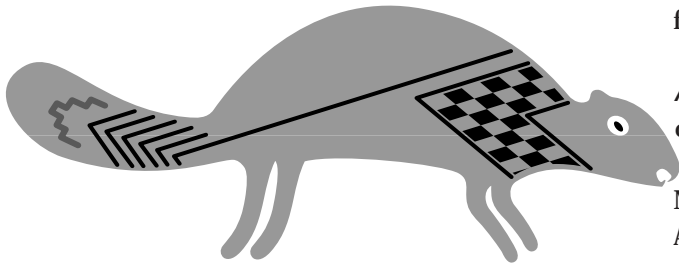
Some illustrations courtesy of **Fulcrum Publishing**, Golden, Colorado.
Contact Fulcrum Publishing for some wonderful books about American Indians.

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Special thanks to **David Pego**

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AN INTRODUCTION



GLUSKABE: Gluskabe or Gluskonba is the culture hero of the Abenaki people. His name, Gluskabe, means “the person who talks,” or “the storyteller” and he sometimes manages to get his way by talking others into things. Gluskabe also has the ability to change or transform. He is said to have shaped himself from the dust that fell upon the Earth from the hands of the Creator and then, later, to have made the giant animals smaller so they would not be so dangerous to the human beings (whom Gluskabe regards as his grandchildren).

Though Gluskabe has great strength, he often relied upon the advice of his wise grandmother, Woodchuck, who corrected him when he was selfish or misused his abilities — a traditional role still played to this day for young people by Abenaki elders and by the stories of Gluskabe.

ABENAKI: The Abenaki nations are the Algonquin-speaking peoples of the area now known as northern New England and the Maritime provinces of Canada. They include the Passamaquoddy, Malisett and Micmac, the Penobscot and, furthest to the west, the St. Francis Abenaki.

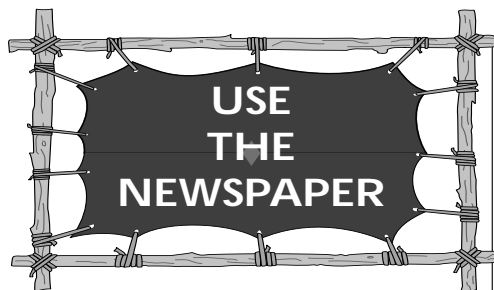
GLUSKABE’S GAME BAG

Among the places where St. Francis Abenaki communities can be found today are the Odanak Reserve in Quebec and the St. Francis/Sokoki Band in Swanton, Vermont. Abenaki literally means “Dawn Land.” The Abenaki also call themselves Alnobak, which means “Human Beings.”

HUNTING: Like other nations of the Northeast, the Western Abenaki engaged in some agriculture but also relied heavily upon hunting for their survival.

They traditionally observed certain practices, such as not hunting female animals with young and not hunting in the same area every year but regularly moving to new hunting grounds to avoid wiping out the game. Hunting was not done for sport but for subsistence, and virtually every part of the animal would be used for food, clothing or tools.

It is also traditional to ask pardon of the slain animal’s spirit and to treat the animals with great respect, for the animals are not regarded as “dumb beasts” but as intelligent beings who are hunted only out of need. If the humans show proper respect, the animal people allow themselves to be hunted. Thus it is Grandmother Woodchuck, an old and wise animal, who advises her grandson — and all human beings — in this story.



Skill: describing ways humans affect the environment

Many consider Indians to be the first ecologists because of the great respect they had for wildlife and the earth. Find an article in the newspaper that is connected to the environment. Write about how an Indian would respond to the article. What might an Indian say and do?

Skill: understanding the challenges of a diverse population

The American Indians are one of many diverse groups that make up our America. What other ethnic or racial groups are mentioned in today’s newspaper? Write a summary of one of the stories that involves one of these groups.

GLUSKABE'S GAME BAG

A play by Joseph Bruchac based on a traditional Western Abenaki Story

Characters:

Narrator 1, Narrator 2, Narrator 3, Narrator 4, Gluskabe (pronounced gloos-KA-bee), Grandmother Woodchuck, Chipmunk, Bear, Moose, Squirrel, Chipmunk, Fox, Deer, Rabbit, Other Animals

NARRATOR 1:

Here is where our story camps.

NARRATOR 2:

It is a story from long ago.

NARRATOR 3:

It is a story of the one called Gluskabe.

NARRATOR 4:

The ancient one who had great power.

NARRATOR 1:

But even though he had that power

NARRATOR 2:

Gluskabe was much like the rest of us.

NARRATOR 1:

He had to learn how to use his strength.

NARRATOR 2:

And he often made mistakes.

NARRATOR 3:

It was good that Gluskabe lived with his grandmother.

NARRATOR 4:

Her name was Woodchuck. She was very wise.

NARRATOR 1:

Back when our story begins .

NARRATOR 2:

Gluskabe woke up one morning and said .

GLUSKABE:

Grandmother .

GRANDMOTHER

WOODCHUCK:

Yes, my grandson.

GLUSKABE:

I am going to go hunting. I will bring back much game for us to eat!

NARRATOR 3:

So Gluskabe went into the forest.

NARRATOR 4:

But the animals saw him coming.

SQUIRREL:

Here comes Gluskabe.

RABBIT:

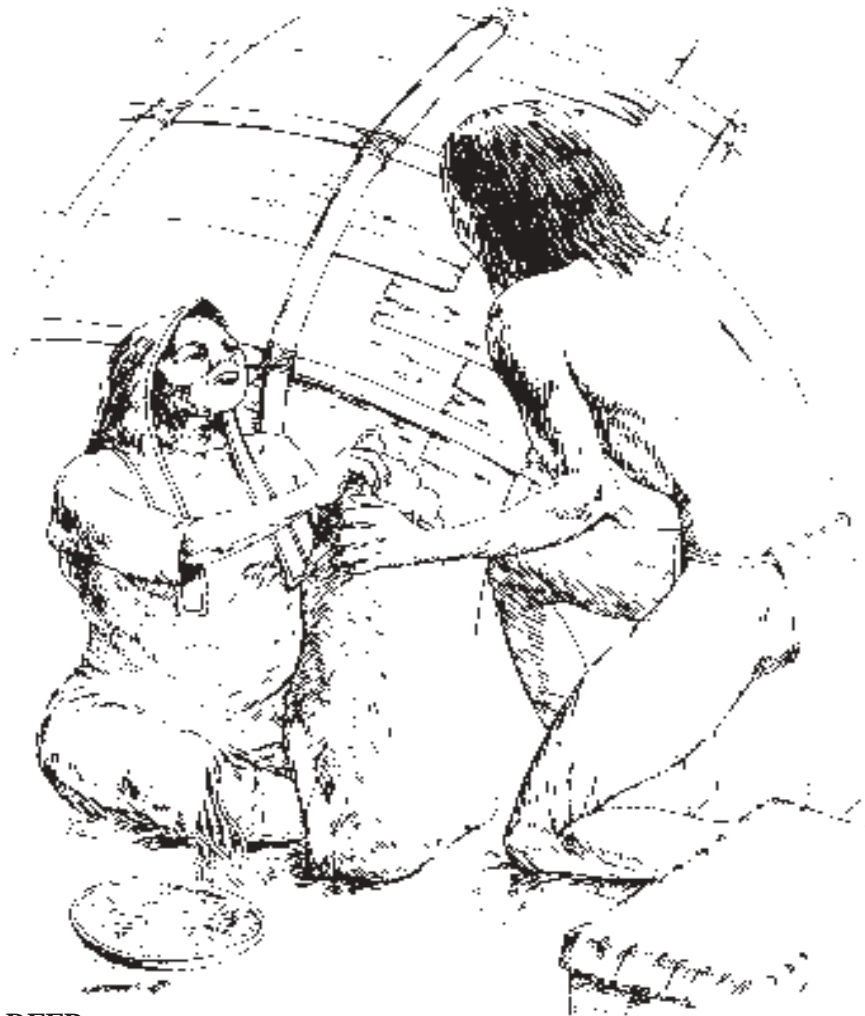
Let's hide from him.

BEAR:

Good idea!

FOX:

We can hide behind the rocks and trees.



DEER:

Everyone, hide!

ALL THE ANIMALS:

Hide, Hide, everyone, hide!

GLUSKABE:

Where have all the animals gone?

NARRATOR 1:

Gluskabe could not find even one animal.

NARRATOR 2:

Even though he could hear them laughing at him from their hiding places.

NARRATOR 3:

He was not happy.

NARRATOR 4:

He went back home to his grandmother's wigwam.

GLUSKABE:

Grandmother, I want you to make a game bag for me.

GRANDMOTHER

WOODCHUCK:

Why do you want one?

GLUSKABE:

Because.

GRANDMOTHER

WOODCHUCK:

I am not sure I should do this. Whenever you ask me for something, it seems you always get into

trouble.

