

# Stories of Our Origins

## Teacher's Guide



Grade Four Social Studies



## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction /Key Message</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Curricular Matches</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Contents of Kit</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>How to use this Kit</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Class Warm-Up Activities</b>	<b>13</b>
• Memory Game	<b>15</b>
• Cut-Up Story	<b>17</b>
• 9 Dene Laws	<b>18</b>
• Respectful Behaviours	<b>22</b>
• Creating a Space	<b>24</b>
• Stories of Our Origins	<b>26</b>
<b>Class Follow-up Activities</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Assessment</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Additional Stories</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Blackline Masters</b>	<b>51</b>
• Animals	
• People and Props	
• Cut-Out Puppets	<b>100</b>
<b>Fish Identification Images</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>Bibliography/Webliography</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>Creating a Full Kit</b>	<b>120</b>
<b>Answer Guide for Student Activity Book</b>	<b>121</b>

## **INTRODUCTION**

This unit is intended to be the first one taught in your Social Studies class this year. The kit you are being provided with is designed to be easy to use. We also encourage use of local resources, student interest and your own passion to enhance this unit.

This unit deals with how people first came to live in the part of the world which today we call the Northwest Territories. It focuses on stories of the First Peoples of this land which have evolved over many generations. Some of these stories may be unfamiliar to you. The stories themselves, and how we learn to tell and hear them, provide critical insights to how people have lived and understood this land we now live in.

### **Getting Started**

How we learn these stories is in some ways as important as what the stories themselves are about. It is important that the context for telling and hearing these stories reflect a kind of learning that the stories themselves evoke.

**The first activity** in the *Stories of our Origins* unit should be establishing a place, context and atmosphere within which the stories in the unit will be explored. The *Warm Up Activities* included in the Teacher's Guide gives some suggestions on how the appropriate context might be established in your classroom.

**The first story** you should begin with is "The Creation of the Dehcho" (found in the section of the Teacher's Guide called "Additional Stories"). This will give all teachers a common starting point from which to work.

Once you have worked through this story, you can begin using the Story Bags and Student Activity Books.

- **You will need to make copies of the Student Activity Book for each student.**
- **You will also need to make copies of the legends in the Story Bags for each group before they begin to teach the legend to the rest of the class.** (These are in the story bags).

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### **NOTE: Be sure to look at the FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES!**

### **KEY MESSAGE**

When we tell stories, we are sharing the most ancient knowledge about our land.

The telling and passing on of legends and stories has maintained the traditions and culture of the Dene and Inuvialuit and formed a vital part of their life. Through these legends, students will know that there are different ways of telling history. It is important for students to realize the sacred nature of storytelling and the essential skills, listening, speaking, and memory, which go with it. These stories can help us to understand a way of life which has existed in our land since people have been here, and which continues to shape the ways people live here today.

## Stories of Our Origins

### **Curricular Matches**

#### **Grade 4: The NWT: Our Places, Stories and Traditions**

##### **DESCRIPTION:**

Grade 4 students will explore the places, stories and traditions of the people of the NWT. Students will situate their territory in the context of Canada and the world. They will learn some of the stories which explore the beginnings of people in the North. Students will also examine the historical, social and cultural characteristics of the NWT and will develop understanding of the diversity and shared experiences of people here. They will consider how life in Canada's North has changed and also remained the same over time, especially since contact with European societies. Through this inquiry, students will be encouraged to develop a sense of belonging within their territory and within Canada.

##### ***Skills and Processes***

- 4-S-001 assume a variety of roles and responsibilities in groups
- 4-S-002 participate in making and carrying out group decisions
- 4-S-003 accept and offer constructive suggestions in order to build consensus and compromise
- 4-S-004 collaborate with others to devise strategies for dealing with problems and issues
- 4-S-005 negotiate with peers to help resolve conflicts peacefully and fairly
- 4-S-006 make decisions that reflect care, concern, and responsibility for the environment
- 4-S-007 actively listen to the accounts and points of view of others
- 4-S-010 present information and ideas using oral, visual, material, print or electronic media appropriate to specific audience
- 4-S-013 use illustrations, charts and graphs to support written work
- 4-S-020 evaluate personal assumptions based on new information and ideas
- 4-S-021 reflect on how stories of other times and places connect to their personal experience
- 4-S-022 identify values that underlie lifestyles. Demonstrate an understanding that ways of living reflect values

## Stories of Our Origins

4-S-026 construct and interpret maps that include a title, a legend, a scale, a compass rose and grids

### **Theme 1 - Canada and the NWT- The Land and People**

4-K-L-007 Identify on a map key physical features of our territory (eg: sink holes, vegetation zones, pingoes, taiga, tundra, mountains)

4-K-L-008 Identify on a map the major lakes, rivers and communities of the NWT

4-K-L-009 Locate traditional areas of Aboriginal peoples and language groups on a map of the NWT

### **Theme 2 – Beginnings and Traditions**

4-V-C-002 demonstrate fairness and respect in their interactions with others

4-V-C-002A demonstrate respect in their interactions with others and their world

4-V-I-003 value their cultural, social and Northern identities.

4-V-I-004 value the First Peoples of this land

4-V-I-004A value their Dene, Inuvialuit or Inuinnait identities

4-V-P-007 demonstrate willingness to take on leadership roles and responsibilities

4-V-E-008 demonstrate respect for the land

4-K-I-010 demonstrate understanding of the teachings of Elders about culture and identity.

4-K-I-010A demonstrate understanding of the teachings of Elders about their culture and identity.

4-K-I-011 demonstrate an understanding of a variety of stories related to the origins of people in the NWT

4-V-L-005 demonstrate an appreciation of how stories both reflect and foster a connection to the land one lives in

4-K-L-012 demonstrate an awareness of Aboriginal peoples' traditional relationships with the land and each other

4-K-L-012A demonstrate understanding of how the land traditionally shaped the roles, identities, values, beliefs, traditions, customs, art,

## Stories of Our Origins

transportation, education, technologies, shelters and clothing of First Peoples

4-K-L-013 demonstrate understanding of the origins, meanings and stories connected to a variety of places in their territory

4-K-L-014 demonstrate an understanding of origin stories related to First Peoples, the land and animals of the North

4-V-T-006 respect oral tradition as a source of historical information.

- Through Elders telling stories
- Through legends that are told or written
- Through cultural activities

4-K-T-015 demonstrate understanding of how shared stories of Aboriginal groups, families and Elders enrich personal and family histories.

4-K-T-016 demonstrate understanding of different periods of time using appropriate terms or languages. *eg., Dene, Inuvaluit seasons, decade, generation, century, when the earth was new, in the time of our ancestors*

4-K-T - 017 Demonstrate an understanding of traditional ways of life (including roles and approaches to learning)

## **Theme 3- Continuity and Change in the NWT**

4-K-CC-020 give examples of artistic and cultural achievements in our territory

4-K-L-022 explain the origins and meanings of a variety of place names in our territory using traditional knowledge

4-K-T-026 demonstrate awareness that accounts of the past may vary according to different perspectives

4-K-T-028 demonstrate understanding of how shared stories of Aboriginal groups, families and Elders enrich personal and family histories.

4-V-CC-011 appreciate the cultural diversity within our territory

4-V-CC-014A nurture openness and a welcoming attitude within our First Nations, Inuit or Métis communities

4-K-CC-043 describe how First Nations, Inuit, Métis and other peoples have helped shape our territory

4-K-CC-044A identify connections between their community and other First Nations, Inuit, or Métis communities

## Stories of Our Origins

4-K-CC-046 identify contemporary diverse cultural communities and describe how they have helped shape our territory

4-K-CC-047 demonstrate an understanding of how education in the NWT has changed

## CONTENTS OF THE LARGE KITS (one per Divisional Board)

- **7 Story Bags**

- The Caribou Boy
- The Hoof Baby
- Where Our World Came From
- The Old Man with the Otter Medicine
- The Mackenzie Land
- The Dene Logo and the Legend of Yamoria
- Crowbeard Finds Abreeza

- **one CD** containing the stories/legends and all images
- **Binder** - Reproducible **Student Activities Booklet**
- **Binder – Teachers’ Guide**
- Copy of George Blondin’s book **Stories of Long Ago**
- Large **map** of NWT with lakes, rivers, communities (laminated)
- Large **map** outline of the NWT (blank)
  - **VHS or DVD**– Yamoria and the Giant Wolverine

### **Credit:**

Many people have shared their time and talents during the development of the teaching resources which support the new Grade 4 Social Studies curriculum (2006). This development has involved northern Elders, educators, staff from the Department of Education, Culture and Employment, The Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, artisans and interested individuals. We would like to express our thanks to all of these people, in particular the following:

Ray Lake, John Stewart, Gayla Meredith, Grade 4 Pilot Teachers (Brenda Johnson, John Cain, Gizelle Gaudon, Melissa Davis, Mayvis Arey, Steve Elms, Lori Robinson, Leanne Lawley, Julie Snow), Myrna Pokiak, Martin Dubeau, Paulette Ollerhead, Wendy Stephenson, Marcella Snijders.

## **HOW TO USE THIS KIT**

An important aspect of this kit is RESPECT; respecting people, ourselves, *our land and animals through story telling*.

We suggest that each class make a special circle or place in the classroom where stories are told. Ask students to bring one or two objects (natural) that are meaningful to them. These will be placed in the special place as well.

We have included 7 stories/legends from the NWT. Each story comes in a Story Bag.

In order for the students to become very familiar with these legends, we recommend that the class be divided into groups, each group taking one Story Bag. Each group will be responsible for teaching that story/legend to the rest of the class. At the end of each story are Learning Activities (in the Student Activity Booklet) for the entire class. It is important that **all** the regional stories/legends become familiar to the students so that they have an appreciation of other cultures in the NWT.

**Note:** In order to cut down on the amount of photocopying, teachers could laminate activity sheets (and have students use erasable markers) or put the activity sheets on an overhead projector.

Another important component for the majority of the stories are **mapping activities**. “**Map Parts**” are included in each **Story Bag**. We suggest that students “build” the blank map of the NWT using these parts.

**2 maps are included with this unit:**

- The **large blank (outlined) map** will be used in the telling of these stories by the students. Teachers will need to make post this large outline map of the NWT on a wall, chalkboard or bulletin board for use by the students. Students will attach their “Map Parts” to this map as they tell their stories.
- The second map is a **detailed map of the NWT** which students can use for reference.

## **MAPPING ACTIVITIES**

### **LARGE WALL MAPS**

These maps of the NWT have been laminated so that they can be used in various ways by the teachers and students. We have included some examples of mapping activities and we also encourage teachers to think of other ways to use this map in the classroom.

### **Mapping Activity #1**

- 1. Photocopy the list of NWT Community names (below). Teachers may choose to enlarge these before copying.**
- 2. Cut the list into individual community names and place the names in a bag.**
- 3. Using the large wall maps, ask students to choose one community from the bag and place it on the large wall map (matching their community name with the one on the map).**

**Tsiigehtchic**      **Rae**

**Tuktoyatuk**      **Edzo**

**Inuvik**      **Ndilo**

**Aklavik**      **Detah**

**Fort McPherson**      **Łutselk'e**

**Colville Lake**      **Gamèti**

**Norman Wells**      **Hay River**

**Tulita**      **Fort Smith**

**Wrigley**      **Fort Liard**

**Trout Lake**      **Deline**

**Fort Providence**      **Fort Good Hope**

**Kakisa**      **Fort Simpson**

**Enterprise**      **Jean Marie River**

Stories of Our Origins

**Wekweètì**

**Nahanni Butte**

**Yellowknife**

**Fort Resolution**

**Whatì**

**Ulukhaktok**

**Sachs Harbour**

**Paulatuk**

## **Mapping Activity #2**

**Give each student a copy of the Canadian Geographic map of the Northwest Territories. Have them use the map to measure distances and plot points on a map. Locations and places from each legend can be used for this activity.**

**Distances between locations from the legends can be measured, or distances from students' community to these locations can be measured.**

## **CLASS WARM-UP ACTIVITIES**

To introduce students to storytelling, we recommend that you begin your Unit by reading students some of the supplementary stories provided. You may want to speak to students about some important skills associated with storytelling: listening skills and behaviour, respectful behaviour and listening for comprehension. You and your class may want to create a list of 'rules' or 'respectful behaviours' which should be demonstrated throughout the unit. This unit will rely heavily upon oral presentations, so work done on behaviour and respect when others are speaking will be important. Practicing these skills while you read will prepare the class for their own story presentations from the Story Bags.

The act and art of storytelling is an important part of this unit. In an oral culture, such as Dene and Inuvialuit, storytelling played a crucial role in passing on culture, knowledge and tradition. You can use the following activities to introduce the importance of storytelling to your class.

- Memory Game
- Cut-up story for sequencing
- 9 Dene Laws
- Respectful Behaviours
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### **Social Studies Links**

The following Grade Four Learning Objectives will be addressed by completing the Warm-Up Activities:

4-S-001	assume a variety of roles and responsibilities in groups
4-S-002	participate in making and carrying out group decisions
4-S-003	accept and offer constructive suggestions in order to build consensus and compromise
4-S-004	collaborate with others to devise strategies for dealing with problems and issues
4-S-005	negotiate with peers to help resolve conflicts peacefully and fairly
4-S-007	actively listen to the accounts and points of view of others
4-S-008	use language that is respectful of human diversity
4-S-009	express reasons for their ideas and opinions
4-S-011	use a variety of communication technologies to interact with others

## Stories of Our Origins

- 4-S-013 use illustrations, charts and graphs to support written work
- 4-S-014 edit and revise written work
- 4-S-021 reflect on how stories of other times and places connect to their personal experience
- 4-V-I-003 value their cultural, social and Northern identities.
- 4-V-I-004 value the First Peoples of this land
- 4-V-I-004A value their Dene, Inuvialuit or Inuinnait identities
- 4-K-I-010 Demonstrate understanding of the teachings of Elders about culture and identity.
- 4-K-I-010A demonstrate understanding of the teachings of Elders about their culture and identity.
- 4-K-I-011 Demonstrate an understanding of a variety of stories related to the origins of people in the NWT
- 4-V-L-005 demonstrate an appreciation of how stories both reflect and foster a connection to the land one lives in.
- 4-K-L-013 demonstrate understanding of the origins, meanings and stories connected to a variety of places in their territory.
- 4-V-T-006 respect oral tradition as a source of historical information.
  
- 4-K-T-015 demonstrate understanding of how shared stories of Aboriginal groups, families and Elders enrich personal and family histories.
- 4-K-T-016 demonstrate understanding of different periods of time using appropriate terms or languages. eg., Dene, *Inuvialuit seasons, decade, generation, century, when the earth was new, in the time of our ancestors*
- 4-K-T-025 demonstrate understanding of how shared stories of Aboriginal groups, families and Elders enrich personal and family histories.
  
- 4-V-C-002 demonstrate fairness and respect in their interactions with others
- 4-V-C-002A demonstrate respect in their interactions with others and their world
- 4-V-I-003 value their cultural, social and Northern identities.
- 4-V-T-006 respect oral tradition as a source of historical information.
- 4-K-T-015 demonstrate understanding of how shared stories of Aboriginal groups, families and Elders enrich personal and family histories.

### **Title: Memory Game**

#### **Learning Objectives**

- The purpose of this activity is to teach students how the memory of a group is greater than the memory of any one person. Students should be able to connect this idea to the practice of oral cultures that use group memory to keep cultural knowledge.

#### **Materials**

- 20-30 small objects (comb, tack, eraser, dust brush, etc.)
- tray
- towel

#### **Suggested Learning Activities**

##### **Activity #1**

1. Have a tray with 20-30 small objects prepared and covered with a towel.
2. Place the tray in the centre of the class and tell the students they will have 30 seconds to look at the tray and remember as many of the objects as they can.
3. Reveal the tray for 30 seconds.
4. Have students write down as many of the 30 objects as they can.
5. Ask students how many objects they recorded and place the highest number on the board (you may want to check the responses of the highest number)
6. When the highest individual number is set, ask the class to record the objects as a group – record the answers on the board.
7. Did the class record a higher number than any individual? Ask your students why this happened.
8. Ask students how they could have assured an even higher correct response (ie. Different students responsible for remembering what was on different parts of the tray).

#### **Context for the Teacher - Making the Connection**

Oral cultures keep cultural knowledge in sophisticated ways – relying on human memory, landmarks in the landscape, song, and story, among other techniques. For an oral culture, keeping cultural knowledge alive is a key part of society. Since there are no written records, oral cultures rely on people to keep knowledge alive. Elders play a key role in this process, but children and adults must also play their part in learning the elements of cultural wisdom. Knowledge such as where and how to hunt, which plants

## Stories of Our Origins

are edible, traditional lands, ceremonies – the whole of a society’s knowledge – must be passed on from person to person. Because there is so much knowledge, it would be beyond the capacity of any one person to remember all the stories. Therefore, the entire group becomes responsible for keeping wisdom – and the memory of all is important.

