

AMERICAN INDIAN HISTORY, CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

Curriculum Framework

Oral Tradition

LESSON PLAN MODELS

Primary

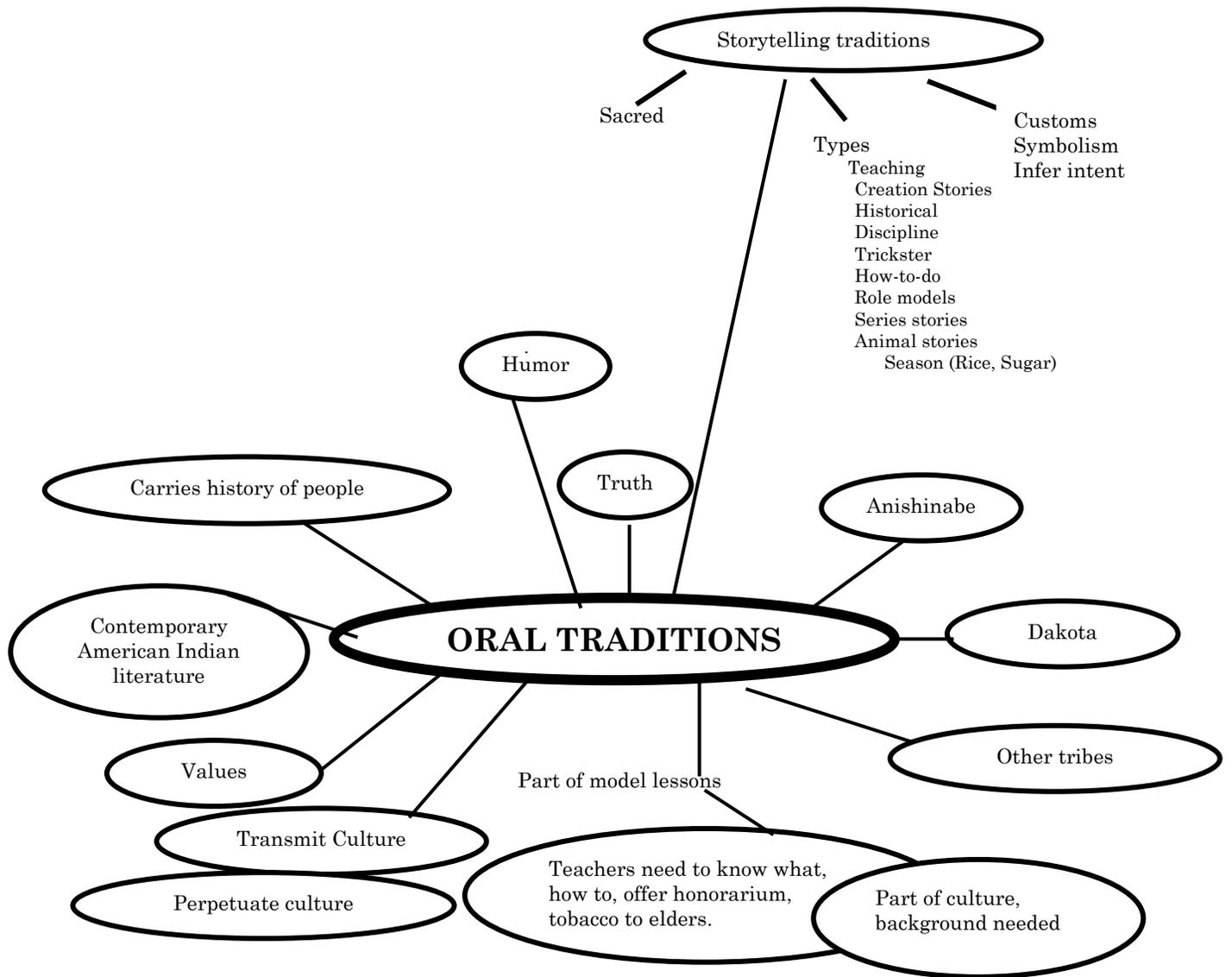
Intermediate

Middle School

Senior High

Office of Indian Education
Minnesota Department of Education
1500 Highway 36 West
Roseville, MN 55113-4266

651-582-8831



LEARNER OUTCOME

Students will be able to summarize and explain the significance of American Indian **oral tradition** in the perpetuation of culture and history.

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ATTRIBUTES

This outcome includes:

- defining American Indian oral tradition.
- knowing the types of traditional stories.
- understanding that values, humor, truth and history are transmitted through oral tradition.
- identifying and investigating contemporary American Indian literature.
- knowing the role of elders in transmitting the culture.
- respecting the proper time for storytelling and the offering of tobacco to the storyteller.
- recognizing oral tradition as one classification in the study of language arts.
- comprehending, interpreting and evaluating information received

through the refinement of listening.

RATIONALE

American Indian oral tradition and teachings are used to transmit culture and preserve the history of American Indians. The study of American Indian oral tradition will assist students in understanding the culture and recognizing the importance of oral history.

CULTURAL CONTENT/AMERICAN INDIAN WORLD VIEW

American Indian oral traditions, which include storytelling, teachings, family and tribal history as well as contemporary Indian literature, lie at the heart of tribal culture. It is largely through oral tradition that American Indian cultures have been preserved and transmitted through the generations.

American Indian stories, teachings and oral histories are rich in cultural context. They provide great insight into the worldview, values and lifestyle which are an integral part of the heritage of American Indians.

For American Indians, the oral traditions must be treated with respect. Many of the stories are seasonal. Most often, the winter months are the season for stories.

For the Dakota it is believed that the time to tell sacred stories is when snakes and other animals that hibernate underground are covered with snow. Their spirits, if above ground, would use the sacred knowledge against the storyteller. For the Anishinabeg, the belief may differ from area to area, but the practice is similar. Sacred stories, particularly those about Nanabozho (Manabozho or Manabush) are to be told only in the winter. Other stories can be told throughout the year. If possible, elders in the community should be consulted regarding timing and customs for specific stories.

It is customary on the part of one who requests a specific story to offer tobacco or some other gift to the storyteller. The storyteller uses tobacco to show respect for the spirits who live in the stories and whose names are mentioned.

The stories passed down to American Indians by their ancestors are very important because they express what American Indians value and believe. In addition, the stories help people to understand the meaning of their existence, and the existence of other things in the world. From these stories, young children learn how people came to be; they receive explanations of why things are the way they are and instructions on how to live properly.

TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

American Indian oral tradition includes stories and teachings, family and tribal history, and some contemporary Indian literature. Oral tradition has been and continues to be a primary means through which American Indian philosophy, values, beliefs and culture are transmitted to future generations.

In recent years, some of the stories and teachings have been put in a written form. Many of the stories have been edited and adapted to suit the tastes of an American Indian storyteller and a non-Indian audience. Colorful illustrated American Indian stories for children are available at most major bookstores and children's libraries. Rendered in English, and written down, the stories sometimes lose some of the original humor and meaning.

American Indian stories should not be trivialized by referring to them as myths, tall tales or fables. These categories prevent students from fully understanding the vital role played by oral tradition in American Indian cultures. History is not trivialized in this way and American Indian teachings deserve the same respect.

American Indian oral tradition expresses the truths, wisdom and humor of human existence. The themes are universal. Oral tradition tells how the Earth was created. It explains that people have a special responsibility to all living things with whom we share the Earth. Many of the stories are about a person with both human and mystical characteristics. The Dakota call the sometimes hero sometimes trickster, Unktomi. To the Anishinabeg he is Waynabozho (Nanabozho, Nanabush, Manabozho). Through his actions American Indian children for generations have learned how to behave and have learned what is expected of them as adults. There is much for all students to learn from the oral traditions of American Indians.

Note: Teachers in schools sometimes refer to American Indian stories or teachings as *myths* and *legends*. *Myth*, *fable* and *legend* often mean an old story or a story that is not true. To avoid the problems that these words can create and to provide consistency, these lessons use the term *story* or *teaching*.

PRIMARY LESSON-ORAL TRADITION

1. DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKPOINT

Primary students demonstrate through discussions and activities that they recognize and understand the meaning of oral tradition. **Primary students** also demonstrate an understanding of the importance of American Indian oral tradition in the transmission of culture.

OUTCOME INDICATORS

- Evaluation of oral reports on personal/family oral tradition.
- Evaluation of discussion of story told to students.

CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

Language Arts, Communication

LESSON OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

- research personal/family oral tradition.
- show interest in American Indian stories by listening respectfully to storytellers.
- state why some American Indians believe that winter is the season when stories should be told.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

1. Introduce the concept of oral tradition by asking students to collect stories that family members have shared with them at family gatherings.

Possible choices for students:

“What was I like when I was younger?”

“Funny things that happened when I was small.”

“Embarrassing moments they never forgot!”

2. Students share their stories orally in small groups.
3. Each group decides on one or two stories to tell the large group and selects storytellers other than the original ones to retell the stories.
4. Storytellers rehearse their stories with the owners of the stories who will monitor the accuracy of the retelling.
5. When applicable ask students to infer what lessons might have been learned from the experience recalled.
6. Review and reinforce the meaning of “oral tradition.”
7. Tell Ojibwe and Dakota stories such as “Manabozho and the Cranberries” and “A Very Short Tale.”
8. Encourage students to infer lessons taught by the stories.

A Very Short Tale (Dakota)

One day, Keha (Keya), the turtle, and Gnaske (Hnaske), the frog, were sitting by the lake talking about the weather. Suddenly, it began to rain. Now, our friend the turtle was very much afraid of getting wet and catching a cold. He told this to his companion, who suggested that they take shelter immediately. And with that, they both jumped into the lake. That is all.

-- *American Indian Oral Traditions: Dakota and Ojibwe*
St. Paul Public Schools

Discussion Questions:

1. Who is Gnakse (Hnaska)?
2. What was the turtle's name?
3. Who was afraid of getting wet?
4. Where did they go to stay out of the rain?
5. Do you think that they chose a good place? Why?
6. What tribe of American Indian people told this story?
7. Can you think of a lesson or point this story might have?

Manabozho and the Cranberries (Ojibwe)

One day Manabozho was walking along the edge of a lake. There was no wind and so the water was very clear and smooth as glass. In fact, it was just like a mirror. When he looked in the water, Manabozho saw some cranberries that looked plump and just right for picking. He thought of how hungry he was and said, "Those look good! I'm going to pick them and eat all that I want!"

Manabozho reached for the berries. He didn't see that it was just water. He fell and hit his head on a rock. When Manabozho managed to scramble out of the water, he was crying and rubbing the sore spot on his head. As he sat on the shore waiting for his clothes to dry, he happened to turn his head and spotted some cranberry bushes above him. Only then did he realize that he had been reaching for their reflection.

-- *American Indian Oral Traditions: Dakota and Ojibwe*
St. Paul Public Schools

Discussion Questions:

- Why was the lake so smooth?
- What did Manabozho see in the lake?
- What happened when he tried to pick the cranberries?
- What did Manabozho really see in the water?
- Has anything like this ever happened to you? Have you ever been fooled by a reflection? in a lake? in a mirror or window?
- What lesson does this story teach?
- What tribe of American Indian people told this story?

ASSESSMENT TASKS

- Present oral reports on personal/family oral traditions.
- Participate in discussion on American Indian stories.

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

- Students illustrate their own stories to be shared with the class.
- Students listen to stories told by other tribes.
- Invite storytellers into the classroom to share stories.

LINKAGES

History

INTERMEDIATE LESSON-ORAL TRADITION

2. DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKPOINT

Intermediate students understand the concept of oral tradition and exhibit listening and retelling skills applied to American Indian stories.

OUTCOME INDICATORS

- Evaluation of retelling of story
- Checklist for responses in discussions of stories

CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

Language Arts, Communication

LESSON OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

- demonstrate listening skills as a story is told.
- demonstrate retelling skills in repeating a story they have heard.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

1. Students read the biographical notes on Elsie M. Cavender.
2. Discuss key points in her life.
3. Review and define *oral tradition*.
4. Tell or read “Wakuwa Etipi – Camping Out” by Elsie M. Cavender, who was an Elder in the Upper Sioux Community.
5. Distribute a section of story to pairs of students.
6. Assign the role of “cuer” and reteller. Distribute the matching cued retelling sheet to the “cuer” in each pair.
7. After reading, the “cuer” asks the reteller to tell everything s/he can remember from the reading. (This is the free retelling). As the reteller mentions ideas and events, the cuer puts a check mark in the Free Retelling column by those items. When the reteller finishes, the cuer should ask, “Is there anything else you can remember?” The teacher may want to role-play this activity with another teacher or student before the students begin. The “cuer” now gives cues and checks off the items that the reteller is able to elaborate on with the help of this prompting.
8. The partners may now retell their part of the story for the whole group making sure the retelling is in proper sequence.

