

## **Moving from Lists to Myths and Epics: A 1<sup>st</sup> Grade Journey through Story**

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### **Introduction**

Myths were very important to me when I was growing up. I watched a crudely animated Hercules on television, questioned what an Achilles heel was all about and was surprised that Ajax was a Greek warrior and not just the cleaner we didn't buy (we were Comet people). Being of Italian descent, I took great interest in the Roman Empire and its mythology was a part of that. As I got older I became interested in Indian culture through music and Bollywood films and later went to India and saw the Hindu religion and its many gods up close. Later, a fascination with Asian cinema brought me to a crazy television show from 70's Japan entitled Monkey or Monkey Magic detailing the (mis)adventures of the Monkey King. These stories were told with specific reasons in mind. Were they told to inform the listeners (and later, readers), to persuade them to some sort of thought or action, or to entertain? As the stories were retold, Monkey is based upon the Chinese novel Journey to the West, does the purpose change?

As our classrooms become increasingly multicultural, I believe it is important that we look at the idea of author's purpose through myth and pourquoi stories not only through a Western lens but a global perspective, as well. I have tackled Islamic stories and Anansi stories from Africa in earlier units; it is now time to focus on other cultures.

### **Background**

The school where I teach, the Colonial School District's Kathleen H. Wilbur Elementary School in Bear Delaware, is comprised of many different kinds of students with a variety of beliefs and experiences. Our school has approximately 1200 students from Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. There are nine 1<sup>st</sup> grade classrooms grouped together in three clusters of three rooms. This year I will have up to 25 students from Hispanic, African, Caribbean, Asian and Middle Eastern cultures as well as students whose families are from the United States. My classes, historically, have been around 50% African American, 30% White and 20% other ethnicities and are usually a close split between boys and girls. Socio-economically, my class will also be diverse with all economic classes represented. My school is a Title 1 school and qualifies for free lunch for all students. We live about one hour from the ocean yet many of my students have never seen it yet alone gone swimming in it. The sum total travel experience of many students is the shopping trip to Walmart, and the weekly attendance at their family's house of worship. Most experiences are virtual through TV, movies, and video games. Using literature from different times and cultures may help to widen the worldview of my

students, helping them to become less parochial in their outlook and understand that although the world is a varied place, there are many similarities in the stories that we tell.

Our school is very progressive. We have a STEM lab where students puzzle out how to build things that will help solve a problem. Students in kindergarten learn the basics of computer coding and that continues through the next five years. Our school has a social and emotional curriculum that is put in place by the administration highlighting a character trait and learning skill that is introduced in an assembly and reinforced through the “Give Me 5” activity during the last 5 minutes of lunch and during daily announcements. Our school was chosen as a Model School in 2015 by the International Center for Leadership in Education mainly because of the environment that is fostered; one where teachers seek to find the balance between rigor, relevance, and relationships in our lessons and our interactions between the students and staff.

## **Rationale**

As students go through the school year, we learn many different ways to help us understand the stories that we read. Among the things we learn about are fiction vs. nonfiction, characters, setting, plot, and main idea and details. Later in the year we learn about why an author writes in the first place, the author’s purpose. This unit will focus on an author’s purpose for writing and the difference between fiction and nonfiction and how that can be blurred due to what the author’s intentions are.

We learn that stories are written to persuade, inform, or to entertain. In class, we read our stories and decide why they were written. Most examples are pretty clear cut. As we look at stories from an earlier time it may not be so easy to decide. Were stories told with only one idea in mind? To persuade the listener to believe something? To inform why something is? But, if it wasn’t entertaining, who would listen?

We will start with Greek myths. While we do not know who the authors were, we can surmise that the stories were written or, more exactly, told with an idea towards explaining the world. An example is when the goddess of the harvest, Demeter grieves for her daughter, Persephone, who is stuck in Hades for four months we have winter. We will discuss myths from different cultures such as the Monkey King from China and Thor, through comics, from Norse. Are myths fact or fiction? When they were first created were they considered fact or fiction? What else goes into a myth? Are there American myths from the 21<sup>st</sup> century that are appropriate for 1<sup>st</sup> graders? We will explore stories we know and, through discussion, comparing and contrasting stories, and using our background knowledge, we will see if they fit the criteria. Why was it written? Who for? As we glean what we think the author’s purpose was, did we feel that they accomplished it?

