



Red Rock Canyon NCA Environmental Education Program

How it Came to Be

Grades: K-5

Estimated Time: 30-45 minutes

Standards Met:

- K-2 grade:
 - *Social Studies H1.K.2* Listen to stories of family members, local residents, and prominent figures to highlight the human experience.
 - *Social Studies H1.1.2* Listen to stories that reflect the beliefs, customs, ceremonies, and traditions of the varied cultures in the neighborhood.
 - *Social Studies H1.2.4* Recognize similarities and differences of earlier generations in areas such as work, dress, manners, stories, games, and festivals.
 - *English Language Arts 3.[K-2].7* Listen to, read, discuss, and compare text from different cultures and time periods.
 - *English Language Arts 5.[K-1].2* With assistance, draw or communicate ideas in written form.
 - *English Language Arts 7.[K-2].1* Listen for a variety of purposes including gaining information, being entertained, understanding directions
- 3-5 grade:
 - *Social Studies H1.5.4* Identify the contributions of Native Americans, Europeans, and Africans to North American beliefs and traditions.
 - *English Language Arts 3.[3-4].7* Listen to, read, discuss, and compare text from different cultures and time periods.
 - *English Language Arts 5.[3-5].2* Draft paragraphs about a single topic that address audience, purpose, and supporting details.

Objective:

Learn the meaning of and experience examples of oral history

Procedure:

Start the activities by having students find a comfortable place to sit where they can hear you. Start off by talking about some of their favorite stories. How have they heard these stories? Were they movies, did they read them, or did they hear them? Why did they like those stories? What was the purpose of the stories?

Discuss Native Americans, both past and present, and their tradition of oral history. Explain that oral history is a way of passing down stories and history that was used all over the world before there was a written language or widespread literacy. Many stories included explanations of how things came to be. Can they think of any other stories that explain why something came to be?

Tell them that you are going to share with them some traditional Native American stories that explain why some things come to be. Share one of the attached stories, or another favorite if you have one.

When the story is done, ask the students their opinion on the story. Did they like the story? What did the story explain? Why do they think Native Americans had a story like this?

Note: *The stories will impact the students more if you tell them rather than read them, particularly since Native American stories followed an oral tradition. Attached is Learning a Story to Tell, a guide to help memorize stories.*

Share another story, asking the same questions when done. If desired, continue sharing all the stories attached.

Hand out How it Came to Be worksheet. Have students either draw or write, depending on their age group, their favorite scene from a one of the

- 3-5 grade, continued:
 - English Language Arts 6.[3-5].2
Write paragraphs about experiences and/or events appropriate to audience and purpose.
 - English Language Arts 7.[3-5].1
Listen for a variety of purposes including gaining information, being entertained, understanding directions.

Materials Needed:

- One How it Came to Be worksheet per student (attached)
- One writing or drawing utensil per student
- Clipboards or other hard writing surfaces (optional)
- Learning a Story to Tell by LynnAnn Wojciechowicz (attached)
- Native American Stories (attached, other stories can be used if desired)

Sources:

Learning a Story to Tell by LynnAnn Wojciechowicz accessed from https://docs.google.com/View?id=d5x3kwz_271g3tsw8fz

How Coyote Stole Fire accessed from <http://www.ilhawaii.net/~stony/lore06.html>

How Butterflies Came to Be from *Native American Animal Stories*. Joseph Bruchac, 1992.

Why Dogs Sniff Each Other's Butts submitted by Anica Mercado, as told by Mitchel Wilkinson

How the Stars Got in the Sky submitted by Anica Mercado; original source unknown

Submitted by Anica Mercado

stories or create their own story that explains how something came to be. Allow time for students to share at end.