**Relate this activity to storytelling by discussing how oral cultures use the entire group to remember information. There may be ‘gifted’ storytellers, but no one person knows all the stories – they are shared. That way, the culture can remember and transmit more information.**

## Stories of Our Origins

### **Title: Cut Up Stories**

#### **Learning Objectives**

- This purpose of this activity is to allow students to experience the oral practice of sharing stories. Students should be able to discuss why this practice makes sense for an oral culture.

#### **Materials**

- Type out a story that the students have not encountered before (you may want to use one of the stories from George Blondin's Legends and Stories from the Past included in your kit)
- Cut the story into 8-10 sections.
- Legends and Stories from the Past

#### **Suggested Learning Activities**

##### **Activity #1**

1. Divide the cut-out stories among students in the class.
2. Ask the students to arrange the cut-outs in the most logical order.
3. Have each student read their section of the story in the most logical order so that the story makes sense and the entire class tells the story.

#### **Context for the Teacher - Making the Connection**

In oral cultures, stories carry a great deal of information. A story which might seem unbelievable (such as Yamoria), is actually a detailed map, a set of Laws and a geological history of the North. A story such as Yamoria also has variations according to the region a person is in. Local knowledge is adapted to fit the story and the story gains more power. The Yamoria stories are told across the traditional Dene territories and change slightly in each region. Again, no one person could know all of these stories, so many people would know parts of the story and the culture as a whole would know the whole story.

**Relate this activity to storytelling. Explain to students that in oral cultures, stories are often remembered by many people in the group – each person knowing a specific part of the story. Why would a culture make these arrangements? Why does this make remembering stories easier? Why does this create a sense of ownership for everyone in the group?**

## Stories of Our Origins

### **Title: Nine Dene Laws**

#### **Learning Objectives**

- The purpose of this activity is to introduce students to the Nine Dene Laws. Students should be able to connect this learning to the storytelling unit by demonstrating how important storytelling is to traditional Dene culture.

#### **Materials**

- Copy of Nine Dene Laws Student Worksheet (with background info.)
- Yamoria , When the World was New , Legends and Stories from the Past by George Blondin

#### **Suggested Learning Activities**

##### **Activity #1**

1. Distribute copy of **Nine Dene Laws Student Worksheet** to class.
2. Tell students that these Laws come from a story by George Blondin – a Dene Elder – and are taken from a story about Yamoria, the Law Giver.
3. More information about Yamoria can be found in “Yamoria” or “When the World was New” by George Blondin
4. Complete the first Law together on the Worksheet listing reasons why “Share What You Have” would be an important Law for the Dene.
5. Have students complete the worksheet individually or in groups. (Teachers may want to remove the examples from this worksheet before giving it to students.)

##### **Activity #2**

1. As a class, have students brainstorm ways in which they could demonstrate each Law in the classroom.

#### **Context for the Teacher – Making the Connection**

**All societies make laws which enable individuals to live in harmony. The Nine Dene Laws are one local example of such laws.**

## Stories of Our Origins

**Connect this activity to the Storytelling Unit. Discuss how these Laws relate to storytelling (ie. how important it is to pass on the teachings, how children are encouraged to listen to elders, how students should demonstrate respect to one another). It might be helpful to make these Laws on posters with students and place them around the room. Stress that students should demonstrate RESPECT during these stories and listen to one another.**

### **Nine Dene Laws Student Worksheet**

The Nine Dene Laws were the rules of the Dene. They allowed people to live in harmony with one another. Underneath each Law, write why you believe each Law is important.

#### **1. SHARE WHAT YOU HAVE**

- Examples: Sharing caribou/moose meat  
Sharing events such as feasts, stories, open home to people visiting community

#### **2. HELP EACH OTHER**

- Examples: Getting wood for an elder, gathering traditional food, taking care of siblings

#### **3. LOVE EACH OTHER AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE**

- Examples with family, friends

#### **4. BE RESPECTFUL OF ELDERS AND EVERYTHING AROUND YOU**

- Examples regarding animals, plants  
Elders should get food first at home and at feasts  
People should be quiet when elder is talking

## Stories of Our Origins

### **5. SLEEP AT NIGHT AND WORK DURING THE DAY**

- Examples: rest to be productive  
Parents who work need sleep in order to work  
Children who attend school need sleep in order to do their best work

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### **6. BE POLITE AND DON'T ARGUE WITH ANYONE**

- Examples: keep peace and harmony in school and at home

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### **7. YOUNG GIRLS AND BOYS SHOULD BEHAVE RESPECTFULLY**

- Examples: It is not respectful to talk back to adults  
Have self-respect and respect for others  
Understand that respecting others helps teaches them that others have valuable messages or knowledge to share

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### **8. PASS ON THE TEACHINGS**

- this ties in with #7 (third point)
- keep traditions and knowledge alive

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### **9. BE AS HAPPY AS POSSIBLE AT ALL TIMES**

- this law helps us to live in harmony with those around us
- positive energy and comments are better messages than negative

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### **Title: Respectful Behaviours**

#### **Learning Objectives**

- The purpose of this activity is to create a list of respectful behaviours with the class by which you will evaluate them during the storytelling unit. Students should be able to identify and demonstrate respectful behaviours.

#### **Materials**

- Legends and Stories from the Past by George Blondin

#### **Suggested Learning Activities**

##### **Activity #1**

1. Discuss the meaning of RESPECT with students. Why is respect important?
2. In this activity, you will attempt to create a list of 'Respectful Behaviours' which show that students are demonstrating respect. (This will ensure that students know what is expected of them during the unit and will also create a useful rubric for the Instructor to evaluate students.)
3. Once the class has brainstormed a list of respectful behaviours, students can create posters which can be hung around the classroom as reminders.

##### **Activity #2**

1. Students can make a "Respect" poem.
2. Example: R – Remember to listen to others.  
E – Everyone deserves a chance to speak  
S – Share what you have  
P – Place things back where you found them  
E – Eat healthy- respect your body!  
C – Call home to let your parents know where you are  
T – Try your best at all times

##### **Activity #3**

1. Using a story selected from George Blondin's Stories and Legends from the Past, read a story and allow students to demonstrate their respectful behaviours.
2. Discuss with the class how well they demonstrated respect.
3. Once again, review the class generated list of 'respectful behaviours' and remind students that they will be evaluated on these behaviours.

### **Context for the Teacher – Making the Connection**

Often it is difficult to evaluate the attitudes and values of students. This activity is designed to create a working rubric for students and instructors to evaluate skills, attitudes and values in this unit.

## Stories of Our Origins

### **Title: Creating a Space for Story Telling**

#### **Learning Objectives**

- The purpose of this activity is to allow students to create a 'special' space for their storytelling unit in the classroom. Students should be able to explain why they are building this space.

#### **Materials**

- A candle to represent the communal fire
- Rocks, driftwood, leaves, etc. to represent the land
- Feathers or bones to represent the animals

#### **Suggested Learning Activities**

##### **Activity #1**

1. Find a space in your classroom where storytelling can take place.
2. The area you choose may be a corner or created by clearing desks, but it should be a distinct area of your classroom.
3. If you are going to light a candle in your classroom during storytelling, put down a tin pie plate or some other safe material.

##### **Activity #2**

1. Have students collect stones, feathers, bones, leaves, etc. from the land.
2. Ask students to collect items which appeal to them and will remind them of the land when they are in the classroom.
3. Collect these items and place them around the fire to remind students that these stories represent the land on which we live.

#### **Context for the Teacher – Making the Connection**

In oral cultures, storytelling was a vital and sacred act. Often, stories were told around the fire at night when people were not as busy as they were during the day. An Elder might tell a story to a whole group or just to one person. When stories were being told, everyone was respectful and listened, knowing how important stories were.

## Stories of Our Origins

**Connect this activity to the Storytelling Unit. Explain to students that because storytelling was such an important act, you will be building a space where all can listen and tell stories together. You may want to explain that because many stories were told around the fire, you will be lighting a candle in your classroom. Also, you may want to explain that collecting items from the land is a way of showing that students understand the importance of the land to the Dene and Inuvialuit.**

## Stories of Our Origins

### **Stories of Our Origins**

- The Old Man with the Otter Medicine
- The Dene Logo and the Legend of Yamoria
- The Mackenzie Land
- The Caribou Boy
- The Hoof Baby
- Where Our World Came From
- Crowbeard Finds Abreeza

## **The Old Man with the Otter Medicine**

There was a small group of people who lived on a small fish lake. They had gathered a lot of fish during the fall to make dryfish for the winter. They continued to use their fishnets to catch fish when the winter came.

In the middle of winter they started catching less and less fish. They started to eat up all the dryfish they had caught during the fall. Slowly, the people started to worry that they would not catch enough fish for the whole winter and would starve. The people got together to decide what to do. Someone said: "There is an old man who lives by himself. He has medicine power. Let's go and see what he can do." So that is what they did.

The people went over to see the old man. They told him they were worried about not catching a lot of fish. The old man listened to them. Afterwards he told them, "As a gift for my power, make me a drum. I have otter medicine and I will use my otter medicine to see why you are not catching many fish anymore."

When the people were finished making the drum they gathered around the old man. The old man started singing his medicine song. While he was singing, his spirit transformed into an otter and this otter went into the lake, swimming around to look for fish. The otter did not find any fish at all. The otter decided to go to the far end of the lake, but he could not find any fish there either. The otter swam back to the shore and entered into the body of the old man and the old man stopped singing.

The people around him started asking him questions; "Well, do you see any fish?" The old man looked at them and said, "No, I saw no fish in the lake." The people were desperate. They asked the old man to try again the next day.

The next day the people gathered around the old man again. The old man started to sing his medicine song. His spirit left his body and again became an otter. This time the otter decided to go deep into the deepest part of the lake. There, to the otter's surprise, was a huge hole. At the entrance to the hole there were two large jackfish guarding the entrance.

## Stories of Our Origins

The otter saw that inside the hole there were thousands and thousands of fish. The otter killed the two jackfish and chased all the fish out of the hole. The otter was really excited. Quickly the otter returned back into the old man. The old man said, "Check your nets! Check your nets!" Everyone was excited. They all went onto the ice to check their nets. They found them full of fish, so full that the nets were melting a hole in the ice! The people were all so happy. Later that night there was a huge feast in honour of the old man who had the otter medicine.

Told by John Blondin  
1994

## The Dene Logo and the Legend of Yamoria

“Many years ago, before the whiteman came into this country, the Creator sent a special man, Yamoria, who travelled into our land. He put everything into its rightful place and got rid of whatever was harmful to people. By doing this, he set laws for people and animals to follow. Until this very day, we are still holding onto them.

In the time when Yamoria came, there were large beavers living in **Sahtu (Great Bear Lake)**. People who lived in this area would travel across the lake by canoe to hunt the caribou. The beavers did not like them to travel across the lake so they would get as close as possible to the canoes and splash their tails hoping to tip them over. When Yamoria heard about that, he went to Sahtu and told the people that he would chase the beavers away.

Yamoria started chasing the beavers around the lake. The big beavers immediately went down **Sahtu De (Bear River)** but the younger ones were harder to chase towards the river. During the time that Yamoria was chasing the younger ones around the lake, the bigger beavers had built a dam on the river. That is where the Sahtu De Rapids are to this very day.

Yamoria got the younger ones to head down Sahtu De and then he chased all of them down the river. Near Tulita, at the meeting place of the two rivers, **Sahtu De (Bear River)** and **Dehcho (Mackenzie River)**, Yamoria killed two medium beavers and one small one. The larger ones were still living and continued down our Great River, Dehcho.

After killing the three beavers, he stretched and pegged the three hides on the south face of **Kwetenipaa (Bear Rock Mountain)**. You can see the impression they made on that rock to this very day. Meanwhile, the two large beavers continued to swim down Dehcho, building two more sets of rapids along the way.

From the top of **Kwetenipaa (Bear Rock Mountain)**, Yamoria shot two arrows at the meeting place of the two rivers and said, “as long as this earth shall last, you shall call them Yamoria’s arrows.” Still to this day, you can see two big poles sticking out of the River. Even after each spring, when the ice goes away, there are always two big poles sticking out of the river.

## Stories of Our Origins

After shooting the two arrows into the river Yamoria brought the beavers that he killed up the Dehcho River about 25 kilometres from the meeting place of the two rivers. There he camped. He cooked the beavers and the grease that had drizzled from the cooking beavers started to burn. Until this day, the fire continues to burn and you can still see it when you pass by this place.

The symbol of the three beaver pelts on **Kwetení?aa (Bear Rock Mountain)** and the forever-burning fire up-river from that mountain, are signs on the land as a reminder of the teachings of legends. If we remember and live them, if we take the signs set on the land for us as our symbols, we will survive as a nation.”

The five-colour ribbons are for the five tribes of the Dene Nation. The logo was first painted on a traditional Dene drum.

The End  
Told By George Blondin

## **The Mackenzie Land**

(from the book, Elik by Herbert Schwarz)

Once upon a time, near Tuktoyaktuk, there was a large pingo called Ibyuk Pingo. In those days the countryside was not as it is today – with its countless rivers and islands and lakes. The whole place was barren with only a few lakes and rivers in between, and the game was very scarce.

At that time there lived on top of Ibyuk Pingo, an Inuvialuit hunter with his wife, and a young son who was the spirit of the Raven. It happened one day, in the early hours of the morning that the hunter went outside his home to inspect his snares in the bush nearby.

He was greatly surprised to find attached to the tree trunk a large sealskin bag that was filled with water. He was very puzzled by this unexpected appearance of the sealskin bag, as he had never seen it there before. So he went back to his home, woke up his wife, and showed her the sealskin bag attached to the tree trunk.

The next day he went outside again. The sealskin bag was still attached to the trunk, but now it was much bigger and it contained more water. So he talked the matter over with his wife and with this son, who was the spirit of the Raven.

The following morning he went all around to warn the people near him. Surely the unexpected appearance of the sealskin bag filled with water bade them all no good.

But the people only laughed at him and called him a silly old man. “Why should they be afraid of water, living right on top of that great big pingo?” And they ridiculed him and made fun of him.

But the Inuvialuit man was not put off by their ridicule. Each day he went to the bush and hauled up large tree trunks, right to the very top of the pingo where he had his home. And each day as he stepped out of his home, he saw the sealskin bag getting bigger and bigger until it was overflowing with water. So he worked harder than ever, hauling up the big spruce trunks right to the top of the hill. Only his wife and son, who was the spirit of the Raven, helped him with his labour.

## Stories of Our Origins

He was building a large raft, right on top of the pingo! And the people stood around them, but they would not help them. They watched the man, his wife and his son, hard at their task, and they laughed at their seemingly ridiculous efforts.

In time, the Inuvialuit man had enough tree trunks to build a large raft and tied together the tree trunks with bâbiche and strips of spruce bark. He fastened his kayak to the raft with rope. Afterwards he made a shelter out of caribou hides in the center of the raft, and he took all his provisions and all his hunting equipment into the shelter.

Each morning the sealskin bag was growing bigger and bigger and it pushed out of its way, all the trees that grew around it. And still, in spite of all his warnings, the people around would not listen to him, and they called him a silly old man.

One day, when the raft was finally completed and was perched right on top of the pingo, the Inuvialuit man sent his wife to see an old woman who had an orphan girl in her care. He asked for the orphan girl to come and live in their home. The old woman, who found it hard enough to provide for her own needs, was only too glad to get rid of the orphan girl. So the orphan girl came to live with the Inuvialuit man and his wife and the boy, who was the spirit of the Raven.

And it happened one day that the sealskin bag pushed all the forest out of its way and suddenly it burst. The water that came from it poured forth continuously for days and weeks and months. It just did not stop flowing. Pretty soon, all the land below the pingo was flooded with water, and all the Inuvialuit who used to laugh at the old man perished in the great flood.

Eventually the water reached the very top of Ibyuk pingo, and the Inuvialuit man and his wife and the boy, who was the spirit of the Raven, and the orphan girl moved to the shelter in the center of the raft.

They had retreated to the raft just in time, as all the land around them disappeared and they could not see anything else but a vast expanse of water. They stayed on the raft for a long time and there was no sign of the water receding.

But their food was getting low. So one day, the boy, who was the spirit of the Raven, asked his father if he could use of the kayak and the hunting

## Stories of Our Origins

equipment. He wanted to get some food and search for some dry land. At first his father was against the idea, but then he let him go.

So the boy, who was the spirit of the Raven, set off to explore the great water around him. And he paddled his kayak for many days until one day he saw a small island bobbing up and down in the water. He approached it cautiously but at the very moment that he came to it, the island disappeared under the surface of the water.

So the boy, who was the spirit of the Raven, got his harpoon ready and set the lines free. And at the precise moment when the island popped up again from under the water, he let go of his harpoon, and speared the island right in its very top.

