


Day 2: "The Legend of the First Fire"


Begin lesson

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

Before the Lesson

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	Teaching notes

Anchor Text

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**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 spruce 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 spruce 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

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Name: _____ Date: _____

Student notes for: The Legend of the First Fire

Day: 2

1. Where did the story take place?

2. How does the author convey that time is passing? What words indicate sequence and progression of the narrative?

3. How are the characters in the story personified?

4. What evidence do the animals have today of their successes or failures?

Animal	Success(es)?	Evidence

Teaching notes

- This guided notes sheet provides students with the text-dependent questions associated with this lesson, along with relevant graphic organizers. You may modify these sheets as needed.
- During class, students can use these sheets to record their responses, notes, or ideas. Space is also provided on the back for recording responses to the

focus question.

- Following class, collect student notes to use as a formative assessment

Getting Started

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Teaching notes

Introduction 1 of 2

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**The Legend of the First Fire,
or How the Water Spider Got Its Red Bowl**
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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 labored over, 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 displeased by this discovery that he flew back across the

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

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~15 minutes

Notes:

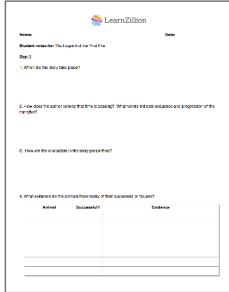
- Remind students that they will be closely reading and analyzing "The Legend of the First Fire." This means they will go back and reread the Cherokee legend to answer questions that are dependent on the text.
- Make sure students have their copy of the legend

and the student notes worksheet.

- Read the text aloud fluently. Remind students to track along with the text as you read aloud.
- Tell students, "Today you will focus on the author's purpose for writing this legend. You will consider the setting and the character's thoughts and actions using evidence from the text." Have students reread the text independently while paying attention to details that help them determine the purpose of this legend.

Introduction 2 of 2

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As we explore the text we will be asking and answering questions about the text's purpose.

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

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Exploring the
Text

Teaching notes

Supporting Question 1

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When did the story take place?

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~5 minutes

Standard: RL.4.1

Purpose: This question demands that students use evidence from the text (explicit evidence and inferences) to understand the time element of the legend's setting.

Answer: According to the explicit evidence in the

text, the story took place "at the beginning of the world." The reader can learn from evidence in the text ("the earth was always cold and dark") that the story takes place long ago, before the world came to be what it is now (ie: before there was fire, when animals could talk). The reader can infer the time setting of the story by comparing the world described in the text with the world as the reader knows it.

Look for students....

- Highlighting or underlining explicit evidence from the text.
- Comparing the setting of the story to the world they live in now.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- Ask, "What phrases does the author use to identify the time of the story?"
- Say, "Reread the first paragraph. What is different from the way you would describe the world today?"
- Ask, "What do those differences tell you about the time setting of the legend?"

Additional Notes:

- The time is explicitly stated in the first line of the text, but this question will help readers pay attention to the differences between the world described in the legend and the world now. It may be helpful for students to create 2-column table (T-chart) to compare the world as it is described "at the beginning" and the world today.
- Students may observe similarities between this legend and other creation stories they may have encountered (religious or cultural creation stories).

Supporting Question 2

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How does the author convey that time is passing? What words indicate sequence and progression of the

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~5 minutes

Standard: RL.4.4

Purpose: This question requires students to focus on specific words that show a transition in time in order to better understand the story's setting. It also requires the reader to notice specific details from the text and consider how the setting changes from the beginning to the end of the story.

Answer: The author conveys that time is passing by describing the change in the setting of the story from the beginning to the end. In the beginning of the text, the world is described as "cold and dark." With the creation of the fire, the setting changes until at the end of the story when the fire comes into the world from the island where it began. The author uses transition words to link the story and show that time is passing ("Now", "Next", "After").

Look for students....

- Observing changes in the setting from "the beginning" to "the end" of the story.
- Highlighting, circling, or underlining transition words ("now", "next", "after").
- Annotating the text to indicate how words or phrases suggest the passage of time.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- Ask, "What does 'as the word spread' tell us has happened since the beginning of the story?"
- Ask, "In the fourth paragraph, what words does the author use to show sequence or the passage of time?"
- Ask, "What other words help the reader understand that time is passing?"
- Ask, "How do transition words help a reader better understand a story?"

Additional Notes:

- Transition words are important to aid the progression of events in a narrative. Teachers and students may want to collaboratively record examples from the text on a class anchor chart for students to reference as they read additional texts throughout the year. The class could then continue adding to the list of transition words as more examples are discovered in other texts.

Supporting Question 3

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How are the characters in the story personified?