We will also discuss pourquoi tales. These are stories from ancient cultures that explain the how and why of the way things are. Many tales feature talking animals as their protagonists, demonstrate character traits, and end with a change in the animal, thing or landscape. For this unit, we will look at Native American pourquoi stories.

Rudyard Kipling's "Just So Stories", written for his daughter, have many of the hallmarks of pourquoi stories. We will discuss some of his stories and why he wrote them and compare his purpose with that of the other stories we have read.

When we leave myths we will look at epics. What is an epic and where does it fit into the history of story? What makes something not just epic but an epic? During this unit I will read Mary Pope Osborne's retelling of The Odyssey and we will compare what happens there with the short myths we will discuss. Is the Odyssey an epic or just epic? We'll see what first graders think.

As part of this unit we will talk about the oral tradition and the "performance" of these stories. Who told these stories? Where and why? Did different cultures have different traditions? What storytelling traditions do we have now in the United States?

Activities that we will do include, illustrating myths and tales and telling or reenacting them either through storytelling, puppets or acting. Our final project will consist of writing our own myth or pourquoi tale. Students will decide if they want to create a book, deliver it orally, or create a video.

## **Learning Objectives**

This unit is for 1st grade but could be easily adapted for another elementary grade. The goal of this unit is to have students understand that writers write for a reason and then students will create a piece of writing in one of the styles we will study. Students will understand that authors have an audience and their work is designed to elicit some sort of response from that audience. We will read our stories and decide if the authors were successful. We will take what we learn from our readings and discussions and apply it to a story that the students will write. Students will work on their stories to take them from lists of events to showing some of the hallmarks of Myths, especially pourquoi stories and those that may be more advanced may try their hand at some sort of heroic Epic. Students will use the ideas that they learn during the unit to facilitate this process. Students will work individually and in groups to create a performance that they will share with the teacher and the class and the wider world via outlets such as YouTube. After their performance students will revise their story, write it down, and we will create a classroom book.

## Content

In *On the Origin of Stories*, Brian Boyd writes about how humans prefer narrative and fictional narrative over non-fiction. Narratives don't need language to tell a story. The story can be told through mime, dance, wordless picture books, or movie. Adding language surely does make the narrative easier to understand (although novels such as James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* may be the exception to the rule). The fictional narrative gives us patterns of social information, it tells us of "others' capacities, dispositions, intentions, actions, and reactions."<sup>1</sup> It tells us the "truth" of ourselves through a made up narrative. As the best seller lists and box office shows, 21<sup>st</sup> century humans prefer fiction to nonfiction.

Noah Richler in his podcast for BBC called "The History of Story", says that stories evolved along a continuum from lists to novels. As cultures came into contact, their stories bumped up against one another. Some stories conquered others, as they went into the history books to survive. As empires and colonialism thrived and as they brought their new technologies to bear, they also brought their stories. Writing came to the oral tradition and crowded most of it out. The novel came and usurped the myth and the epic.<sup>2</sup> But story survived. How it is told may change, from oral to cave wall to papyrus to scroll, to paper. Mr. Guttenberg's press brought first the Bible and then the novel to the ever increasing middle class. The photograph to the silent movie, black and white to technicolor, 2D to 3D and "odorama", analog to digital HD, to 4k and IMAX they all tell stories, simple lists to post-modern novels. Do we not want to be entertained? Well yes we do, but informed as well and, as advertisers know, we even want to be persuaded.

### Lists

The list, as first seen in cave paintings such as those in Lascaux, France, itemize things from Paleolithic man's everyday life. Animals and humans were depicted maybe cataloging what the artists saw and giving rise to the first stories. Abstract images were also painted; did they have meaning or were they merely decoration such as in an illuminated manuscript? We'll save those questions for another unit. Are the cave paintings much different than the drawings my students do at the beginning of the year? They draw their home, relatives, pets and other important items. They also put abstract symbols into their picture, some decipherable as words, others known only to the authors. They, just like early man, are evolving their storytelling potential. As the 1st grader's ability to tell a story evolves the pictures are replaced with words. Lists of favorite things make way to lists in sequence, of things that happen in their lives. "I wake up. I eat breakfast. I brush my teeth. I put on clothes. I go to school." The story of their morning is just an incomplete list of things that they do on a school day morning. My first graders write to inform. This is what happened. This is how it happened. This is why it happened.

As we move from a List centered story to one of Myth or Epic, we will seek to add entertainment to their purpose.