Once he had it at the end of his harpoon, he held it firmly with his lead rope so that it would not sink again. And as it happened, the island was the top of a giant pingo!

Once he had the pingo firmly fixed with his lines, the boy, who was the spirit of the Raven, effectively stopped the whole island from popping up and down under the water. Eventually some of the water receded and the land reappeared and was now criss-crossed by numerous lakes and rivers. The boy paddled back to Ibyuk Pingo.

There he found his father's raft perched right on top of the pingo. And he also saw many dead whales and fish and dead creatures which were left stranded right on top of the pingo. And the boy, who was the spirit of the Raven, married the orphan girl and they had many children.

Their children grew and prospered in that great Mackenzie Land which was now full of rivers and lakes and fish and game of all kind. And the Inuvialuit people hunted the vast herds of caribou in the forests, fished in their great lakes and rivers and hunted seals and whales in the Beaufort Sea.

When the hunting season was over, and the long winter cast its dark shadow over the Arctic, the people delighted in story telling. From one generation to another, these stories and legends were heard all over the Mackenzie Land. As there was no written language among the Inuvialuit, this formed a vital part of their life and maintained the traditions and culture of the people.                    The End

## **The Caribou Boy**

**Told by John Blondin  
1993**

A little boy was travelling with his parents and grandparents. They were travelling through the bush, carrying all their belongings. At night they set up their camp. During the night, the little boy began to make sounds in his sleep, moaning and groaning. The boy's grandfather, who was a Medicine Man, woke him up and asked him, "What was your dream?" The little boy said that he didn't remember so the grandfather told him to go back to bed.

The next day the family packed up and kept walking, carrying all their supplies. They travelled over the land, walking all day. By nightfall they set up camp at a good spot. After eating, the little boy was put to bed and the same thing happened. The family listened to the boy moaning and groaning. Again, the grandfather woke the boy and asked him "What was your dream?" Again, the boy could not remember and was told to go back to bed.

When the grandfather told the parents that the boy could not remember his dreams, one of them said, "You have medicine, you could do something." So the grandfather took out his drum and started drumming. His spirit left his body and went to the time when the little boy was born and watched the child grow up to the present day. The grandfather was watching the child's life to see if anything might have influenced the little boy to have him make such strange noises. But the grandfather could not find anything. After his spirit had returned to his body, the grandfather told the family members, "I didn't see anything wrong with the little boy from the day he was born." He said he would try again later.

The next day was much the same as the last. After traveling all day, the little boy was sent to bed after dinner. He began moaning and groaning in his sleep. His grandfather put him back to bed after finding that, again, the little boy did not remember his dream. This night, however, the little boy woke up after his family had gone to sleep, put on his winter clothes and walked out into the night.

## Stories of Our Origins

In the morning, after realizing he was gone, the little boy's family went out after him. The grandfather could tell what time the little boy had left and was able to read nature like a book, so he knew they would have to hurry to catch the boy. The family packed up their camp and set out after the boy, following the tracks in the snow. Before long, two sets of caribou tracks appeared beside the boy's tracks. Eventually, they found his hat, gloves, parka and pants lying in the snow and saw that he was walking barefoot with the caribou. They picked up his clothes as they were walking and were very concerned about what was going on.

The family was worried that the little boy would freeze to death because it was winter and they could no longer find his footprints. All they could see were caribou tracks all over so they decided to climb up a hill and look into the valleys to see if they could see him.

When his family finally found him, the little boy was a long way off with two caribou. The sun was shining in the sky and the little boy's family began waving at him to come back. The little boy turned around and walked to the bottom of the hill. His family could now see that his legs had changed into the form of a caribou.

The little boy began to sing a song and in that song he explained that "a long time ago I was a caribou being, but the spirit is so strong in me I cannot remain a human anymore. So I am going back to being a caribou. I am so grateful to you for being my parents and my grandparents and for that I will give you a gift. If you ever need any caribou, pray to me and I will send you caribou."

As he said that, he turned around and started to walk towards the two caribou and continued to change into an animal. On the horizon a whole herd of caribou was waiting for the Caribou Boy. They were all waiting for their leader who was even now changing back into a caribou – his arms became legs and his head grew huge antlers. Just before heading off over the horizon, the Caribou Boy turned around and gave one last look at his old family, and then he was gone.

Told by John Blondin  
Autumn 1993

## **The Hoof Baby**

A long time ago, an old woman was living alone among a group of people. In those days, people were always travelling in order to stay close to the caribou. They depended on the caribou for their lives. This particular group of people decided to leave the spot where they were camped and travel on. The old woman was left behind.

All alone and partially blind, the old woman was left in her shelter made from branches with snow piled round it. As she sat quietly by the fire it began to get dark outside. In the quiet of the night she could hear sounds. The sounds were much like that of a baby crying.

Wanting to see what was making these sounds, the old woman crept out of her hut and found many, many caribou tracks. In one of the hoof prints was a very tiny baby boy. The old woman took the baby back to her shelter.

In these days of long ago, people used to kill and eat ravens for food. The woman fed the tiny baby on the powder from the dried liver of a raven. Whenever she went outside she would keep the baby inside her fur coat to keep him warm. She fed and cared for the little boy as well as she could and soon he began to walk.

When the little boy could talk he asked his granny to make him a bow and arrow for hunting. This she did and he kept the bow and arrow by his side.

One night the old woman decided to check on the boy while he was sleeping. He was sleeping in a warm raven feather blanket. When the old woman opened the blanket the boy was not there! Later on that night she checked again and the boy was there, sleeping peacefully.

The next morning the boy told his granny where he had been the night before. "We were playing on the same lake where you found me. Let's go and see what we were playing with." The boy and his granny walked back to the spot he had told her about. When they came to the lake they saw that the little boy had used his new bow and arrow to kill many caribou. They spent the rest of the day cutting up the caribou meat.

## Stories of Our Origins

The little boy never grew to be very big. He remained very small because he had been born out of a caribou's hoof. The old woman told the boy the story of how she had raised him from the time she found him as a tiny baby lying in the caribou track. She also told the boy stories about his uncle who lived far away from them. As a result of these stories the little boy grew curious and wanted to see where his uncle lived.

Whenever the boy wanted to travel a long way he had the power to change himself into a caribou calf. This he did and off he went to see where his uncle was living. By the time he had travelled that long distance it was dark and all the people were asleep in their huts of branches and snow. As a sign that he had been there, the little boy left a caribou chin stuck on a long stick by the door of the hut. Then he travelled back home.

It was not until the next morning that the uncle noticed the stick by his doorway. When he and his people looked outside they saw caribou tracks leading away from the hut. They were very hungry for caribou meat so they decided to follow the caribou tracks.

When the uncle and his people arrived at the old woman's hut she told them the story of how the little boy had been born out of the hoof of a caribou. She and the boy were living well with a lot of caribou meat to eat. Seeing this, the uncle and his people moved to the spot where the old woman lived.

One day, the little boy told his granny to make him some grease from the fat in between the two sides of the caribou hoof. "If you make a bucket of grease," he said, "don't let my uncle put his finger into it to taste it. My caribou power is very special and must be respected." But before his granny could tell the uncle, he had put his finger right into the grease.

Without even looking at the grease, the boy knew that his uncle had put his finger into it. His caribou power would never be the same. This made the boy very upset and suddenly he grabbed the bark bucket of grease and took off to the moon.

On a clear night, when the moon is full and bright, take a close look at the moon. If you look carefully you can see the little 'hoof baby' with his bucket of grease.

**Told by Pierre Judas, Wekweti, 1983**

## **Where Our World Came From**

Told by Peter Ross

A long time ago, when animals could speak like we do, the earth was all covered with water. There were no hills, no riverbanks, no forests, no fields, only water and sky. All the animals lived on a large raft, including Raven.

It wasn't long before Raven was feeling a little crowded on the raft. He longed to stretch out his legs on dry ground. Now Raven liked to be comfortable and well fed at all times. Raven, you know, was a very wise bird and if he didn't like something, he would think of a way to make things better for himself. "If I had any earth, even a little bit, I would make it grow large enough for all the animals to live on," Raven told everyone.

Of course, all the animals were excited because they missed their old homes in the woods in holes, or riverbanks or in trees. They missed running and playing and stretching their limbs. But who would be brave enough to find some earth for Raven? They all knew deep in the water they could find it – far beneath their safe raft.

Some animals peered over the edge of the raft but no earth could be seen. Finally, Muskrat volunteered to search for a piece of earth. Muskrat remembered his cozy home in the river and thought to himself, "It is true that this is not a river and that I have never seen so much water before but it is water all the same."

Down dove Muskrat, and the water closed over him.

After a long time, Muskrat's good friend Otter said, "I think something has happened. I can dive very well. Let me try." And down dove Otter into the dark water.

But like Muskrat, Otter never returned.

"Let me try," offered Loon. I can stay under water for a long time and

## Stories of Our Origins

travel quickly over a long distance under water. I should be able to find some earth." But like Muskrat and Otter, Loon never returned either. You would think that the other animals would be afraid to follow Muskrat, Otter and Loon, but they were concerned about what happened to their friends. And so all the good divers and swimmers – the Loon, the Oldsquaw Duck, the Harlequin Duck, the White Wing Scoter, the Goldeneye Duck, the Grebe and the mink went down under the waters and tried to bring back some earth but none of them returned. The other animals feared that their brave friends had drowned. "It's no use," they all agreed, hanging their heads.

But Beaver made a last try. Beaver not only was a good swimmer, but he was a hard worker and a clever builder. Now he made sure that he tied a line around his body first so that he could be pulled back up out of the water.

He dove so deep into the water, he almost drowned when he reached the bottom. As he struggled in the water, he clutched some mud from his paws. Beaver knew that when his friends pulled him up, they would find the mud. Sure enough, the mud was still on his paws when his friends pulled poor Beaver out of the water. He had used his last strength to reach the bottom and retrieve the earth and the water had been too much for him. Beaver had given his life to help the other animals. All of them were sad but thankful when they lay their eyes on their good friend.

Now Raven started to work. Carefully, he gathered the mud from Beaver's paws and formed it into a ball. Then he took his walking stick and ran it through the bit of earth. He planted the stick on the surface of the water. No sooner did the earth touch the water then it began to grow, just as Raven said it would. It grew larger and larger.

When it was big enough to hold everyone, the animals stepped onto it from their raft. How wonderful it was to feel the earth beneath their feet again. They laughed and sang with happiness.

And they never forgot their friends Otter, Muskrat, Beaver and the others who had been so brave for their sakes. They had offered their great skills in swimming to find a home for everyone else.

### Stories of Our Origins

The small clump of earth that Beaver found soon grew into our beautiful land with its hills and forests and lakes. And even today, Raven's walking stick still holds up the land. Somewhere, where the Old Crow and Porcupine River meet, you can see it. And if you do, remember this story of how Raven made the earth. And when you play on the land in the summer, remember Beaver and his friends who were so brave and kind.

## Crowbeard Finds Abreeza

At one time, there was a young man called Crowbeard. He lived somewhere along the Upper Liard River, near Fort Nelson, B.C. He was living with his old parents.

One spring day they asked him why he hadn't got together with a young woman. He was then twenty years old, rather late for someone his age. They were concerned for his well-being. The mother said, "We're getting old my son, we cannot take care of you much longer. You should go and look for a wife and have your own family".

Crowbeard said to her that when he was born he saw a woman that was to be his wife. Her name was Abreeza.

They knew that was the work of medicine powers. "Then it is time for you to go looking for her."

They made him a birch bark canoe and off he went in search of his wife. He continued down the Liard River until he reached Echaot'jé Kúé ("eh-cha-oh-tee koo-eh"), known today as Fort Liard. He spent the summer there asking around if anyone knew a woman by the name of Abreeza. No one knew of her.

During autumn, he went further down the Liard River until he reached Łídljú Kúé ("klee-dlee koo-eh"), (Fort Simpson). He found a family there with whom he could stay with for the whole winter long. Crowbeard would help everyone by hunting, trapping, fishing and collecting wood for these people. In the meantime, he would ask around if anyone knew Abreeza in the area. No one had heard of that name.

In the spring of the following year, he paddled down Dehcho, the mighty Mackenzie River, all the way to Tulita. He decided to stay there over the winter and ask around if anyone knew Abreeza. Still, no one knew her.

As Christmas was approaching, people from all over the area would come to Tulita to trade their furs. When each group arrived he would ask them if they heard of a woman called Abreeza.

## Stories of Our Origins

A group from Sahtu, (Great Bear Lake), had told him that there was a woman by that name who lived in the east arm of Sahtu. He was finally happy to find people who knew that name. When Christmas was over and everyone got their winter supplies, they would leave Tulita to head back home in all directions. Crowbeard decided to go with the people from Sahtu to their main camp at the east arm.

When they arrived, Crowbeard asked a boy to show him the tent of Abreeza. The boy led him in the direction of a tent nearby. When he entered the tent he found the woman just as she was in his dreams.

Upon entering the tent, the woman said, “Where have you been? I have been waiting for you all this time. I was about to give up on you.”

They laughed and hugged each other. Abreeza had the same dream for she was also a medicine woman. She had seen the man who would be her husband, Crowbeard, in her dreams. A lot of young men had asked her to be their wife, but she refused everyone. She knew that one day Crowbeard would appear. And so he did. The following year sometime before November, they had their first son, Karkeye.

The End  
Story Told by George Blondin

### **CLASS FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES (to do at the end of this unit):**

- Teacher tells the beginning of one of the legends that the class has studied. Students finish the legend or tell what comes next.
- Make a list of the legends that were studied by the class. Under each title, as a class, brainstorm for characters, animals, messages and ideas in each legend.
- Using the 9 Dene laws, see what law fits into which legend.
- List the animals used in the stories. List the qualities of each animal from the stories.
- Invite an elder from the community to tell local stories – place them on the map if possible
- Look at all the legends with the class. Make a bar graph showing the least favourite to most favourite legends.
- Make a class video demonstrating the 9 Dene laws.
- Design posters for each of the legends.
- Have students re-write the legends from different perspectives or using their own words.

## **ASSESSMENT – the following are examples of types of assessment that teachers can use with this unit.**

### **Example #1**

The following is the criteria for legend assignments. The illustration assignment is based on the following:

✓ Illustrations match the story	/5
✓ Illustrations are complete	/6
✓ Illustrations are coloured	/6
✓ Neatness	/4
✓ Pride and Effort	/4

Total: /25

Stories of Our Origins

**Example #2**

**How Did I Do?**

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Hardly Ever
1. Did you get along with your partner?				
2. Did you share supplies and equipment with others?				
3. Did you listen carefully to others and consider their ideas?				
4. Did you do your share of the group's work?				
5. Did you follow the directions provided?				
6. Did you use your time wisely?				
7. Did you complete the assigned tasks?				
8. Did you participate and contribute to the group discussions?				

## Stories of Our Origins

**Example #3 for use with legends such as “Caribou Boy” and “Hoof Baby”.**

The performance of the legends will be based on the following criteria. The teacher OR classmates can assess each other. An average will be taken from the group's assessment. Each group will be given a mark out of 15%.

\*Note: Students are broken down into two groups. One group will perform Caribou Boy and the other group will perform Hoof Baby. During assessment, one group of students watches the other group perform their play, then vice-versa.

This can be used with **any** of the legends in the unit.

- ✓ Students spoke in a clear voice

always /3 sometimes /2 never /0

- ✓ Actions were related to narrators reading

always /3 sometimes /2 never /0

- ✓ Students understood the meaning of the play

always /3 sometimes /2 never /0

✓ Group worked together

Always /3 sometimes /2 never /0

✓ Enjoyed the play /3

**Total:** /15

## Stories of Our Origins

### Example #4

#### Peer and Self Evaluation Rubric

Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Members: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please give yourself a mark and a mark for each group member on a scale from 1-10 with 10 being the highest.**

Individual Evaluation

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Following the teacher's instructions.	<input type="checkbox"/> 6. Sharing responsibilities.
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Sharing ideas and information.	<input type="checkbox"/> 7. Respecting others.
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Helping the group stay on task.	<input type="checkbox"/> 8. Helping others to understand.
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Sharing materials.	<input type="checkbox"/> 9. Doing things on time.
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Asking for help when needed.	<input type="checkbox"/> 10. Works well with others.

I could do better at

because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.

Group Evaluation:

<input type="checkbox"/> 1. Following teacher's instructions.	<input type="checkbox"/> 6. Helping others to understand.
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. Sharing ideas and information.	<input type="checkbox"/> 7. Solving problems
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. Staying on task	<input type="checkbox"/> 8. Works well with others
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. Sharing responsibilities.	<input type="checkbox"/> 9. Completes the assignment.
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. Respecting others	<input type="checkbox"/> 10. Asking questions

Peer Evaluation:

Give a mark to each group member using a scale of 1-10

Mark

Group Member

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## **ADDITIONAL STORIES**

### **The Creation of Dehcho, The Big River**

**John Tetso (1921-1964)**  
**(Fort Simpson area)**

Way back in the days of bows and arrows, we had spring, summer, fall and winter, just like we have now. One year something went wrong. It was spring, and the pretty leaves were on the trees. The birds of every kind came from the South, built their nests and laid their eggs. The cow moose had their calves born, and hovered over them protectively. Fish that spawn in the spring, went up creeks to do the work of reproduction.

