TITLE: Once Upon a Native Myth

WRITTEN BY: Melinda Crimmins

GRADE LEVEL(S): 8-12

TIME ALLOTMENT: 3-6 fifty minute class periods

OVERVIEW: Students will research regional Native American folklore, create a storyboard using pictures or symbols and relate the story orally to the class. The class will vote on the two best oral stories. The “winners” will receive a prize. The teacher may videotape the performances and show to the class. Another option would be to post the video on the school, or class, webpage.

SUBJECT MATTER:
Language Arts: American Literature; Native American Folklore & Oral Story Telling

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
Students will develop an understanding of the themes in American literature, recognize the link between literature and history by analyzing literature according to various genres, and differentiate among forms such as journals, essays, and stories.

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS:
National Standards: Language Arts
Writing:
Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process
Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing
Reading:
Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)
The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the International Reading Association have developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching the English language arts. This lesson plan addresses the following NCTE standards:

1. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members in a variety of literacy communities.
2. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, and vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.
3. Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace;
and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

**North Dakota State Education Standards:**

**Standard 1:** Students engage in the research process.
- Research Planning
- Evaluating Research Information
- Organizing Research Information
- Presentation
- Evaluating the Research Process

**Standard 2:** Students engage in the reading process.
- Literary Genres
- Reading Strategies for Interpreting Meaning of Texts
- Purposes for Reading
- Literary Elements and Techniques
- Vocabulary

**Standard 3:** Students engage in the writing process
- Literary/Narrative Writing
- Prewriting
- Drafting
- Literary Elements and Techniques
- Revising and Editing
- Publishing/Presentation

**Standard 4:** Students engage in the speaking and listening process.
- Planning for an Audience/Purpose
- Verbal and Nonverbal Communication
- Conversation, Group Discussion, and Oral Presentation

**Standard 6:** Students understand and use principles of language
- Literary Elements and Techniques
- Interpret symbolism
- Locate cultural differences in language; i.e., colloquialisms, regional and ethnic dialects, and indigenous vocabulary

**Minnesota State Education Standards:**

**Standard(s):** IB The student will apply a variety of strategies to expand vocabulary.

**Skills / Benchmarks:**

1. Acquire, understand and use vocabulary by learning words through explicit vocabulary instruction and independent reading, and appropriately use these words in writing.
2. Determine the meaning of unfamiliar words and metaphors by using dictionaries, context clues and reference books.
3. Apply knowledge of Greek and Latin roots, prefixes and suffixes to understand content area vocabulary.
4. Understand the meaning of unknown words using derivations, such as word roots and word origins.
Standard(s): IC The student will understand the meaning of informational, expository or persuasive texts, using a variety of strategies and will demonstrate literal, interpretive, inferential and evaluative comprehension.

Skills / Benchmarks:
8. Evaluate clarity and accuracy of information, as well as the credibility of sources.

MEDIA COMPONENTS – VIDEO AND/OR WEB:
Selected clips that support this lesson plan:
- Native American Myths & Stories: http://www.americanfolklore.net/
  http://www.ilhawaii.net/~stony/loreindx.html
  http://www.livingmyths.com/Nativesum.htm
- Oral Story Tellers:
  grandma Coyote tells a Creation Story http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNIY8Nrzrp0&feature=related
  Native American Story ~ The Three Deer Sisters http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWsep2SZ98c&feature=related
  Native American Storyteller@richheape.com - Tales of Wonder http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SIHtzU133NI&feature=related
  Grandma Spider Brings The Sun To Earth http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNBNGL9uLCl&feature=related

MATERIALS:
- Computers with internet access
- Guide to Quality Story Telling Handout
- Oral Story Evaluation Form
- Native Myth: The World on the Turtles Back
- Story Summary Sheet
- Digital Story Telling Handout (optional)
- Poster board/ markers
- Video Recorder (optional)

PREP FOR TEACHERS:
- Access computers with internet
- Make copies of Quality Oral Story Telling Handout
- Make copies of Native American Oral Story Evaluation Sheet
- Make copies of Story Summary Guide
- Gather poster board and markers

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY - SETTING THE STAGE:
1. Ask students to define or give examples of: Fairy Tales, Folk Tales, Legends, Tall Tales, Fables, and Myths.