NARRATOR 1:

So Gluskabe sat down in front of his grandmother .

NARRATOR 2:

He crossed his arms .

NARRATOR 3:

He took a deep breath.

NARRATOR 4:

And he started to chant.

GLUSKABE:

I need a game bag, I need a game bag, I need a game bag, I need a game bag, I need a game bag.

NARRATOR 2:

Finally Grandmother Woodchuck could stand it no longer.

GRANDMOTHER

WOODCHUCK:

Gluskabe, stop your chanting, please! It is hurting my head. I will make a game bag for you.

NARRATOR 2:

Then Grandmother Woodchuck took deer hair and wove a fine game bag.

GRANDMOTHER

WOODCHUCK:

Here, Grandson.

NARRATOR 3:

But Gluskabe was not satisfied.

GLUSKABE:

Grandmother, this game bag is too small.

NARRATOR 4:

So Grandmother Woodchuck took caribou hair and wove a bigger game bag.

GRANDMOTHER

WOODCHUCK:

Here, Grandson.

NARRATOR 1:

But Gluskabe was still not satisfied.

GLUSKABE:

Grandmother, this game bag is too weak.

NARRATOR 2:

So Grandmother Woodchuck took moose hair and wove a game bag that was bigger and stronger.

GRANDMOTHER

WOODCHUCK:

Here, Grandson.

NARRATOR 3:

But Gluskabe was not still satisfied.

GLUSKABE:

Grandmother, this game bag is not good enough, either.

GRANDMOTHER

WOODCHUCK:

Grandson, what kind of game bag do you want?

GLUSKABE:

I want one made out of woodchuck hair!

NARRATOR 4:

So Grandmother Woodchuck pulled all the hair from her stomach and wove it into a game bag.

NARRATOR 1:

Ever since then, all woodchucks have almost no hair on their stomachs.

NARRATOR 2:

Though that game bag was not large, it had great power because it was made from his grandmother's hair.

NARRATOR 3:

No matter how much was put into it, there would still be room for more. Gluskabe knew this.

GRANDMOTHER

WOODCHUCK:

Here, Grandson.

NARRATOR 4:

Now Gluskabe was satisfied.

GLUSKABE:

Grandmother, this game bag is just what I want. Ktsi oleohne! Thank you very much!

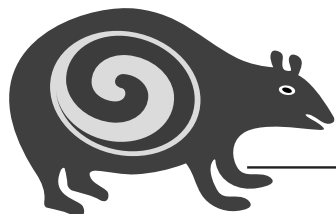
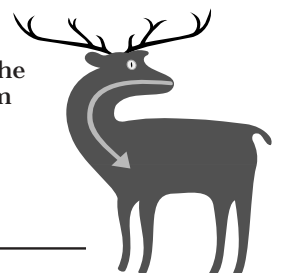
NARRATOR 1:

Then, holding his new game bag, Gluskabe went back into the forest.

NARRATOR 2:

Just as before, the

animals saw him coming.



CHIPMUNK:
Someone is coming

SQUIRREL:
It's Gluskabe again.

RABBIT:
Let's hide once more.

MOOSE:
Yes, it's time to hide.

FOX:
We can hide in the places we hid before.

BEAR:
He'll never find us!

DEER:
Quick, everyone hide!

ALL THE ANIMALS:
Hide, Hide, everyone, hide!

NARRATOR 3:
But Gluskabe did not look for the animals.

NARRATOR 4:
He stopped in the middle of a clearing and then called out in a loud voice.

GLUSKABE:
All you animals, listen to me. A terrible thing is going to happen. The world is going to end and everything will be destroyed.

NARRATOR 1:
The animals heard this.

NARRATOR 2:
It frightened them very much.

NARRATOR 3:
They came out of their hiding places.

NARRATOR 4:
They gathered around Gluskabe.

CHIPMUNK:
What can we do?

BEAR:
The world is going to end.

MOOSE:
Everything is going to be destroyed.

SQUIRREL:
What will happen to us?

DEER:
Help us, Gluskabe!

GLUSKABE:
I have an idea.

FOX:
Tell us, please.

ALL THE ANIMALS:
Please, Gluskabe, please.

GLUSKABE:
Just climb into my game bag. You will be safe in there when the world is destroyed.

NARRATOR 1:
So the animals did as he said ...

NARRATOR 2:
From the little chipmunk to the giant moose ...

NARRATOR 3:

They all went into Gluskabe's game bag ...

NARRATOR 4:
And the game bag stretched to hold them all.

NARRATOR 1:
Then Gluskabe tied the top of his game bag shut.

NARRATOR 2:
He laughed, picked that game bag up and carried it home to Grandmother Woodchuck.

GLUSKABE:
No longer will Grandmother have to walk around looking for food. Now, whenever we want something to eat, we can just reach into my game bag.

NARRATOR 3:
Grandmother Woodchuck opened the game bag and looked down into it.

NARRATOR 4:
All of the animals in the world looked back up at her.

GRANDMOTHER WOODCHUCK:
Gluskabe, why must you always do things this way? You cannot keep game animals in a bag. They will sicken and die. There will be none left for our children and our children's children. It is also right that it should be hard to hunt the animals. We grow stronger trying to find them and the animals grow stronger and wiser trying to avoid being caught. Then things are in the right balance.

GLUSKABE:

Grandmother, you are right.

NARRATOR 1:
So Gluskabe picked up his game bag.

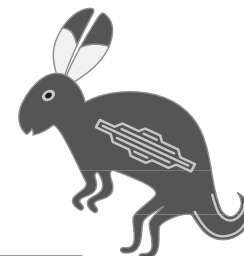
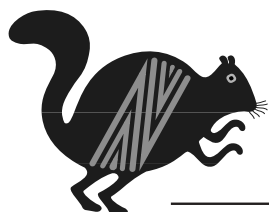
NARRATOR 2:
He went back to the clearing and opened it up.

GLUSKABE:
All you animals, you can come out now. The world was destroyed, but I put it back together again.

NARRATOR 3:
So the animals came out of Gluskabe's game bag and went back into the woods. They are still there to this day.

NARRATOR 4:
But they grew suspicious when they saw that everything still looked the same. They decided Gluskabe had tricked them.

ALL FOUR NARRATORS:
So it is that ever since then no animal has ever climbed into anyone's game bag again. And here, this story of Gluskabe ends.



WHERE DID THEY COME FROM?

If you look at a map of the world, you will see a small bit of water, a channel, between Alaska and Siberia. This water is called the Bering Strait. Between 10,000 and 50,000 years ago, during what is known as the Ice Age, large glaciers (big formations of ice) sucked up the water in the shallow channel, and the Bering Strait disappeared. Then Alaska and Siberia were connected by a land bridge. Some scientists believe that people walked over this bridge, following the grazing herds of animals they were hunting, from Asia to the Americas. Other people believe that the Indians were on this continent even before people were in Asia and that, maybe, people moved the other way.

Of course no one knows for sure the whole story of how the American Indians first came here. In fact, many tribes have their own wonderful myths about how they got here. The Iroquois tell of Skywoman, who fell from the sky onto an island that grew into the Earth. The Hopi, from Arizona, tell a tale about a terrible flood in a world below this one that made people come up through a hole in the Grand Canyon into this world. And that is interesting because that story is much like the story of Noah's Ark and the great flood. Scientists are studying why so many people in different parts of the world, tell stories about floods. What do you think?

WHAT DID THEY WEAR?

American Indians made their clothing from the things around them. They used animal skins for cloth, sinews for thread, and bones for needles. Where animals were scarce, they wove cloth from plant material. Although they loved to create beautiful ceremonial costumes, they also dressed in everyday styles to suit the weather where they lived. It was important that their clothes fitted loosely so they could move easily. Men wore loincloths, shirts, tunics and leggings. Women wore skirts and dresses. Shoes could be made of leather, like moccasins with hard or soft soles. In winter,



they added shawls and blankets for extra warmth. The fancy ceremonial clothes might be made of deerskin and decorated with fringe or with eagle feathers or animal tails.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

WHERE DID THEY LIVE?

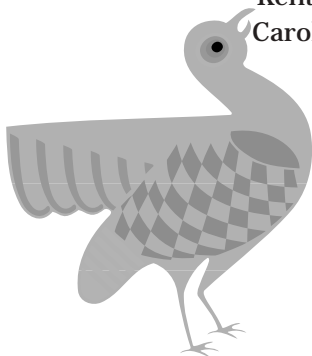
The American Indians spread across the land. They depended on nature for food and shelter, so where they lived ruled how they lived. On the Northwest Coast, where forests and water are plentiful, the Nootka built homes of wood and ate mostly fish. The Inuit (sometimes called Eskimos) made homes of ice and hunted the polar bears that lived with



them in the frozen tundra of the Arctic.