The Dene put away their snowshoes, moved their camps to sunny hillsides, and took it easy, soaking up the sun. Their hard, cold winter days were over and long, lazy days were here. Little did they know what nature had in store for them.

One morning, they awoke to find a little snow on the ground and it was cold. The north wind was blowing hard and more snow was coming down. Soon, everything was covered with a heavy blanket of snow. Lakes and river froze over, and some waterfowl perished, being caught unprepared.

At first, the Dene thought it was strange. It made some of them laugh. Some of them thought it might be just a late spring snowfall. Soon, they were forced to put their snowshoes on as more snow kept coming down and by now was knee-deep.

On and on it snowed. The wind also kept whistling through the woods, piling huge drifts many feet deep. After many days, the wind died down, and the snow ceased to fall. A very bitter cold gripped the land under its blanket of white. The days grew shorter, just like when it's winter with long, long cold nights.

Across the vast land, starvation stalked both man and beast. Some villages were lucky, others were not. Once in a while, someone found a frozen calf given up by the mother, but a little calf in a large village was not enough to

## Stories of Our Origins

keep everyone alive and soon some of the villages had no smoke coming from them.

The Great Master knew the suffering of the poor Dene, so He decided on a plan to help them and at the same time to make a big river for us, to drink from, to fish in and travel on.

As the Dene in those days ate mostly meat, our Master sent them a great big ball of dried meat, which dropped somewhere in the east from here. When it dropped, the huge ball started to roll westward. Two young men with special powers were also sent. These men had long poles with a spear at one end, and as the great ball rolled they attacked it with their poles, peeling great chunks of dried meat.

When the man on the left peeled some off, he attacked it with such vigour that it made the huge ball roll more to the right. It did the same with the man on the right, winding as our river does today. Instead of decreasing in size as some of it was being peeled off, the great ball grew bigger and bigger as it rolled across the land and into the sea, thus making the river wider towards the mouth.

A great, wide path was left where the huge ball had rolled, leaving no trees standing. The Dene hunting in the woods came upon this path. Some of them were frightened away, thinking some monster was roaming the land, eating people. Others were braver and walked along the wide path finding peeled off meat. Soon word was spread and the Dene moved their tents to the strip of broken land. Everyday the Dene gathered the meat, storing it away.

Many, many moons later, the days grew longer and warmer. By and by, spring came again, and with spring, the birds came back from the South. The snow on the mountains and trees melted, turned into water and made the little rivers come back to life with the merry sound of running water.

Gradually, the wide path filled up with water from the melting snow, and started to flow in the direction taken by the big ball of meat. At first it was awfully muddy, but as time went on, it got clearer, and as it did all the broken trees were carried away to the mouth.

This is the story of the creation of the Dehcho, The Big River.

The End

## **The Creation Story of the Weledeh River (Yellowknife River)**

As told by the Yellowknives Dene First Nation

The banks of the Weledeh, from the mouth to the rapids, have always been preferred sites for fish camp settlements. For generations, the people have told their youth a story about the creation of the Weledeh. This story occurred in the time of Yamozha, the very powerful medicine man of the Dene.

Yamozha was pursuing a giant beaver that lived at the mouth of the Weledeh, in order to help the people for two reasons. The giant animal had dragged people under water when they were canoeing and the beaver had blocked off the flow of the Weledeh into Tinde'e (Great Slave Lake) by building a huge dam across the mouth.

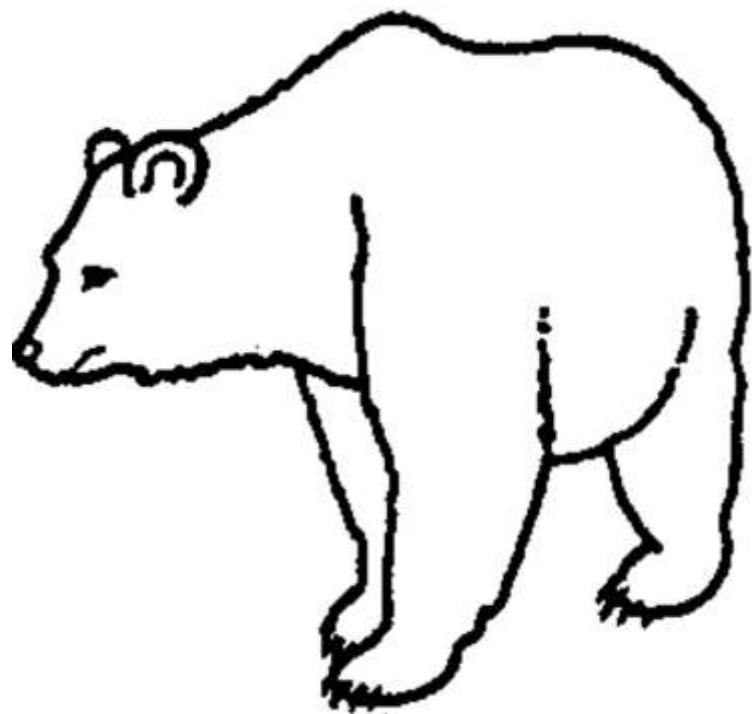
Yamozha had a giant snow shovel, much like smaller ones used by Weledeh Yellowknives Dene, for ice fishing. The snow shovel had mesh make from woven babiche, like a snowshoe, and could be used to scoop pieces of ice out of the fishing hole. Yamozha stuck his huge snow shovel into the giant beaver's lodge. The giant beaver pushed the huge lodge to one side of the Weledeh, swimming into Tinde'e to escape from Yamozha. The river flowed freely, as it does to this day.

The giant beaver's dam became stone and to this day it exists on the point of land at the mouth of the Weledeh. This place is known by Weledeh Yellowknives as Kweh ka tzsoa ("kway-kah-tso-ah"). Yamozha stuck his huge snow shovel into the beaver dam and to this day it is growing as a large spruce tree. This tree is known as Tsi-wah cho ("tsee-wah choe"). This tree and the land around it is a very sacred site to Weledeh Yellowknives Dene. Many of the peoples, past and present, have paid their respects at the site of Kweh ka tzsoa and Tsi-wah cho. The tree site – and the hill to the north of it – were also strategic lookout points for Akeh-cho; he would stand next to the tree or on top of the hill watching the bay for tribal enemies of strangers.