## Myths

After lists, Richler posits that myths next came on the scene. According to Merriam-Webster a myth is “a usually traditional story of ostensibly historical events that serves to unfold part of the world view of a people or explain a practice, belief, or natural phenomenon.” Or “a popular belief or tradition that has grown up around something or someone; *especially*: one embodying the ideals and institutions of a society or segment of society.”<sup>3</sup>

Richler puts creation myths and cautionary tales together. They are both in his second level in the evolution of story. The creation of the universe, a myth, and flowers at the side of the road denoting an accident, a cautionary tale, fall into this category. Much of what we see from other cultures are their myths. We can look at the myth and feel culturally superior, because after all, while we know that the story is a myth the culture whose story it is, whether ancient or modern, may not. In a myth, the notion of good and evil may be present but they come to us by chance and characters may be ambiguous, no one totally good nor totally bad. The trickster is just who he is, he is not an “other”, not lesser or greater than the other characters but cut of the same cloth. The gods in Greek myths toy with man because they can, they are not evil nor are they good, and these notions have no place in their world. The myth shows what happens when humans go against what is best for their community or what is best for nature. Another element found in myths is the notion of fate or destiny. According to Merriam-Webster.com, fate is “the will or principle or determining cause by which things in general are believed to come to be as they are or events to happen as they do.”<sup>4</sup> Usually, myths do not turn out so well for the human characters and, when confronting the will of the gods or the power of nature, how can they?

A kind of myth that we will discuss is the *pourquoi* story. According to Scholastic, “*Pourquoi* [por-kwa] means “why” in French. *Pourquoi* tales are old legends told to explain why certain events happened. These tales often start in the past, e.g. A long, long time ago . . . and end when the explanation is complete. *Pourquoi* tales are most often concerned with animals and the natural world.”<sup>5</sup> We will see what happens to the animal characters and what fortune or misfortune befalls them as the leopard gets his spots, the chipmunk his stripes, etc.

Another kind of myth, but one that is relatively modern, is the “Just So Stories” written by Rudyard Kipling and published in 1902. Kipling wrote these stories for his daughter to help her fall asleep. These stories tell how an animal came to have a certain characteristic based upon its interaction with man or with a magical being. These stories are entertaining and give information even though the author knew that the information

was incorrect. Unlike the other stories we will discuss, these stories were actually written for children and we won't need to look at editions that have been simplified for a younger audience.

## Epics

Evolving from myth is the epic: Beowulf and his battles with Grendel, Odysseys and his ill-fated travels home. Our heroes, who have finally arrived on the scene after thousands of years of lists and myths, battle the forces of the "other". Oxforddictionaries.com defines epic as, "A long poem, typically one derived from ancient oral tradition, narrating the deeds and adventures of heroic or legendary figures or the past history of a nation."<sup>6</sup> Epics occur across cultures. I will be reading The Odyssey as a chapter book read aloud but will also read epics from other lands. The two I will focus on are from China, the first, Monkey King and the second, Mulan.

Our students are familiar with epics from our popular culture. Whether Max taming the Wild Things in "Where the Wild Things Are" or countless enemies being waylaid by Han Solo or Gandalf. The enemy is made less than human or non-human therefore taking sympathy and empathy away from the listener/reader/viewer. Star Wars' storm troopers keep on their faceless helmets, or make disparaging remarks about our protagonists. Odysseus battles harpies and sirens before he gets to the suitors of his faithful wife. The epic explains and defends our culture's right to exist at the expense of everyone else. When our students tell their epic stories they are justifying their existence and their actions. They are the heroes in their own narratives fighting against the injustices of parents, homework, and schoolyard bullies. If they are not listing the minutiae of their day, there is some great battle to be won. In 1<sup>st</sup> grade, their story is black and white, there is no gray area. They have not yet created the novel.

## Novels

While the novel will not figure into this unit it is well that we discuss Richler's idea of what the novel is. Novels champion the individual over the community. In myths and epics, the individual usually does not benefit at the expense of the community. The hero protects and defends his culture. The protagonist in the myth reaps the benefits or bears the fallout from his interactions with his surroundings. In the novel, the individual is more important than his community. It is the arc of his narrative that interests us and not necessarily how he interacts with his environment, society, or enemies.

