

Native Americans in New England Curricular Project

Title: Stories We Use to Understand Our World: Exploring Native American Deeptime¹ Stories and Geology Explanations

Grade Level: Second Grade

Subject Area Focus: English Language Arts

Estimated Number of Days to Complete: 5 lessons, 5-6 Days

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District Union 28

State Massachusetts

Date Submitted _____

Curricular Project Summary:

In this unit, 2nd grade students will explore two ways that we tell stories in order to explain the world around us. By focusing on a mountain that is (just about!) visible from the school, students will connect with the cultural importance of deep-time stories as a way to understand our landscape. This will be compared to a geological explanation of mountains. Students will engage in multiple ways with both types of stories--through listening, analyzing, illustrating, telling (the story), and comparing. A collaboration between the classroom and library, this unit includes extension activities in the art classroom and sets the stage for a connected writing project. Students engage with local native culture and history and are encouraged to nurture a deeper respect for traditional tales. A "Read and Analyze Nonfiction Chart" is used to scaffold a mini-research process, allowing students to confirm their prior knowledge and uncover misconceptions.

¹In her publicly available essay, "[The Geology and Cultural History of the Beaver Hill Story](#)", Marge Bruchac (Abenaki) explains the significance and characteristics of deep-time stories, particularly those with an "earthshaper motif": "Native stories in this genre describe, in metaphorical terms, using human, super-human, and non-human characters, how ancient geological events reshaped the landscape, forming mountains, rivers, lakes, islands and rocky outcroppings. Many of these stories also describe species evolution and climate change. Native oral narratives about the landscape formed part of a larger body of knowledge that enabled Native people to efficiently hunt, fish, gather and plant, make climate predictions, practice ethnobotany, and situate homesites in the best locations."

Desired Results/Objectives

1. Essential Questions/Historical Questions:

What are the different ways that we explain the world around us? Why is a particular place important?

2. Objectives: By the end of this project what will students know, understand and be able to do?

Students will know...

- How fault-block mountains are formed geologically.
- The Pocumtuck deep-time story of Wequamps, Beaver-tail Hill (Mount Sugarloaf).

Students will understand...

- That different people have different ways of seeing and explaining the world around them.
- The importance and usefulness of oral storytelling.

Students will be able to...

- Participate in the retelling of one story about how a mountain was formed.
- Compare and contrast deeptime stories (traditional tales) with scientific narratives.

3. Curriculum Standards (National, State, Local):

Mass. DOE Reading Standards for Literature: Grade 2:

Key Ideas and Details:

1. Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
2. Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.
3. Describe how characters in a story respond to major events and challenges.

Craft and Structure:

5. Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas:

7. Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

9. Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story (e.g., Cinderella stories) by different authors or from different cultures.

Mass. DOE Speaking and Listening Standards: Grade 2

1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about grade 2 topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).

b. Build on others' talk in conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others.

c. Ask for clarification and further explanation as needed about the topics and texts under discussion.

2. Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.

3. Ask and answer questions about what a speaker says in order to clarify comprehension, gather additional information, or deepen understanding of a topic or issue.

4. Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking audibly in coherent sentences.

4. Transfer Goal:

Students will understand that different viewpoints and ways of seeing the world are all valid. They will foster a deeper sense of place through history and story telling.

Assessment/Evidence

Performance Task or Assessment used to gauge student learning: (Please describe)

- Retell a portion of one story.
- Identify a place that is important to you.
- Graphic Organizer filled out with differences and similarities between Scientific Explanations and Deep-time Stories/Traditional Tales.

Pre-Assessment: RAN Chart will be used to facilitate and document a group discussion of “What we think we know” about how mountains are formed and about Native American deeptime stories (traditional tales).

Formative Assessment:

- Observation of student participation and observations during read-alouds as questions are asked of them, and they ask questions.
- On-going use of the RAN Chart to facilitate and document discussions of what knowledge we have ‘confirmed’, what ‘misconceptions’ we have uncovered, our ‘wanderings’, and what we’ve ‘learned’.

Other Assessment Evidence: n/a

Learning Plan

Lesson Summaries:

Lesson 1: Introduction of RAN chart and reading of first Deeptime Story

Lesson 2: Deeptime Story reading and chunking story into seven parts

Lesson 3: Reading of scientific text, chunking into seven parts, and further filling in of RAN chart

Lesson 4: Identifying similarities and differences between scientific text and Deeptime story

Lesson 5: Retelling of Deeptime story and scientific ‘story’ of mountains.

Learning Activity Details:

LESSON 1: UNIT INTRO & DEEPTIME STORY #1

Materials/Resources Tools:

- Blank RAN Chart
- Joseph Bruchac's "The Earth on Turtle's Back" from *Keepers of Earth*
- "The Earth on Turtle's Back" images projected

Instructional Tips/Strategies/Suggestions:

- Activate prior knowledge
- Read and make predictions
- Visual Thinking Strategies

Historical Question/Essential Question: How are mountains formed? How can we use stories to understand the world around us? What places are important to me?

