

Storytelling

California Indians, like all people, wondered about the causes of natural phenomena such as the creation of the earth, seasons, moon phases, and the origins of humans.

The following books may be useful in teaching about California Indian stories:

- Caduto, Michael and Joseph Bruchac. *Keepers of the Earth*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 1988.
- Clark, Ella. *Indian Legends of the Pacific Northwest*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1953.
- Gifford, Edward et al. *California Indian Nights*. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1990.
- Kroeber, Theodora. *The Inland Whale – Nine Stories Retold from California Indian Legends*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1959.
- Lake-Thom, Bobby. *Spirits of the Earth*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1997.
- Margolin, Malcom, ed. *The Way We Lived – California Indian Reminiscences, Stories, and Songs*. Berkeley, CA: Heyday Books, 1993.
- Monroe, Jean Guard and Ray Williamson. *They Dance in the Sky*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1988.
- Sarris, Greg. *Keeping Slug Woman Alive*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993.

Have the students make up and illustrate their own stories. Some topic ideas:

- How/why the coast redwood is so tall
- Why the wood or bark of the redwood is red in color
- Why madrone bark peels
- Why madrone bark changes color from green to red
- Why poison oak leaves change to red in the fall
- Why some trees lose their leaves in the fall and others don't
- How the spotted owl got its spots. (skunk its stripes, raccoon its mask)
- Why raccoons "wash" their food
- Why redwoods sprout new trees from stumps
- Why does fog form in the region
- How Native Americans learned to use fire to encourage oak growth

Students can ask their own questions and make up their own topics.

Focus Standards:

- Grade 4-7: English Writing S.S. 1: Writing Strategies
- English Writing S.S. 2: Writing Applications
- English Written and Oral English Language Conventions S.S.1:
Written and Oral English Language Conventions
- Grade 4: History/Social Studies 4.2.1: Discuss ...CA Indians...legends
- Grade 5: History/Social Studies 5.1.2: Describe ... customs and folklore traditions
- Grade 6: History/Social Studies 6.1.1: Describe the hunter-gatherer societies...