Fairy tales have magic characters such as witches and fairy godmothers, as well as human or animal characters. The solution to the problem is usually reached through magical means.

Folk tales are stories that originated from the common people and are often associated with a specific country or people. The characters are often stereotypes of ordinary people and extraordinary things often happen to them.

Legends have some basis in historical fact, which may have been distorted or exaggerated as they have been told over the years.

Tall tales involve characters that are larger than life. They may be based on actual people or events, but they are exaggerated so much as to make them seem impossible.

Fables are short stories with a moral lesson. They often feature animals that act like people.

Myths are made up to try to explain why things are as they are in nature, customs, and institutions.

2. Ask students what stories they may know. Some examples they may suggest are; Goldie Locks and the Three Bears, The Tortoise and the Hare, Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox, Johnny Appleseed, The Easter Bunny. Discuss how the Native American culture has many stories classified as myths and folklore.

3. Have students read the Iroquois story *The World on the Turtles Back* (p.24-32 Unit 1: Part 1 McDougall Little) or distribute the handout.

4. Guide the discussion. “What might be the cultural significance of the folk story? What function does it fulfill for a society, particularly as a creation story? How are folk stories conveyors of cultural values?”

5. Ask students how they know the myth, legend, etc they named earlier? Did they know these stories/legends before they could read? Ask “If the stories were not written down how else would these stories be passed from generation to generation?

6. Talk about the tradition of oral storytelling. “The tradition of oral storytelling has been a part of human heritage and culture throughout history. It was in existence long before the written word. The oral story has a unique social role is as a vehicle for passing on long-standing beliefs and customs. It has been used to spread news, teach lessons, relate historical events and explain natural wonders and phenomena in an entertaining way.” Tell students that story telling has been used to preserve and celebrate the history of the people. “Today, storytelling is still an integral part of cultures and groups throughout the world. It is an important tool in linking the past with the present.”
7. Ask students what would make an oral story memorable or interesting?

8. Show video clips of a Native American oral story tellers.

   Grandma Coyote tells a Creation Story
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eNIY8Nrzrp0&feature=related

   Native American Story ~ The Three Deer Sisters
   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWsep2SZ98c&feature=related

9. Ask the students if they liked the clips and why?

10. Ask students to listen for expression as you show them another video clip.

    Native American Storyteller richheape.com - Tales of Wonder
    http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SIHzU133N1&feature=related

11. Ask students if they noticed any difference between the video clips they just watched? Which did they like better? Why? View another video clip.

    Grandmother Spider Brings The Sun To Earth
    http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNBNGL9uLCI&feature=related

    Other videos if needed:
    http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bBeUdL-NkO8
    http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RCCLa3zguY&feature=related
    http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ejp8wn_rnlA&feature=related

    Why Dogs Chase Cats and Cats Chase Mice.
    http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GE6iTTPe2sk&feature=related
    http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EraMx3PgU4g&feature=related

    Native American Story ~ How Coyote Got His Cunning
    http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-1946864619125702494#

12. Distribute and review handout Quality Oral Story Telling.

13. Tell students they will be researching regional Native American folklore, creating a storyboard using pictures or symbols and retelling the story orally to the class. The class will vote on the best oral story telling and the “winners” will receive a prize.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES:
MATERIALS: Story Summary guide, computer with internet access, poster board, markers, Story Evaluation sheet

1. Distribute Story Summary Guide with links to Native American Myths and Folk Lore. Students will use the internet to research and locate Native American folklore, myth or creation story - preferably regional.
2. Students will complete a *Story Summary Guide*. After completing the guide they will ‘block out’ the stories in storyboard format. This will help in memorizing the story. First - block in key words or phrases in sequentially. The simplest blocking format is to divide a piece of paper into four or six quadrants. Then, divide the major events of the story into four or six sections. This will assist the students’ memorization of the story. Next the students create symbols, or simple drawings, to represent each quadrant. They use no words or written phrases.