Lesson 1 Details

Lesson Openings

Unit Introduction: Teacher and Librarian verbally introduce the unit, goals, schedule and timeline for the unit. We will be exploring how landforms are created through various types of stories (traditional stories and scientific stories).

Introduce RAN CHART: Teacher and Librarian introduce the RAN CHART as a way that we will track and record our learning throughout the unit.

Students are asked to answer the question, "How are mountains formed?". Teacher or Librarian fill out the "Prior Knowledge" column on the RAN CHART based on student input. Emphasize that we, as a class, will be using stories to "Confirm" what we know or to learn about our misconceptions. Teacher or Librarian do not need to *correct* student input.

Students are asked to answer the question, "What is a Native American traditional tale or deep-time story?". Teacher or Librarian fill out the "Prior Knowledge" column on the RAN chart based on student input. Emphasize that we, as a class, will be using stories to "Confirm" what we know or to learn about our misconceptions. Teacher or Librarian do not need to *correct* student input.

Students are asked what questions have come up while listening to their classmates. These are recorded under the “Wonderings” column of the RAN CHART.

During the Lesson: Read “The Earth on Turtle’s Back”

The focus of this lesson is one deeptime story. Teacher and Librarian define deep-time story and give some background on the story.

Teacher or Librarian read the story, encouraging students to make predictions:

- What do we think will happen in this deeptime story based on the projected images?
- Why is the wife’s dream important?
- What do you think will happen with the seeds?

Lesson Closing

Teacher and Librarian ask students if we have confirmed anything that we know about how mountains are formed or what deep-time stories are. This is noted in the “Confirmed” column on the RAN CHART. Based on our reading, what do we know about:

- Who tells or writes the story
- Where do they get their knowledge

Teacher and Librarian also ask students if we have uncovered any “Misconceptions” and note these in the RAN CHART.

Teacher and Librarian remind students that deeptime stories are about places that are important to native cultures who have lived here, where we are, for thousands of years. We all have places that are important to us because we have fun at these places, we get our food from them, etc.

In this deeptime story, we learn about how the Earth came to be. What is important to the people in the story?

Teacher and Librarian ask students to close their eyes and think of a place that is important to them. A few students can share with the group what they see.

LESSON 2 - DEEPTIME STORY #2: Beaver-tail Hill

Materials/Resources Tools:

- Images from [Amiskwôlowôkoiak - the People of the Beaver-tail Hill \(text transcript link\)](#)
- Audio recordings of Marge Bruchac (Abenaki) telling [Wôbanakiak: Amiskwôlowôkoiak – the People of the Beaver-tail Hill](#) (duration: 5:26 minutes)

- Image of [Marge Bruchac](#), Abenaki story-teller

Instructional Tips/Strategies/Suggestions:

- Using context clues to decipher meaning
- Re-"read" for deeper understandings
- Synthesize readings to form new learning and challenge misconceptions
- Summarize and sequence
- Practice classroom procedures and collaborative skills for large group discussions
- Demonstrate learning verbally and through drawing

Historical Question/Essential Question: How do traditional tales explain the creation of landforms? What places are important to me?

Lesson 2 Details

Lesson Opening: A picture of [Marge Bruchac](#) is projected.

Students are asked to sit quietly in a circle so that we can listen to an Abenaki storyteller, Marge Bruchac (who lives in Northampton part of the year), tell the story of how Mount Sugarloaf is formed. We will listen to this story multiple times, and you can close your eyes if you want to.

Play [recording](#) for the first time.

During the Lesson

Teacher reviews vocabulary that we heard in the story:

- awaasak - animals
- Quinneticook - Connecticut
- abaziak - trees
- Pocumtuck - Indians who were living near what is now Deerfield when English settlers moved to western Massachusetts
- amiskw - beaver
- councilled - had a meeting to discuss
- Obbamakwa - shape-maker, or one who moves the earth around
- Wequamps - Indian name for Mt. Sugarloaf
- Amiskwôlowôkoiak - people of Beaver-tail Hill

Teacher asks students to verbally recall the important things that happened (key actions) in the story.

Teacher projects images from [Amiskwôlowôkoiaik - the People of the Beaver-tail Hill](#) and replays the recording.

As a group, we verbally outline the action in the story using 7 frames, and the Teacher writes these up on 7 pieces of butcher paper.

Lesson Closing

Teacher and Librarian ask students if we have confirmed anything that we know about how mountains are formed. This is noted in the “Confirmed” column on the RAN chart.

