

What are stories of **CREATI**

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE FOR THE TEACHER



- Stories of how the world was created are frequently found in different cultures. They are often referred to as creation myths; here 'myth' means a story that is told to explain a phenomenon, rather than a story that is untrue.
- Inuit are indigenous peoples living in Arctic and sub-Arctic regions of Alaska, Canada and Greenland. They should be referred to as Inuit rather than Eskimo.
- The Haudenosaunee are a confederacy of six Native American nations living around what is now known as the state of New York through to Montreal. The nations are: Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca and Tuscarora. Although they are often called 'Iroquois', this is a European term rather than a Native American one.
- This unit includes one story from each of the above cultures (see pp 7-8), but several variations of both are in existence. Some of this is due to slightly different versions of the stories being told by different groups of Inuit and Haudenosaunee. There are other reasons too, such as some indigenous stories not being written down until hundreds of years after they were first told; the initial writings were not always by members of the indigenous groups themselves.
- Creation myths generally began as stories passed from generation to generation through word of mouth, so this unit focuses on oral storytelling rather than reading or the written word.

In this unit, both the teacher and pupils take on the role of 'storyteller'. As these stories were initially told orally rather than read, teachers should try not to read them. Instead, try to retell them. Maybe make some notes to help you remember the main points, or keep the pages nearby in case your memory needs refreshing. Remember to use different oral storytelling techniques, such as having voices for different characters; varying tone, pace and volume; and building in opportunities for listeners to get involved. Rehearsal beforehand can lead to captivating storytelling, and some teachers like to indicate when they are being storytellers by donning particular apparel, such as a cloak or hat. Many indigenous creation stories would have been told out of doors, so it would not be out of place to use outside areas when retelling.

This unit starts with a focus on nature before thinking about how that nature was created. The two creation myths are then introduced, with pupils going on to think about how and why stories of creation often focus on the making of natural phenomena: e.g. animals, people and land.

This work could provide further examples to link to RE Today units of work F6 What is special about our world? and 1.8 How should we care for others and the world, and why does it matter?

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE FOR THE PUPIL

By the end of this unit pupils should know:

- lots of people have thought about how the world was made
- there are different creation stories showing how the world was made
- the plot of at least one creation story
- creation stories tend to explain how natural things were made

Key vocabulary:

world, creation, God, nature, created



PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

In order to access the learning in this unit, pupils should have learnt about:

- creation stories from one of the religious worldviews studied in school

Please note that pupils, particularly in this age group, may bring prior learning from home.

ASSESSMENT FOR 4-6s

The statements below suggest expected outcomes from this unit for 5-year-olds and are based on the Early Learning Goals (England, 2020). Adapt them for the age of pupils you are teaching. These link to the outcomes for this series of books shown on the webpages. You may need to adapt them slightly for the syllabus or guidelines you follow.

Expected

- Demonstrate understanding of the creation myths by retelling them using their own words and recently introduced vocabulary.
- Explore the natural world around them and talk about how traditional stories explain its creation.

This unit helps pupils in Scotland to achieve RME 0-04a and 1-04a.



ERESOURCES

Go to www.natre.org.uk/bqic-big-questions-big-answers to access the resources below:

- other creation stories online
- Members are able to download an extra resource to support this unit:**
- large copies of the cards from Resource 2.3 on p. 9



ACTIVITY 1:

Nature explorers indoors

Create a 'Nature Explorers Area' (e.g. a corner of the room or a dedicated table). Add natural objects for children to explore. These could include feathers, shells, eggs, stones, branches, leaves, conkers, pine cones and flowers, and should include some pea pods with the peas still inside. Some objects should be living (e.g. flowers in water, or cress).

Pupils can:

- care for these and observe how the living things change as they develop
- explore what they find in a range of ways: e.g. observational drawing, describing objects within the area without mentioning their names, or discussing where each of the objects originally came from
- add their own contributions to this area too

It is especially important for pupils to see and talk about how peas come from inside the pods.