3. In groups, students practice their stories with each other, using their storyboard or poster to assist them. Students progress to telling their chosen story without the poster.

4. Distribute the handout *Oral Story Evaluation*.

**CULMINATING ACTIVITY:**
**MATERIALS:** Completed story board, poster, Video Camera (optional)

1. Students will tell the stories to the class. Using the rubric as a guide, the class will vote on the two most enjoyable, or best, stories. Prizes will be given to those students.

2. Time saving alternative: Have students tell stories to groups and then have each group decide on the best story to present to the class. If you have access to a video camera, tape the students telling their stories. This is a good way to refine the telling of a tale, particularly the movements and gestures.

3. When students are telling the story/tale in a "performance" setting, do not interrupt the teller. Keep notes for each teller. Go over them with the entire class after the teller is finished, so that all learn from your comments. You may also go over the notes with each teller individually.

**CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITY:**
**ART**
- Analyze stories for use of strong imagery and visual details.
- Use stories to develop themes.
- Use stories that create patterns or rhythms. Translate them into visual patterns.
- Use stories to motivate and stimulate creativity.

**HISTORY**
- Use stories that are based on historical events.
• Analyze details of stories that show cause and effect.
• Use biographical stories.

GEOGRAPHY/ SOCIAL STUDIES
• Tell or listen to stories that show the way of life, customs, and beliefs of an area or ethnic group.
• Incorporate stories into the curriculum that explain the why and how of the earth’s formation.
• Use stories that have geographical details in the setting.
• When studying West African or Jamaican cultures, listen to Anansi stories. Then discuss how these stories reflect the cultural identity of the people.

LITERATURE
• Use stories to enhance and reinforce vocabulary development.
• Tell or listen to stories that provide examples of how literary elements are used effectively.
• Use stories to motivate and stimulate interest in reading and writing.

MATH
• When teaching how to solve word problems, turn arithmetic equations into stories.
• Look for stories that include problem solving, inference, sequencing, and patterns.
• Use stories that make comparisons and show cause and effect.

MUSIC
• Choreograph stories.
• Compose songs to go with the stories.
• Compose music to tell the story.

SCIENCE
• In a unit on scientific theory, look for ‘how’ and ‘why’ stories such as Why Raven’s Feathers Are Black and How The Leopard Got Its Spots.
• In a unit on the rain forests, look at stories from or about the indigenous people of Brazil.
• To teach analyzing skills, use stories that show cause and effect or that make comparisons.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS
Students could interview residents at local Indian reservations about oral traditions.

* Students could post their story boards in local businesses with a short description of the project or story they depicted.
* Students could perform their oral stories for the community.
* Students could post a video of themselves giving the performance on line.

For more ideas on community-based projects, go to the Making Family and Community Connections site at www.thirteen.org/edonline/concept2class/month9.

STUDENT MATERIALS
Computers with internet access.
Quality Oral Story Telling Handout
Native American Oral Story Evaluation Sheet
Story Summary guide
Poster board
Markers

Materials of Interest:
60 minute PBS Video: Anishinaabe-Niimi ‘Idiwin: Ojibwe Powwow. Includes footage of powwows at Red Lake, Leech Lake, and Ball Club along with performances by the Eyabay Singers from Red Lake with lead singer Lee Lussier, Jr.

SmithsonianVideos — January 25, 2010 — Winter Story Telling Festival: Thirza Defoe(Oneida/Ojibwe) and Gene Tagaban (Tlingit/Cherokee). These videos demonstrate how to tell stories not only with words, but with music, song, dance, and film as well.

Audio & transcripts: http://www.turtleislandstorytellers.net/
Turtle Island Storytellers Network is an online network promoting tribal storytellers, historians, and song carriers from 13 states. This network is funded by the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, the National Park Service, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Audio, transcripts, biographies: http://www.pbs.org/circleofstories/voices/index.html