The Plains people hunted buffalo while those in the Southeastern tribes became farmers. The Cherokee nation stretched over land that is now seven states: Virginia,

Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia and the Carolinas. They settled in villages and on farms.



ABOUT AMERICAN INDIANS

WHAT WERE THEIR HOMES LIKE?

Some tribes built permanent homes while others followed their food and moved from place to place. Some tribes spent winter in one place and summer in another. The Eskimos lived partly underground, beneath turf roofs. Seminoles, in places like Florida, raised their homes (called chickees) on stilts because the land was swampy and wet. The sides were open because of the hot and humid weather. Tribes in the Southwest had many people in a small area so they stacked their homes made of mud bricks, one on top of another, much like modern apartment houses. Ladders led to the upper floors. The Iroquois in the Eastern United States and Southeastern Canada, lived in longhouses — huge houses made of a pole frame covered with slabs of elm bark. Several families lived together in each house, separated by storage units. Mandan people beside the Missouri River built round domed houses so that the heavy rain could easily run down the sides. Plains tribes like the Sioux, Cheyenne, Crow, and Blackfeet built tipis. Those were cone-shaped structures made from buffalo hides and sewn together. When the tribes had to move, their tipis could easily be folded and taken with them. Furniture was simple and sparse. Buffalo skins were beds with backrests of willow logs woven together.

HOW DID THEY LIVE?

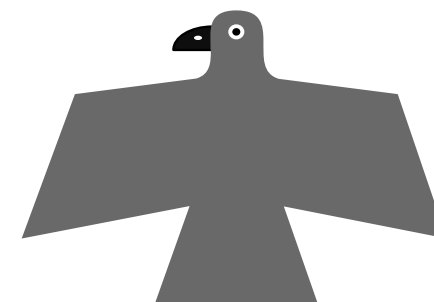
Many American Indians lived in harmony with the Earth and took care of it.

Others were not as careful with the land's resources. Most were farmers and hunters at one time or another. Many American Indians, including the Utes of the Great Basin, moved around a great deal, searching for things to eat. They foraged (looked around) for seeds, berries, nuts and roots. They also would eat grasshoppers and small rodents or lizards as well as larger animals like deer. Birds would be shot with bows and arrows.

Other tribes like the Hopi and the Pueblo grew crops like corn and beans. They cleverly invented ways to water the land and keep the birds away. They believed in godlike higher powers, so they performed many rituals to help a healthy harvest.

For the Plains tribes, like the Mandan and the Gros Ventre, buffalo meant life, so they hunted those animals in order to live. They used the hides for clothing and shelter, the manure for fuel, the fat to burn in their lamps, the horns for spoons, the bones for tools and toys, the stomachs for cooking pots, and the hooves for rattles and glue.

Northwestern tribes, like the Tlingits, hunted whales and fished to live. Tribes that lived near the Great Lakes fished, too. They carved hooks out of animal bone or horns, and they made harpoons of wood. Often they would have a religious ceremony to celebrate the first catch of the season. For the Inuit (Eskimos), fish were vital to their survival in the frozen winter when there was no plant food around.



THE GIRL WHO MARRIED A FROG

A play by Joseph Bruchac
Based on a traditional Tlingit story



Characters:

Storyteller, Village Chief, Mother, First Young Man, Second Young Man, Third Young Man, Proud Daughter, Second Daughter, Third Daughter, Frog Chief, Frog Chief's Son, Villager 1, Villager 2, Villager 3, Villager 4, Other Frogs

STORYTELLER:

There once was a young woman who was too proud. She was the eldest daughter of the Village Chief. Many young men wanted to marry her.

FIRST YOUNG MAN:

I would like you to be my wife. I am a great fisherman.

PROUD DAUGHTER:

Hah! Your face is like a fish. You are not good-looking enough for me.

SECOND YOUNG MAN:

I would like to marry you. I am strong. No one can beat me at wrestling.

PROUD DAUGHTER:

Hah! Look at how you are dressed. Go wrestle with a bear. You are not worthy of me.

THIRD YOUNG MAN:

I would like to marry you. I am a great canoe-maker.

PROUD DAUGHTER:

Hah! Use your canoe to travel to some other village to find a girl who will marry someone as skinny as you.

STORYTELLER:

No man was good enough for her. One day, she and her sisters walked beside the big lake near their village. It was a warm day. Many

frogs were sitting on the mud bank in the middle of the lake.

SECOND DAUGHTER:

Look at those frogs.

FROGS:

Huh-huh. Huh-huh. Huh-huh.

THIRD DAUGHTER:

They are all looking at us.

PROUD DAUGHTER:

How ugly these frogs are.

THIRD DAUGHTER:

Sister, that is rude.

SECOND DAUGHTER:

That one seems to be listening. You should not insult them.

PROUD DAUGHTER:

But it is true.

STORYTELLER:

Then the Village Chief's proud daughter picked up the frog that was looking up at them.

PROUD DAUGHTER:

You are very ugly. Even another frog would not want to marry you.

STORYTELLER:

Laughing, she threw that frog into the lake.

SECOND DAUGHTER:

Sister, you should not have done that.

FROGS:

Huh-huh. Huh-huh. Huh-huh. Huh-huh.

THIRD DAUGHTER:

The frogs are angry at you.

PROUD DAUGHTER:

Hah, what can a frog do?

STORYTELLER:

That night, the Village Chief's proud daughter woke up. She thought she heard someone calling her from outside the great wooden longhouse. She stepped out into the moonlight and saw a tall young man. He was handsome and wore clothing covered with bright green beads.

PROUD DAUGHTER:

Who are you? You are the handsomest man I have ever seen.

FROG CHIEF'S SON:

Huh-huh. I have come to

marry you. Come with me to my father's house.

PROUD DAUGHTER:

I will go with you.

FROG CHIEF'S SON:

Huh-huh. We must climb the hill to my father's house.

STORYTELLER:

Then they began to walk. It seemed to her that they were climbing a hill. But they were walking down toward the big lake.

When they reached the lake, they did not stop.

They went under its waters. The next day, no one could find her.

VILLAGE CHIEF:

Where is my daughter?

SECOND DAUGHTER:

She was not in her bed this morning.

THIRD DAUGHTER:

Perhaps she went for a walk.

MOTHER:

This is strange. We must look for her.

VILLAGE CHIEF:

Everyone, look for our daughter.

VILLAGER 1:

Look for her footprints.

VILLAGER 2:

Here they are in the mud. They lead to the big lake.

VILLAGER 1:

Her tracks end at the water.

VILLAGER 2:

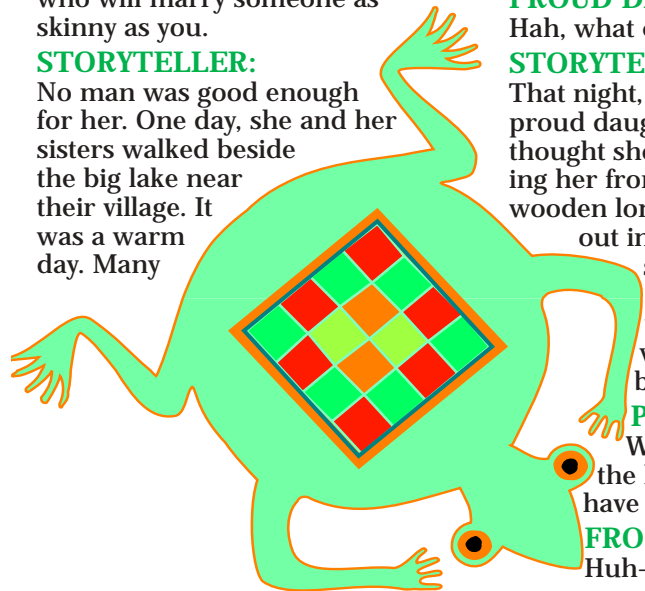
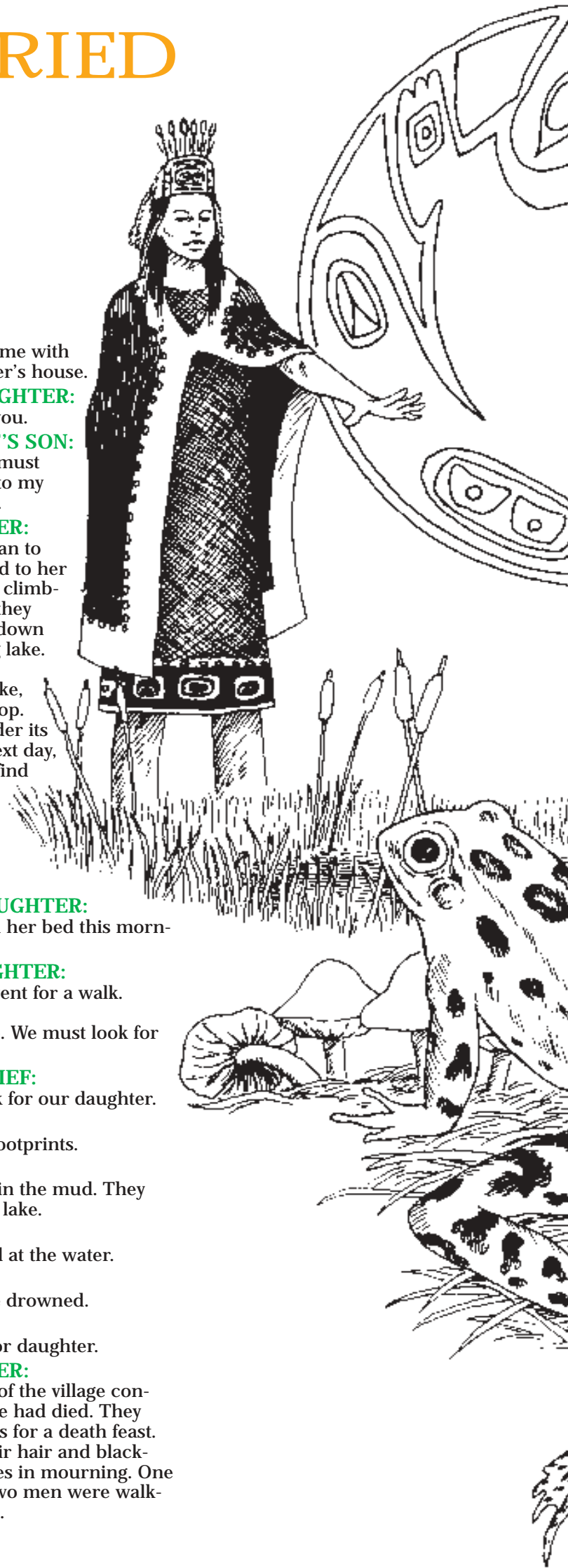
She must have drowned.

