

Day 3: "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

Card 3 of 14

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

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: 3

1. What did Raven think about himself? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

2. Was Raven's self-perception a true reflection of who he was?

3. Consider the author's choice of adjectives and adverbs used to describe some of the other animals who fail to bring the fire. Based on these adjectives and adverbs, how accurately do their actions match with their initial self-perceptions?

Animal	Descriptors	Comparison to actions
Raven		

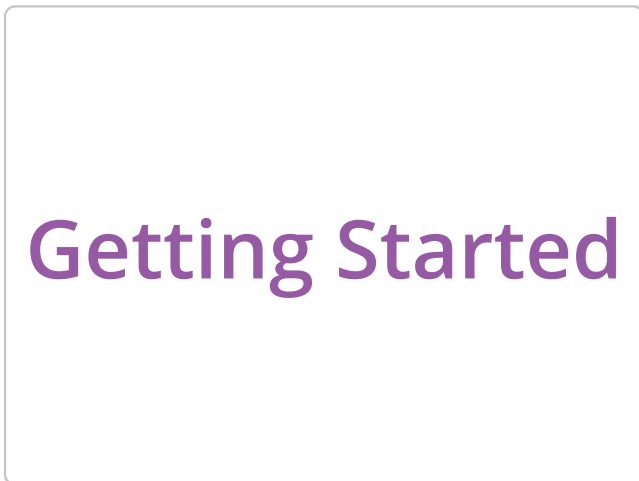
Teaching notes

- 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
Adapted from a Cherokee Legend
From *Myths and Legends of the Great Plains*
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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 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 distressed he hid 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: ~5-10 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.
- Tell students, "Today you will focus on the different strengths of the characters in this legend. You will compare and contrast how the animals view themselves and what their actions convey to the reader." Have the students reread the text independently while paying attention to details that help them better understand the characters' true strengths.

Introduction 2 of 2

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

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

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~5-10 minutes

Notes:

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- Make sure students have their copy of the legend and the student notes worksheet.
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Exploring the Text

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Exploring the Text

Teaching notes

Supporting Question 1

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What did Raven think about himself? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~3-5 minutes

Standard: RL.4.3

Purpose: This question requires students to consider the self-perception of Raven so they may later compare it with the more humble self-perception of Spider. This question also prepares students to respond to the next supporting question as they compare how Raven "saw himself"

with his actions.

Answer: Raven saw himself as the "smartest and strongest." Because of this perception, he was confident that he would succeed in bringing the fire back from the island and was the first to volunteer.

Look for students....

- Rereading the third paragraph of story.
- Highlighting, underlining, or circling evidence from the text.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- Ask, "What does the author explicitly say about how Raven 'saw himself'?"
- Ask, "What can you infer about Raven because he was 'the first to offer to go'?"

Additional Notes:

- While this question is direct, it does require some inferring. It provides the foundation for the next supporting question (where students contrast Raven's self-perception with his actions).

Supporting Question 2

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Teaching notes

Pacing: ~10 minutes

Standard: RL.4.3

Was Raven's self-perception a true reflection of who he was?

Purpose: This question requires that students contrast Raven's self-perception with his actions by drawing on specific details in the text. It will help students understand Raven's sense of pride and consequently the shame he feels at his failure.

Answer: Raven's self-perception was not a true reflection of who he was. He views himself as the "smartest and strongest," but when he arrived at the burning sycamore tree he had to pause to think ("As he wondered what to do next"), which resulted in his feather turning black from the heat. By

volunteering to be the first to try and get the fire, he conveyed that he was brave and confident, but his dismay and subsequent fear about the change in color to his wings caused him to abandon his mission. Raven's actions did not align with how he viewed himself, and his initial pride turned to shame upon his failure.

Look for students....

- Highlighting, underlining, or circling words or phrases in the text to identify details that provide evidence to answer the question.
- Making inferences from the character's actions.
- Jotting notes or thoughts in the margins of the text to record questions or inferences.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- Ask, "What happened to Raven 'as he wondered what to do next'?"
- Ask, "How would a faster decision have kept Raven's feathers from turning black?"
- Ask, "Why did Raven fly back across the water?"
- Say, "The author noted that the wings of Raven and his descendants 'have remained black ever since.' How will the color of Raven's wings serve as a reminder to him? What contrasting trait do the black feathers represent when compared to his self-perception?"

Additional Notes:

- Students may have difficulty extracting character traits from the actions of Raven. Teachers should scaffold instruction by modeling and using guiding questions and prompts to help students' understanding.
- A graphic organizer may be a useful tool for helping students organize information from the first two supporting questions.