Outdoors

Ensure pupils have opportunities to explore natural resources and the environment. Ideas could include:

- experimenting with soil (multiple opportunities for planting, digging, changing consistency with water and then using it for painting, etc.)
- leaving a patch of grass in the school uncut for longer than usual – as well as observing the growth of grass and any other plants in this patch, there will be great opportunities for imaginative play
- a mud kitchen
- a nature walk (remember to stop from time to time to listen to sounds in nature, as well as looking while walking)
- a bug hunt
- exploring the weather: e.g. seeing windmills on a windy day, watching rain fall from under a clear tarpaulin or creating shadows in the sun

Discuss which of the nature activities pupils enjoyed the most, and what their favourite thing is about nature. Ask them 'How do you think nature was made?' Allow pupils time to chat about and contribute ideas. If they do not bring up the idea of God, you can explain that some people think God created the world and nature, and other people do not. Tell pupils that lots of different people have ideas and stories about the way the world and nature were created. Some pupils may know a story from a religion or culture about how the world was made, and can share it.

ACTIVITY 2:

Inuit creation story

Remind pupils that lots of people have different stories about how the world was made, and explain that they are going to learn one that belongs to Inuit people. It may help pupils to see pictures that prompt further discussion about who Inuit are and where they originate from.

Tell the story on p. 7 (Resource 2.1) to pupils. Ensure that it is told orally rather than read, and that pupils have plenty of opportunities to join in. Opportunities can include:

- miming pulling Raven's beak up and down as he turns from man to bird and back again, building animals from clay, beating Raven's wings, eating berries and stooping down to drink the water
- putting up fingers and counting aloud for the different days
- answering rhetorical questions



Resource 2.1

ACTIVITY 3:

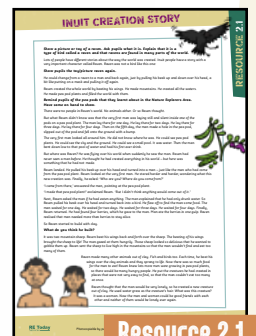
Superb storytellers

Take photos of pupils freeze-framing six of the main events of the Inuit creation myth. For example:

1. Raven creating the world with his wings
2. Man coming out of the pea pod
3. Raven finding Man
4. Raven giving Man berries
5. Raven making animals
6. Raven creating Woman

Give groups copies of the photos and retell the story. As you tell each part of the myth, pupils should hold up the correct photo.

As a class, place the photos into the right order and have the pupils work together to retell the story from them. Pupils should then each try to tell the first part of the myth to a partner, making it as interesting as they can. Share some excellent retellings. Pupils can build up to retelling the whole story. To make the best oral retellings, pupils will have to rehearse and refine their performances.



Resource 2.1

ACTIVITY 4:

Haudenosaunee creation story

Ask pupils what 'created' means. Use some examples of work they have created at school to demonstrate. Following this, ask who created the world in the Inuit story. Explain that pupils are going to hear another story. This one was first told by the Haudenosaunee.

Again, use oral storytelling devices to ensure that the story on p. 8 (Resource 2.2) is told to pupils in an engaging way. This time, ensure that each pupil is given a part to play during the storytelling so that all the class are involved. Parts can include:

- the Tree of Light (props can include picture of a tree and a torch)
- the Endless Waters (props might include blue fabric/paper)
- birds native to the part of America where Haudenosaunee originally lived – in written versions of the story, swans, ospreys, eagles, herons and loons are often mentioned (props may be masks or feathers)
- water creatures, including muskrats, beavers, toads (masks or pictures of the animals could be used here) – it may be easier to use a toy or cut-out paper turtle rather than a pupil
- Sky Woman
- Flint
- Sapling

Pupils will need direction on when and how to act during the first telling of the myth. To familiarise them with it, retell it a second time with pupils in the same roles – they should need far less direction now. For any further retellings, pupils can swap roles, including taking on the function of storyteller for parts.



Resource 2.2



ACTIVITY 5:

Story similarities

Give pupils the cards from p. 9 and two large hoops. Label the hoops 'In both stories' and 'Not in both stories'. Pupils should classify the cards into the correct hoops. You can differentiate this activity by only using the first eight cards on the page if utilising all of them will be too difficult for pupils.

Once the cards are classified, discuss what pupils have found to be similar between the myths: people are created, animals are created, food is created (in the form of animals and berries), land is made. Discuss how some of the cards in the 'Not in both stories' hoop refer to one story while others are in neither. To reinforce this, play a game; for example, one pupil picks a card and others should hold up two fingers if it is in both stories or one finger if it is only in one, and shake their heads if it is in no story at all.