Stories of Our Origins

Appendix A Blackline Masters

Bear

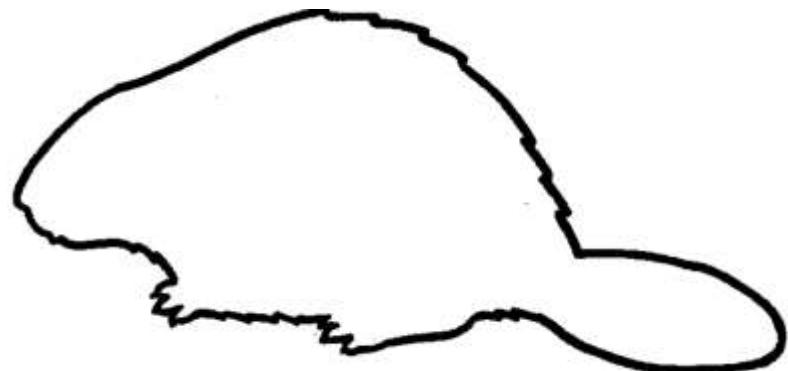


Stories of Our Origins

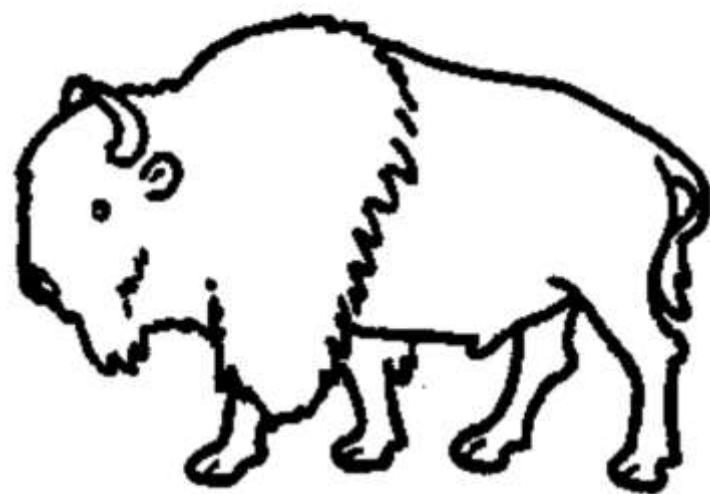
Beaver



Stories of Our Origins

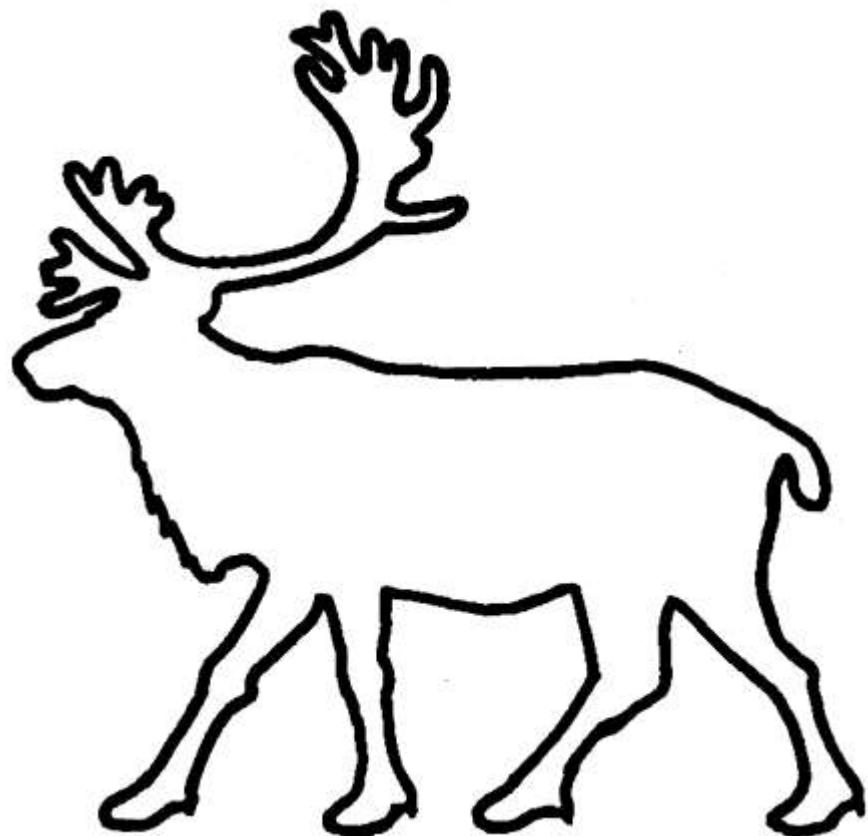


Bison



Stories of Our Origins

Caribou



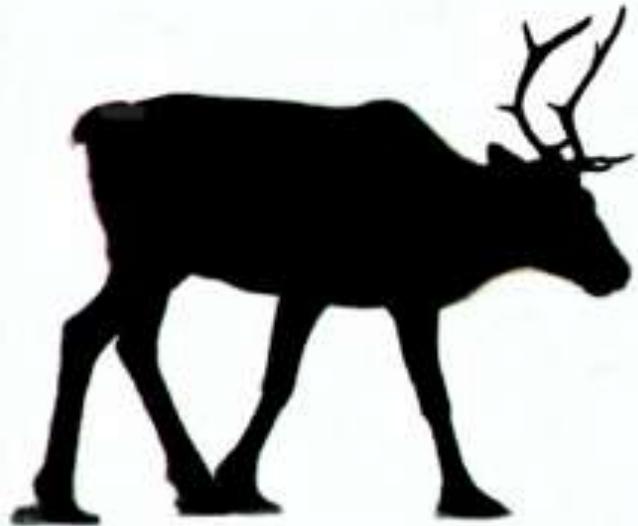
Stories of Our Origins



Stories of Our Origins



Stories of Our Origins



Stories of Our Origins



Stories of Our Origins

Duck

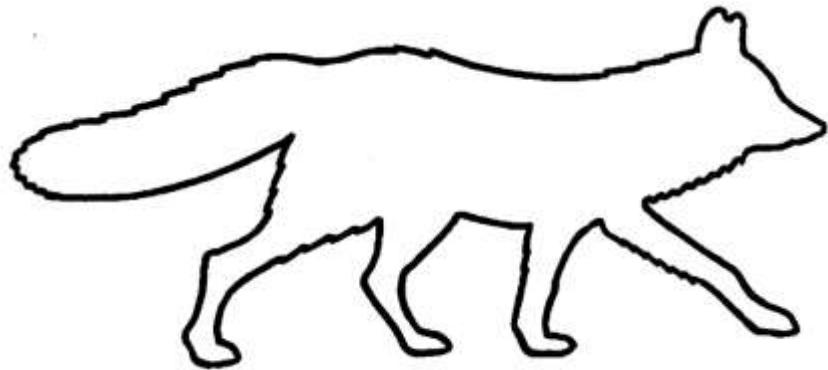


Stories of Our Origins

Fox

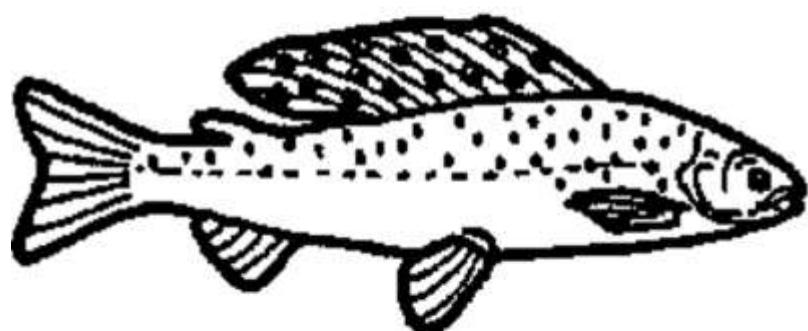


Stories of Our Origins



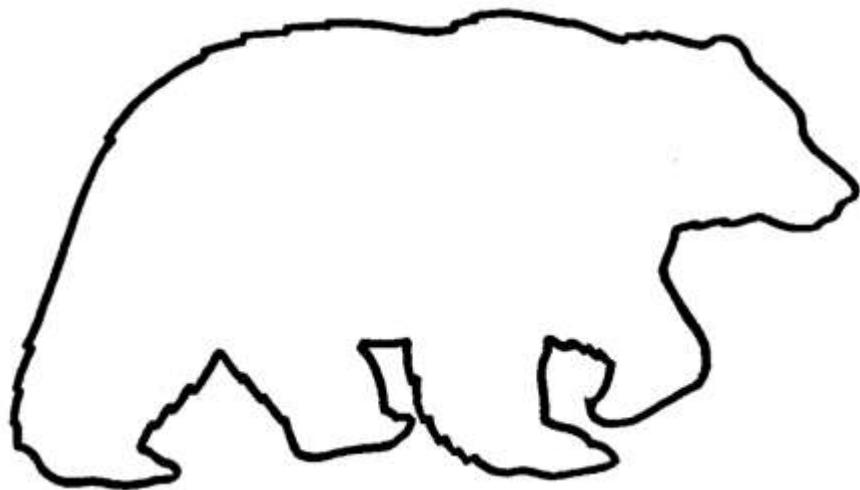
Stories of Our Origins

Grayling



Stories of Our Origins

Grizzly

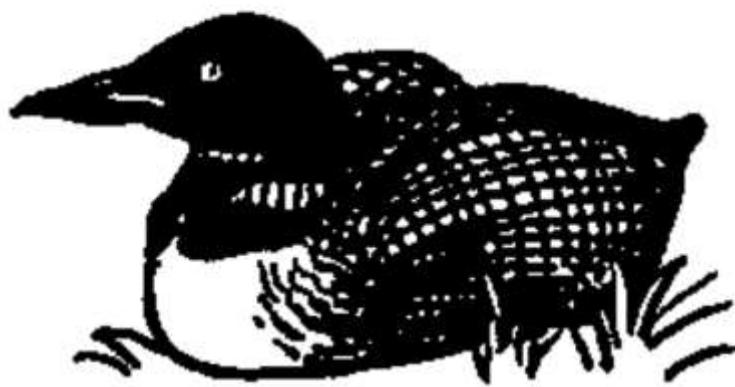


Stories of Our Origins

Loon

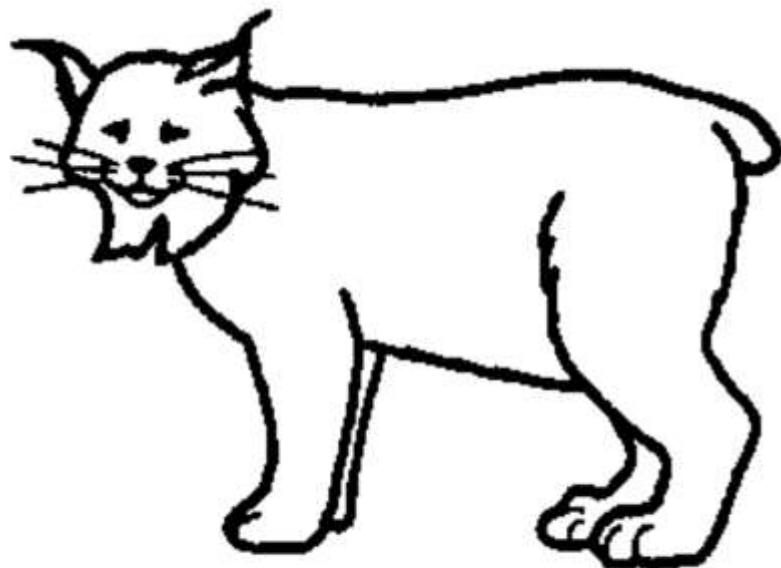


Stories of Our Origins



Stories of Our Origins

Lynx



Stories of Our Origins

Marten

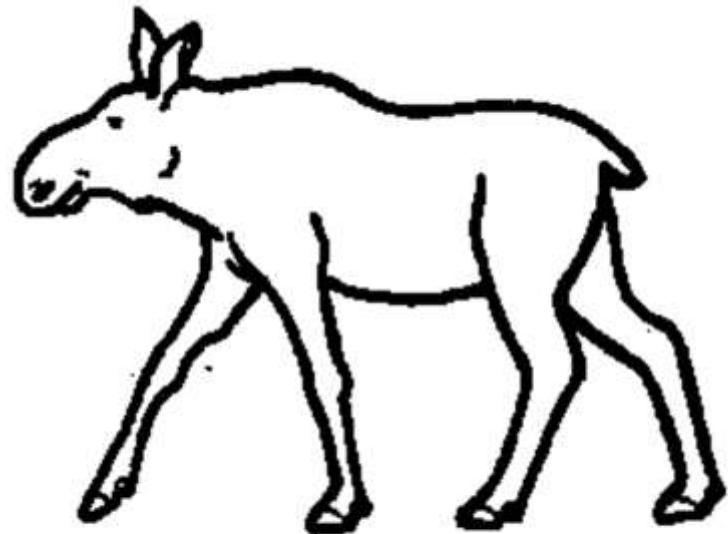


Stories of Our Origins

Moose



Stories of Our Origins

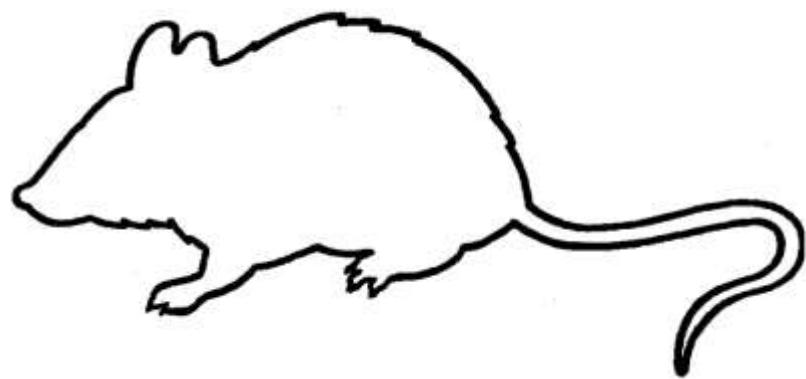


Stories of Our Origins

Mouse



Stories of Our Origins



Musk Ox



Stories of Our Origins

**Muskrat**



Stories of Our Origins



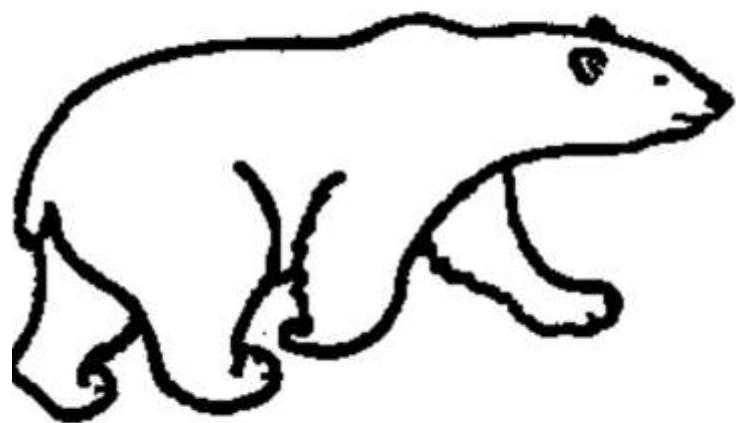
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Otter



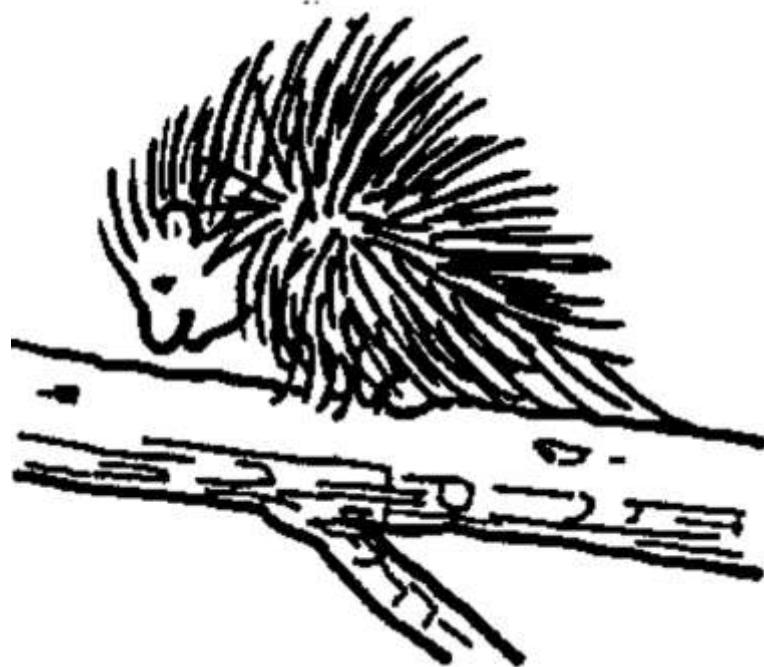
Stories of Our Origins

Polar Bear



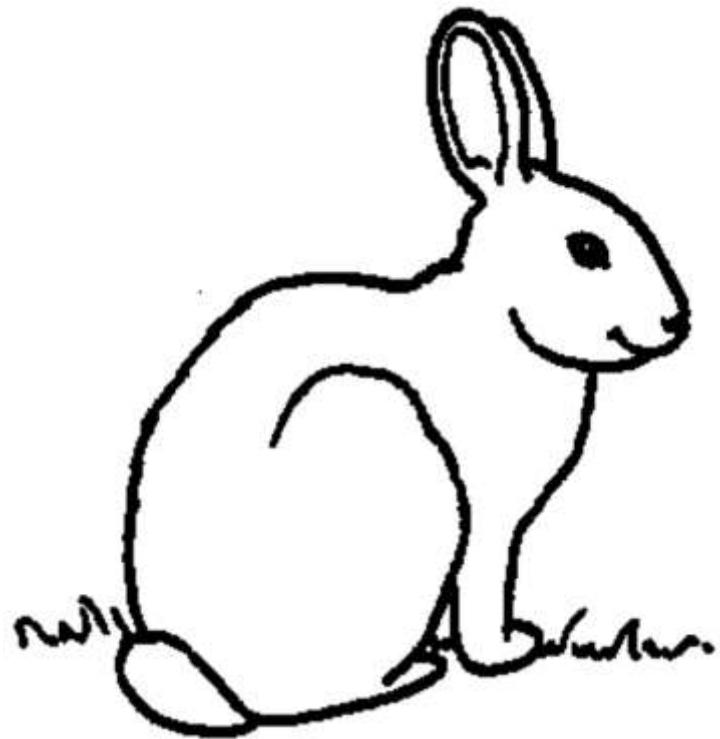
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Porcupine



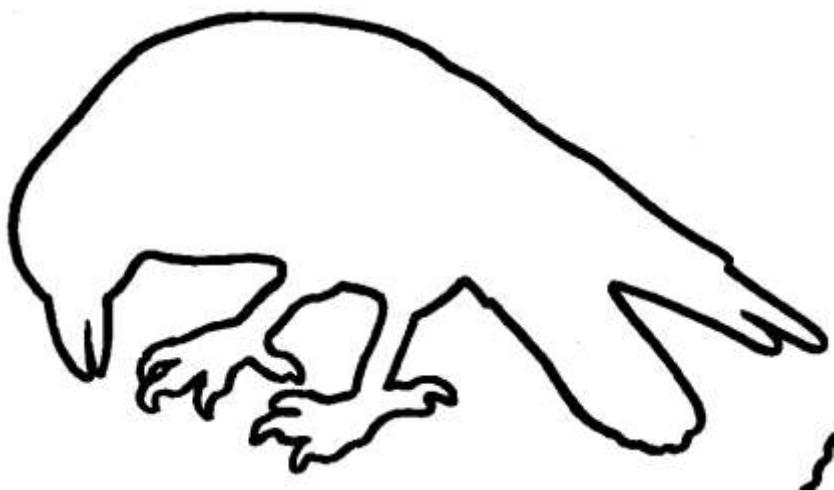
Stories of Our Origins

Rabbit

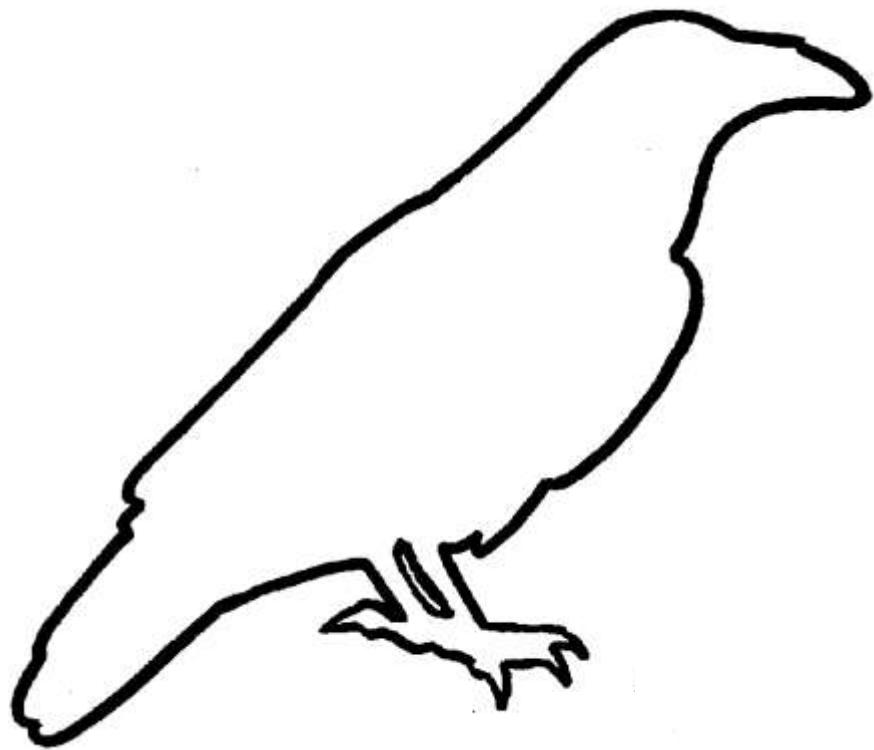


Stories of Our Origins

Raven



Stories of Our Origins



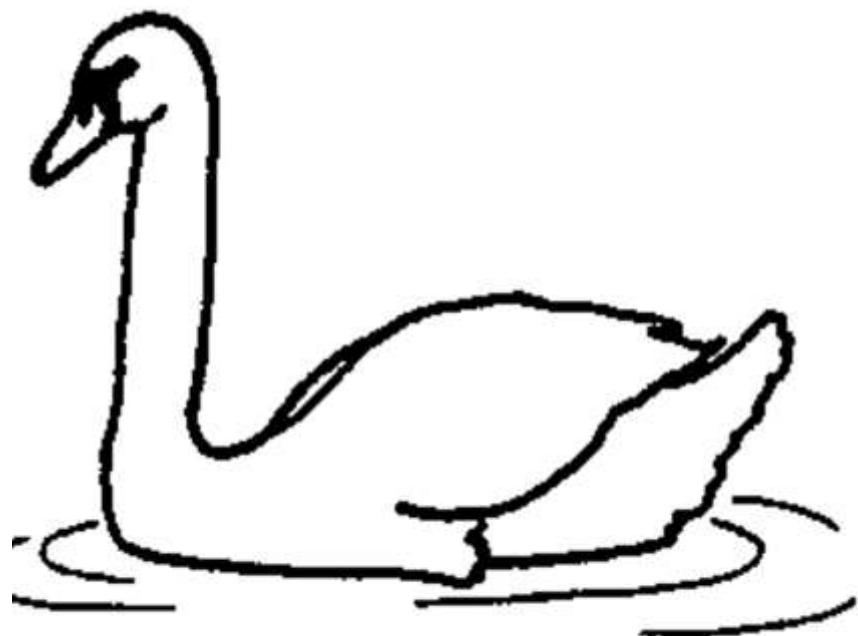
Stories of Our Origins

Sheep



Stories of Our Origins

Swan



Stories of Our Origins

WWeasel

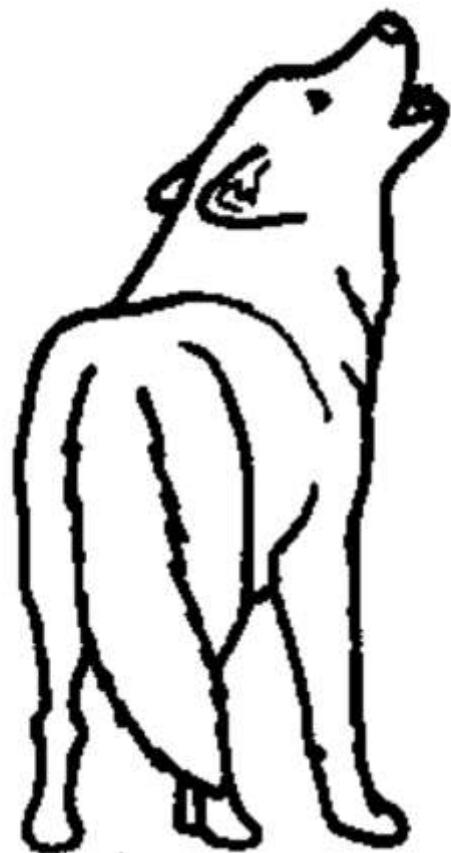


Stories of Our Origins

Wolf

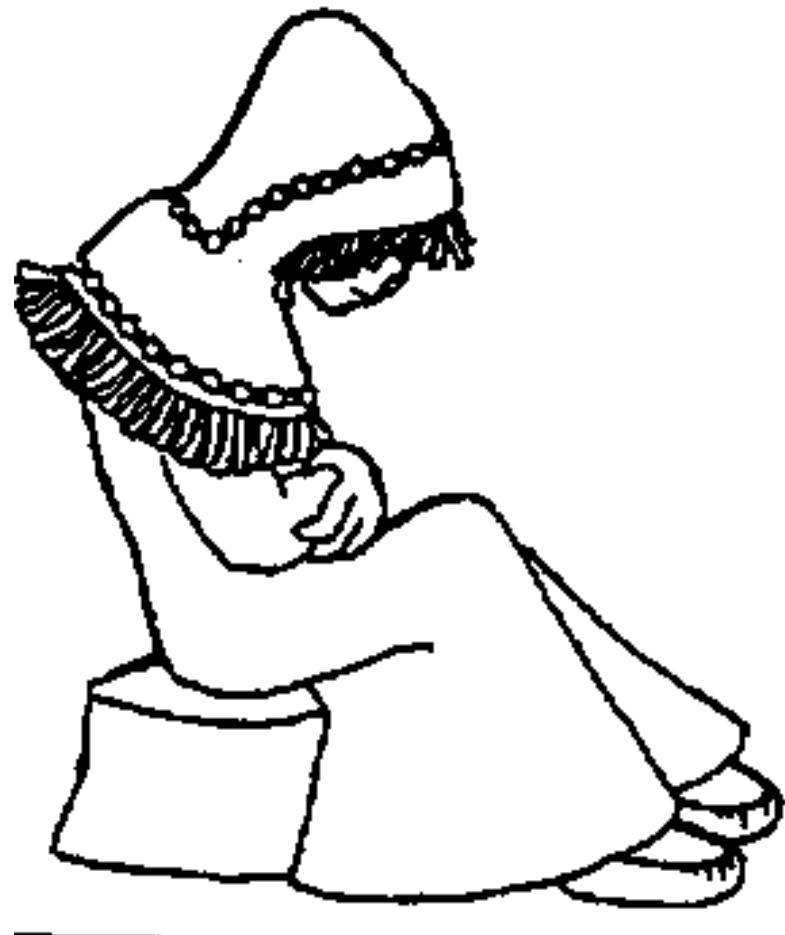


Stories of Our Origins



Stories of Our Origins

(Woman Sitting)