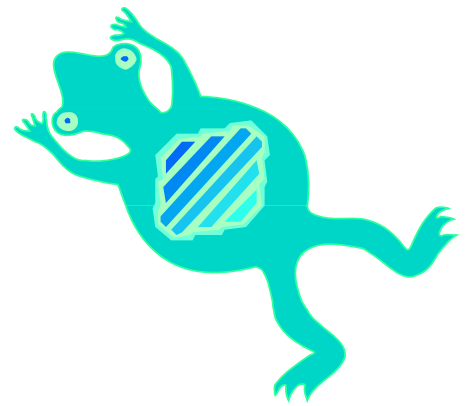
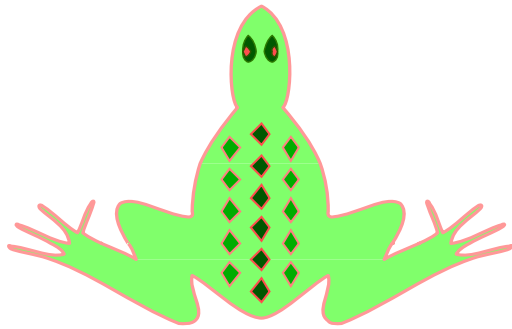
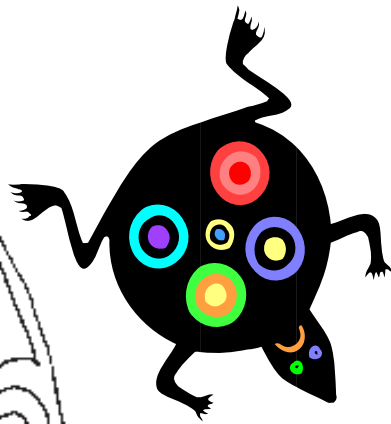
MOTHER:

Oh no! My poor daughter.

STORYTELLER:

So the people of the village concluded that she had died. They beat the drums for a death feast. People cut their hair and blackened their faces in mourning. One day, though, two men were walking by the lake.





FROGS AND PROUD DAUGHTER:

Huh-huh, huh-huh, huh-huh.

VILLAGER 3:

Look at all those frogs on their mud bank.

VILLAGER 4:

Hey! Look there in the middle of those frogs!

VILLAGER 3:

It is our chief's daughter.

VILLAGER 4:

Quick, let's wade in and get her.

FROGS AND PROUD DAUGHTER:

FROGS AND PROUD DAUGHTER:

Huh-huh, huh-huh, huh-huh.

VILLAGER 3:

Too late. They've gone back into the lake and taken her with them.

STORYTELLER:

The men went quickly to the Village Chief's longhouse.

VILLAGER 3:

We have seen your daughter.

VILLAGER 4:

She has been taken by the frogs.

VILLAGER 3:

We tried to reach her.

VILLAGER 4:

But the frogs took her with them under the water.

MOTHER:

My husband, we must rescue our daughter.

VILLAGER CHIEF:

Everyone, follow us to the lake.

STORYTELLER:

The people of the village hurried to the lake. There they saw the Village Chief's eldest daughter sitting on the mud bank surrounded by the frogs. They tried to reach her but, just as before, the frogs dove in and took her with them.

SECOND DAUGHTER:

Our sister insulted the frogs and made fun of them.

THIRD DAUGHTER:

She said they were ugly. That is why they have taken her.

MOTHER:

We must ask the Frog People to forgive her.

VILLAGER CHIEF:

We will make offerings to them.

STORYTELLER:

They placed dishes of food on the water. The dishes floated out and sank, but the frogs did not return the daughter. They placed fine skin robes on the bank of the lake. The Frog People took the robes, but still kept the Village Chief's proud daughter.

VILLAGER CHIEF:

We must dig a trench. We will drain the water from the lake and rescue my daughter.

STORYTELLER:

The people dug a trench and the water began to drain out of the lake. The frogs tried to drive them away, but the people just picked the frogs up and dropped them back into the water, being careful not to hurt them. The Chief of the Frog People saw this.

FROG CHIEF:

Huh-huh. Our homes are going to be destroyed.

FROG CHIEF'S SON:

Huh-huh. What shall we do, father?

FROG CHIEF:

Huh-huh. We must give my new daughter back to her people.

FROG CHIEF'S SON:

Huh-huh. Father, I am sad to hear this.

STORYTELLER:

So the frogs brought the young woman to the trench.

VILLAGER CHIEF:

My daughter.

PROUD DAUGHTER:

Huh-huh, huh-huh.

SECOND DAUGHTER:

She is all covered with mud.

THIRD DAUGHTER:

She smells like a frog.

MOTHER:

She is still my daughter.

PROUD DAUGHTER:

Huh-huh, huh-huh.

STORYTELLER:

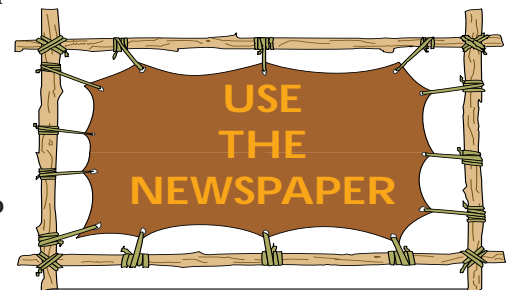
One frog leaped out of the water after her. It was the one who had been her husband. The Village Chief picked him up carefully and placed him back gently into the water. Then they took the young woman home. For a long time, she could speak only like a frog. Finally she learned to speak as a human again.

PROUD DAUGHTER:

The frogs know our language. We must not talk badly about them.

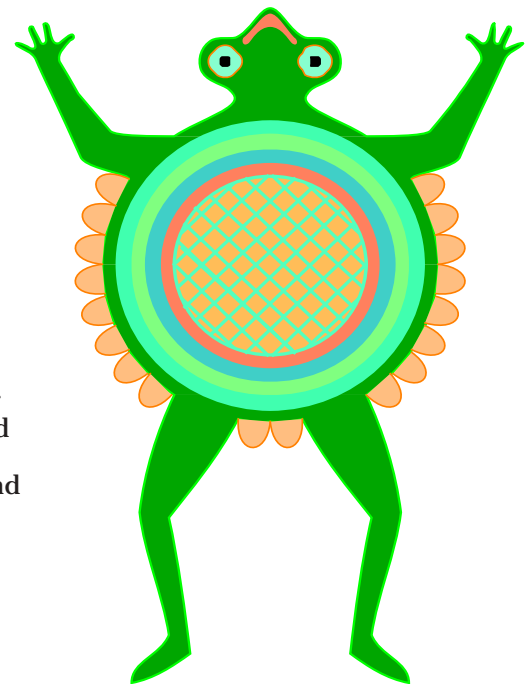
STORYTELLER:

From that day on, the people of that village used the frog as their emblem. They learned the songs of the frog people from the Village Chief's eldest daughter and never forgot the lesson she had learned. They still tell her story. And when they hear the frogs singing in the lake, they say that the frogs are telling their children this story, too.