## Author's Purpose

In first grade we learn that an author has three reasons to write their story, four if you include a paycheck. The first reason is to persuade you, the second to inform you and the third to entertain you. We see that most successful stories (for the 1<sup>st</sup> grade audience

anyways) may combine two of these elements, persuade and entertain or inform and entertain or may just have entertaining as their purpose. As Boyd points out in *On the Origin of Stories*, “fiction can hold our interest, unlike almost anything else, for hours at a stretch.”<sup>7</sup> Experience tells me he is speaking of adults and not 1<sup>st</sup> graders.

### *Persuade*

I want you to agree with my point of view. I want you to buy something. I want you to buy me something. Persuasion is a powerful purpose for an author. As I write this, it is election season. The television is full of commercials trying to persuade me to vote one way or another. Fiction or nonfiction is beside the point; it is all about getting the author’s (or Political Action Committee’s) viewpoint across. Soon commercials for Christmas presents will inundate the airwaves and the persuasion will continue. 1<sup>st</sup> graders are bombarded with information from an early age and this information is designed to get them to be active consumers. It is designed for them to have an opinion on what breakfast cereal to whine to their parents to purchase or which Xbox game or app their parents should download for them. In our curriculum, an opinion writing piece is one of the first things we teach and have the students complete. It is only a short step from having an opinion, “skittles are my favorite candy” to persuading someone to purchase skittles because “skittles are the best candy and here are my reasons why”.

### *Inform*

The nonfiction we read in 1<sup>st</sup> grade was written to inform the reader about something. We read about foxes and bats, cars and trains, and people, famous and not. We look at this information, find the main idea and then identify supporting details for this idea.

When writing, we first research some facts, usually about an animal but sometimes about planets or other things that spark kids’ interests and then we write our topic sentence, details and concluding sentences. Some students may be ready to write more than one paragraph but most write just the one. We often share these paragraphs, along with pertinent pictures we have found, through Google docs or slides.

### *Entertain*

Entertainment, the pinnacle of human achievement. We as readers/listeners/viewers value entertainment above all else. We may want the information but, while you’re at it, can you provide some entertainment, as well? The well-crafted story is nice but is it a page turner? Can we not put it down? At the movies, will we pay \$20 for something that is good for us? No, of course not but the lines will be long for the next installment of the (epic) Star Wars saga.

When entertainment and persuasion or information meet, that is the sweet spot of storytelling. The list, not too entertaining. We might admire our Paleolithic artist but I cannot imagine crowds of cavemen around the cave wall trying to catch a glimpse of the next masterpiece. The storyteller by the fire though, telling about Grok's harrowing escape from the cave bear, that's worth a leg bone or two of today's hunt. We might even learn something about what cave not to go in.

The stories that have come down to us through history have all been the entertaining ones. I am sure that the Sumerians had great lists of goods that only an archeologist would find fascinating but everyone can get behind the story of Gilgamesh. Even if we don't know it exactly, we've heard it before. I won't go into the narrative but Hercules, the tree of knowledge in the Bible, the trials of Sinbad, death of the hero, sacrifice, and the search for immortality may all have found their way into those narratives from this epic tale. How did it persuade or inform? It helped explain why Sumerian culture was superior to the surrounding cultures. We can read it now and say this is a bit dated but modern storytelling, from Cervantes to Walt Disney, have used a sidekick. Just like Gilgamesh had Enkidu, Don Quixote had Sancho Panza and Aladdin had Abu.

## **Strategies**

This unit will be based upon stories that I will read aloud to my students. If and when I find 1<sup>st</sup> grade appropriate materials, the students will read the stories, as well. Students will show comprehension via sequencing charts, identification of main idea, theme, characters, setting, and, if appropriate moral or lesson. Students will take what they have learned and craft their own story. The story will attempt to both inform about a certain natural phenomenon or history, true or not, and to entertain the audience. We will start by mimicking a story. Students will then substitute one animal for another and tell how that animals defining feature came to be. They will then expand on their writing to create their own story. Students will then be given a choice of scenarios and create their own story based on their chosen scenario. Students will also collaborate to produce a finished product whether it be an oral telling, a puppet show, a performance, or an illustrated story.

We use The Daily Five during our reading block. The Daily Five allows students to have choice in how they do their work. I plan on using the independence and stamina that our students have gained in both independent reading and independent writing in this unit. When appropriate materials are assigned for reading, students will do so as part of their "Read to a Friend" center. Writing prompts, whether words or pictures, will mirror the stories that we are reading and will be assigned as part of "Work on Writing".