RESOURCE LIST

Elementary

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Schommer, Carolynn. *Unktomi and the Ducks: A Dakota Legend*. Minneapolis Public Schools, 1978.

Treuer, Anton. *Living Our Language: Ojibwe Tales and Oral History*. MN Historical Society Press, 2001

Weyaus, Susan. *The Legend of the Owl*. Minneapolis Public Schools, 1977.
Waynaboozho and the Geese. Minneapolis Public Schools, 1978.

Video: Lacy, Lyn. "Stereotypes in Children's Books." Minneapolis Public Schools.

ASSESSMENT TASKS

Retell story to partners and to larger group.

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITY

- Tape-record a series of stories to be used at other grade levels. Select appropriate music for introduction and ending.
- Create cue sheets for retelling additional stories.
- Students retell stories to other classrooms.
- Invite Elder or community member into the classroom to share their stories or teachings,

LINKAGES

Social Studies, History

“Wakuwa Etipi – Camping Out”

PART 1

**FREE
RETELLING**

**CUED
RETELLING**

details of camping and trapping trip

form of transportation

supplies

details regarding dogs

“Wakuwa Etipi – Camping Out”

PART 2

**FREE
RETELLING**

**CUED
RETELLING**

first camp

second camp

food supplies

Sisseton

Grandpa’s land

snow, weather

“Wakuwa Etipi – Camping Out”

PART 3

**FREE
RETELLING**

**CUED
RETELLING**

home: canvas, straw bales, carpet

stove, pipe, blankets, quilts

“Wakuwa Etipi – Camping Out”

PART 4

**FREE
RETELLING**

**CUED
RETELLING**

		purpose of tipi
		Grandpa
		Grandma
		breakfast
		farmer and his wife

“Wakuwa Etipi – Camping Out”

PART 5

**FREE
RETELLING**

**CUED
RETELLING**

		Grandma’s work
		meals
		sewing, mending
		hides
		description of Grandma

“Wakuwa Etipi – Camping Out”

PART 6

**FREE
RETELLING**

**CUED
RETELLING**

		hominy soup
		hole in the ice
		water

“Wakuwa Etipi – Camping Out”
PART 7

FREE RETELLING	CUED RETELLING	
		supper
		small game
		Grandma’s work
		marten/ptan

“Wakuwa Etipi – Camping Out”
PART 8

FREE RETELLING	CUED RETELLING	
		Grandma’s work
		Grandpa’s work
		dried skins and pelts

“Wakuwa Etipi – Camping Out”
PART 9

FREE RETELLING	CUED RETELLING	
		bread
		fence
		cast-iron pot
		open fire
		timer
		jams, jellies, butter

“Wakuwa Etipi – Camping Out”

PART 10

FREE RETELLING	CUED RETELLING	
		prairie chickens
		preparing chickens
		midnight supper
		opinion on Grandma’s food

“Wakuwa Etipi – Camping Out”

PART 11

FREE RETELLING	CUED RETELLING	
		day time
		evenings
		Grandpa’s stories
		special effects

“Wakuwa Etipi – Camping Out”

PART 12

FREE RETELLING	CUED RETELLING	
		Grandpa is late
		worries
		English
		wish

“Wakuwa Etipi – Camping Out”

PART 13

**FREE
RETELLING**

**CUED
RETELLING**

		Grandpa’s gift
		Grandpa’s load
		reason for gift
		what happened to gift

“Wakuwa Etipi – Camping Out”

PART 14

**FREE
RETELLING**

**CUED
RETELLING**

		end of camping trip
		Thanksgiving
		reasons to go home
		selling pelts
		Granite Falls
		opinion of Grandparents

WAKUWA ETIPI – CAMPING OUT

By Elsie M. Cavender, Dakota Elder Upper Sioux Community
Granite Falls, Minnesota

From: “Collection of Legends and Stories”
Prepared for Dakota Project by Elitta Gouge

Part 1

I was seven years old when Grandpa and Grandma Roberts took me with them on a camping and trapping trip. For about five weeks from the latter part of October to three days before Thanksgiving, we camped at a place called Dry Wood Lake, 15 miles west of Sisseton, South Dakota.

Our form of transportation was a two-horse drawn, two-seated buggy, without the back seat; it held everything that was needed for the camp. My grandparents were very organized in their packing and very seldom forgot anything. When something was forgotten, additional supplies were obtained near our destination.

Grandpa's three dogs joined us on this trip, but since we traveled at a slow, steady pace, the three animals had no problem keeping up with the horses. Naturally, all three had Dakota names: Ohitika (which means fierce, terrible, brave); Kado (which I believe means the diamond in playing cards); and Siyo (prairie chicken). Siyo (she-yo) was a good bird dog and the other two were good hunting dogs. They made good companions and Grandpa liked to use them when he hunted the birds and animals that helped supply the necessary food.

Part 2

On the first evening, camping was set up at Appleton, Minnesota. There were non-Indian friends there who were used to seeing Dakota campers. In the past it had been a favorite place to camp and dig for wild turnips, or tipsinna, as we call it. Our second camp was at Goodwill on the Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Reservation, which is where some of the relatives lived. While we were there, Grandpa and Grandma had a good time visiting, and we all enjoyed their hospitality.

The next day was spent in Sisseton purchasing the necessary food supplies: flour, potatoes, beans, rice, coffee, a slab of bacon, several cuts of beef, tea, lard and eggs. Of course, they also bought candy and fruit, especially for me! Since we were to camp by the farmer who rented Grandpa's land, there would be more meat and milk products available from him when needed. We left Sisseton as soon as possible so that we would be settled at the campsite before nightfall. Grandpa owned 40 acres of timberland and another 120 acres of farmland which he rented to a non-Indian farmer. It was close to his farm that we were to camp, near a small lake. When we arrived at the campsite, already there was a light covering of snow on the land and it was cold. During our five weeks of camping, two additional snowstorms came up and left a good amount of snow; yet we were comfortable and cozy. I don't remember that I was ever cold.

Part 3

Grandpa had selected a sheltered spot and the first thing that went up was the canvas wall tent. Straw bales were picked up from the farmer and these were laid around the inner walls with some of the straw spread out on the floor, over which were placed heavy pieces of carpet. The bottom edges of the tent had flaps which were tucked under the bales and carpet pieces. This was to be our home and sleeping area.

