

# Day 1: "The Legend of the First Fire"

## Begin lesson

Card 1 of 14

Begin lesson

### Teaching notes

Click the "Begin lesson" button to view this lesson.  
Teaching notes for each slide will appear in this box.

## Before the Lesson

Card 2 of 14

Before the  
Lesson

### Teaching notes

# Anchor Text

Card 3 of 14

**The Legend of the First Fire,  
or How the Water Spider Got Its Red Shell**

*Adapted from a Cherokee Legend*

*From Myths and Legends of the Great Plains  
Courtesy of Gutenberg.org*

At the beginning of the world, there was no fire. As a result, much of the earth was always cold and dark. The animals shivered constantly and, because it was so dark, were always running into each other and getting hurt. One day the Thunder, who lived high in the clouds and saw this problem, sent down a bolt of lightning. The lightning struck the hollow of a sycamore tree that grew in the middle of an uninhabited island. This created a spark that developed into a flame and the flame became a roaring fire. The animals from the mainland, who had never seen anything like it, were curious.

As the word spread, the animals decided to meet in a small clearing to decide what they would do. Deer, raccoons, squirrels, rabbits, snakes, owls, and other woodland creatures all jumbled away, each giving their two cents. From where they assembled, they could see the smoke and smell the burning wood. However, they all came to the same conclusion: they needed to get a closer look in order to figure out the cause. At first they did not know how to get to the island, as it was surrounded by water on all sides, but every animal that could fly or swim eagerly volunteered to get the fire.


Raven, who saw himself as the smartest and strongest, was the first to offer to go. His large, strong wings carried him swiftly over the water and he gracefully landed on the branches of the sycamore tree. As he wondered what to do next, he glanced down and saw that the heat of the fire had blackened his beautiful, snow-white feathers. Raven was so frightened by this discovery that he flew back across the water without completing his mission. Raven's wings and those of his children have remained as black as night ever since.

### Teaching notes

Download and print copies of the anchor text for each student.

# Student Notes Sheet

Card 4 of 14



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student notes for: The Legend of the First Fire

Day: 1

1. What is the setting of the story and how does it impact the animals? Use details from the text to provide evidence.

2. In the text, the author says that "the Thunder" sent down a bolt of lightning, which started the fire. Why is the word "Thunder" capitalized?

3. What is the effect of the fire on the animals?

### Teaching notes

- This guided notes sheet provides students with the text-dependent questions associated with this lesson, and relevant graphic organizers. You may modify these sheets as needed.
- During class, students can use these sheets to record their responses, notes, or ideas. Use the back to record responses to the focus question.
- Following class, collect student notes to use as a formative assessment.

# Getting Started

Card 5 of 14

## Teaching notes

# Getting Started

## Introduction 1 of 2

Card 6 of 14

## Teaching notes



*The Legend of the  
First Fire, or How  
the Water Spider  
Got Its Red Bowl*

*Adapted from a  
Cherokee Legend*

**Pacing:** ~15 minutes

### Notes:

- Remind students that they will be closely reading and analyzing "The Legend of the First Fire". This means they will go back and reread the Cherokee legend to answer questions that are dependent on the text.

- Make sure students have their copy of the legend and the student notes worksheet.
- Read the text aloud fluently. Remind students to track along with the text as you read aloud.
- Tell students that today you will focus on the feelings of the animals toward the fire. Have the students reread the text independently while paying attention to details that communicate how the animals feel about the fire. Suggest that they mark up the text, as needed.

# Introduction 2 of 2

Card 7 of 14

As we explore the text we will be asking and answering questions about the setting and characters.

We will find and keep track of evidence from the text to support our ideas about each question.

## Teaching notes

**Pacing:** ~15 minutes

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# Exploring the Text

Card 8 of 14

## Exploring the Text

## Teaching notes

# Supporting Question 1

Card 9 of 14

What is the setting of the story and how does it impact the animals? Use details from the text to

## Teaching notes

**Pacing:** ~5 minutes

**Standard:** RL.4.3

**Purpose:** This question helps students understand the setting and the need the animals felt for getting the fire. By paying attention to details used by the author, they will be able to comprehend how the conditions described in the setting will change if the fire is acquired.

**Answer:** When the world started, the earth was "cold and dark" and the "animals shivered constantly". The animals feel that the fire is important to them and are driven by curiosity. Fire will improve their quality of life -- it will help them stay warm, stop shivering and keep them from "constantly running into each other and getting hurt."

### Look for students....

- Identifying descriptive words used by the author.
- Understanding the conditions of the world before fire.
- Using evidence from the text in their descriptions of the setting.

### Guiding questions and prompts:

- Ask, "What is it like 'at the beginning of the world'?"
- Ask, "What words does the author use to describe this place?"
- Ask, "What do those words tell us about the setting?"

### Additional Notes:

- The author of the text includes details that describe the setting. Students may make inferences, but make sure they can cite the details from the text that support their inferences.
- Emphasize the conditions as described so students will have a basis for understanding the motives of the animals in the next questions.

## Supporting Question 2

Card 10 of 14

In the text, the author says that “the Thunders” sent down a bolt of lightning, which started the fire. Why is

### Teaching notes

**Pacing:** ~5 minutes

**Standard:** RL.4.4

**Purpose:** This question will help students understand the importance of capitalization to indicate names (proper nouns). It also alludes to a significant character and an impetus of the plot in this legend.