Supporting Question 3

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Consider the author's choice of adjectives and adverbs used to describe some of the other animals who fail

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~10 minutes

Standard: RL.4.4

Purpose: By examining the specific words and phrases the author uses in the text, students will cite evidence to show whether the words are true descriptors of the characters.

Answer: The author uses these descriptive words to

help the reader understand how the characters viewed themselves, and how they acted when confronted by the heat and flames of the fire. The author uses words like "strong", "powerful", "swiftly", "more capable", and "sure" to describe the self-perception the birds and snakes had of their strengths and abilities. Their actions, however, demonstrate how fear and desperation to escape grave harm/death overwhelmed their perceived strengths and desire for fire ("everyone was too afraid to attempt and get the fire").

Look for students....

- Focusing on adjectives and adverbs used by the author.
- Highlighting, underlining, or circling evidence in the text.
- Supporting their ideas with evidence from the text.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- Say, "At the beginning of paragraph 4, the author says that Screech Owl had 'confidence.' What words does the author use to describe Screech Owl after his encounter the fire?"
- Ask, "What does the author mean when the text says that Hooting Owl and Horned Owl were 'sure they would succeed where the others failed'?"
- Ask, "What do you learn about the owls by their decision to fly 'back to safety'?"
- Ask, "Did the actions of the snakes match their confidence in their strengths?"

Additional Notes:

- Make sure students understand how adjectives and adverbs are used to describe objects or characters (adjectives) and modify adjectives or verbs (adverbs).
- Students will benefit from opportunities to verbally explain their thinking to a peer through a protocol such as think-pair-share before writing their response.

Supporting Question 4

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What do you learn about Water Spider from her actions?

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~5 minutes

Standard: RL.4.3

Purpose: Water Spider's actions show her strengths and bravery, which prepares students to compare Spider's character with that of the other animals in the focus question.

Answer: Water Spider is "very wise." Instead of

acting immediately, she "knew that she must prepare and plan." She thought carefully about how she would accomplish the task, taking into consideration her talents ("she could run across the top of the water or dive to the very bottom") and the information she had learned about the fire from the experiences of the other animals. Even though "she was not as big or as strong as the other animals", she was courageous, and used her water-walking ability plus the spinning of a "thread from her body" to successfully retrieve the fire.

Look for students....

- Using evidence from the text to make inferences.
- Annotating the text by jotting questions and thoughts in the margins.
- Making conclusions from the evidence that suggests what Water Spider was and what Water Spider was not.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- Ask, "What does it mean that 'Water Spider piped up'?"
- Ask, "What did the other animals think about Water Spider?"
- Ask, "Why did Water Spider think she would be able to get the fire?"
- Ask, "What did Water Spider do before she went to the island? What does that advance planning tell you about Water Spider?"
- Ask, "How did Water Spider get to and from the island?"

Additional Notes:

- This question will prepare students to contrast Water Spider's character traits with those of the other animals' in the day's focus question.
- Visual learners may benefit from a photograph or video clip depicting a water spider's physical appearance and method of moving across water.

Focus Question

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Focus Question

Teaching notes

Focus Question

Card 14 of 14

How are Water Spider's strengths different from the strengths of the other animals who

Teaching notes

Pacing: ~10 minutes

Standard: RL.4.3

Purpose: The purpose of this question is to guide students to examine the physical attributes and character traits of Water Spider compared with the other animals. This question builds on the previous days' examination of the characters' actions. It also prepares them to respond to Day 4's question on

wisdom and the culminating task's understanding of the theme.

Answer: Water Spider's strengths included both physical talents and mental strengths. Her "unique skills" included the ability to spin a web and walk on, or dive under, the water. The other animals had the physical strength to fly and power to climb trees. Water Spider's unique mental strengths were her ability to use her mind to "plan and prepare". (Students will organize details about animals in a graphic organizer and then write a paragraph to answer the focus question.)

Birds (Raven and Owls)	Snakes	Water Spider

Look for students....

- Revisiting the text to find evidence about Water Spider's and the other animals' strengths.
- Recording details about animals in the graphic organizer.
- Contrasting the strengths of each group to identify differences in their types of strengths.

Guiding questions and prompts:

- Ask, "What words describe the strengths of the birds and snakes who tried to get the fire?"
- Ask, "How would you classify their strengths? Physical or mental?"
- Ask, "What words and phrases describe Water Spider's strengths?"
- Ask, "How do Water Spider's strengths compare with the strengths of the birds and snakes? Why are Water Spider's strengths more effective in getting and bringing back fire?"

Additional Notes:

- Look for students citing evidence (specific words from the text) to describe the strengths of the different animals. They may refer to their ideas from the first side of the student notes page.
- Students should include details and evidence in the graphic organizer, but may also benefit from writing a short paragraph below the graphic organizer to synthesize the information into explanatory statements that reference the textual evidence.