To keep us warm, Grandpa had ordered a specially made, small, four-burner tin stove. He cut out a lined opening at the top of the canvas tent for the stovepipe. The stove kept us warm during those weeks, although at night we used the flannel blankets and heavy quilts that Grandma brought along.

Part 4

The next morning, the tipi that Grandma had made was put up. This was to be used for the skinning of the small game, the tanning of hides and the drying of the skins. When all of the work was finished and we were properly sheltered, Grandpa went off to start his trapping. Almost every day he went out, leaving the tent while it was still dark and usually not returning until well after dark in the evening. I was allowed to sleep in and by the time I woke up, only Grandma would be there. She made sure that I had a good breakfast; sometimes I would have eggs (boiled or fried), bacon, and potatoes. When Grandpa visited the farmer and his wife, he returned with jams and jellies along with milk, cream and butter. The farmer's wife said, "Take some for the little girl." So I enjoyed those things with my meal, except the milk, which I didn't drink.

Part 5

During the day, I followed Grandma around (if I wasn't playing) and watched or even helped her as she did her daily tasks. Grandma was a little woman, very spunky with strong principles. She always got up with Grandpa, made his breakfast and made sure that he ate before he left. While she waited for me to wake up, she did her sewing and mending. It must have been the only quiet time for her as she stitched or repaired moccasins for Grandpa, or made or repaired mittens, gloves and shirts. She always had my breakfast to serve, the dishes to wash, along with the clothes, the tent and tipi to keep clean. She also had the wood to gather and the fires to keep burning. In the tipi, she tanned and stretched hides and then smoked some of them by hanging the hides over the open fire. Most of the work in the tent and the tipi belonged to her and she was zealous in doing it.

Part 6

She took along a bag of her Indian corn and decided one day to make hominy soup. I went with her to the pond to wash the corn out. Grandpa had cut two holes in the ice, one for the horses to drink from and the other from which to dip out our drinking water. In the hole in the ice, I would see little minnows surface and I always wanted to catch a few to take back to the tent, but Grandma never allowed me to do that, for she said the minnows would die. The minute the hominy (which was made with oak wood ashes) was placed in the water, the minnows disappeared. "We drank the water and never got sick from it. There was nothing wrong with the water in those days." (1913)

Part 7

Grandma and I had supper by ourselves many times because Grandpa usually came in after dark. When he did return, he was always loaded down with small game – mink, raccoon, skunk, muskrats, even a weasel once and jack rabbits for eating. This meat Grandma would sometimes dry out on a line that she put up outside for that purpose. In the evenings, she always brought the meat back inside to keep it away from wolves and other animals that would come around. Grandpa even brought back marten once, which we call “ptan” in our language. I remember that the fur, which was a brownish-black color, was very soft to the touch. Since Grandpa always carried his gun along, there would even be a pheasant or two or some other kind of fowl that he would bring back for an evening meal. We never wanted for a variety of meats.

Part 8

Grandma’s real work started in the evening with that load of small game. While Grandpa went out to feed the horses and dogs, Grandma started her work. I asked her once, “Grandma, are you going to skin all of the animals?” I was really asking her if she was able to skin all of the animals. She replied confidently, “Yes, I am.” By the end of the evening she was finished. When Grandpa finished with the horses and dogs and had had his supper, he began making long triangle-shaped frames and nailed the skins onto the frames to dry in the tipi. On sunny days, Grandma took the frames of skins from the tipi out into the sun. In the evenings she again put them all inside. Grandpa ran out of pieces of wood that he brought along for his frames and the farmer gave him more material. Grandpa and Grandma worked together as a team, each

knowing exactly what to do, and they made the work seem easy. Later, those dried skins and pelts were neatly packed at the bottom of the wagon and sold on the way home.

Part 9

One afternoon, after Grandma had decided to bake bread, I walked with her a short distance to a fence. On the fence were vines from which she picked something that was used as the yeast for the bread. That evening she mixed this with a small amount of flour and other ingredients, and it was left to sit all night. By morning it was bubbling. Grandma then kneaded the dough with more flour, and left this by the fire until noon. Then she shaped her dough into biscuits and placed them into a cast-iron pot or dutch oven with a large overlapping cover. In the tipi at the open fire, she pushed aside the live coals and placed the pan in the cleared spot and then pushed back all the live coals over the pan, covering it completely. She had no timer but she knew exactly when to take the pan out. When she did, the bread was baked to near perfection. She also made loaves of bread and each time it came out the same way. The jams and jellies and butter from the farmer's wife made the bread even tastier!

Part 10

Grandpa returned one evening with two prairie chickens. Since there was so much work to do, Grandma decided to make an "oven supper" and let it cook while she got on with dressing the small game. She quickly removed the heads and entrails. Grandma took a mixture of water and brownish-yellowish clay or mud and coated the chickens with this, feathers and all. I asked her, "Grandma, are we going to eat that?" She assured me that it would be good eating even though, to me, it did not look too appetizing. The chickens were placed under the live coals and left there for several hours. Later that evening, when they had finished with all the work, we enjoyed a midnight supper. When the birds were removed from the coals the coating and feathers practically

fell from the meat, and underneath was deliciously browned. “I can’t remember ever eating any fowl since then that has tasted as good as that.” I learned to appreciate the food that was put before me, and I learned that what Grandma cooked, was always delicious.

Part 11

Being with Grandma all day, I was never lonesome. Yet, I was also glad when Grandpa returned. On the evenings when there was not quite so much to do, Grandpa would tell stories. He had a special way of imitating animal characters and changing his voice for each one. Sometimes, there were songs in the tales that he remembered as well, and he would sing as he told the story. These were very special times for me. I have been able to remember several of those tales but not with his special effects. That and many of his other stories are lost to me.

Part 12

On several evenings, Grandpa was late in returning to the tent. On those nights, I could tell that my grandmother worried about him. Later on, I thought about what would have happened to us if Grandpa had met with an accident of some kind; thankfully he did not. Grandma spoke no English, neither did I. I would have been no help to her if we had to go to the farmer and his wife. Grandpa spoke a little bit of English, enough for us to get along. He was able to take good care of me and my brother and sister. So could Grandma. They loved us very much. If I had my wish, all children would have grandparents like them.