**Answer:** The word "Thunders" is capitalized because it is a proper noun. The "Thunders" must be the name of the individual(s) who sent down the lightning which created the fire. The individual(s) may be a supernatural being or creator.

### Look for students....

- Recognizing capitalization of proper nouns.
- Annotating (underlining, highlighting, or circling) proper nouns in the text.
- Making connections from additional evidence in the text to infer meaning of "Thunders."

### Guiding questions and prompts:

- Ask, "What words do you notice in the text that are capitalized?"
- Ask, "What is the difference between capitalized words at the beginning of a sentence and words that are capitalized within a sentence?"
- Ask, "What other names are included in the text?"

### Additional Notes:

- Use this as an opportunity to focus on conventions that help a reader gain meaning from a text. When words are capitalized in a sentence, it indicates the name of a person, place, or thing.

## Supporting Question 3

Card 11 of 14

What is the effect of the fire on the animals?

### Teaching notes

**Pacing:** ~5 minutes

**Standard:** RL.4.1

**Purpose:** This question is designed to help students understand how the actions of the animals are related to the creation of the fire. It asks students to revisit the text to consider the general effect on the animals as a group, and the specific effect on the individual animals that attempted to retrieve the

fire.

**Answer:** The animals had never seen anything like the fire and are driven by curiosity to try and obtain it. It causes them to risk their health as they fly or swim to the island to discover more about the fire.

### Look for students...

- Using details from the text to show the effect of the fire on the animals in general and the specific animals that attempted to get it (i.e. Screech Owl and Raven).
- Focusing on the effects on the animals and not the effects on the land.
- Annotating the text (highlighting, underlining, or circling) to identify the effects of the fire.

### Guiding questions and prompts:

- Ask, "Why were the animals curious about the fire?"
- Ask, "How did the fire affect Raven?" or "How was each animal who tried to get the fire affected?"
- Say, "Reread the text and highlight/underline/circle the effect of the fire on each animal."

### Additional Notes:

- For ELLs and visual learners, you may want to show images of the actual images to help them understand the coloring or marking changes described in the legend.

## Supporting Question 4

Card 12 of 14

What problems and solutions does the fire present for the animals in the story?

### Teaching notes

**Pacing:** ~5 to 10 minutes

**Standard:** RL.4.1

**Purpose:** This question's purpose is to have students consider the problems the animals now face because of the creation of the fire. It also asks them to evaluate how the fire will solve problems established by the author's description of the setting.

**Answer:** The setting of the legend is described as "cold and dark", so the fire offers a solution for the animals by providing a source of both heat and light. Because the fire is located on an island, the problem is that only animals with certain attributes are able to try and get it. These animals risk their safety in their efforts to obtain the fire.

### Look for students...

- Using specifics from the text (i.e. "they did not know how to get to the island") to support their answer to the question.
- Distinguishing between the problems and solutions presented in the text.

### Guiding questions and prompts:

- Ask, "What words in the legend tell us what problems the animals faced before the fire was created?"
- Ask, "How does the creation of the fire solve the problem?"
- Say, "Describe the problem with the location of the fire."
- Ask, "What problems did each animal face in getting the fire?" and "Did they discover a successful solution to those problems?"

### Additional Notes:

- Teacher may want to provide scaffolded support for a whole class discussion of this question by creating a simple 2-column graphic organizer on the board/screen to organize student ideas about the different problems or solutions (with the students citing evidence to support their ideas).



## Focus Question

Card 13 of 14

### Focus Question

#### Teaching notes

## Focus Question

Card 14 of 14

How did the animals feel about the fire?  
How did their actions prove how they felt?

#### Teaching notes

**Pacing:** ~10 minutes

**Standard:** RL.4.1

**Purpose:** The fire is the central objective for the animals, and the reader needs to use details from the text to understand the animals' feelings toward the fire so that they can understand the animals' actions to obtain it. The supporting questions help students recognize the animals' need for fire and

their curiosity about it.

**Answer:** The animals felt that the fire was important to them and are driven by curiosity to find out more about it. All of the animals met together and each "jabbered away" about their ideas about what should be done. They all came to the conclusion that they "needed to get a closer look" to figure out what was causing the light and smoke they could see. The animals were so excited and curious that birds and snakes "eagerly volunteered" to try and get the fire. The animals' actions prove that they are curious, because they were collectively and repeatedly excited and eager to find out more about the fire.

**Look for students....**

- Rereading parts of the text to find explicit evidence that shows the animals' feelings toward the fire.
- Supporting their inferences with details from the text.
- Citing specific examples from the text in their written response.

**Guiding questions and prompts:**

- Ask, "What specific words or phrases give the reader a clue about how the animals feel?"
- Ask, "What do the actions of the animals suggest about their attitude towards the fire?"
- Ask, "What evidence helps prove that the animals feel this way?"
- Say, "Highlight or underline the evidence in the text that helps support your inference."

**Additional Notes:**

- Teachers may want to guide students to draw a comparison between the way the fire began (with a spark which was kindled into a flame), and the way the animals' curiosity and their subsequent actions evolved.
- The cold, dark setting and the animals' curiosity are the impetus of the animals' feelings toward the fire.