



Description: After dividing the learners into two groups, each group will listen to a creation story about either the Milky Way or the Pleiades star cluster. Each group will then create a story board sequence to use as a visual while retelling their story to their classmates.

Background: Stories and storytelling have a rich history. No one knows exactly where or when the practice of storytelling began. Many cultures like the Greeks, Romans, African-Americans, and Native Americans have used stories to connect one generation to the next. Early mythological stories attempted to explain the origin of the universe or the origin of life. These myths were often about gods or other supernatural beings. The mythology of origins focused on the world and how everything in the world came to be. Later, stories often centered on humans, their relationship to nature, and their interaction with the cultural world around them.

National Science Standards¹

3-5 Nature of Science

Understands the scientific enterprise

Knows that people of all ages, backgrounds and groups have made contributions to science and technology throughout history

National History Standards¹

3-4 History

Understands family life now and in the past, and family life in various places long ago

Knows the ways that families long ago expressed and transmitted their beliefs and values through oral tradition...

Understands the folklore and other cultural contributions form various regions of the United States and how they helped to form a national heritage

Understands how stories, legends, songs, ballads, games, and tall tales describe the environment, lifestyles, beliefs, and struggles of people in various regions of the country

National Language Arts Standards¹

3-5 Listening and Speaking

Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes

Listens for specific information in spoken texts
Organizes ideas for oral presentations

¹Kendall, J.S. & Marzano, R.J. (2000). *Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education*. (3rd ed.). Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Materials (For Class)

- [Audio files](#) of two Native American Cherokee creation stories as told by Deanna Johnson-McGraw (using RealPlayer audio, best played on computer with speakers) visit: <http://www.genesismission.org/educate/diffangle/exploring/index.html>
- Class will be divided into two groups: one group will listen to the creation story about the Milky Way and the other will listen to the story about the Pleiades star cluster.

For each student:

- [Communication Measurement Chart](#)
- Scissors
- Write-On Sheet, "[Stories of Origins](#)" (which Write-On Sheet depends on the story assigned to the group)
- Unlined paper for storyboard frames
- Colored markers or pencils for drawing storyboard

Procedure:

1. Have participants conduct a listening self-assessment using the "[Communication Measurement Chart](#)." Provide the chart and a pair of scissors to each student. Participants should first rate their self-perceived talk/listen ratio on chart 1. Participants should then find peers that are able to rate them using charts 2-4. Participants can then see how their self-rating compared with the perceptions of others.
2. Explain to participants that before there were books and newspapers, storytelling was a method of communicating information. In ancient times, cultures told stories about the patterns of stars in the sky called constellations. Ask participants to think about why storytelling is not as popular today as it was in the past. (Participants might suggest that there are other forms of communication and entertainment that are available today, i.e. Internet, newspapers, television, movies, sporting events, shopping, etc.)
3. Explain to participants that they are going to split into two groups. Each group will listen to a story, told from a Native American perspective, about either the formation of the Milky Way galaxy or the creation of the Pleiades star cluster.
4. Distribute the accompanying Write-On Sheet, "[Stories of Origins](#)," to each participant. Explain to participants that they will listen to the story twice. Instruct them to fill in

Leader Tip

You may want to share some of the myths behind specific constellations and show the star charts with outlines of constellations. For constellation resources, refer to the Web sites listed below.

the "Main Idea or Event" column of the chart as they listen the first time. Then, the second time they hear the story, participants should listen closely for details (such as things they can picture in their heads) and list these on their chart.

5. After listening to their assigned story, participants should divide into smaller groups of no more than 5 members.
6. Instruct students to share their charts with their group members. As a group, they will need to determine 5 main ideas or events that happened in the story. Then, each group will create a 5-frame storyboard that visually tells what happened from beginning to end. Encourage learners to incorporate the details they listed in their charts into their illustrations.
7. Using their illustrations as visual aids, they will retell their stories orally to the other half of the class. Explain to participants that this is oral storytelling, and that writing is unnecessary; however, if they want to jot down some notes on the back of their storyboard, they may use these notes to prompt them during the oral presentation. Each participant should be responsible for creating and presenting one frame/main event from the storyboard/story.
8. After both stories have been retold orally and through the visual storyboard, facilitate a discussion about what the stories reveal about the culture (e.g., values, hobbies, daily life, customs, etc.).

Alternate Strategies

Instead of having learners create a storyboard and retell the Cherokee creation story they heard, ask participants to do one of the following:

- Write their own story that explains why star patterns appear to move from east to west each night
- Write their own story that explains why certain constellations appear only at different seasons. It might be helpful to distribute star charts that show the constellations for each season.
- Perform a skit of the myth associated with a particular constellation.

Refer to "**Resources for Extension and Enrichment Activities**" for more information.

This activity was adapted for Community Quest from an activity in the Genesis education module *Exploring Origins* found at:

<http://www.genesismission.org/educate/diffangle/exploring/index.html>

Resources for Extension and Enrichment Activities

<http://domeofthesky.com/foyer.html>

The Dome of the Sky is a virtual planetarium. Learners select a latitude and date to see a representation of visible stars. Explore the stars and constellations simply by clicking your mouse.

<http://school.discovery.com/schooladventures/skywatch/stories/index.html>

This Discovery School site contains Greek and Native American myths based on constellations for each month.

http://starchild.gsfc.nasa.gov/docs/StarChild/universe_level2/javascript/star_art.html

In ancient history, various cultures created stories about patterns of stars seen in the sky. In this activity, learners are introduced to the stories about people and animals perceived among the stars. Then, participants are challenged to match the story with the "Star Art."

<http://www.allthesky.com/constellations/const.html>

Wonderful digital images of constellations. Click on "draw lines" and the outline of the constellation is displayed. Constellation images could be used in "Starry Universe" activity.

http://www.astro.wisc.edu/~dolan/constellations/extra/culture_refs.html

Contains a list of children's mythology books that relate to the constellations.