Stories of Our Origins

Baby



Stories of Our Origins

Boy

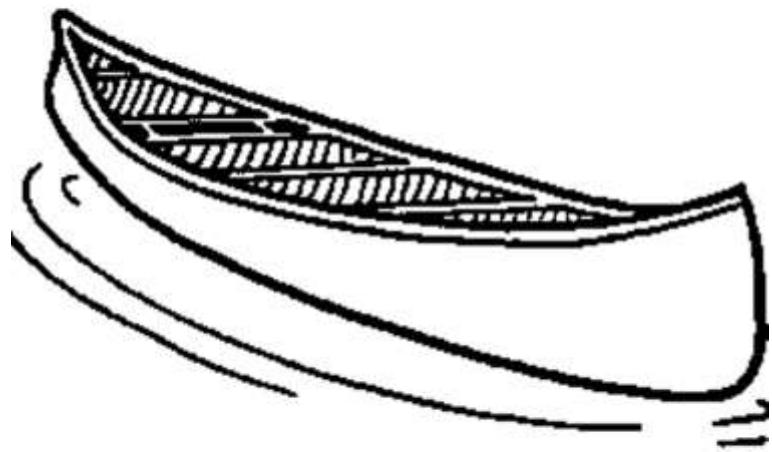


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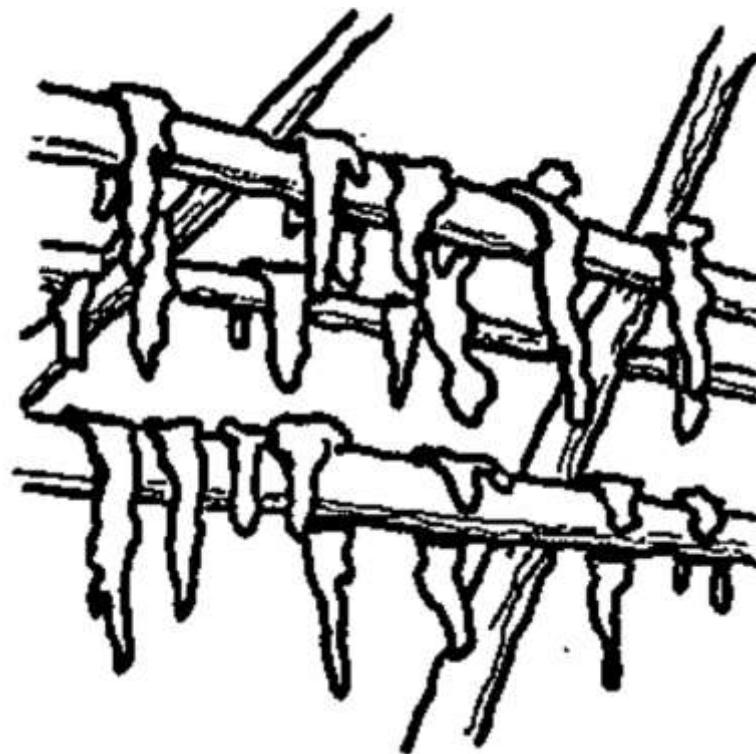
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Canoe



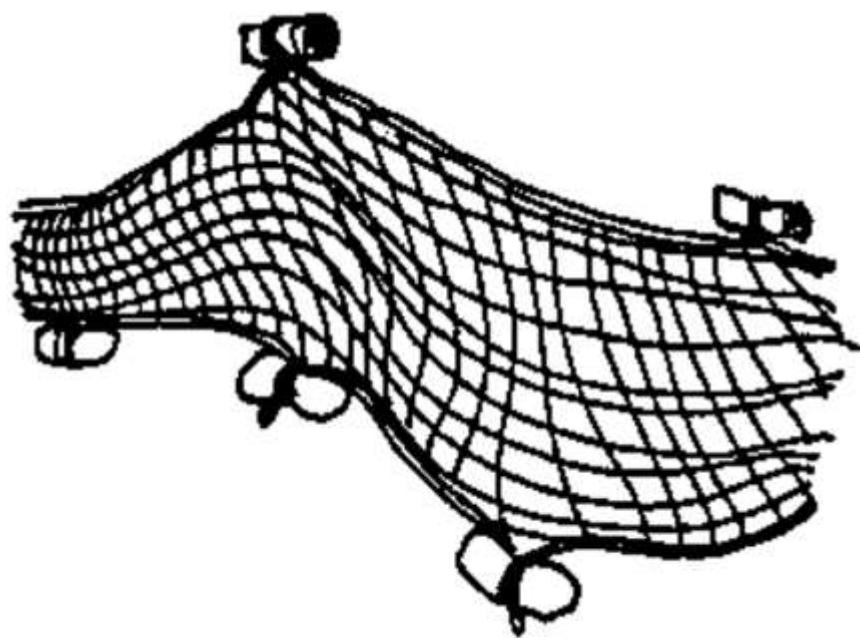
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Dry Meat