Part 13

Grandpa showed me how special I was one evening as he came home carrying his pack of animals on his back. In one hand, he carried a gift, which he held out to me. He had cut a tripod of long slim branches from a small tree and in the crutch of the tripod was a little bird's nest made of grass, feathers and mud. He knew what bird had made it and told me, but it is information that I have long since forgotten. There's an expression from the non-Indians that I have heard, something about stopping to smell the roses. Grandpa stopped to admire the handiwork of a little creature and wanted me to do the same. Loaded down as he was, he still found the extra hand to carry back this miniature work of art. Of course I was delighted and pleased with the gift, so pleased in fact that I kept it until I was 18 years old. By that time it was so dry that it began to fall apart. When I threw it away, I told him about it, but he seemed not to remember. He was impressed when he learned that I had treasured my bird's nest for so many years. "That was the best gift I have every received!"

Part 14

As the skins and furs mounted up in the tipi, Grandpa and Grandma began to think about going home. The first blasts of winter came with two heavy snowstorms and they did not want to be caught in that area for the rest of the winter. Grandpa decided that we would go home in time for the Thanksgiving holiday, since they both were satisfied with the fruits of their labor.

On the return trip Grandpa sold his pelts to Burns and Sons in Appleton.

He had done business with them many times before and preferred to travel back that far to sell his pelts. They paid him about \$500 for his load, giving him \$100 in cash and a check for the balance which they put in the mail for him the same day. He picked that up in Granite Falls on the way home.

It was never my privilege to be with my grandparents again on such a trip. I cherish those times spent with my grandparents. They took good care of me; they loved me and always kept me clean. I was very happy and I loved their Dakota ways.

The Author:

Elsie M. Cavender was a Dakota elder and storyteller who preserved the oral history passed down from generation to generation. Cavender, a full-blooded Wahpeton Dakota, was the descendent of three Indian chiefs. She was born in the village of Pejihutazizi, now known as the Upper Sioux Agency. This is where she spent most of her life. She was raised by her grandparents John and Isabel Roberts. John Roberts' father was Inyang Mani, who signed the treaty of 1851 at Traverse de Sioux. Isabele Roberts' father was Mazomani, who signed the treaties of 1830 and 1858.

As a child, she listened to her grandfather, a Presbyterian lay leader for 50 years, tell stories about the U.S. – Dakota Conflict of 1862. This conflict was also known at one time as the Sioux Uprising. Several hundred white settlers, soldiers and Indians were killed as the conflict swept across southwestern Minnesota. In the end, 38 Indians were hanged and thousands of Dakotas and Winnebagos were subjected to banishment or bounties. In a 1987 interview marking the 125th anniversary of the conflict, Cavender recalled her grandmother weeping as she told of seeing her own grandmother stabbed to death by a soldier while on a forced march from Fort Snelling to South Dakota.

Cavender knew no English until she went away to Indian schools in Pipestone, Minnesota and Flandreau, South Dakota. When she died February 1, 1993 at age 86, she was one of fewer than three-dozen speakers of the Dakota language living in the four Dakota communities

in Minnesota. She helped historians identify Dakota elders and chiefs and translate American Indian names. As an oral historian, she passed along hundreds of stories to her children and grandchildren. Some have been recorded and eventually will be published.

- Information adapted from article in the February 3, 1993 edition of Minneapolis Star Tribune.

MIDDLE SCHOOL LESSON-ORAL TRADITION

3. DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKPOINT

Middle School students will have an awareness that the Anishinabeg have long understood that distinct plant and animal communities exist within the natural world; as well as having a sense of the balance or imbalance of those communities by the character they reflect. **Middle School students** will recognize that this knowledge is transmitted through American Indian oral tradition.

OUTCOME INDICATORS

- Written interpretation of “The Tree of Life” from *Ojibwe Heritage* and other readings relating to science concept of biomes
- Analysis of two selected biomes

CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

Science, Geography, Earth Science

LESSON OUTCOMES

Students will be able to:

- demonstrate an awareness of the scientific knowledge transmitted through American Indian oral traditions.
- compare/contrast two land biomes and state why they exist where they do in terms of climate, location and populations.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

1. Present readings from *Ojibwe Heritage*.
2. Present readings and discuss Ojibwe World View.
3. Locate on maps, view pictures and describe six major land biomes:
 - Tropical Rain Forest

- Deciduous Forests
- Grasslands
- Deserts
- Taiga (coniferous forests)
- Tundra

4. Conduct experiments such as:

“Why Do Trees Grow There?”

Construct a metal tent by folding a piece of sheet metal down the middle (see illustration). Chill it in the refrigerator for two to three hours. (Do not remove the tent from the refrigerator until the rest of the experiment is read!) Fill a teakettle with water. Heat the water in the teakettle over a hot plate or other burner. Place an electric fan on one side of the heating teakettle. When the water in the kettle begins to form steam, remove the sheet metal from the refrigerator and place it downwind from the fan and kettle. Turn the fan and direct the steam so that it passes up and over the “mountain.” Ask students to observe which side of the “mountain” is the driest. Which do they think would be more favorable for plant growth? Ask them to think of any mountain ranges where there are deserts or near-deserts on one side and lush vegetation on the other (Cascades, Olympics, Sierra Nevadas, Rockies).

On each side of the “mountain” fasten a thermometer. Take the “mountain” and thermometer out on the schoolground. Turn the “mountain” north and south, east and west, northwest and southeast and so forth, asking the students to record the sunny-side temperature and the shady-side temperature of each setting.

5. In what biome do the Anishinabeg of the United States predominately live?

Answers: Mostly deciduous forest (mixed with conifers)
 -use birch bark for a variety of things
 -determined game for food (white tail deer, rabbit, bear, wild rice, turkey, beaver, etc.)
 -use sugar maple as food source
 -use pine and cedar as medicine

6. How has the lifestyle of the Anishinabeg been affected by the biome they live in?

7. Discuss how factors such as climate and nearness to bodies of water affect land biomes and the communities within them.

8. Ask students to map out two land biomes they have chosen. Compare and contrast the biomes, stating why they exist where they do.

9. Ask students about the biomes in other parts of the country where friends

and family may reside.

