



LEVEL 1 | BOOK 20 | READABILITY LEVEL 2.4

# Raven Helps the Indians

## Story Summary

Skunk causes trouble for the people because he can kill enemies by spraying them with a bad-smelling liquid. When he chases and frightens some people they heat a large boulder and roll it down on top of Skunk. Skunk does not die but he can no longer kill with the bad smelling liquid and he now has a long stripe burned into his fur.

## Author

This is a Skokomish legend as told by Emily Miller

## Illustrator

Bruce Miller

## Grade Level

Primary

## Estimated Instructional Time

One 60 minute lesson

## Materials/Resources Needed

- Class set of the story: Raven Helps the Indians
- Outline picture of the raven on large piece of butcher paper
- Markers
- Copy of the Raven story divided into sequential parts

## Overview of the Lesson

Students engage in a review of sequencing skill through one of the many Raven stories of the Native peoples of the Pacific Northwest.

## Student Objectives

- Students will retell the events of the story in correct sequence.
- Students will practice reading parts of the story with partners in preparation for Reader's Theater activity.
- Students will read assigned parts of the story orally in appropriate sequence.

## Teacher Background

"Raven, like Mink and Coyote and other spirit beings of the Northwest mythology, was as fickle and unpredictable as nature and its seasons. Raven was a shapechanger, who could assume any form — human or animal. Raven was a glutton and trickster, but he showed pity for the naked people he found in a giant clamshell. His trickery brought them the essentials for existence in a harsh world— game, fish, and fowl, fire, clothing, shelter - and with them the rituals that would protect them from the dark spirits lurking about.

"The Raven Stories are both entertaining - as Raven's mischief often backfired, but also instructive— teaching us about the Northwest Indians' way of life and the origin of their customs".

— Elderbarry

"In the cedar slab houses during the long rainy winters, and at the potlatch feasts where social order and position was established by lavish gift giving, the storytellers passed on tribal tradition with the stories of Raven and the other spirit beings that had been carved, painted and woven into everything around them. Many of the stories of the peoples of the Northwest Coast are considered private property of a household or clan, though the Raven myths are generally common to the whole culture."

— Elderbarry

## Instructional Plan - Learning Activities

### PART 1

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#### Vocabulary

*Eagle, raven, thirsty, lodge, people, available, formed, stream, lake, smoke, sequence*

- Have the story printed in large type on poster boards with each vocabulary word highlighted.
- Read the story with the students, emphasizing the new vocabulary.
- After the story has been read, discuss the order of story events with the students.
- Have a large outline of a Raven on butcher paper and as students share events write down the events in order in the Raven outline.
- Show the students the term sequence on a word card and explain that they have just listed the events in the story in the order in which they happened and this is called putting things in sequence. The students have put the story together in the correct order from beginning to end.

## PART 2

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- Review the idea of Reader's Theater with students. Remind them of the importance of carefully listening to each speaker so that they can speak their part at the correct moment in the sequence of the reading.
- Divide the story into eight parts and provide individual students with a copy of the part (printed on tag board). Since parts are limited some students will have the same parts.
- Students then practice reading their parts orally to a partner or into a tape recorder until they can read the part fluently. (Allow class time for practice.)
- Gather students together for the Reader's Theater with Raven Helps the Indians.
- Provide copies of the text for students to take home to read to their parents/caregivers.

## EXTENSIONS

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Explore other raven stories with students and connect to the sequence activity. Then move to an examination of the story grammar of the various stories. Have students write their own raven (or other animal) stories using the same story grammar used in the raven legends. Below are some examples of stories that might interest students:

- Raven and Crow's Potlatch,
- Ravens Cry, by Christie Harris (novel)
- A Skagit Raven Tale as told by Elderbarry
- Raven Steals the Light, by W. Reid & R. Bringhurst
- Raven the Trickster, by Gail Robinson

## Student Assessment/Reflection

Observation of student reading behavior during sequence activity and Reader's Theater