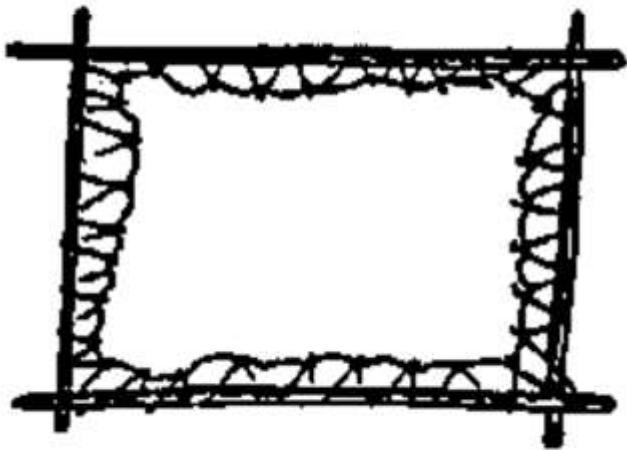
Stories of Our Origins

Fish Net



Stories of Our Origins

Preparing Hides



Stories of Our Origins



Stories of Our Origins



Stories of Our Origins

Island



Stories of Our Origins

Mountain



Stories of Our Origins

Raft



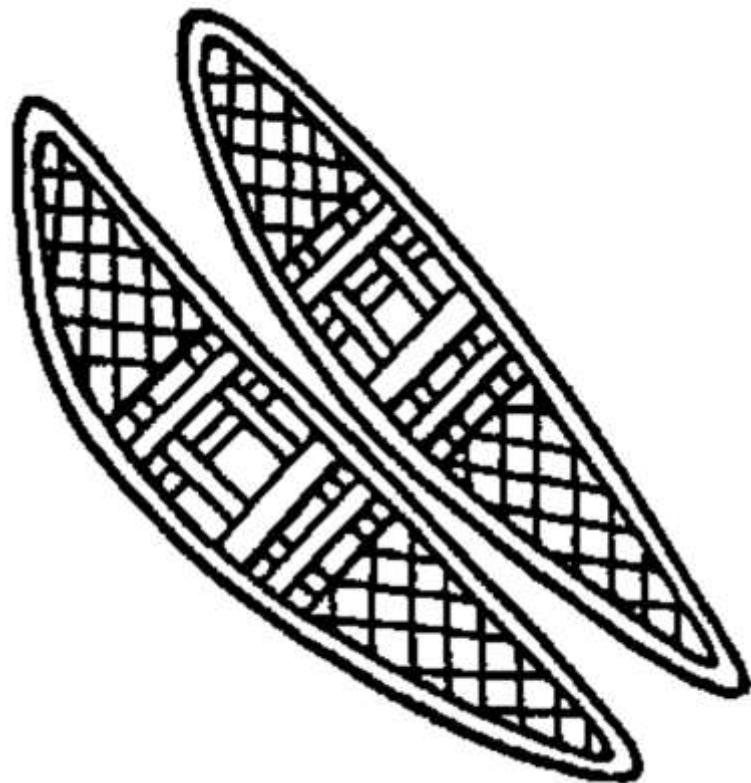
Stories of Our Origins

Rock



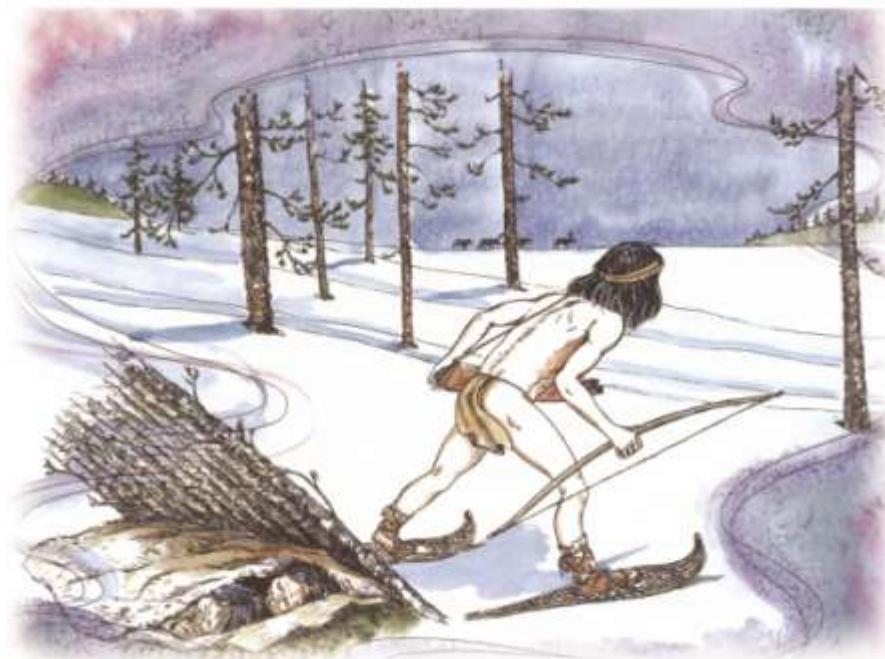
Stories of Our Origins

Snowshoes



Stories of Our Origins

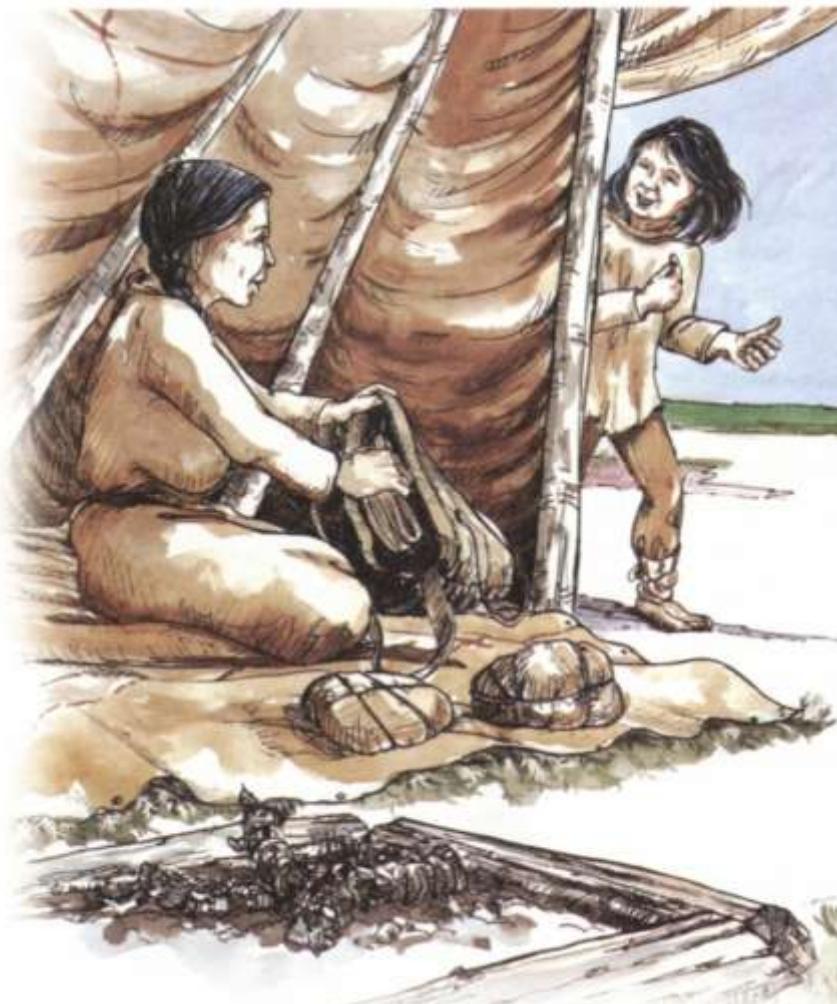
Appendix B Cut Out Puppets



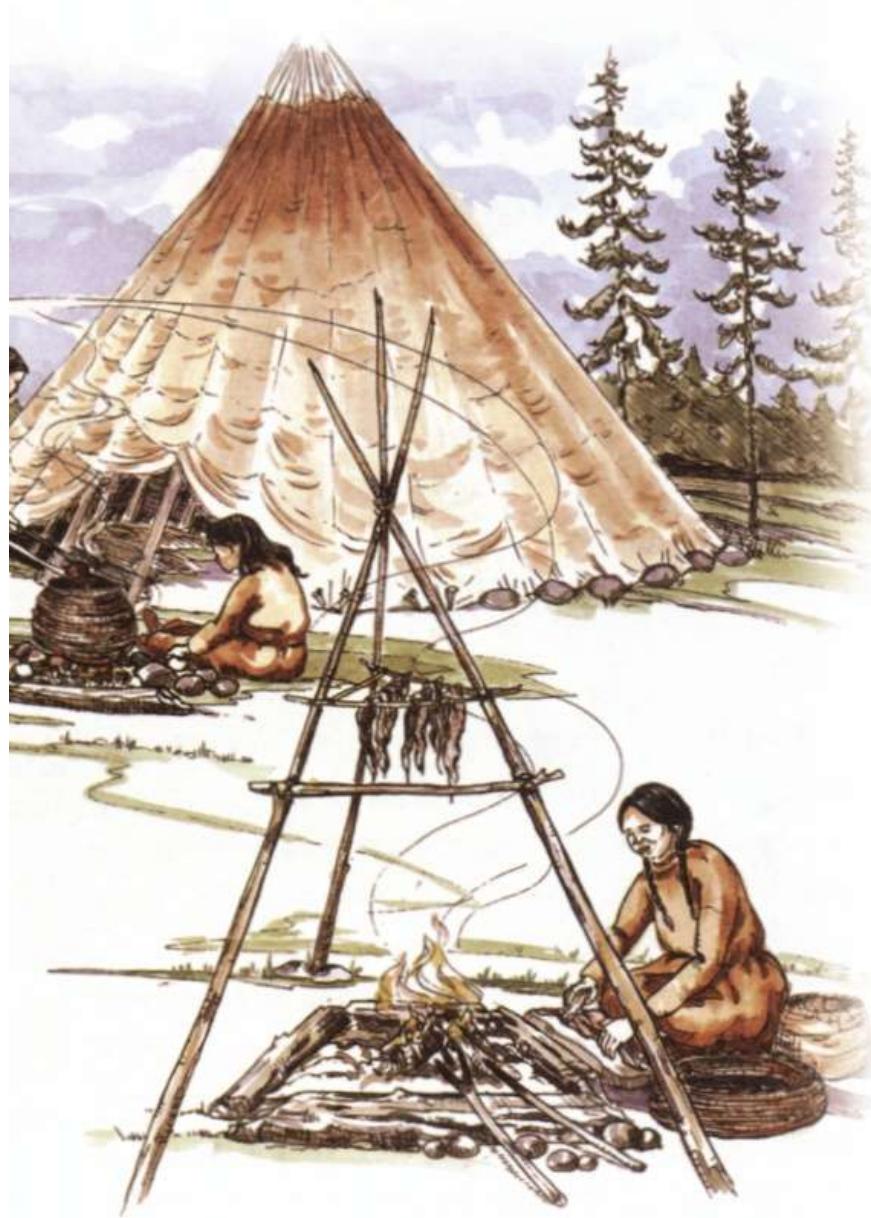
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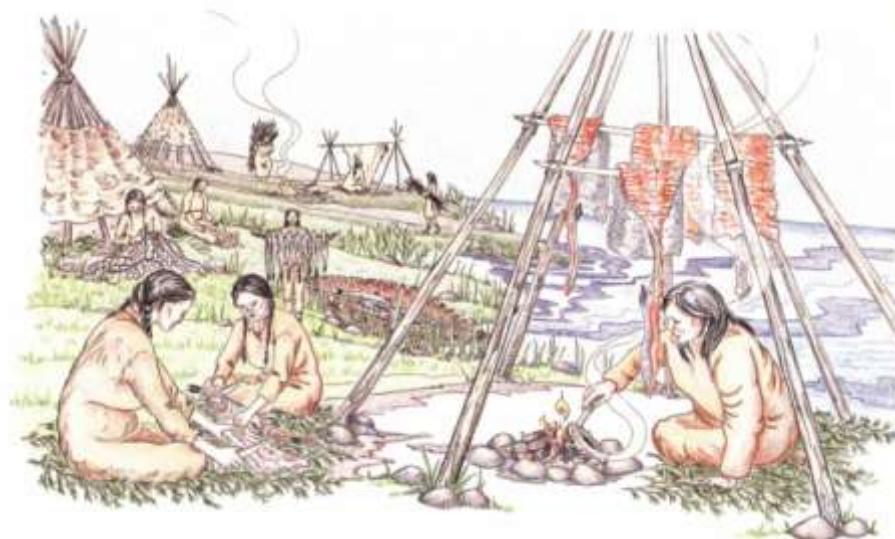
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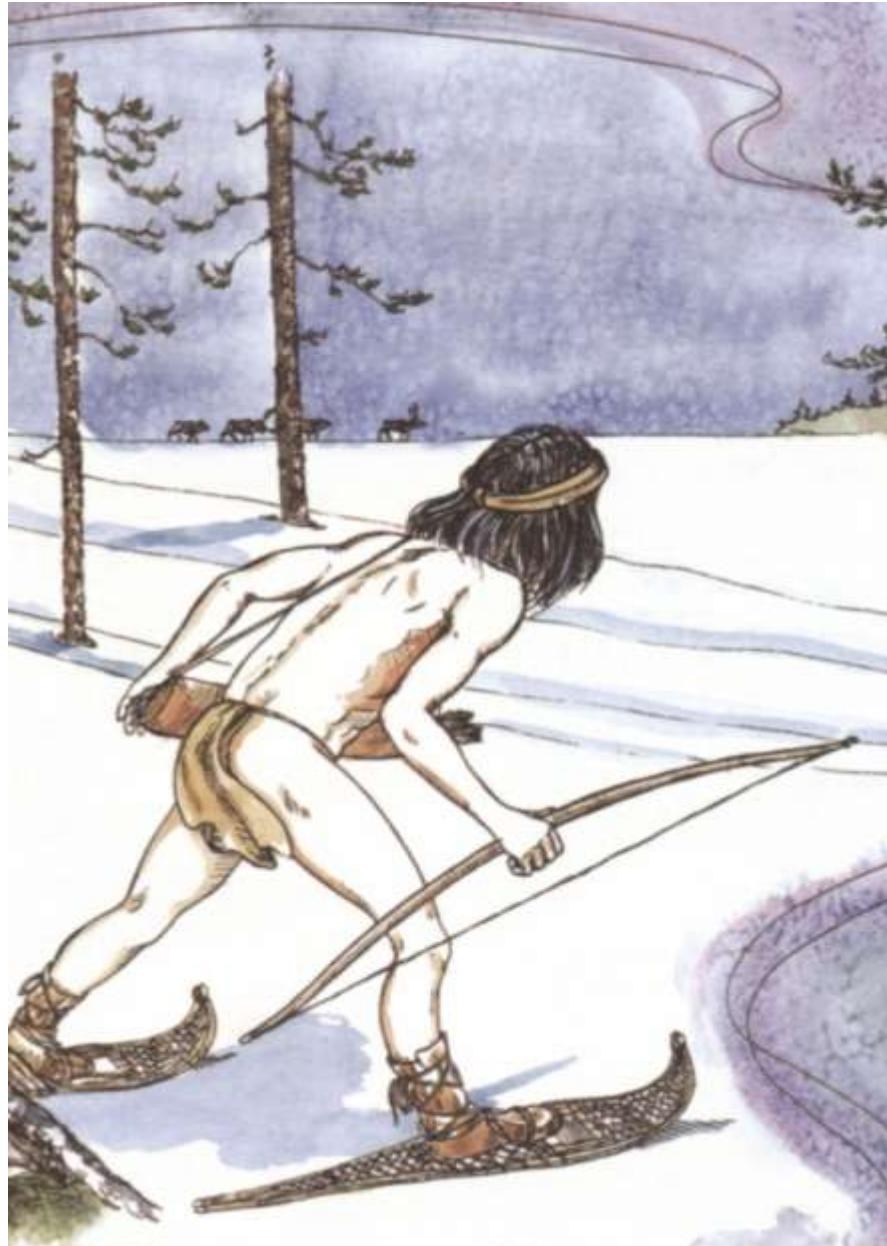
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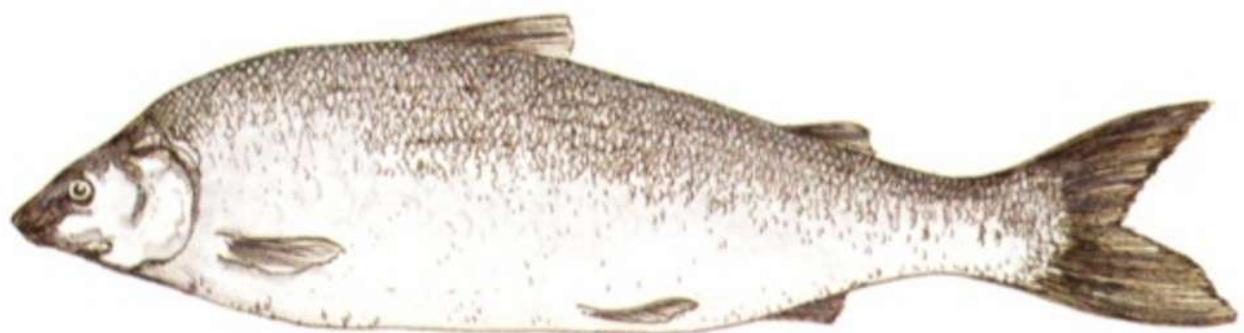


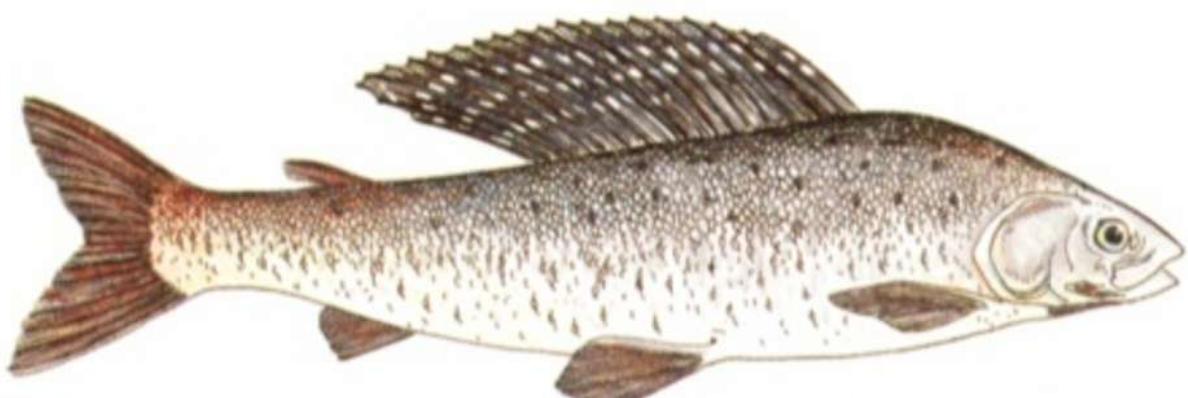
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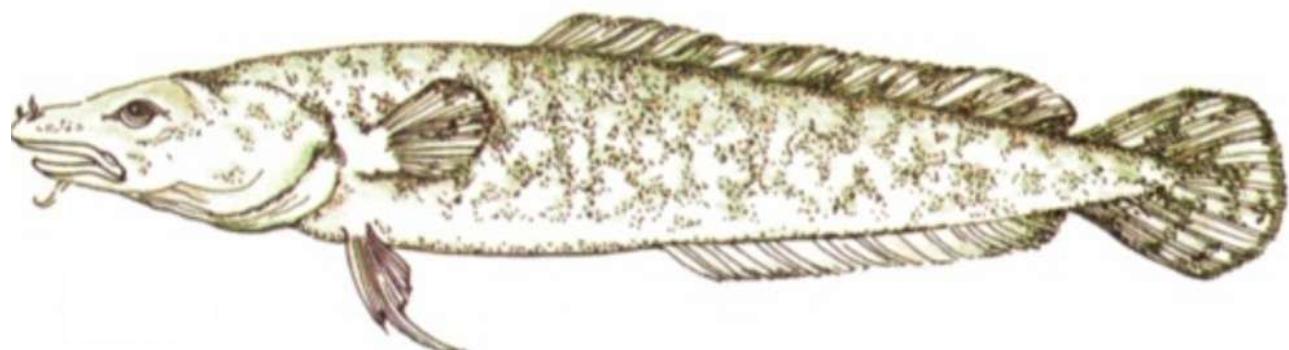
Stories of Our Origins

Appendix C Fish Identification Images













## Appendix C **Bibliography/Webliography**

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Blondin, George, When the World Was New, Yellowknife: Outcrop Publishers, 1991

Blondin, George Yamoria the Lawmaker. Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1997.

Comment [W1]:

[www.gwichin.ca](http://www.gwichin.ca)

[www.dogrib.ca](http://www.dogrib.ca)

[siksik.learnnet.nt.ca/PDF/02\\_K-12/Legends/story4.pdf](http://siksik.learnnet.nt.ca/PDF/02_K-12/Legends/story4.pdf)

<http://www.deneculture.org/denelaws.htm>

<http://www.akaitcho.info/links.html>

## Appendix D

### How to Create a Full Kit

**Puppets:** Prices range from \$12.99 - \$39.00 per puppet. Order from "Who's Who in the Zoo" – 403-651-5141 (Calgary)

[www.whoswhointhezoo.com](http://www.whoswhointhezoo.com)

**Loon Toy:** [www.kazootoys.com](http://www.kazootoys.com) or call 1-800-257-0008

**Books:** Order through The Book Cellar (867-920-2220, Yellowknife)

**Videos/DVD's:** "Yamoria and the Giant Wolverine" available from Cogent/Benger Productions (1-416-535-5394)

**Muskrat Pelts:** \$12 each from Halford Hides in Edmonton (1-800-353-7864)

**Tubs:** Action Packer tubs available from True Value Hardware, Yellowknife (or local hardware in your community) (867) 765-5675

## ANSWER GUIDE TO STUDENT ACTIVITY BOOK

### The Old Man with the Otter Medicine

#### ***Understanding the Story***

1. What happened to the people living by the fish lake in the winter?

*They ran out of fish to eat.*

---

2. What did the old man ask the people to make for him?

*He asked them to make him a drum.*

---

3. The old man used his medicine to transform into an animal.

Which animal did he turn into?

*He turned into an otter.*

---

4. At first the old man/otter thought there were no fish in the lake. Finally he found them. Where were the fish all this time and who was guarding them?

*The fish were in a cave guarded by 2 large jackfish.*

---

5. How do the people in this story show their appreciation for the Old Man with the Otter Medicine?

*The people held a large feast in honour of the Old Man.*

---

## Stories of Our Origins

### ***Other Activities***

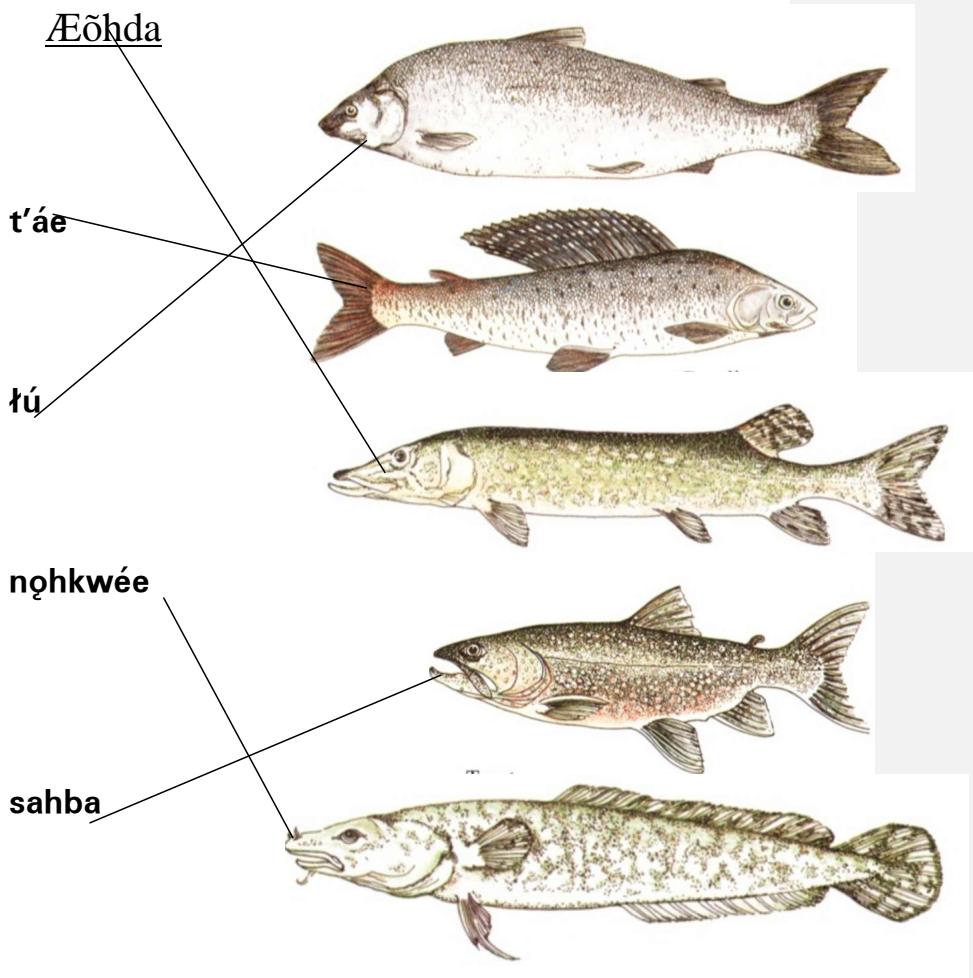
- What is Medicine Power? Use George Blondin's stories to investigate "e'chon" (eh-choe).  
(students' ideas here)
- What sorts of fish could have been in the hole at the bottom of the lake? Make a list.  
*Lake trout, loche, grayling, inconnu, whitefish etc.*
- List the characteristics of the otter.  
*Clever, fast, smart, strong, determined etc,*
- If you could have any Medicine Power, what type would you have? Why?  
(students' ideas here)
- List and talk about the different ways of fishing in summer and winter (past and present)  
(students' knowledge here)

### North Slavey Language Activity

Here are the English and North Slavey words for common fish in the NWT.

grayling - t'áe (ta-eh)	jackfish - Ɂóhda (oh-dah)
trout - sahba (sah-bah)	
whitefish - Ɂú (kloo)	loche - nōhkwéé (no-kway)

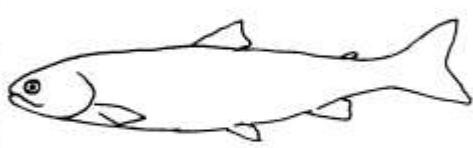
Match the North Slavey word with the correct fish.



Stories of Our Origins

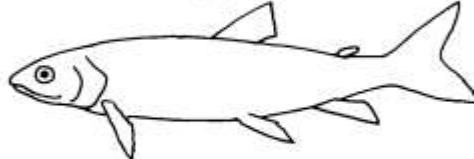
Unscramble the names of the fish.