Skill: understanding contemporary social issues

Diversity is a wonderful thing. We can learn a great deal from celebrating our differences instead of fighting about them. Find some examples of diversity in today's newspaper. Write an essay, based on what you found, telling about how diversity is good for our society.



THE CORN SPIRIT

By Joseph Bruchac

Based on a traditional Tuscarora story

Characters:

Storyteller, Dayohagwenda, Corn Spirit, First Villager, Second Villager, First Child, Second Child, Third Child, Fourth Child, First Wife, First Husband, Second Wife, Second Husband, First Hunter, Second Hunter, Third Hunter, Fourth Hunter

STORYTELLER:

Long ago, there was a village of people whose cornfields were blessed with good harvests. There was so much corn for so many years that the people began to take it for granted.

FIRST VILLAGER:

We have so much corn, why do we need to weed our fields?

SECOND VILLAGER:

You are right. It is too much trouble. Let the weeds grow. There will still be more corn than we need.

FIRST CHILD:

I am tired of driving the birds away from the cornfield. Let's go play instead.

SECOND CHILD:

We can play, knock the corn stalks down and trample on them!

THIRD CHILD:

It doesn't matter that the corn hasn't been picked yet.

FOURTH CHILD:

It doesn't matter that the crows will come in and eat the corn.

FIRST CHILD:

There will still be plenty left.

ALL CHILDREN:

Let's play.

FIRST WIFE:

My husband, do you want more corn to eat?

FIRST HUSBAND:

No, I have eaten enough.

FIRST WIFE:

What shall I do with the rest of this corn?

FIRST HUSBAND:

Just throw it to the dogs.

SECOND HUSBAND:

Is the corn dried enough for us to store it as seed corn for next year?

SECOND WIFE:

There is so much of it, I am sure that some of it is dried enough to put into the storage baskets.

SECOND HUSBAND:

Those baskets do not look to be well made. Will the seeds stay dry?

SECOND WIFE:

It would take too long to make the baskets tight. There is so much corn,

what does it matter if some spoils?

Did you dig the storage pit deep enough to keep it from freezing?

SECOND HUSBAND:

I am tired of digging deep storage pits. This will probably be deep enough.

STORYTELLER:

Even the Clan Mothers and the Village Elders forgot to be grateful.

CLAN MOTHER:

There is no need to have a ceremony to give thanks to the corn.

VILLAGE ELDER:

It is too much trouble. The corn will still grow without it.

CLAN MOTHER:

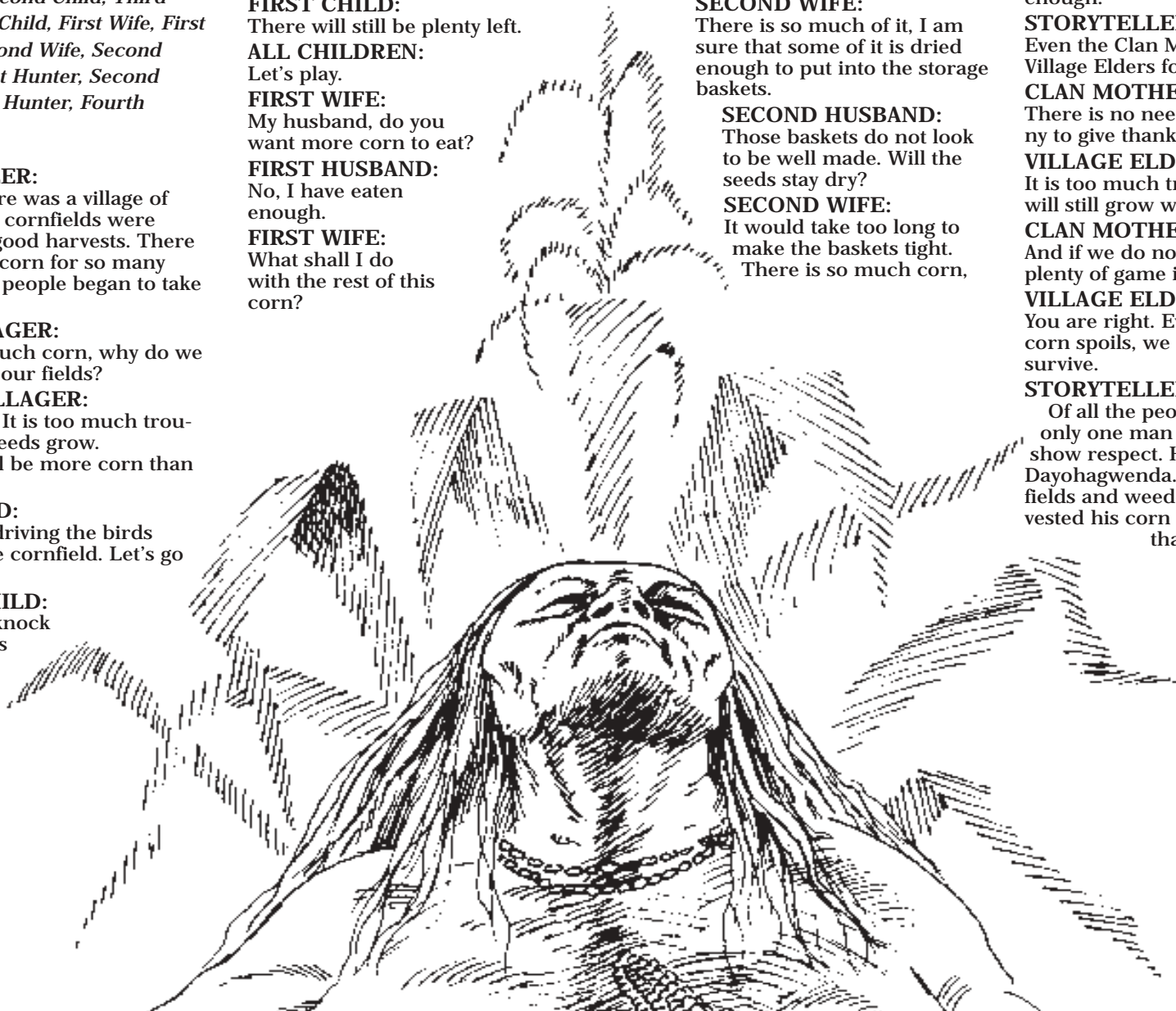
And if we do not have corn, there is plenty of game in the forest.

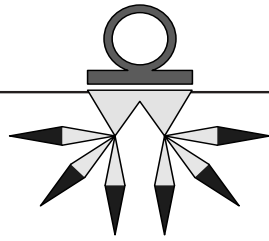
VILLAGE ELDER:

You are right. Even if the stored corn spoils, we can still hunt to survive.

STORYTELLER:

Of all the people in that village, only one man remembered to show respect. His name was Dayohagwenda. He cared for his fields and weeded them. He harvested his corn with care and gave thanks. He made





strong baskets and dug a deep granary to store the dried corn.

DAYOHAGWENDA:

I am sad about the way my people are acting. But they will not listen to me. I hope that bad luck does not come to them.

STORYTELLER:

But bad luck did come. When the Moon of Falling leaves arrived, the hunters went into the forests. The hunting was not good.

FIRST HUNTER:

There are no deer in the forest.

SECOND HUNTER:

I have been hunting for many days and I have not seen even one game animal.

THIRD HUNTER:

The deer, the moose, even the rabbit are gone.

FOURTH HUNTER:

I have tried to fish, too. But the lakes and streams seem to be empty.

FIRST HUNTER:

We will have to dig up the corn that we stored.

STORYTELLER:

But, when they went to dig up the corn, they were dismayed.

SECOND HUSBAND:

All of the corn in this basket has rotted.

SECOND WIFE:

All of the corn in this basket was eaten by mice.

ALL OF THE PEOPLE:

What shall we do? We will starve.

STORYTELLER:

Meanwhile, Dayohagwenda was walking in the woods. He was worried about what might happen to his people because they no longer showed respect for the corn or gave thanks. He found an old trail that led to a clearing in the forest. In the middle of the clearing was an old elm bark lodge built on a mound of earth. Weeds grew all around it. An old man in torn clothing sat there weeping.

DAYOHAGWENDA:

Grandfather, why are you weeping?

CORN SPIRIT:

I am weeping because my people have forgotten me.

DAYOHAGWENDA:

Why are your clothes torn?

CORN SPIRIT:

Because your people threw me to their dogs.

DAYOHAGWENDA:

Why are you so dirty?

CORN SPIRIT:

Because your people let the children trample me.

DAYOHAGWENDA:

Why are there weeds all around your lodge?

CORN SPIRIT:

Because your people no longer take care of me. Now I must go away and never return.

