

## Standard One – Lesson One

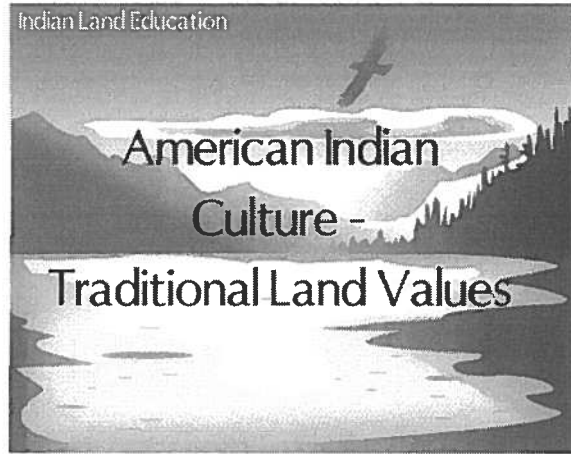
**Achievement Goal:**  
Read and retell certain tribal origin stories

**Time:**  
One class period

**Core:**  
Cultural Arts, History, Language Arts



Grades: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>



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### Background:

Origin stories answer some of the most fundamental questions: How was the universe created? By whom or what? Why? There are as many origin stories as there are cultures. Each group of people has their own beliefs about how the world and universe came to be. Many of these stories take place before time and space were established.

In addition, American Indian tribes, like many other peoples, have explanations as to how they originated as a people. The stories tell of powerful beings that created the natural world and people's place in the world. From this creation, laws, values, traditions and ceremonies originated as well.

Many American Indian tribes think of their beliefs as important, everyday facet of existence that contributes to rich tradition and cultural heritage. This way of life connects native people to the mysteries of life, birth, death and the spirit world. These beliefs also connect people to the elements that provide for their existence, such as the earth, sky, water, the sun and moon, animals, and plants.

Although these stories are ancient, they are considered as vital and continuing into the present. They are represented in ceremonies and teachings and they are passed on to each new generation.

American Indian origin stories should not be treated or told as simple fairy tales. Learning respect for others' beliefs will make this lesson an important educational experience that the students will enjoy and appreciate.

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### Student Activity:

- Read and retell selected tribal origin or creation stories from the list of books below (1) through (4).
- Find additional stories on the Internet at (5) below and read/retell them.
- Develop questions from one of the selected stories to discuss with students.
- Let the students repeat the story in the general sequence.

- Have students think about the stories and imagine what they might have seen when the world was created in the stories.
  - Have them draw a picture illustrating their thoughts on how things might have looked when people, animals, lands and trees were created.
  - Have the students display their drawings on a bulletin board and talk about their drawings in class.
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### **Evaluation:**

- Evaluate the students' grasp of origin stories by their responses to questions and their participation in discussions.
  - Assess the students' ability to visualize origin events by their drawings and explanations.
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### **Resources:**

1. Bruchac, Joseph and Thomas Locker. The Earth Under Sky Bear's Feet: Native American Poems of The Land. New York: Philomel Books, 1995.
2. Caduto, Michael J. and Joseph Bruchac. Keepers of the Earth: Native American stories and environmental activities for children. Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum, 1989.
3. Goble, Paul. The Great Race of the Birds and Animals. New York: Bradbury Press, 1985.
4. Goble, Paul. Remaking the earth: a creation story from the Great Plains of North America. New York: Orchard Books, 1996.
5. "Native American Lore Index Page", <http://www.ilhawaii.net/~stony/loreindx.html>
6. "Indian Legends", <http://www.indianlegend.com/default.htm>