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| Suggested Locations: Open area where students can sit. | |
| Pine Creek Trail: 3,7, or 8 | Red Spring Boardwalk: 1 or 4 |
| Fire Ecology Loop: 3 or 4 | Moenkopi Loop: 3,6,7,8, or 9 |

Learning a Story to Tell

By LynnAnn Wojciechowicz

1. **Choose a story** that says, “Tell Me!” one that touches your heart.
2. Read the story pausing often to **notice the pictures in your mind**.
3. Make a **list of plot elements**: What happens first? Next? What is the turning point? How does it end?
4. **Think about the setting**: Where does the story take place? When? (past or present, day or night, winter or summer) What colors do you see? What fragrances? What textures?
5. **Think about the characters**: What do they look like? How do they move? What are their voices like? What are their personalities like?
6. Visual Learners: use **colored markers**, pens, or crayons and **sketch** out the various scenes (like cartoon segments) showing what happens in each. As you practice telling the story, **see the pictures** you have created in your mind.
7. Auditory Learners: make a **tape recording** of yourself reading the story and **listen to it over and over**. As you practice telling the story in your own words, make a new recording of your telling using your own words.
8. Kinesthetic Learners: **type the story** out using your words (don't copy from the printed page). It is fine to refer to the printed story if you forget certain details, just make sure you are typing it in YOUR WORDS. Later, you might practice **telling the story** as you **move around your house**, starting the story at one spot, then telling the next scene at a different place in the room, moving to a different room for the climax of the story, and a different spot for the ending. Do this several times, telling the same part of the story in the same spot each time.
9. **Practice telling the story out loud**: to a stuffed animal or a pet, to a child, to a mirror, to a tape recorder, in the car while driving, in bed before you go to sleep or when you wake up.
10. When you get in front of your audience, before you start your story, look at your audience, smile, and **take a few deep breaths**, allowing yourself to **relax**.
11. Take your time when you tell the story. Enjoy yourself! Remember, **you are giving the Gift of Story!**

How it Came to Be

Native American Stories

Why Dogs Sniff Each Other's Butts

A long time ago, Dogs used to gather in giant roundhouses. They would dance and have a great time. Coyote, seeing this, asked if he could join in. He wanted to dance and have a good time too.

The Dogs laughed at him and said no. While Coyote might look almost like a Dog, he wasn't one and wasn't invited. This hurt Coyote's feelings, but he kept watching the gatherings, hoping the Dogs would change their minds.

One night, the Dogs had the biggest gathering they ever had. All Dogs, from very far away, travelled to dance at this big gathering. Again, Coyote asked if he could join in and dance with the Dogs, and again they laughed at him and told him he couldn't because he wasn't a Dog.

As more and more Dogs came, the roundhouse became very crowded, and soon there wasn't enough room to dance. The Dogs didn't know what to do, so Coyote made a suggestion.

"Why don't you take your tails off? It will give you room to dance," Coyote said.

The Dogs thought this was a great idea, and each one took its tail off and hung it up on the wall of the roundhouse. They continued dancing and dancing into the night, but as they did, they made a lot of wind. In the roundhouse, the candles on the wall blew harder and harder in the wind, until the roof caught on fire!

The Dogs were having so much fun dancing, that no one noticed the roof was on fire. Coyote came in and yelled, "The roof is on fire!"

The Dogs didn't believe him at first, but they looked up and saw that the roof was on fire, in fact by then the entire roundhouse was on fire. They quickly ran out of the roundhouse for their lives!

Coyote, seeing a chance to get even, ran in and collected all the Dog's tails from the walls and put them in a bag, running back outside just before the roundhouse collapsed.

The Dogs cheered when they saw that Coyote had saved their tails, because they were afraid that they wouldn't have any tails and would be very embarrassed walking around without them.

Coyote saw they were happy, but was still angry they had not let him dance with them. "I have saved your tails, and you would not let me dance with you. I should have let them burn in the fire."

The Dogs hung their heads and apologized, because they knew they should have been nicer to Coyote.

"I will give you back your tails, but you have to take the first one you grab and keep it," Coyote said.

The Dogs weren't concerned about this, because they all knew what their particular tails looked like and knew they'd be able to easily spot them. So they agreed, and the first Dog went up to claim his tail.

Coyote hid a smile as the Dog came up and looked in the bag. The fire had made all the tails dirty, and they were covered in soot and looked the same.

"Let me clean off the tails!" The first Dog asked.

"You can clean off your tail if you want to, but you already promised to keep the first tail you grab and keep it," Coyote answered, not hiding his smile anymore.

So one by one, all the Dogs went and grabbed a tail, but very few of them got their own tails back.

This is why, to this day, Dogs sniff each other's butts. They are still trying to find their own tails.