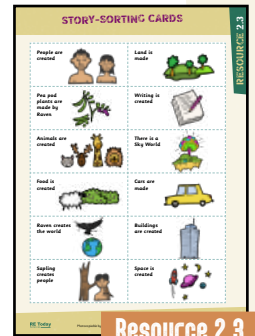
Take the cards that had elements from both myths, and explain that there are hundreds of creation stories that have been told in the world. The class have only heard two, but many of the different creation stories include how food, land, animals and people were made.

Ask pupils to remember that these stories were first told thousands of years ago, and ask:

- Why do pupils think they do not include cars? Buildings? Space (beyond the sun, moon and stars)?
- Why do they think the stories focused on what is found in nature, such as food, land, animals and people?

Next steps

Learn a creation story from a religious tradition that pupils are familiar with. Try to spot whether food, land, animals and people are created.



Resource 2.3

CONTINUOUS PROVISION

- Caring for natural items (reinforce that pupils are doing this because the stories talk about how much of nature was created): e.g. looking after living items in the Nature Explorers Area or cultivating a vegetable/flower patch.
- Using the freeze-frame images to retell the Inuit story and the props to retell the Haudenosaunee one. If you have a special item such as a storyteller's cloak, pupils can use this in their retellings.
- Writing a letter to Raven to tell him that a man has emerged from a pea pod plant!
- Listening to, learning and performing the '5 Fat Peas' rhyme, and shelling peas and using them in recipes.

INUIT CREATION STORY



Show a picture or toy of a raven. Ask pupils what it is. Explain that it is a type of bird called a raven and that ravens are found in many parts of the world.

Lots of people have different stories about the way the world was created. Inuit people have a story with a very important character called Raven. Raven was not a bird like this one:

Show pupils the toy/picture raven again.

He could change from a raven to a man and back again, just by pulling his beak up and down over his head, a bit like putting on a mask and pulling it off again.

Raven created the whole world by beating his wings. He made mountains. He created all the waters. He made pea pod plants and filled the world with them.

Remind pupils of the pea pods that they learnt about in the Nature Explorers Area. Have some on hand to show.

There were no people in Raven's world. No animals either. Or so Raven thought.

But what Raven didn't know was that the very first man was laying still and silent inside one of the pods on a pea pod plant. The man lay there for one day. He lay there for two days. He lay there for three days. He lay there for four days. Then on the fifth day, the man made a hole in the pea pod, slipped out of the pod and fell onto the ground with a bump.

The very first man looked all around him. He did not know where he was. He could see pea pod plants. He could see the sky and the ground. He could see a small pool. It was water. Then the man bent down low to that pool of water and had his first ever drink.

But where was Raven? He was flying over his world when suddenly he saw the man. Raven had never seen a man before. He thought he had created everything in his world – but here was something that he had not made.

Raven landed. He pulled his beak up over his head and turned into a man – just like the man who had come from the pea pod plant. Raven looked at the very first man. He stared harder and harder, wondering what this new creation was. Finally, he asked: 'Who are you? Where do you come from?'

'I came from there,' answered the man, pointing at the pea pod plant.

'I made that pea pod plant!' exclaimed Raven. 'But I didn't think anything would come out of it.'

Next, Raven asked the man if he had eaten anything. The man explained that he had only drunk water. So Raven pulled his beak over his head and turned back into a bird. He flew off to find the man some food. The man waited for one day. He waited for two days. He waited for three days. He waited for four days. Finally, Raven returned. He had found four berries, which he gave to the man. Man ate the berries in one gulp. Raven realised that man needed more than berries to stay alive.

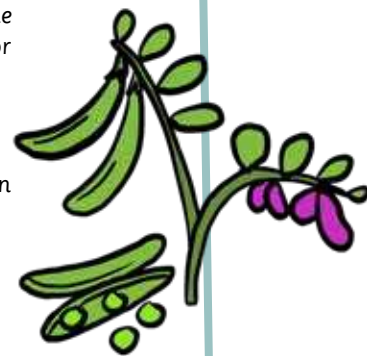
So Raven started to build with clay.

What do you think he built?

It was two mountain sheep. Raven beat his wings back and forth over the sheep. The beating of his wings brought the sheep to life! The man gazed at them hungrily. Those sheep looked so delicious that he wanted to gobble them up. Raven sent the sheep to live high in the mountains so that the man wouldn't find and eat too many of them.

