

Teacher's Guide for Appleseeds: *Myths and Mythology*

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Teacher Guide prepared by Lisa Greenberg. Lisa taught in international schools in Japan, Singapore, and Saudi Arabia. Her coffee table book SAUDI ARABIA, photographs by Mohammed Babelli and text by Lisa was published in May, 2007. Her children's story "Flying Like a Djinn" was in Cricket, September 2007.

What A Story! Myths and More

Getting Ready:

Set up a free reading table with retold myths, legends, and folktales, including plenty of illustrated books. You may wish to organize a bulletin board on "The Hero's Journey", pp. 12-13 as a teaching aid or have the class create a bulletin board on this concept..

It's an Old Story, pp. 2-5

Direct students to read the article or read aloud as a group and then discuss:

- Why do people continue to tell and listen to the old stories?
- What is the difference between myth, legend, and folktale?
- Why do the old stories change over time? (You may wish to show some variations of stories, such as Cinderella, that have been retold all over the world.)

Project: You may wish to assign each of the Olympians to a group of students to research and create a story board or short skit about the god.

Fire to the People, pp. 6-8

Compare and contrast: Divide the students into groups to compare the three myths of the origin of fire. They might create a chart, illustrate the differences, write a compare and contrast essay, or construct a Venn diagram showing similarities and differences.

Allow time to show and discuss the different projects.

Anansi, Trickster Spider, pp. 9-11, and When Raven Soared, pp. 30-32

Have students read page 9 and then discuss the concept of the "trickster". What "tricksters" do they recognize in the books they have read, the movies or cartoons they have seen, stories they have heard?

Read *Anansi's New Trick* aloud, or have students take different narrative roles, e.g. Anansi, Mole Rat, Nyume, narrator for a shared reading experience.

Discuss the "lesson learned" by Anansi. How can students apply that lesson to their own lives?

Read *When Raven Soared* aloud or have students read it individually, and discuss:
How is Raven a trickster?
How is he similar to Anansi? How is he different?

What lesson does this story teach?

Map That Myth, pp. 12-13

Challenge small groups of students to write and illustrate a collaborative story following the plot map on these pages. Share the stories together.

Alternatively, choose one of the books or stories the whole class has read together and trace the "hero's journey" through the story. Does it follow the general plot line or is it different? If so, why do they think the story teller took the hero(ine) on a different journey?

Harry Potter, Modern Epic Hero, pp. 14-15

Discuss:

What are the attributes that make Harry Potter a hero?

Is any other character in the Potter series a hero? Why or why not?

Would you want to be in Harry Potter's shoes? Why or why not?

Class project: Challenge students to write an essay for the context at the top of p. 15 and send their entries in to *Appleseeds*.

Myths of the Night Sky, pp. 16-18

Have students research one of the constellations and retell the myth behind the constellation in writing or orally or through illustration.

Collect the stories in a class book or on a class audiotape for sharing with families at home.

(Not So) Plain Vanilla, p. 19, and The Stranger at the Dance, pp. 20-21

Have students read the two stories.

Discuss with class how many tales explain the natural world. Ask, "How does *(Not So) Plain Vanilla* fit with what we know about ancient cultures of Mexico?" What other stories do they know that offer explanations about the natural world? How are they the same as or different from *(Not So) Plain Vanilla*?

Then discuss, what lessons are taught in *The Stranger at the Dance*?

Brainstorm the ways in which this tale from the Southwest is similar to and different from the previous story from Mexico. Then work with the students to write a group compare and contrast essay or have each write their own, if the concept has already been taught.

Urban Legends — Fact or Fiction? Pp. 22-23

For homework, have students collect urban legends (or Internet legends) from their families. Share in class the next day. You may wish to introduce students to ways in which they can verify "fact or fiction".

How Our Noses Got This Way? Pp. 24-25

Discuss:

What makes this a good story?

What aspects are related to real life or fact? (suggestions: "(one person) worked very carefully, but (another) was careless", "hated to be told he was wrong", a depression at the top of the nose, the nostrils facing to the ground, a new-born being switched or spanked)

With students compare this story to *(Not So) Plain Vanilla*, and then have them practice writing a compare and contrast essay.

Eureka! Meet the Muses

Introduce students to the concept of writing a crossword puzzle, how to number it, how to write clues. Then challenge them to design a crossword puzzle using the names of the Muses and characters in the retold tales in the magazine. Copy off a few of the crossword puzzles and have students figure them out.

Star in Your Own Myth! Pp. 28-29

Have students do this activity individually, in pairs, or in small groups. Depending on the age and capability of the students, you may wish to demonstrate by writing a group story first, following the steps in the activity.

Wrap Up

Ask students, what stories were your favorites? Why did you like them? What did you dislike about some of these stories? Why do you think a particular story has lasted over time?