STORYTELLER:

Now Dayohagwenda knew who the old man was. He was the Corn Spirit.

DAYOHAGWENDA:

Grandfather, do not leave. I still respect you. I will go back and remind my people how to treat you.

CORN SPIRIT:

Grandson, I know you. I will stay with you. If your people show respect to me, I will not leave them. I will help them through this winter.

DAYOHAGWENDA:

People, listen to me. I found an old man in ragged clothes sitting in the forest by a lodge surrounded with weeds. It was the Corn Spirit. He said his people have forgotten him and he was about to leave forever.

ALL PEOPLE:

Oh no. Now we will all surely die.

DAYOHAGWENDA:

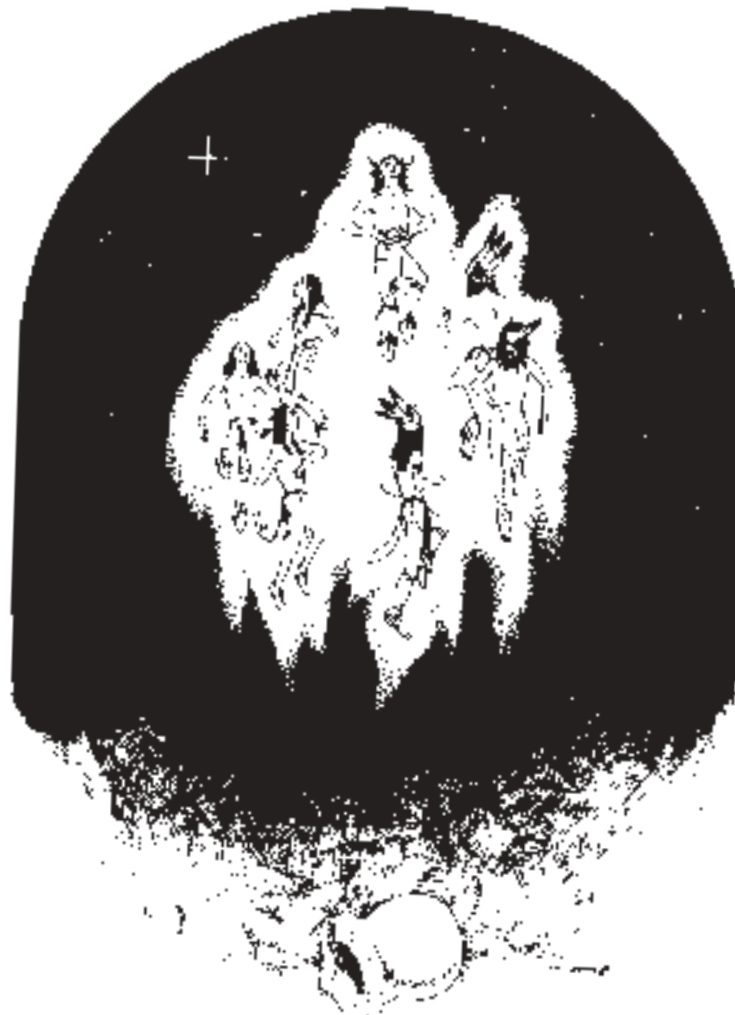
No. I spoke with Corn Spirit. I said that we would treat him with respect. If we respect him, he will help us through the winter.

ALL PEOPLE:

We shall do so.

STORYTELLER:

Then Dayohagwenda dug up the



STORYTELLER:

So Dayohagwenda went back to the village.

FIRST HUNTER:

What shall we do?

SECOND WIFE:

We have no more corn.

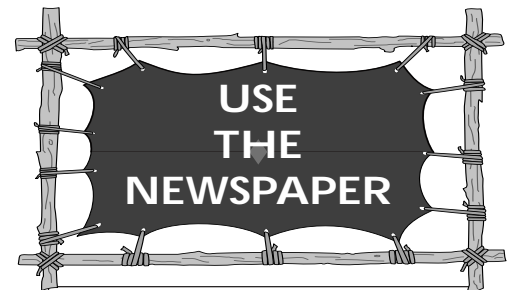
CLAN MOTHER:

We will surely starve.

VILLAGE ELDER:

Look, there is Dayohagwenda.

corn he had stored. He had dug his granary deep and covered it properly. There was even more corn than he remembered. There was enough to feed the whole village through the winter. There was enough to use as seed corn the next spring. From that day on, his people never again forgot to give respect to the corn. They gave thanks for all the blessings they were given. They taught their children to do the same and so it is to this day.



Skill: exploring universal themes

A plant's habitat meets its survival needs, such as sunlight, food and water. In this story, it is suggested that the corn plant also needs respect. People need respect, too. Can you find a story about respect in today's newspaper? Find one and write a paragraph explaining why respect is so important in that story and to our society.

Skill: understanding point of view

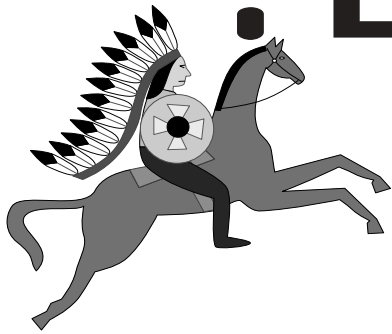
The Corn Spirit represents an object, the corn plant, sharing its point of view as if it were a person. It's interesting to try to see things from a new point of view. Choose a picture from today's newspaper and write a narrative from the point of view of one object in the picture.



If you'd like to read more about corn and the American Indians, check out the book, "Corn is Maize: The Gift of the Indians" by Aliki (Harper Collins; 1986. 40 pages.)

!ESCAPE!

By Suzanne I. Barchers and Charla R. Pfeffinger



SUMMARY

The Seminoles left the Creek tribe, settling in Florida. Because Florida was under Spanish rule, many slaves escaped to Florida to join them. Some Seminoles were slave owners themselves, while others married ex-slaves and helped others to fight for freedom. After Spain sold Florida to the United States, the whites wanted the rich land. Some Seminoles fought back, but finally agreed to move to a reservation in Oklahoma. There they struggled with more broken promises from the government and, finally, they moved to Mexico.

PRESENTATION SUGGESTIONS

Because most of the characters are males, the narrators could be girls to give gender balance to the script. The general could sit at a desk to one side, with John Horse moving to the desk for their exchange. The other speakers should stand in the order of the speaking.

DELIVERY SUGGESTIONS

Jim and Samuel should sound scared at first. Later, they should sound worried, though confident, as they discuss how they will leave for Mexico. The general should sound controlling and nasty.

CHARACTERS

*Narrator 1, Jim, Samuel,
Narrator 2, John Horse,
William, General*

NARRATOR 1:

In the early 1800s, many Seminole Indians lived in the Florida Everglades. They had farms and lived in freedom and peace. At the same time, many black

slaves escaped to the Everglades in search of a better way of life. Listen and learn about how two groups of people struggled together for freedom for many years.

JIM:

Why are we going south? Won't the master find us if we go this way?

SAMUEL:

No. If we can cross the border into Florida, we'll be safe.

JIM:

How do you know that?

SAMUEL:

I've heard the master and his friends talk about slaves escaping to Florida. It's owned by a country called Spain. We should be safe there.

JIM:

I hope you're right. How much farther is the border?

SAMUEL:

I'm not sure, but we must keep going. The sun will be up in a few hours. If we don't cross before sunup, we'll be caught for sure. I know I don't want to go back to work for the master, do you?

JIM:

I sure don't! Let's get going.

NARRATOR 2:

Many escaped slaves like Jim and Samuel made it to Florida. They became friends with some Seminole Indians who appreciated their farming skills. The Seminoles also valued the black people's English-speaking abilities. In time, some of the blacks and Seminoles married. They lived together, working hard, enjoying the land and their families. But then everything changed.

NARRATOR 1:

Spain sold Florida to the United States. The whites

wanted the good farmland that the Seminoles worked. The government wanted to move the Seminoles to reservations. The Seminoles fought back, but resistance was hard.

Samuel, Jim and another former slave talked with a Seminole leader.

SAMUEL:

John, this war is costing too much and going on too long. We have to find a way to give people back their lives. I've learned that the army has captured Osceola. This is especially bad news for us.