ARCH



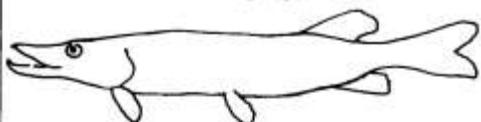
char

ROUTT



trout

SHACKJIF



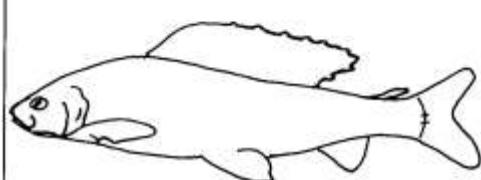
jackfish

CHOLE



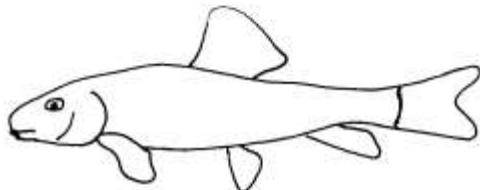
loche

GAYLRING



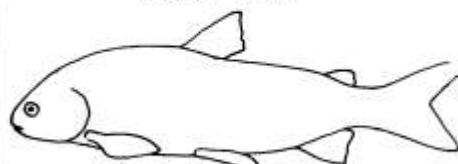
grayling

KCURSE



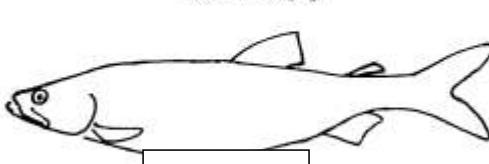
sucker

WISH THIEF



whitefish

IONNNCU



inconnu

## ***The Dene Logo and the Legend of Yamoria***

### **Told by George Blondin**

#### ***Understanding the Story***

1. Where does this story take place? (Name the rivers and lake).  
*Sahtu, Dehcho, Sahtu De*

2. Why did the Dene people want Yamoria to come and help them?  
*They were unable to travel on Sahtu because of the giant beavers.*

3. What landmarks can you see today that are from Yamoria's story with the giant beavers?  
*Bear Rock Mountain, Smoking Hills, Sahtu De Rapids, Yamoria'a arrows*

4. The ribbon on the Dene logo has five colours, one for each of the 5 Dene tribes. Name the languages spoken for the 5 Dene tribes.

*Dogrib, North Slavey, South Slavey, Gwich'in, Chipewyan*

---

---

B-3-

## ***North Slavey Language Activity***

Here are 4 of the important places talked about in this story. Read the story again and find the English word for these places.

**Kwetení?aa -** *Bear Rock Mountain*

**Sahtu De -** *Bear River*

**Sahtu -** *Great Bear Lake*

**Deh Cho -** *Mackenzie River*

## Scrambled Words

Unscramble these words from the story!

**Ehd hco** (*hint – a river*) - *dehcho*

**Eabvre** (*hint – an animal*) - *beaver*

**MaYroia** (*hint – hero of the story*) *Yamoria*

**Irvre** (*hint – type of water*) *river*

**UTilat** (*hint – place*) *Tulita*

**TShau** (*hint – lake*) *Sahtu*

## ***The Mackenzie Land***

(from the book, Elik by Herbert Schwarz)

### *Understanding the story*

1. Where does this story take place?

*Near Tuktoyaktuk*

2. Name the group of people in this story.

*Inuvialuit*

3. List the main characters in this story.

*Father, mother, boy, orphan girl*

4. What happened to the sealskin bag that was tied to the tree trunk?

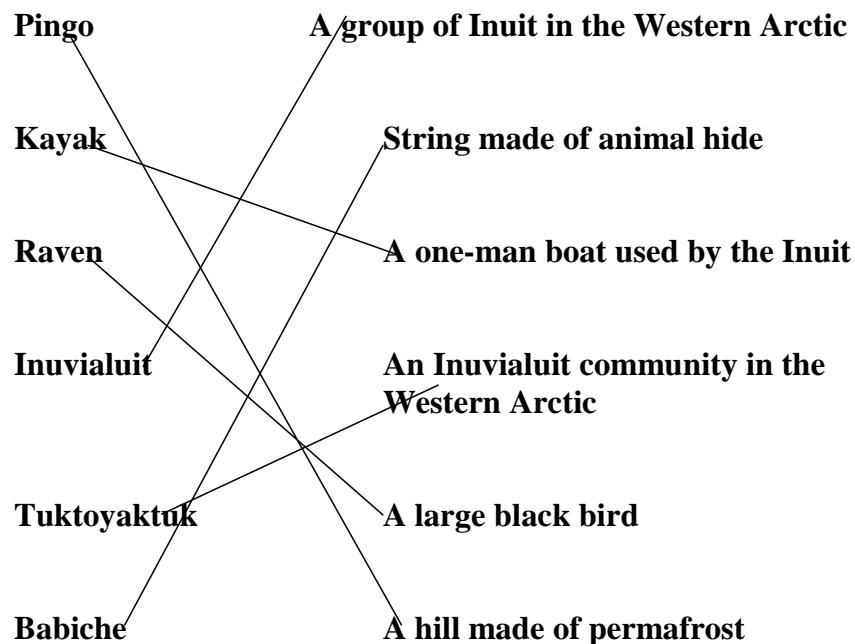
*It was filled with water and then it burst!*

5. What types of things reappeared after the boy (Raven spirit) harpooned the island? Make a list of them.

*Caribou, fish, land, rivers, lakes, seals and whales*

Vocabulary

*Match the following words from the story with the correct meanings.*



### Inuvialuit Language Activity

- The Inuvialuktun words for **man**, **woman**, **girl**, **son** and **raven** are:

**Angun , arnaq, niviaqsiraq, irniq , tulugaq**

Use each Inuvialuktun word in a meaningful sentence.

(angun)

---

\_\_\_\_\_

(arnaq)

---

\_\_\_\_\_

(niviaqsiraq)

---

\_\_\_\_\_

(irniq)

---

\_\_\_\_\_

(tulugaq)

---

- Read the following short paragraph. Now rewrite the paragraph replacing the Inuvialuktun words with English words.

There was a **tulugaq** who lived on the edge of a village. Each day he would watch a tall **angun** go out in his kayak to check his fishnet. Sometimes his **irniq** would also bring his kayak and help check the net. When they got home, they would take the fish to an **arnaq** who would clean the fish with the help of a young **niviaqsiraq**. Each day the **tulugaq** would watch, hoping that he would get a fish too!

## **The Caribou Boy**

Told by John Blondin  
1993

### **Understanding the Story**

- 1. What made the grandfather think there was something special about the little boy?**

*He was making sounds in his sleep.*

- 2. What was special about the grandfather?**

*He had special medicine.*

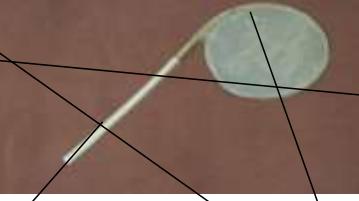
- 3. The boy left in the middle of the night. Where did he go and how did the family find him?**

He went to be with the caribou. The family saw his clothes, tracks and saw that he had turned into a caribou.

- 4. What happened to the little boy at the end of the story?**

*He turned into a caribou.*

## Language Activity

English Word	Item made from caribou	North Slavey Word
scraper		Ǝchú
mitt		bó
babiche		Ep'ine
rattle		Bebí Ǝshéle hánágoye

**awl**



**tłuhgø**

D-8-

Stories of Our Origins

***The Hoof Baby***  
**Told by Pierre Judas**  
Wekweti, 1983



E-1-

**Understanding the story**

1. Where did the older woman find the tiny boy?

*In one of the caribou tracks.*

2. What did the woman make as a gift for the boy?

*A bow and arrow.*

3. What is the other animal mentioned in this story? Name 2

*ways it was used.*

*Raven – for food and a blanket*

4. The tiny boy had special powers. Describe his powers.

*He could change himself into a caribou.*

5. Why did the boy get angry and take the bucket of grease to

*the moon?*

*He had asked his uncle not to put his finger into his bucket , but the uncle did not respect him.*

## *Dogrib Language Activity*

Learn these words in **English and Dogrib:**

**caribou - ekwò**      **raven - tatsò**

Fill in the blanks with the correct Dogrib word:

The old woman found a tiny boy in the track of the  
\_\_\_\_ekwo\_\_\_\_\_.

When the boy was little, the old woman fed him with food from the —tatso—.

The boy wanted a bow and arrow so he could hunt  
\_\_\_\_\_ekwo\_\_\_\_\_.

The people were hungry and wanted to eat  
\_\_\_\_\_ekwokwo\_\_\_\_\_.

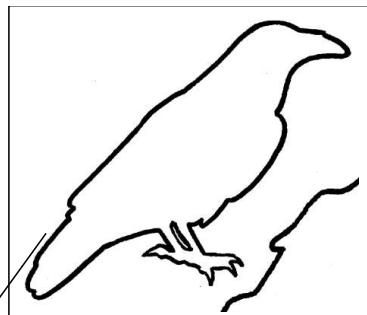
The boy's go?eh put his finger in the to of grease.

The boy was upset with his uncle and took the bucket of grease to the \_\_\_\_\_adzezaa\_\_\_\_\_.

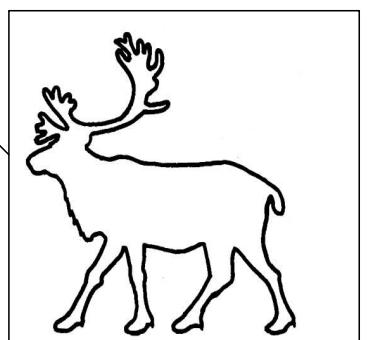
Stories of Our Origins

*Match the Dogrib word on the left, with the correct picture on the right.*

**ekwò**



**adzəzaà**



**tatsò**



**tò**



## **Where Our World Came From**

Told by Peter Ross

1. List the animals in this story.

*Beaver, raven, otter, muskrat, loon, ducks*

2. Who was the first animal to dive into the water?

*Muskrat*

3. Why were the animals diving into the water one by one?

*They were trying to find some earth.*

4. How did Raven get the earth to come back?

*He used the mud from the beaver's paws.*

5. Peter Ross told this story.

Which community was he from? *Ft. McPherson*

Which language is spoken there? *Gwich'in*

**Gwich'in and English Animal Names**

muskrat - dzan



loon - ts'ałvít



otter - tryuh



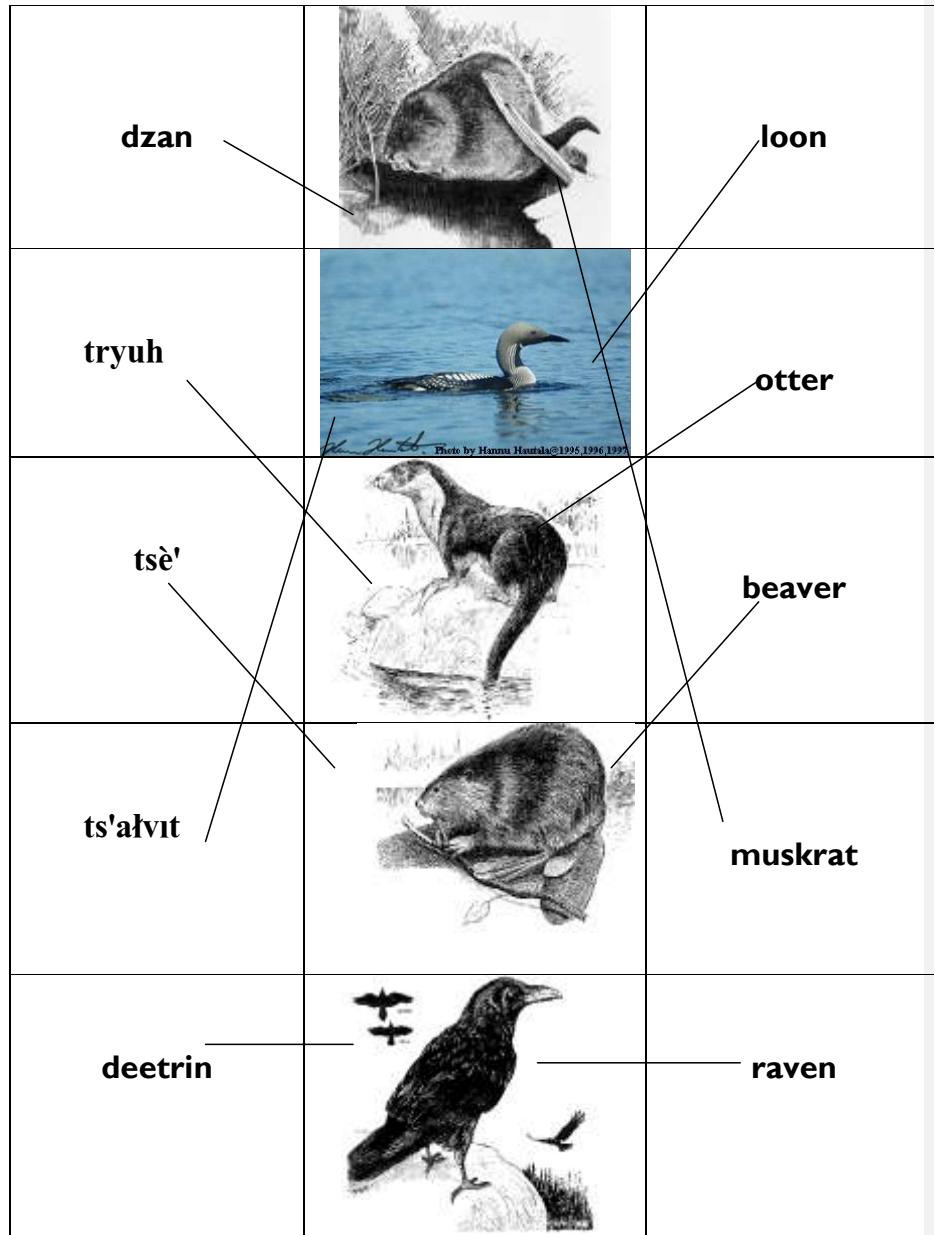
raven - deetrin



beaver - tsè'

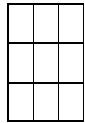


**Match the animal picture with its Gwich'in and English name:**



**There are many animals and birds in this story. Match the animals and birds on the left with the description on the right! (the first one is done for you!)**

1. Raven      e      a. A black duck
  
2. Muskrat      D      b. An animal with a flat tail
  
3. Beaver      B      c. This bird is an excellent diver
  
4. Otter      F      d. This animal is small and brown
  
5. Loon      C      e. This is a large black bird.
  
6. Scoter (duck) A      f. This animal has a long tail.



## **Crowbeard Finds Abreeza**

### ***Understanding the Story***

1. What kind of story is this?

*A love story.*

2. What are the names of the 2 main characters and what is special about each of them?

*Abreeza and Crowbeard (both have medicine power)*

3. What did Abreeza do in **Łídlıj Kúé** when he stayed there for the winter?

*Hunted, trapped, fished and collected wood.*

4. Crowbeard finally found Abreeza. Where was she and what group of people was she living with?

*At the east arm of Sahtu – North Slavey*

5. How did Crowbeard travel during the summer months?

*By canoe.*

G-4-

## **Other Activities**

- What are the other names for the following communities or places?

## Łíidl̄i Kúé \_\_\_\_ Ft. Simpson\_\_\_\_\_

## Echaot'ię Kúé \_\_\_\_\_ Liard River \_\_\_\_\_

**Tulita** \_\_\_\_\_ **Ft. Norman** \_\_\_\_\_

## **Sahtu** \_\_\_\_\_ \_Great Bear Lake\_\_\_\_\_

## **Dehcho** \_\_\_\_\_ Mackenzie River \_\_\_\_\_

- Using the NWT map included at the back of your activity book, mark the communities/places in the correct places.
- Using the map and a coloured pencil or pen, trace Crowbeard's journey as he searched for Abreeza.
- Write a postcard from Crowbeard to Abreeza.
- If you could describe Crowbeard in 4 words, what words would you use?

\_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Communities of the NWT

<u>Traditional Name</u> <u>Language</u>	<u>English Meaning</u>	<u>English Name</u>
Łíidlij Kúé South Slavey	Place where rivers come together	Ft. Simpson
Echaot'je Kúé South Slavey	People from the land of giants place	Ft. Liard
Tulita North Slavey	Where the waters meet	Ft. Norman

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### Using the information in the chart, fill in the blanks:

South Slavey is spoken in \_\_\_\_ Ft. Simpson \_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_ Ft. Liard \_\_\_\_\_.

Ft. Liard is the English word for \_\_\_\_ People from the land of  
giants place \_\_\_\_\_.

Tulita means \_\_\_\_ Where the waters meet \_\_\_\_\_  
in the North Slavey language.

“People from the land of giants place” is the community of  
\_\_\_\_\_ Ft. Liard \_\_\_\_\_.

What language is spoken in the community of Łíidlij Kúé?  
\_\_\_\_ South Slavey \_\_\_\_\_

### **True (T) or False (F)**

1. Crowbeard lived near Yellowknife. F\_\_\_\_\_
2. At the beginning of the story, Crowbeard was 20 years old. T\_\_\_\_\_
3. Crowbeard was looking for Abreeza to become his wife. T\_\_\_\_\_
4. Crowbeard travelled to Echaot'jé Kúé in the winter. F\_\_\_\_\_
5. Crowbeard travelled on the Dehcho by birchbark canoe. T\_\_\_\_\_
6. Crowbeard arrived at Tulita just in time for Easter. F\_\_\_\_\_
7. After Crowbeard found Abreeza, they had a son named Karkeye. T\_\_\_\_\_