

# Day 5: "The Legend of the First Fire"

## Begin lesson

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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

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Before the  
Lesson

### Teaching notes

# Anchor Text

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**The Legend of the First Fire,  
or How the Water Spiker Got His Red Hoof**

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 trunk 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, ants, and other woodland creatures all gathered there, 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 easily 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.

Now it was Screech Owl's turn. With confidence, he soared high and far across the

## Teaching notes

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

# Student Notes Sheet

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 LearnZillion

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

**Student name for:** The Legend of the First Fire

Day: 5

**Writing Task:** The author of *The Legend of the First Fire* uses cause and effect to teach a theme through each animal's attempt to bring the fire back from the island. Write a paragraph in which you determine the theme of the legend. Give several examples from the text to support your idea.

## Teaching notes

- This guided notes sheet provides students with the culminating writing task for *The Legend of the First Fire*. During class students may use the sheets as directed by the teacher to record their written response. These sheets may be modified to meet the needs of each learner.
- Following class, collect student written responses

and use as an 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**  
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 he did not know what to do, but 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:

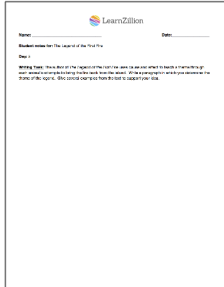
- Remind students that throughout the week, they have been closely reading the legend about the first fire. Close reading means they have spent time reading and rereading the text, answering questions and making inferences based on evidence in the

text, and learning more about how the characters feel and act.

- Make sure that students have their copy of the story and the student notes worksheet.
- Explain that today, students will need to use the knowledge they have gained through our reading of the text this week. They should reflect on their annotated text as well as questions they have answered throughout the week to help them plan their written response.
- Ask students to re-read the text independently before introducing the prompt.

## Introduction 2 of 2

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Today you will be applying what you have learned about the characters to determine the theme of the legend.

Reread the text independently, focusing on a lesson it might teach.

### Teaching notes

**Pacing:** ~15 minutes

#### Notes:

- Remind students that throughout the week, they have been closely reading the legend about the first fire. Close reading means they have spent time reading and rereading the text, answering questions and making inferences based on evidence in the

text, and learning more about how the characters feel and act.

- Make sure that students have their copy of the story and the student notes worksheet.
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## Focus Question

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**Focus  
Question**

### Teaching notes

## Writing Task

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The author of *The Legend of the First Fire* uses cause and effect to teach a theme through each animal's

### Teaching notes

**Pacing:** ~15-30 minutes

**Standard:** RL.4.2

**Purpose:** A legend is a tradition of oral storytelling to explain a reason for something in nature and to teach a lesson. Students need to be able to extract the underlying message or theme an author is trying to convey in a piece of literary text. The theme of the legend is taught through the actions and

reactions of different animals. If students can understand the theme, they can then apply the lesson(s) they learn to other situations.

**Answer:** The theme that is being taught in *The Legend of the First Fire* is that everyone has unique strengths and talents that can help them overcome challenges. At first, the animals that volunteer to go to the island and get the fire are fast, strong birds or powerful snakes. All of those animals, though, get burned by the heat from the fire or choked by the ashes. After all the other animals failed, a small water spider volunteered to go. All of the other animals thought she couldn't succeed because she was "not as big or as strong as the other animals". She was, however, patient and wise. She carefully made a plan for how she would carry a burning coal in a woven basket on her back. Her special talents--to walk on water and spin a nest for the coal with her webbing--helped her achieve her goal. In conclusion, it is important to remember not to treat people badly or think they can't do something because of the way they look or their size. Just like Water Spider, sometimes even the most unexpected individuals can contribute amazing things with their unique talents.

#### Look for responses that....

- Include details from the story.
- Clearly identify a theme (lesson) taught within the story.
- Cite evidence of cause and effect (i.e. Raven thought he was strong, so he volunteered to get the fire).
- Describe how the strengths of the animals affected their success (i.e. Water Spider was patient, so she made a plan and carefully prepared).

#### Additional Notes:

- Students should independently answer the question in writing.
- Struggling readers and ELLs could be provided with a graphic organizer to cite their evidence to support the theme.
- Students may refer to their guided notes from previous days lessons.
- Students may refer to class-created anchor charts.

#### Ideas for culminating projects and additional writing:

- Students can write an opinion piece on one of the characters in the story.

- Students can create their own pour quoi tales to explain additional natural phenomena (such as animal markings, physical features, unusual landforms, or natural disasters).
  - Students can create an illustrated re-telling of the legend to show how the animals were changed by the heat of the fire.
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