VOCABULARY

tradition – teaching, beliefs, ceremonies, customs, practices.

biosphere – total region where life can exist on Earth (a thin layer of air, soil and water)

biome – an area that has its own weather patterns and unique communities

climate – yearly pattern of rainfall and temperature changes within an area

community – all animals and plants living within an area

deciduous – those trees and shrubs which shed their leaves to prevent water loss

taiga – a biome of the northern latitudes where conifers are the dominant plant

tundra – biome of northern latitudes characterized by long cold winters and short cool summers (grasses dominate)

desert – biome of temperate and tropical areas with less than 25 cm of annual rainfall

coniferous – cone bearing tree which has green leaves throughout the year

grassland – biome of the mid latitudes which has long hot summers and cold winters (grass dominate)

tropical rainforest – biome of tropics in which annual rainfall exceeds 200 cm

MATERIALS

Readings by Vine Deloria, Jr. and poem “The Tree of Life” by Basil Johnson

1 large piece of sheet metal

fan

teakettle

heating source for teakettle

refrigerator or pieces of ice

optional: two thermometers

ASSESSMENT TASKS

- Write interpretation of the readings relating American Indian oral tradition to concept of biomes.
- Compare/contrast two selected biomes in regard to climate, location and populations.

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITY

- Find additional examples of American Indian oral tradition and link to contemporary issues especially in regards to problem-solving.
- *Waterdrum Science: Science Through American Indian Arts and Culture* by Carolyn Petty (ISBN 0-9642898-0-6) includes many other activities that can be used to support this lesson.

LINKAGES

Ecology, Language Arts

--- Adapted from a lesson by Dawn Beard in *Infusing Ojibwe World View into Science Curriculum*,
Northwestern Wisconsin Project

STUDENT READINGS

The Anishinabeg have always respected and acknowledged the life-giving forces of Mother Earth. The Anishinabeg recognize that each plant as well as the community it lives within, has a particular spirit or character, which indicates to what extent a natural balance exists there. In addition, as one travels, the spirit or character of an area will change as the species and locations change. The Anishinabeg continue to honor the uniqueness and complexity of all Mother Earth.

“Away from the woods grew the sand cherries on little low shrubs. Around and over the sand hills [where] not a blade of grass grew, these bushes flourished, yielding a luscious fruit which we were very careful, in gathering. We picked this fruit only against the wind, for if we stood with our body odors going toward the fruit its flavor was destroyed.”... But what on earth would inspire anyone to look into the direction of the wind when picking fruit? The variance in rain, heat and other climatic factors would appear to be so much more important in determining the condition of the fruit that it would seem unlikely that anyone could isolate human body odor as the critical factor in the relationship. Yet the Sioux were able to identify this element from everything else that needed to be considered.

- Vine Deloria, Jr. “Relativity, Relatedness and Reality,” *Winds of Change*. Boulder, CO: American Indian Science and Engineering Society Publishing, Inc., Autumn 1992.

THE TREE OF LIFE

an excerpt from *Ojibway Heritage*, Basil Johnson

A tree images life
It grows
Unwell, it heals itself
Spent, it dies

A tree reflects
It changes
Altered, it restores itself
Ever to remain the
Same.

A tree gives life
It abides
It lends existence yet
Endures undiminished.

Trees give me everything
Serve all my needs
To the tree I can give nothing
Except my song of praise.

When I look upon a tree
I remember that
The apple tree can
Allay my hunger
The maple can
Slake my thirst
The pine can
Heal my wounds and cuts
The bark of birch can
Form my home, can
Mould my canoe and vessels
The tissue of birch can
Keep the images that I draw
The balsam groves can
Shield me from the winds
Fruit of the grapevine can
Lend color to my quills
The hickory can
Bend as my bow, while
The cherrywood provides
An arrow shaft.

The cedar ferns can
Cushion my body in sleep
The basswood can
Become my daughter's doll
The ash, as snowshoe, can
Carry me across the snows
The tobacco can
Transport my prayers to God
The sweetgrass can
Aromate my lodge
The roots of evergreen can
Bind my sleigh and craft
The stump and twig can
Warm my lodge
The rose and daisy can
Move the soul of woman
The leaves wind-blown can
Open my spirit

The elders said that Kitche Manitou created the world in a certain order; first, the physical world of sun, moon, earth and stars; second, the plant world of trees, flowers, grasses, and fruits.

Plants were therefore prior to animals and to the Anishinabeg. They could exist alone; they are not dependent upon other beings for their existence or well being.

In essence each plant being of whatever species was a composite being, possessing an incorporeal substance, its own unique soul-spirit. It was the vitalizing substance that gave to its physical form, growth and self-healing. The inner substance had a further power. It could conjoin with other members of its own species and, more wonderfully, with other species to form a corporate spirit.

Each valley or any other earth form – a meadow, a bay, a grove, a hill – possess a mood which reflects the state of being of that place. Whatever the mood, happy, peaceful, turbulent, or melancholy, it is the tone of that soul-spirit. As proof, destroy or alter or remove a portion of the plant beings, and the mood and tone of that valley will not be what it was

SENIOR HIGH LESSON-ORAL TRADITION

4. DEVELOPMENTAL CHECKPOINT

Senior High students through repeated examination of beliefs, values and customs recognize a philosophy of life. **Senior High students** interact in discussion groups sharing points of view.

OUTCOME INDICATOR

Portfolio

CURRICULUM INTEGRATION

Language Arts, Communication, Critical Reading

LESSON OUTCOMES

Students will:

- discover themes, patterns and interrelationships in the narrative *Night Flying Woman* by Ignatia Broker.
- participate in discussion groups to listen and share ideas.
- prepare portfolios.
- apply facts and ideas to real-life problems.

INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES

1. Present overview of lessons on *Night Flying Woman: An Ojibway Narrative*.
2. Distribute papers for portfolios:
 - “Getting Started, Discussion Responsibilities”
 - “Student Preparation Check List”
 - “Analysis Questions for Each Section of Book”
 - “Question Response”
 - “Discussion Evaluation”
 - “Personal Evaluation”
 - “Dramatization, Special Places, Philosophy of Life”
 - “Section Pyramid”
 - “Solve a Problem”
3. Assign individual reading of *Night Flying Woman* and distribute discussion questions for each section of book.
4. Organize class in discussion groups of 5 to 8 students per group. Select discussion leaders on a rotating basis.
5. Assign one or more sections for discussion per class period.
6. Students should prepare responses to questions for sections to be discussed.

Students refer to portfolio papers for guidance.

VOCABULARY

Students keep own lists in portfolios.

Refer to glossary at back of *Night Flying Woman* .