Teacher and Librarian also ask students if we have uncovered any “Misconceptions” and note these in the RAN CHART.

Teacher and Librarian remind students that deep-time stories are about places that are important to native cultures who have lived here, where we are, for thousands of years. We all have places that are important to us because we have fun at these places, we get our food from them, etc.

In this story, why might Wequamps (Mount Sugarloaf) be important to the Pocumtuck?

Teacher and Librarian ask students to close their eyes and think of a place that is important to them. A few students can share with the group what they see.

Students are told that they will be illustrating the story frames in art class this week.

LESSON 3 - Geology of Mountains

Materials/Resources Tools:

- Seymour Simon's *Mountains*
- Group RAN chart
- Chunking paper-chart or large construction paper
- Class set of blank graphic organizers
- Class set of paper for use with p. 8, *Mountains*
- 10 sets of 4 chunks each of different colored clay (see YouTube activity)
- Canola oil
- Yogurt cups or other containers for oil-can use small amount per pair of students

Instructional Tips/Strategies/Suggestions:

- Using context clues to decipher meaning
- Re-“read” for deeper understandings

- Synthesize readings to form new learning and challenge misconceptions
- Summarize and sequence
- Practice classroom procedures and collaborative skills for large group discussions
- Demonstrate learning verbally, through drawing, and through writing
- Organize thinking in order to compare and contrast
- Make sure no students have allergies to canola oil before doing activity

Historical Question/Essential Question: How are fault-block mountains formed? How do we tell stories? What places are important to me?

Lesson 3 Details

Lesson Opening
<p>Teacher reviews RAN Chart as reminder of how we filled it out in previous lessons. Teacher introduces <i>Mountains</i> by asking students how they think it will differ from or be the same as the Deeptime Story:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who tells or writes the story ● Where do they get their knowledge
<p>Introduce vocabulary words that students might not know. Ask if students know and can tell other students. Give a heads-up that we will listen for these words and attempt to define using contextual clues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fault-block mountain: formed above fault when one plate shifts and huge blocks of rock rise or fall ● Fault: spots on Earth where two tectonic plates or large rocks collide or slide against each other
During the Lesson
<p>Read pp. 8, 10, and 12 of Seymour Simon's <i>Mountains</i>. (Pages are not numbered so teacher will need to count out.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have students do activity with piece of paper on p. 10. (Hold a piece of paper at either end and slowly push towards the middle until it buckles, demonstrating the pressure that builds and pushes mountains up in the Earth's crust.)
<p>Teacher will show Fault Block Mountains video, (disregard last 20 seconds of video) and then lead students in performing the activity.</p>
Lesson Closing
<p>As a group, verbally outline the action in the story using 7 frames, and the Teacher</p>

writes these up on 7 pieces of butcher paper.

Teacher and Librarian ask students if we have confirmed anything that we know about how mountains are formed. This is noted in the “Confirmed” column on the RAN chart.

Teacher and Librarian also ask students if we have uncovered any “Misconceptions” and note these in the RAN CHART.

Teacher and Librarian ask students to close their eyes and think of a place that is important to them. A few students can share with the group what they see. Students are told that they will be illustrating the story frames in art class this week.

LESSON 4 – Comparing and Contrasting

Materials/Resources Tools:

- Group RAN chart
- Class set of blank graphic organizers

Instructional Tips/Strategies/Suggestions:

- Synthesize readings to form new learning and challenge misconceptions
- Practice classroom procedures and collaborative skills for large group discussions
- Organize thinking in order to compare and contrast

Historical Question/Essential Question: How are Deeptime stories and scientific explanations of landforms similar or different? How do we tell stories? What places are important to me?

Lesson 4 Details

Lesson Opening

Discuss how the two stories, scientific and Wequamps, are similar and different so that students can fill out their graphic organizers.

(Teacher should make sure that some version of similarities/differences from below are included in the RAN.)

Similarities:

- mountain/landform/natural phenomena is a big part of the story (main

character?)

- they both tell how the landform/phenomena got there
- both stories have an end 'product'

Differences:

- mountains/landforms/natural phenomena (like thunder) are animals or beings who talk
- people have a part in the Deeptime creation of the landform
- there is a 'shaper', god, or creator who 'makes' the landform

Teacher will help students find one or two similarities and differences on the RAN chart to start them off. Teacher will model circling one or two similarities (in orange) or differences (in green) as an example for filling out their graphic organizers.

During the Lesson

Introduce graphic organizers that students will fill out.

Students fill out their individual graphic organizers.

Lesson Closing

Tell students we will be retelling our two stories; Deeptime and scientific explanation. Ask for a show of hands to see if half of the students gravitate towards the scientific retelling and half want to retell the Deeptime story. If not, let them know that we will randomly draw students for each group for our next meeting.