JOHN

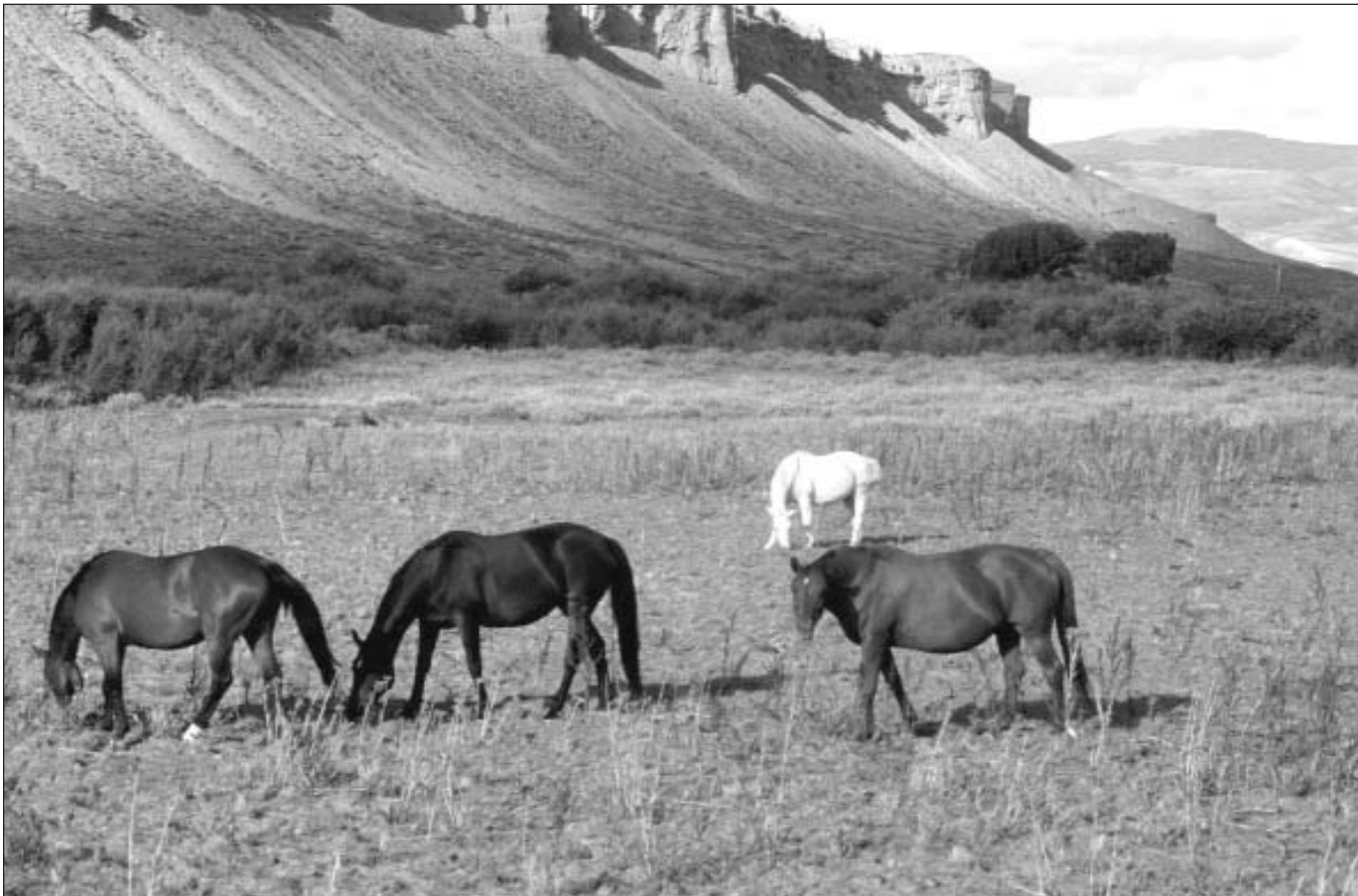
HORSE:

Why would they capture Osceola? He went to the army under a white flag of truce. Doesn't that mean anything to the army?

JIM:

Capturing him must have been more important than honoring the





the Everglades. They are successful business people and farmers, with many living in different cities and others living on reservations. The government broke promise after promise to them, but many of these determined, hard-working people survived.

truce. What are you going to do, John?

JOHN HORSE:
I'm not a leader. How can I talk with the army? They won't even honor a white flag of truce!

WILLIAM:
Someone has to try! You are wise. And you are a leader. Maybe they'll listen to you.

NARRATOR 2:
John Horse did go, and he signed a peace treaty with the army. The Seminoles agreed to leave Florida for Oklahoma, where they all could work their farms in peace. But the government broke its word. They wanted some Seminoles to stay in Florida to work as slaves. Once again, the Seminoles were at war. Some were caught by the army, while others escaped to the Everglades. John Horse tried to reason with the general.

JOHN HORSE:
General, we have agreed to end this war. We've signed a treaty with the government. Our people are ready to go to the reservation in Oklahoma. Why won't you let us go?

GENERAL:
But so many of you are hiding out in the Everglades. We want them to leave too. Can't you do something about them?

JOHN HORSE:
I don't control them and I have no way of finding them. If your soldiers find them, I'll try to convince them to come with us. But that's all

I can do. The rest want to leave now.

GENERAL:
All right, you can leave. But we are going to keep searching for the ones who are hiding.

NARRATOR 1:
In 1849, the Seminoles left for Oklahoma, but they left behind 600 others who were hiding in the Everglades. The government finally gave up their search in 1858 after 300 Seminoles died. Meanwhile, John Horse and the tribe had their share of troubles in Oklahoma.

JOHN HORSE:
I've called this meeting because we need to decide how to protect our black brothers. They are being captured and returned to the South to be slaves. The government has again broken its promise to let us work the land in peace.

SAMUEL:
Then we must move. I don't want another war. And we don't have the men to fight.

JIM:
Samuel's right. We didn't escape slavery to fight wars. We were looking for freedom. This seems like another form of slavery.

JOHN HORSE:
It appears that we have three choices. We can stay here and fight. Or we can find a new home near another tribe that will help us fight. Or we can move to Mexico. The government can't control us there.

WILLIAM:
Our families won't want to leave.

But our safety is more important. I think we should move to Mexico.

JIM:
How do we know we'll be safe there?

JOHN HORSE:
We don't know for sure. But we know we're not safe here. Let's go to Mexico and meet with their leaders. If they welcome us, I think we should move there.

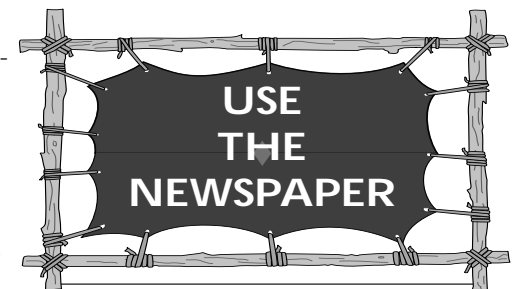
WILLIAM:
That's a good plan. We'll all go along to help you talk to them.

JOHN HORSE:
Let's make our plans. We'll need to take supplies. And we need to be sure our people are safe while we're gone.

NARRATOR 2:
The visit went well. John Horse and the Seminole tribe moved to Mexico in 1850. Twenty years later, the United States government asked the black Seminoles to return to the United States as scouts for the army. They promised them land for their families in exchange for their help.

NARRATOR 1:
But the government broke their promise again. Many of the Seminoles returned to Mexico.

NARRATOR 2:
Today, you can find Seminoles in many places. They live in Florida, Oklahoma and throughout the southwest. They no longer hide in



Skill: identifying human emotions

The characters in "Escape" are scared to move to a new land. Look through the newspaper to find other types of emotions people feel. What made them feel the way they do?

Skill: understanding interrelationships of groups

The United States government and the Seminole Indians agreed to settle their conflict with the Indians being forced to move. What other conflicts are in the news? Who are the participants and what is their dispute? Can you think of a peaceful solution to the conflict?

M O R E QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



ABOUT AMERICAN INDIANS



HOW DID THEY COOK?

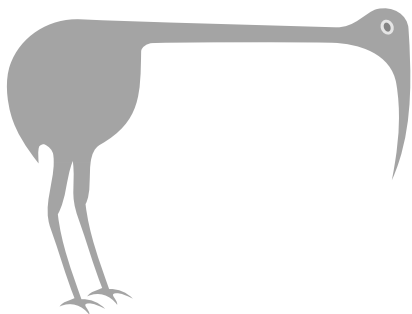
It's your turn to cook dinner. You have no gas or electric stove, no microwave, no tap water, not even a supermarket! You can imagine how hard a job it was for American Indian women (or anyone of that time) to cook without all of the things you are used to having. The women made the meals, and it took hours for them to collect the food and water. They would teach their daughters the skills, too. Pueblo women baked cornbread in outdoor ovens, heated by the sun. Most days, young Hopi women would grind corn on a rough stone slab called a "metate" and rub them with a smaller stone. They would then use the ground corn to make more than 30 dishes! The Tlingits would fill baskets woven of roots with water, meat and vegetables and then drop in hot rocks until the water boiled to make stews. Later, after they began trading with the Europeans who came here, they used metal pots too.

American Indians had no set meal times or plans. They ate when hungry or when travelers arrived. Food was divided fairly and evenly so that everyone could eat. Most tribes stored food for the winter.