Note: The spelling **Ojibway** is used throughout *Night Flying Woman*.

MATERIALS

Student copies of *Night Flying Woman* by Ignatia Broker
(This book can also be purchased on tape for students who need extra support).
Notebook or cover for portfolios, guide sheets for portfolios
Questions for each section of book

RESOURCE LIST

A Long Time Ago is Just Like Today. Oral Narratives of Ojibwe Elders.
Duluth Public Schools Indian Education Program, 1976.

Anishinabe Literature Curriculum Unit. (Senior High) Includes oral traditions, current issues, biographies, modern Indian literature. Cass Lake Indian Education Program. Cass Lake, MN, Phone: (218) 335-2214.

Broker, Ignatia. *Night Flying Woman. An Ojibwe Narrative*. St. Paul: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1983.

Deloria, Ella C. *Dakota Texts*. Vermillion: Dakota Press, 1978. *Waterlily*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1988.

Dunn, A. and Humphrey, A. *Grandmother's Gift: Stories from the Anishinabeg*. Holy Cow! Press, 1997.

Dunn, A. and White S. *When Beaver was Very Great: Stories to Live By*. Midwest Traditions, Incorporated. 1995.

Eastman, Charles A. *Indian Boyhood, Wigwam Evenings, From Deep Woods to Civilization, The Soul of the Indian*. Greenwich, CT: Fawcett, Inc. 1972.

Kegg, Maude (John Nichols ed.) *Gabekanaansing: At the End of the Trail*. Memories of a Chippewa Childhood with texts in Ojibwe and English. Greeley: University of Northern Colorado, 1978.

National Geographic. "Origins – "Tewa Account" Vol. 180/No. 4, October 1991.

Neihardt, Hilda. *Black Elk and Flaming Rainbow*.

Rogers, John. Red World and White. *Memories of a Chippewa Boyhood*. Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1974.

Traditional Indian Stories. Selections from the Ojibwe, Hopi, and Cherokee Nations. A two week unit for Middle School and Jr. High students. Anoka-Hennepin Indian Education Program, 1992. Phone: (612) 422-5784.

Treuer, Anton. *Living Our Language: Ojibwe Tales and Oral History*. MN Historical Society Press, 2001

Vizenor, Gerald. *Anishinabe Adisokun: Tales of the People*. Minneapolis: Nokin Press, 1970.

Warren, William Whipple. *History of the Ojibway People*. Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1984.

Winaboozhoo Adisokan, Family Circles, Lac du Flambeau AODA Prevention Parenting Program, 450 Old Abe Rd., Lac Du Flambeau, WI 54538.

CD-ROM: "Culture and History of the White Earth Ojibwe" Mahnomen Public Schools, 1993. P.O. Box 319. Mahnomen, MN 56557, Phone: (218) 935-2211.

ASSESSMENT TASKS

- Complete the portfolio with emphasis on evaluation of responses to questions for each section of book and final paper on Philosophy of Life.

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITY

- Elaborate on one or more of the original sheets of the portfolio.
- Interview elders or community members concerning beliefs, values, and customs.
- Visit an area reservation owned museum.

LINKAGES

History, Sociology

GETTING STARTED

This study of a narrative is programmed by sections for study, discussion and activity. Since many of your activities are done in a small group, your responsibilities go beyond personal ones. The others will depend on you to do your best and be prepared.

You will need a loose-leaf notebook or cover to serve as a portfolio to organize your papers for this project.

Your teacher will present you with questions for each reading section. These are meant for guiding your reading and group discussion. Prepare answers on the Question Responses Form. Whenever you find a place in the narrative that would help you explain your direct answer to one of the questions, record page number, paragraph number, key words and a brief comment that will remind you of what you want to say in response to that particular question.

DISCUSSION RESPONSIBILITIES

Leader

1. Briefly review the narrative to date.
2. Read questions for discussion in turn.
3. Encourage courteous interaction of members.
4. Summarize group's response to each question.
5. Guide group evaluation of discussion period.
6. Select leader for following week.
7. Present brief report to teacher. Include members absent, general quality of discussion, name of following leader.

Group Members

1. Be prepared for discussion.
2. Back up statements with evidence from reading.
3. Listen attentively.
4. Add to idea presented or indicate agreement or courteous disagreement.
5. Respect the opinions of others.
6. Speak only one at a time.
7. Participate in a fair evaluation of the group's work.

DISCUSSION EVALUATION

	weak		strong
Member Preparation	0		10
Courtesy	0		10
Contributions from Everyone	0		10
Quality of Responses	0		10
Quantity of Responses	0		10

Comments: _____

Leader _____

Group Members _____

Date _____

Book _____

Section # _____ Pages _____

PERSONAL EVALUATION

Rank each item by deciding how well you met the standard. Place a mark on the scale to indicate your evaluation.

	weak		strong
Personal Interest	0		10
Preparation for Discussion	0		10
Participation in Discussion	0		10
Vocabulary Activity	0		10
Story Analysis Activity	0		10
Other Experiences	0		10

Comments: _____

3. What were some beliefs and values of the Anishinabeg (Ojibway)?
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Section 2. “Ni-bo-wi-se-gwe” pp. 13 - 24

1. What were Ojibway attitudes toward the strangers?
 2. What behaviors were taught to children and for what reasons? Tell how these behaviors were taught.
 3. List beliefs, values, customs of Ojibway.
-

Section 3. “Six Days’ Journey” pp. 27 - 37

1. What predictions did Oona make resulting from the coming of the strangers?
 2. What was the significance of the message Oona received from an elder?
 3. List beliefs, values, customs of Ojibway.
-

Section 4. “The Rainy Country” pp. 39 - 49

1. What changes were the Ojibway making because of the strangers?
 2. What were the Ojibway’s attitude toward the forest and the animals?
 3. What practices revealed beliefs and values?
-

Section 5. “Oona Dreams” pp. 51 - 61

1. What teachings did A-wa-sa-si relate to Oona?
 2. List the changes anticipated with the coming of the strangers.
 3. List the beliefs and values taught by A-wa-sa-si to Oona.
-

Section 6. “White Earth” pp. 63 - 74

1. Discuss Mother’s attitude toward the changes the strangers would force. Describe her reasoning.
 2. Describe the conflicts and hardships caused by the new ways.
 3. What beliefs and values were threatened by the new ways?
-