How Coyote Stole Fire

Long ago, when man was newly come into the world, there were days when he was the happiest creature of all. Those were the days when spring brushed across the willow tails, or when his children ripened with the blueberries in the sun of summer, or when the goldenrod bloomed in the autumn haze.

But always the mists of autumn evenings grew more chill, and the sun's strokes grew shorter. Then man saw winter moving near, and he became fearful and unhappy. He was afraid for his children, and for the grandfathers and grandmothers who carried in their heads the sacred tales of the tribe. Many of these, young and old, would die in the long, ice-bitter months of winter.

Coyote, like the rest of the People, had no need for fire. So he seldom concerned himself with it, until one spring day when he was passing a human village. There the women were singing a song of mourning for the babies and the old ones who had died in the winter. Their voices moaned like the west wind through a buffalo skull, prickling the hairs on Coyote's neck.

"Feel how the sun is now warm on our backs," one of the men was saying. "Feel how it warms the earth and makes these stones hot to the touch. If only we could have had a small piece of the sun in our teepees during the winter."

Coyote, overhearing this, felt sorry for the men and women. He also felt that there was something he could do to help them. He knew of a faraway mountain-top where the three Fire Beings lived. These Beings kept fire to themselves, guarding it carefully for fear that man might somehow acquire it and become as strong as they. Coyote saw that he could do a good turn for man at the expense of these selfish Fire Beings.

So Coyote went to the mountain of the Fire Beings and crept to its top. He watched the way that the Beings guarded their fire. As he approached, the Beings leaped to their feet and gazed searchingly round their camp. Their eyes glinted like bloodstones, and their hands were clawed like the talons of the great black vulture.

"What's that? What's that I hear?" hissed one of the Beings.

"A thief, skulking in the bushes!" screeched another.

The third looked more closely, and saw Coyote. But he had gone to the mountain-top on all fours, so the Being thought she saw only an ordinary coyote slinking among the trees.

"It is no one, it is nothing!" she cried, and the other two looked where she pointed and also saw only a grey coyote. They sat down again by their fire and paid Coyote no more attention.

So he watched all day and night as the Fire Beings guarded their fire. He saw how they fed it pine cones and dry branches from the sycamore trees. He saw how they stamped furiously on runaway rivulets of flame that sometimes nibbled outwards on edges of dry grass. He saw also how, at night, the Beings took turns to sit by the fire. Two would sleep while one was on guard; and at certain times the Being by the fire would get up and go into their teepee, and another would come out to sit by the fire.

Coyote saw that the Beings were always jealously watchful of their fire except during one part of the day. That was in the earliest morning, when the first winds of dawn arose on the mountains. Then the Being by the fire would hurry, shivering, into the teepee calling, "Sister, sister, go out and watch the fire." But the next Being would always be slow to go out for her turn, her head spinning with sleep and the thin dreams of dawn.

Coyote, seeing all this, went down the mountain and spoke to his friends among the People. He told them of hairless man, fearing the cold and death of winter. And he told them of the Fire Beings, and the warmth and brightness of the flame. They all agreed that man should have fire, and they all promised to help Coyote's undertaking.

Then Coyote sped again to the mountain top. Again the Fire Beings leaped up when he came close, and one cried out, "What's that? A thief, a thief!"

But again the others looked closely, and saw only a grey coyote hunting among the bushes. So they sat down again and paid him no more attention.

Coyote waited through the day, and watched as night fell and two of the Beings went off to the teepee to sleep. He watched as they changed over at certain times all the night long, until at last the dawn winds rose.

Then the Being on guard called, "Sister, sister, get up and watch the fire."

And the Being whose turn it was climbed slow and sleepy from her bed, saying, "Yes, yes, I am coming. Do not shout so."

But before she could come out of the teepee, Coyote lunged from the bushes, snatched up a glowing portion of fire, and sprang away down the mountainside.

Screaming, the Fire Beings flew after him. Swift as Coyote ran, they caught up with him, and one of them reached out a clutching hand. Her fingers touched only the tip of the tail, but the touch was enough to turn the hairs white, and coyote tail tips are white still. Coyote shouted, and flung the fire away from him. But the others of the People had gathered at the mountain's foot. Squirrel saw the fire falling, and caught it, putting it on her back and fleeing away through the treetops. The fire scorched her back so painfully that her tail curled up and back, as squirrels' tails still do today.

