**Native American Literature: Myths and Folklore**

**Myth Recap**

* A myth (or origin/creation story) is a traditional story which describes the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of something—typically the world, humanity, or aspects of nature or a culture.
* A myth is an \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ mysteries, “supernatural” events, and cultural traditions.
* Sometimes considered a form of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ belief – in other words, the culture of origin typically believes the myth is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* Often involves gods, spirits, or characters with supernatural abilities

**Myths vs Folktales**

2. Acknowledged as \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ by its culture of origin

1. Focus is passing on a lesson or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but can explain an origin

2. The culture of origin  
 typically believes the myth  
is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
(or at least used to)

2. Both often involves nonhuman characters (gods, spirits, or animals) or human characters with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
abilities

1. A myth’s main purpose is to explain the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
   of something, but  
   can have a moral
2. Both are stories passed down from generation to generation by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Trickster Tales**

* While a trickster tale does explain the origins of something (typically something in nature, like how tornadoes began or why deer have antlers), the main purpose of the story is to pass on a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to the audience.
* The moral of a trickster tale is usually very obvious and intended for \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, while the themes behind a myth are usually more subtle
* At some point in the story, a character (usually an animal) tries to trick another character or group of people.

**Creating Our Own Trickster Tales**

**Step One:** Must have a natural setting and characters- Characters must be well-developed and must include animal characters with human qualities (i.e. A coyote that can speak, etc.)

**Step Two**: Must include a magical happening or magical transformation that refers to an explanation to something in the natural world. In most trickster tales, the magical happening is a creation of a characteristic of an animal (i.e. a buck’s antlers, an elephant’s tusks, etc) or a natural force in the natural world (i.e. tornados, hurricanes, etc.).

**Step Three:** Must include a trickster. Someone in the story that either tries to trick all other characters or tries to foil the plan for everyone involved.

**Step Four:** Include a moral in the story. The ending of the trickster tale needs to serve as a moral compass for the reader- a cautionary tale that bad things will happen or things will not go your way if you do wrong.

**Example Trickster Tale: A Snail’s Tale**

There once was an old woman who traveled from town to town with a large bag she carried on her back. As she traveled from town to town, many villagers said, “Oh, what a nice woman, let’s help her through her journey.” They would let her stay in their homes and dine at their tables, all the while not knowing that she was stealing from them during her stay.

The Great Eagle saw her evil doings and told her, “Old Woman, if you do not stop your evil ways, a great burden will be placed upon you.”

The Old Woman looked at the Great Eagle and said, “Oh Great Eagle, I have changed my ways. Thank you for believing in me!”

The next town held many villagers whose homes held many treasures. The Old Woman stayed with the most prosperous family in the village. She could not help herself in taking the family’s most prized possession- a clay pot lined with a buffalo hide.

The Old Woman thought, “Surely one item won’t hurt.”

As the Old Woman left the village with the pot in her bag, the Great Eagle swooped down and told her, “Old Woman, you have been warned, and from now on you shall crawl to every destination you seek always carrying a heavy burden upon you back!”

The Old Woman started to shrink to the ground, unable to move her arms and legs. She started slithering on her belly, noticing a heavy item upon her back. As she looked behind her, she noticed a great shell resting on her back.

Thus the arrival of the ﬁrst snail.