Section 7. “New Homes, Old Ways” pp. 77 -88

1. Describe Mother’s adapting of new ways.
 2. How will the old ways be kept?
 3. What values and beliefs did the Ojibway observe in the Agent’s wife?
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Section 8. “The New Ways” pp. 91 -101

1. What confusions and conflicts arise?
 2. Why is the mother of Oona so troubled?
 3. List the values and beliefs underlying the customs described.
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Section 9. “Oona Becomes a Woman” pp. 103 - 111

1. Discuss the traditional Ojibway customs mentioned in this section.
 2. The year 1879 is mentioned. What was happening in Minnesota around that time?
 3. What was happening elsewhere in United States at this time?
-

Section 10. “Times of Change” pp. 113 - 125

1. List examples of how old and new ways are mixed in Ojibway life.
 2. List effects of rules and laws by whites, change in diet, boarding schools.
 3. Which of the Ojibway “old ways” were most easily maintained? Which customs and traditions were difficult to keep?
-

Section 11. “The Circle” pp. 127 - 131

1. Is there evidence that the white strangers learned anything from the Ojibway?
2. In her eightieth year, what were Oona’s remembrances about her life and what were her concerns?
3. Why is the last chapter called “The Circle?”

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

DRAMATIZATION

Each group chooses a few pages from a section that would be suitable for dramatization. Choose a narrator and select character parts. Video tape/tape dramatic reading and play it back for group evaluation.

Each group may perform for larger group after several practice sessions to smooth out the performance.

PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

After discussions of every section of *Night Flying Woman*, students compile lists of beliefs and values of Ojibway and develop a paragraph that indicates their perception of the philosophy of life or world view possessed by the Ojibway.

Students may also write paragraphs which reflect their own philosophies of life.

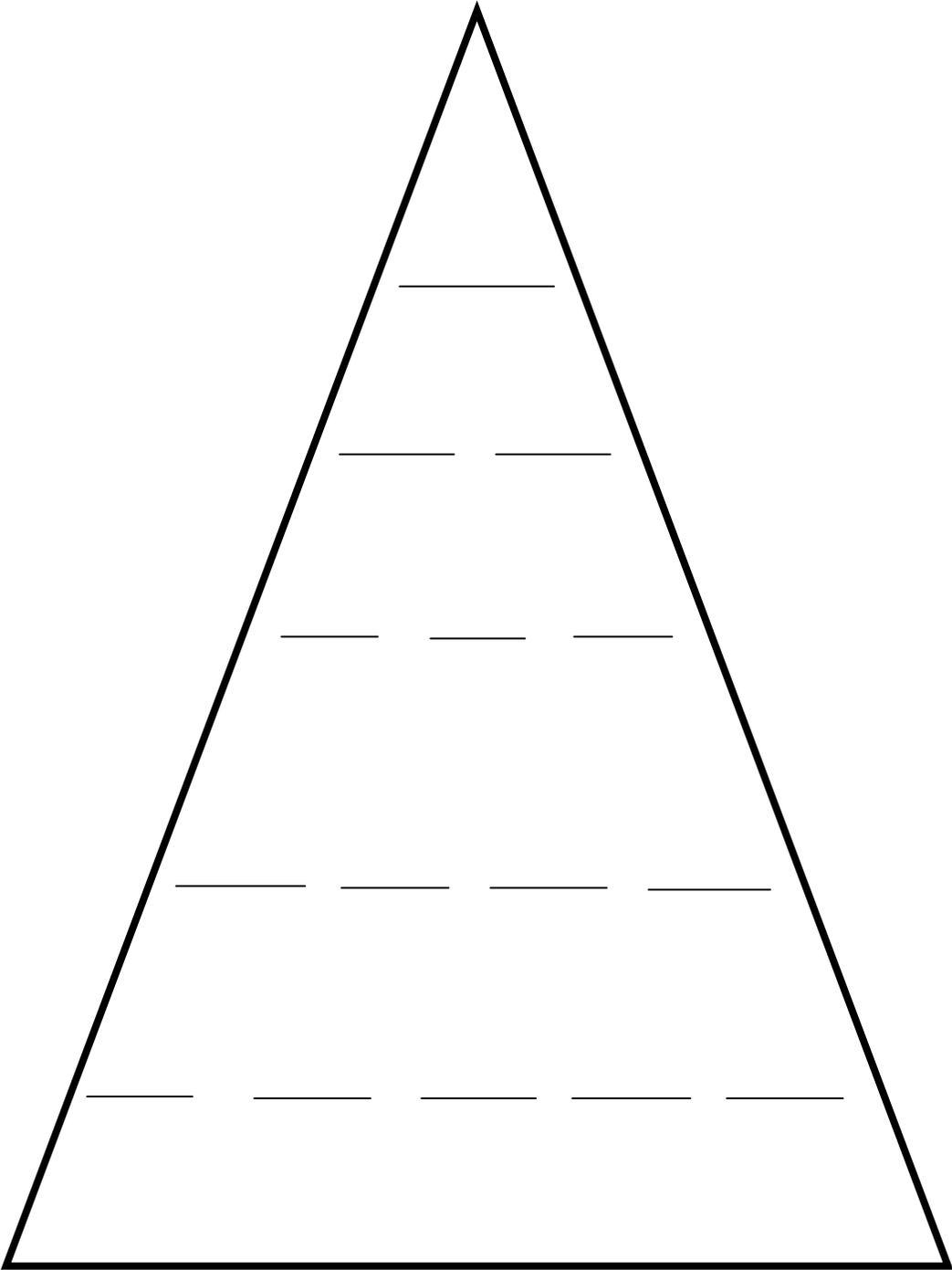
SPECIAL PLACES

What are the special places mentioned in each section of the book? Choose one of the following activities:

1. Design a map with symbols for each important location.
2. Create a sketch or drawing showing one place. Be elaborative and show many details.
3. Show a footstep progression picture (in the correct sequence) naming places a main character visited .

SECTION PYRAMID

Build a pyramid summary of this section. On the blanks, place one word for a central character, two words to show important feelings he/she displayed, three words to describe where the main action took place, four words to tell an important event, and five words to tell about a problem that still exists.



SOLVE A PROBLEM

Understanding how others solve problems can help one to analyze real-life situations.

Choose a dilemma or problem presented in the section you are reading.

The problem: _____

Facts: _____

How was the problem solved? _____

What other ideas would you have for solving the same problem?

What do you think is the most practical solution to a problem like this?