The Fire Beings then pursued Squirrel, who threw the fire to Chipmunk. Chattering with fear, Chipmunk stood still as if rooted until the Beings were almost upon her. Then, as she turned to run, one Being clawed at her, tearing down the length of her back and leaving three stripes that are to be seen on chipmunks' backs even today. Chipmunk threw the fire to Frog, and the Beings turned towards him. One of the Beings grasped his tail, but Frog gave a mighty leap and tore himself free, leaving his tail behind in the Being's hand, which is why frogs have had no tails ever since.

As the Beings came after him again, Frog flung the fire on to Wood. And Wood swallowed it.

The Fire Beings gathered round, but they did not know how to get the fire out of Wood. They promised it gifts, sang to it and shouted at it. They twisted it and struck it and tore it with their knives. But Wood did not give up the fire. In the end, defeated, the Beings went back to their mountaintop and left the People alone.

But Coyote knew how to get fire out of Wood. And he went to the village of men and showed them how. He showed them the trick of rubbing two dry sticks together, and the trick of spinning a sharpened stick in a hole made in another piece of wood. So man was from then on warm and safe through the killing cold of winter.

How Butterflies Came to Be

Long ago, not long after Earth-Maker shaped the world out of dirt and sweat he scraped from his skin, Itoi, our Elder Brother, was walking about. It was just after the time of year when the rains come. There were flowers blooming all around him as he walked. The leaves of the trees were green and bright. He came to a village and there he saw the children playing. It made his heart food to see the children happy and playing. Then he became sad. He thought of how those children would grow old and weaken and die. That was the way it was made to be. The

red and yellow and white and blue of the flowers would fade. The leaves would fall from the trees. The days would grow short and the nights would be cold.

A wind brushed past Elder Brother, making some fallen yellow leaves dance in the sunlight. Then an idea came to him.

“I will make something,” Elder Brother said. “It will make the hearts of the children dance and it will make my own heart glad again.”

The litoi took a bag and placed in it the bright-colored flowers and the fallen leaves. He placed many things in that bag. He placed yellow pollen and white cornmeal and green pine needles in that bag and caught some of the shining gold of the sunlight and place it in there, as well. There were birds singing around him and he took some of their songs and put them in that bag, too.

“Come here,” Elder Brother called to the children, “come here. I have something here for you.”

The children came to him and he handed them his bag.

“Open this,” he said.

The children opened Elder Brother’s bag and out of it flew the first butterflies. Their wings were bright as sunlight and held all of the colors of the flowers and the leaves, the cornmeal, the pollen and the green pine needles. They were red and gold and black and yellow, blue and green and white. They looked like flowers, dancing in the wind. They flew about the heads of the children and the children laughed. As those first butterflies flew, they sang and the children listened.

But as the children listened to the singing butterflies, the songbirds came to Elder Brother.

“litoi,” the songbirds said, “those songs were given to us. It is fine that you have given these new creatures all the brightest colors, but it is not right that they should also have our songs.”

“Ah,” Elder Brother said, “you speak truly. The songs belong to you and not the butterflies.”

So it is to this day. Thought they dance as they fly, the butterflies are silent. But still, when the children see them, brightly dancing in the wind, their hearts are glad. That is how Elder Brother meant it to be.

How the Stars Got in the Sky

A long, long time ago, before humans existed on this earth, things were very different. The sun never slept, so it was always light, and there were only animals. The animals lived in harmony for a long time, but soon they began to fight amongst themselves. The fighting became worse and worse, until one day, Bear was so angry at Salmon, he reached down, grabbed him, and ate him.

The Great Spirit, who had been unhappy with the animals fighting, was very unhappy with this. He punished the animals by putting a giant blanket over the earth, and everything became dark.

If you remember being afraid of the dark, imagine how frightening it would be if you had never seen it before.

Once the animals realized that the blanket wasn't going to be taken down, they held a meeting. They decided that someone needed to go and tear the blanket down from the earth. Bear, who felt guilty about eating Salmon, volunteered to go first.

"I will go and tear the blanket down with my sharp claws," Bear said. He headed off, traveled over a long, long distance, to the tallest mountain. He climbed up and up the tallest mountain, up as high as he could go, and he tried to tear the blanket down with his sharp claws, but he just couldn't do it. He reached and he clawed and he clawed, but he just couldn't get that blanket down. He rested and then he clawed and he clawed again, but he just couldn't get that blanket down. He tried until he couldn't try anymore, and then, tired and sad, climbed back down the mountain, over the long distance, back to the other animals.