Raven made many other animals out of clay. Fish and birds too. Each time, he beat his wings over the clay animals and they sprang to life. Now there was so much food for the man to eat! Raven knew lots more men were growing in pea pod plants, so there would be many hungry people. He put the creatures he had created in places that were not very easy to find, so that the man couldn't eat too many at once.

Raven thought that the man would be very lonely, so he created a new creature out of clay. He used water grass as the creature's hair. What was this creature? It was a woman. Now the man and woman could be good friends with each other and neither of them would be lonely ever again.



HAUDENOSAUNEE CREATION STORY

Before this world was created there was an island floating high, high up in the sky. This was called the Sky World. Below the Sky World was much, much darkness. Underneath the dark was deep, deep water. Birds lived in the dark air and water creatures swam in the Endless Waters below the Sky World.

The Sky World was a wonderful place. It was paradise. People who lived there were never ill and always happy. There was no sun in the Sky World, because it hadn't been created yet. Instead, there was a huge tree called the Tree of Light. The light from this tree made everything bright in the Sky World so that people could see and live happily. One day, a great gust of wind blew the tree down! There was darkness in the Sky World and a big hole where the tree had stood. That hole went all the way down to the very bottom of the Sky World. The Sky Woman went to look through the hole ... and ... she fell into it.



Down, down, down tumbled the Sky Woman. Down through the Sky World. Lower, past the bottom of the Sky World. Further, she dropped into the darkness below. She fell for such a long time and for so many miles. The Sky Woman was about to fall into the Endless Waters when she was saved by some birds who caught her so that she was safe and sound.

But the Sky Woman could not be carried by birds forever. She was too heavy, and they were getting far too tired to hold her for much longer. So she was placed onto the back of a great turtle that was swimming in the Endless Waters. Thankfully, this turtle could easily hold the Sky Woman so that she was protected from the waters below.

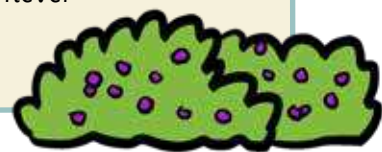
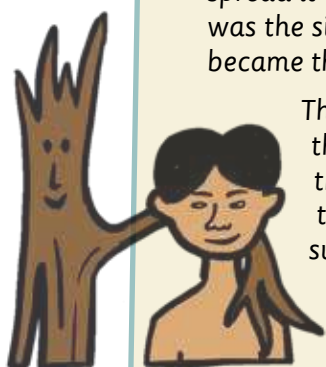
But it is hard to live on the back of a turtle. The woman needed land beneath her feet, not turtle shell. The creatures made a plan, and this is what they decided: although the Endless Waters were incredibly deep, there was something at the bottom of them – earth! Many of the water creatures wanted to dive deep down to the very bottom of the water to collect some earth for the Sky Woman to live on. But the waters were so amazingly deep that although lots of animals tried, they just couldn't get all the way to the bottom to find the earth. The beaver tried and had no luck. The muskrat tried and could not reach the earth below. Finally, a very small, old toad managed to dive all the way down. She scooped up some earth and brought it back to the surface of the water.

The earth was placed onto the turtle's back. The Sky Woman and the animals started to spread it out. The more they spread the little bit of earth, the bigger it became, until at last it was the size of the world we have today. Then the Sky Woman sprinkled dust into the air. It became the stars. She also created the sun and the moon.

The Sky Woman had two babies, twin boys called Sapling and Flint. Between them, they created many of the things that we find in the world today. Sapling created all that is good and useful in the world – he even created people, and animals to help them. But Flint did the opposite, creating all that is bad and unhelpful. Sapling made summer, so what did Flint create? Winter. Sapling made delicious berries that grow on bushes for humans to eat, such as raspberries and blackberries. So what did Flint put on the berry bushes? Sharp thorns that can prick people when they pick the berries.

But that was all a very long time ago. What about today?

Well, even today animals are very important. Without them the Sky Woman would have fallen straight into the Endless Waters. Without them, the Earth would never have been created. Even today, the Earth is carried on the back of the giant turtle who is swimming ... swimming ... swimming on the Endless Waters.



STORY-SORTING CARDS

People are created



Land is made



Pea pod plants are made by Raven



Writing is created



Animals are created



There is a Sky World



Food is created



Cars are made



Raven creates the world



Buildings are created



Sapling creates people



Space is created