Lesson 5: Retelling

Materials/Resources Tools:

- Audio recordings of Marge Bruchac (Abenaki) telling [Wôbanakiak: Amiskwôlowôkoiak – the People of the Beaver-tail Hill](#) (duration: 5:26 minutes)
- Seymour Simon's *Mountains*
- 7 chunks of Deeptime story on large paper and 7 chunks of scientific telling on large paper (written out in previous lessons)

Instructional Tips/Strategies/Suggestions:

- Using classroom procedures to facilitate collaboration

Historical Question/Essential Question: How do we tell stories? What places are important to me?

Lesson 5 Details

Lesson Opening

Model storytelling with another Bruchac story from *Keepers of the Earth*. "What are the characteristics of a good storyteller?"

During the Lesson

Break students into two groups. (Teacher and librarian lead the separate groups.) One group will retell the scientific explanation and one group will retell the Deeptime Story.

Pass out chunks (7 pieces of large paper) of each story to the respective groups, and use classroom collaboration procedures to decide who will retell which section.

In pairs, students will practice telling their section of the story and giving feedback to their peers.

As a group, practice telling the "full" story.

Lesson Closing

The two groups will perform their stories for the rest of the class.

Closing group discussion: What did we learn about telling stories out loud? What did we learn about why places are important to different people?

Materials and Sources Used

What primary source(s) is/are being used (full citation)? Please annotate each source.

Bruchac, Marge. "Wôbanakiak: Amiskwôlowôkoiak – the People of the Beaver-tail Hill."

Voices & Songs: Creation Stories. *Raid on Deerfield: The Many Stories of 1704*.

Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, 2004. Web. 20 July 2015.

<<http://1704.deerfield.history.museum/voices/stories.do>>.

From here, you can download and play recordings of Marge Bruchac (Abenaki) telling the Pocumtuck deep-time story of Beaver-Tail Hill.

Caduto, Michael J., Joseph Bruchac, Ka-Hon-Hes, and Carol Wood. "The Earth on Turtle's

Back." *Keepers of the Earth: Native American Stories and Environmental Activities for Children*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum, 1988. 24-26. Print.

A collaboration between native and non-native culture-makers, this book provides a broad collection of native traditional tales, extensive background information, and activity ideas for connecting to the tales in ways that honor the traditional meanings. Because this creation story is based on oral tradition and written/re-told by a member of the community from which it comes, we consider it a primary source.

What secondary sources are being used (full citation)? Please annotate each source.

Bruchac, Marge. "The Geology and Cultural History of the Beaver Hill Story." *Raid on*

Deerfield: The Many Stories of 1704. Pocumtuck Valley Memorial Association, 2004.

Web. 20 July 2015.

<http://1704.deerfield.history.museum/voices/transcripts/wob_creation_essay.html>

Marge Bruchac (Abenaki) is a storyteller who provides background information on the relationship between geology and deep-time stories in this essay.

Colleen and Stacey. "Read & Analyze Nonfiction Text with the Rungs of Reading!" *Adventures*

in Literacy Land: Read & Analyze Nonfiction Text with the Rungs of Reading!

Adventures in Literacy Land, 19 Jan. 2014. Web. 20 July 2015.

<<http://www.adventuresinliteracyland.com/2014/01/read-analyze-nonfiction-text-with-rungs.html>>.

Our NEH Institute 2015 colleague, Michelle Parrish, shared this gem with us. Similar to a KWL chart, the RAN chart, allows students to activate prior knowledge, but also encourages them through a research and learning process whereby their knowledge is

"confirmed", "new learning" can occur, and "misconceptions" are revealed.

Fault Block Mountains. Dir. Lindy Sims. Perf. Lindy Sims. *YouTube*. YouTube, 2 Nov. 2013.

Web. 23 July 2015.

This video demonstrates how to create a representation of a fault block mountain out of clay. After watching the video, students will perform the activity to reinforce understanding of how some mountains are formed.

Mackiewicz, Diana T. "Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island." NEH: Indigenous Peoples of Turtle

Island/Abenaki and Pocumtuck. NEH Summer Institute *Native Americans of New*

England: A Historical Overview, Aug. 2013. Web. 20 July 2015.

<<http://researchdtmack.com/abenakipocumtuck.html>>.

Created by an educator and former NEH scholar, this site provides background information and further lesson ideas particularly relevant to the deep-time story about Beaver -Tail Hill. Other resources, such as interactive maps, are compiled here.

Simon, Seymour. *Mountains*. New York: Mulberry, 1997. Print.

What other curricular materials do you plan to use to support the curricular project?

- Graphic organizer - compare and contrast deeptime and geology stories.

Reflection

After teaching the lessons, what suggestions do you have for other teachers who might use this curricular project?

Next step: Writer's workshop focusing on writing our own personal, sacred place folktales.