"I'm sorry," Bear said when he got back. "I tried and I tried, but I just couldn't get that blanket down."

"Let me try!" Came a little voice. It was the tiny Hummingbird.

Everyone laughed at this. "If Bear cannot do it, what makes you think you can Hummingbird?" Said Mountain Lion. "No, I will go and try. I can jump higher than Bear can, so I can jump and get it with my claws."

Everyone agreed Mountain Lion was a good choice, so she headed off, traveled over the long, long distance, to the tallest mountain. She climbed up and up the tallest mountain, up as high as she could go, and she jumped and tried to tear the blanket down with her claws, but she just couldn't do it either. She jumped and she clawed and she clawed, but she just couldn't get that blanket down. She rested and then she jumped and she clawed again, but the blanket would not come down. She tried until she couldn't try anymore, and then, tired and sad, climbed back down the mountain, over the long distance, back to the other animals.

"I'm sorry," Mountain Lion said when she got back. "I tried and I tried, but I just couldn't get that blanket down either."

By now, it had been dark for days, and the animals were starting to get worried.

"Let me go, let me try!" Came the little voice of the Hummingbird again.

And again, everyone laughed. "If Bear could not do it, and Mountain Lion could not do it, how would a tiny little Hummingbird do it?" Asked Coyote. "No, I will go. I will bite at it and get that blanket down."

Everyone agreed that Coyote would be the next best choice, so he headed off, traveled over the long, long distance, to the tallest mountain. He climbed up and up the tallest mountain, up as high as he could go, and he tried to bite the blanket down with his teeth, but he just couldn't do it. He jumped and he bit and he bit. He rested and then he bit and he bit again, but he just couldn't get that blanket down. He tried until he couldn't try anymore, and then, tired and sad, climbed back down the mountain, over the long distance, back to the other animals.

"I'm sorry," Coyote said when he got back, his tail between his legs. "I tried and I tried, but I couldn't get the blanket down."

Again, a little voice came through, "Let me try, let me try!" It was Hummingbird.

And again, all the animals laughed. "No, no, no. If Bear and Mountain Lion and Coyote couldn't do it, you wouldn't be able to do it. You are too small to do anything. No, no, no." Said Rabbit. "I will go, and I will try. I can bounce much higher than anyone else, I'll be able to tear the blanket down."

The other animals agreed, and Rabbit headed off. She bounded over the long, long distance, to the tallest mountain, and she bounced right up, as she could go. She jumped and tried to tear the blanket down with her big teeth, but she just couldn't do it either. She jumped and she jumped and she jumped, but she just couldn't get that blanket down. She rested and then she jumped and she jumped again, but the blanket would not come down. She tried until she couldn't try anymore, and then, tired and sad, bounced back down the mountain, over the long distance, back to the other animals.

Now the same thing kept happening. Different animals would go try, each one thinking they could tear the blanket down, and no one could. Each time, little Hummingbird would ask to go, and each time everyone would laugh.

Finally, after it had been dark for months, there was no one left to send.

"Please let me try!" Insisted little Hummingbird.

The animals shrugged their shoulders. There was no one else left to try, and they were going to be stuck in darkness forever. What harm would it do? They decided to let Hummingbird try.

Hummingbird headed off, flying over the great distance, flying to the tallest mountain. She flew up the mountain, then she kept flying and flew right at the blanket, her beak poking a tiny little hole in the blanket! A tiny ray of light shown through the hole, the first light the animals had seen in months. As they cheered she flew up again and poked another little hole, and then another little hole, and another, until tiny rays of light shown down all over. When she was too tired to keep going, she flew back to the other animals.

When she got there the animals hoisted her up on their shoulders, cheering Hummingbird and apologizing for not listening or letting her try other.

The Great Spirit, seeing that again the animals were living in harmony, decided to lift the blanket off the earth. But, to remind them to be respectful of each other, each night he puts the blanket back over the earth. However, he leaves the holes that Hummingbird made, letting a little light shine through, so that everyone remembers that no matter how small or insignificant someone might seem, everyone is useful in their own way.