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~5 to 10 minutes

Standard: RL.4.3

Purpose: This question asks students to focus on figurative devices used by the author to help readers understand how the characters spoke and acted like humans. This will help readers make sense of the way the animals communicate and the feelings they convey about themselves and others.

Answer: The characters in the story are given characteristics and traits of humans. The author uses words and phrases like "the animals decided to meet in a small clearing to decide what to do" or "confidence", "offered", or "volunteered." By applying these words and phrases to describe the animal characters, the reader able to better relate to them and understand how they felt and why they acted the way they did (the reader can use their own experiences to make inferences).

Look for students....

- Highlighting or underlining examples of personification in the text
- Questioning examples from the text to consider whether the action or feeling is how an animal would act/feel, or how a human would act/feel
- Comparing the actions and feelings of the animals to humans (text-to-self connections)

Guiding questions and prompts:

- Ask, "In the second paragraph, what did the animals do after "the word spread"?"
- Ask, "Which actions in paragraph 2 are things that are more human-like?"
- Ask, "What other examples from the text show that the animals have been personified?"
- Ask, "How does the use of personification help you better understand the characters and their actions?"

Additional Notes:

- The use of figurative language can be challenging for ELLs. Teachers may wish to spend time focusing on the figurative meaning of phrases like "as the word spread" or "each giving their two cents" (both in paragraph 2). These idioms may impact student understanding of personification, as both relate to human-like qualities of the animals.

Supporting Question 4

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What evidence do the animals have today of their successes or failures?

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~5-10 minutes

Standard: RL.4.1

Purpose: This question requires students to revisit the details of the text to identify the evidence that serves as a “reminder” of each animal's encounter with the fire. The question helps prepare students to determine the author’s purpose in telling this legend (Day 2 focus question).

Answer:

Animal	Successful?	Evidence
Raven	No	feathers turned black
Screech Owl	No	red eyes
Hooting Owl	No	white circles around eyes
Horned Owl	No	white circles around eyes
Racer Snake	No	twisted movement and dark skin
Climbing Snake	No	black color
Water Spider	Yes	red bowl marking on her back

Look for students....

- Highlighting, underlining, or circling evidence from the text about the physical effects of the fire on individual animals.
- Identifying whether an animal's attempt was successful or not.
- Explaining how the animal changed through brief annotations or by discussing with a partner.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- Ask, "What animal first tried to get the fire?"
- Ask, "Did he succeed in bringing the fire back from the island?"
- Ask, "What evidence does this animal have today to show their success? Their Failure?"

Additional Notes:

- For ELLs and visual learners, it may be helpful for students to see images of these animals today (photograph of a raven, screech owl, etc). Some students may also prefer to record their response to the question as a drawing that indicates what the animal looked like after their encounter with the fire.
- Teachers may also assess student understanding by orally questioning students about how the animal was changed by the heat of the fire or through a partner-share.

Focus Question

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Focus Question

Teaching notes

Focus Question

Card 14 of 14

What is the purpose of the legend? Why did the Cherokee people tell this story?

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~10 minutes

Standard: RL.4.2

Purpose: A legend is intended to teach a lesson and explain why or how something in nature is the way it is (i.e. "How the Water Spider Got its Red Bowl"). The culminating task on Day 5 will ask students to identify the theme (lesson) of the legend. By understanding the purpose of the legend (what it

explains in nature) in today's focus question, it will prepare students to extract the theme/lesson as the Big Idea on the last day of the lessons.

Answer: The Cherokee people told this story to explain how fire came into the world and how different animals got the color patterns or markings that can be observed today. The legend tells about Raven whose "wings and those of his children have remained as black as night" or the owls whose "white circles around their eyes are a reminder of the hot air that scared them away." The Cherokees used the legend of the fire and animals to explain what they did not understand about nature and give their interpretation of how certain things came to be.

Look for students....

- Considering the secondary title of the story.

- Highlighting phrases and other evidence from the text that supports the author's purpose.
- Using the information from the completed table in supporting question 4 (student notes page) as evidence to support the author's purpose.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- Ask, "What does the secondary title (How the Water Spider Got Its Red Bowl) tell you about why this story was written?"
- Say, "Review the final paragraph of the text. What two purposes does the author explicitly state in this paragraph?"
- Ask, "How do the details about the effects of the fire on each animal support the author's purpose?"
- Ask, "What does the story explain about the world?"

Additional Notes:

- Today's focus question relates specifically to the purpose of the Cherokee people explaining the natural world. While a legend does also teach a lesson, the focus today is only on the explanation of natural phenomena. Day 5 will ask students to extract the theme (lesson) from the story.
- A story like this is sometimes called a *pour quoi* tale (French for "why") because it explains *why* something is the way that it is. It provides a reason for its existence or appearance through a narrative tale (example: How the Zebra Got Its Stripes)