IS IT TRUE THAT AMERICAN INDIANS SOLD MANHATTAN FOR A FEW BEADS?

Dutch traders did give the Lenape tribe some beads and other items worth about \$24, but the tribe did not think of this as payment for any land. They did not believe that land could be owned or bought and sold, so it is likely that they thought the beads were a goodwill gift.



HOW DID THEY GET AROUND?

Many American Indians were great walkers and they often used their feet for transportation. Apaches even painted their moccasins with sacred pollen because they believed it would help them find their way. They developed clever ways to carry items, too. Women took the heaviest burdens in backpacks, while the men carried the weapons. In the colder climates, they used sleds to pull their loads. Sometimes dogs pulled the sleds and then horses and ponies did, too.

Horses had been extinct since the Ice Age, but the Spanish explorers brought them to the Americas and gradually they spread from tribe to tribe. Comanches were especially talented horse trainers and traders.

DID THEY REALLY SMOKE PEACE PIPES?

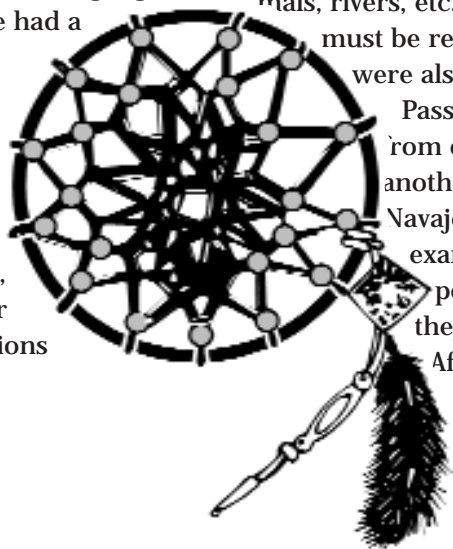
There were serious pipe-smoking rituals to ask for the help of the spirits. They might be used to make war or peace or to seal a deal. Pipes were crafted beautifully and took weeks to make. The stem was carved of wood while the bowl might be made of soapstone, clay, or wood. Pipes would be smoked at events (later called powwows) where people gathered. Still today, powwows are joyful events to remind people of old customs and to celebrate new ones.

DID AMERICAN INDIANS REALLY HAVE THANKSGIVING WITH THE PILGRIMS?

Massasoit, chief of the Wampanoag tribe, and about 90 of his warriors did join the Pilgrims at Plymouth for a celebration in the fall of 1621. In traditional style, the American Indians celebrated to thank the spirits for a good harvest. The Pilgrims invited them because they were grateful that the Wampanoag had taught them how to farm in their new homeland. Massasoit encouraged his people to keep the peace with the Pilgrims, although it wasn't always easy.

HOW DID THEY READ AND WRITE?

Many tribes had written language. A Cherokee man, Sequoyah, invented a way of writing down the Cherokee spoken language, using symbols. He had a symbol for each sound in the language. With this, the Cherokee, for example, became a literate people, writing their laws, their history, their business transactions and more.



WHAT WERE THEIR RITUALS?

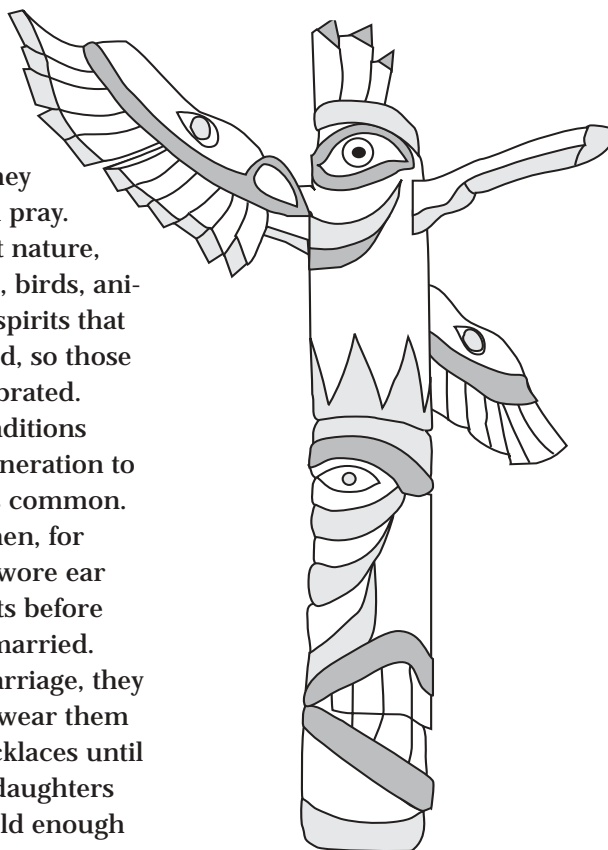
Life events were very important to American Indians. They celebrated events such as becoming an adult, getting married or winning a battle. They wore decorated ceremonial clothing and they would dance, sing and pray. They also believed that nature, the sky, the soil, plants, birds, animals, rivers, etc., had spirits that must be respected, so those were also celebrated.

Passing traditions from one generation to another was common.

Navajo women, for example, wore ear pendants before they got married.

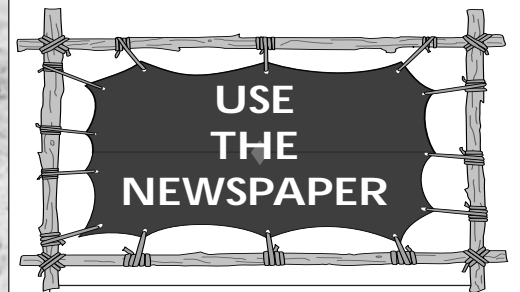
After marriage, they would wear them on necklaces until their daughters were old enough

to wear the same pendants on their ears.



WHERE ARE THE AMERICAN INDIANS TODAY?

As of 2000, there were about 2,000,000 American Indians. Native peoples live all over the United States, but most live west of the Mississippi River. Some still live on tribal reservations (land set aside for American Indians), but most live in towns and cities with a diverse group of people. The Navajo belong to the second largest tribe (the Cherokee is the largest), but they live on the largest reservation, which is in the Southwest. A tribal council governs it. Today, American Indians work the same jobs as anyone else and live their lives in the same way.

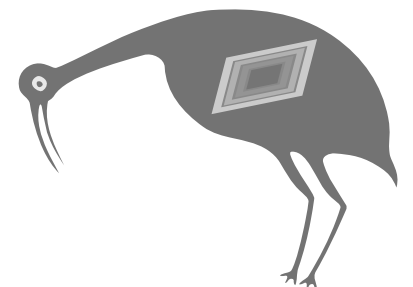


Skill: locating information about culture

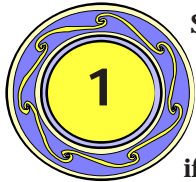
These pages contain a great deal of information about how the American Indians lived, worked, dressed, ate, traveled, and entertained themselves. Use today's newspaper to find examples of the way today's society does each of these things. Create an oral presentation telling about the examples you found in each category.

Skill: retelling

Look for a story in the newspaper that mentions several people. Rewrite the article in the form of a play, creating the dialog for the characters. Your classmates can help perform your own Readers Theater using your script.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Spirituality or religious belief is a big part of these plays. What are some of the things that you believe in? Remember, when you talk about religion, it's important to accept everyone's beliefs as right for them, even if you don't agree.

I believe in:



Many of the American Indian stories are about things in the outdoors. Go outside as a class and observe nature for five minutes. Take paper and pencil so you can write notes about what you see. When you come back in, brainstorm a list of what you saw and talk about it.

What I saw:



Every outdoor area, even a cement schoolyard, has nature to discover. Make a list of the things you found on the lines below. If you keep a journal, write an entry or draw a picture about what you experienced outside.

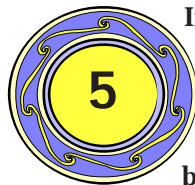
My schoolyard discoveries:



Do some research in the library or on the Internet to find out more about American Indian tribes that lived in your area or nearby. Prepare a short oral presentation about what you discovered. Share your findings with your class. Create a visual aid to illustrate something you learned.

NOTE: When you research American Indians, you will want to check your sources carefully. Much printed material about Indians is misleading and often mistaken. Find out about the authors. Try to read books written by American Indians, if you can. The Smithsonian Institution offers a great bibliography with book suggestions. You can find it on the Web at: <http://nmnhwww.si.edu/anthro/outreach/Indbibl/bibgen.html>

My presentation outline:



In American Indian life, Thanksgiving is not just a yearly event, but a daily practice. Giving thanks is a part of living in balance and taking part in the circle of life. What are you thankful for? Try to think of three things for which you are grateful and write about them below. Talk about this with your class.

I am thankful for:

Think about keeping a gratitude journal in which you write, every day, about one thing you are grateful for. It may be fun, once each week, to discuss your entries with your class.