My 1<sup>st</sup> graders like to talk. This unit will provide multiple opportunities for students to talk with their elbow partners and face partners whether we are sitting on the rug or back in our seats. When appropriate, we will also do "mingles" where students wander

the classroom to music and when the music stops they pair up with the closest person to exchange ideas or information. These engagement strategies can be used at different areas of the lessons to get kids talking (which they will do anyway) or up and moving around when they get antsy.

## **Classroom Activities**

### **Introduction**

This should take two class periods.

Content Objectives: Students will understand that stories are written or told for various reasons. They may inform us about something, they may try to persuade us to some thought or action and they may try to entertain us.

Standards: RL 1.1, 1.2 1.3, 1.9 RI 1.8

Day 1: I will read the story, “What Makes Day and Night” by Franklyn Branley. . This is a nonfiction book that explains how the Earth’s rotation causes day and night. We will discuss why Branley wrote this story. During the year I have been reading novels such as the Junie B. Jones series. I will ask students to discuss how this story is different from the most recent Junie B. story we’ve read. Is there anything that is the same about it? I will find a current advertisement for a toy or breakfast cereal and either read it, if a print ad, or show it, if a commercial, and ask students to compare that to the Brantley book. What is the same and what is different.

Sometime during this day, I will start reading Mary Pope Osborne’s retelling of The Odyssey. I have read some of her Magic Treehouse books to the class and will introduce it as another series written by the same author. As we later talk about myths and epics, students will, I hope, be able to identify characteristics of those genres in the story. I also hope to highlight one of the character traits that our administration highlights in our iCommunity meetings and “Give Me Five” lunch time lessons, perseverance. I will highlight how, no matter the hardship, Odysseus keeps his sights on returning to his home.

Day 2: Students have a “book box” containing five books. With their shoulder partner they will sort their books into three categories, persuade, inform, and entertain. Before a student can place their book in a category, they must justify their decision to their partner. If their partner agrees, they categorize the book, if the partner disagrees they must justify their reason. If the partners cannot agree, they place the book to the side and I will listen to their justifications and see if we can come to a consensus.

### **Lesson 1: Stories as Lists**

This should take three class periods.

Content Objectives: Students will understand that stories started as lists.

Standards: RL. 1.1, 1.2 1.3, 1.9, RI. 1.8, W. 1.2, 1.3

Day 1: We will talk about how stories started. Why did stories exist? Why were they told? What do they think the first story was? I will have students imagine that they are a

caveman. What would they want to tell their fellow cavemen? How would they go about it? I will guide them to thinking about, most likely, they would communicate where food was and where danger was. Maybe they were identifying their world. I will reference Mary Pope Osborne's *Sunset of the Sabretooth*. What did Jack Annie find on the wall of the cave? Why do students think that those paintings were there? We will visit a cave with Neolithic cave art, in Lascaux, France (<http://www.lascaux.culture.fr/?lng=en#/fr/00.xml>) and look at what cavemen actually painted. Do students think these paintings were used to inform, persuade, or entertain the neolithic viewer?

Day 2: We will revisit Lascaux. We will discuss why they painted what they did. Students will then, using finger paints and paint what they see in their world. Why did they choose what they did? Do their paintings tell a story of their life?

Day 3: We will, again, revisit Lascaux. Do you think the cave paintings in Lascaux tell a story? If so, what story? I will have students write down the story they feel the cave paintings tell. Those that don't feel it tells a story will write down a list of what they see. Partners will compare stories and if no student has a list of what they see, I will write that list and students will compare their story to the list. What is different between the list and stories written by students? We will discuss why the cave paintings were just pictures and not words.

### **Lesson 3: Myths**

This lesson will take at least three days but can take longer based on the number of myths being read and compared.

Content Objectives: Students will understand that myths explain the "unexplainable".

Standards: RL. 1.1, 1.2 1.3, 1.9, RI. 1.8,

Day 1: I will reference "What Makes Day and Night" and we will discuss what science has shown us to be true. Then I will ask students to imagine we lived 2500 years ago. We think the Earth is flat and does not move and that the sun moves in the sky to cause day and night. I will read the myth of Apollo and his son Phaeton. This describes how Apollo, every day, would harness his horses to his chariot and drive the sun across the sky and what happened when his son wanted to drive one day. How are the myth and the science book similar? How are they different? Why was each story told or written? Does each persuade, inform, and/or entertain? Do both have a lesson?

Days 2-3 I will read other myths to students such as the myth of Demeter and Persephone and the myth of Prometheus. Myths that explain how natural phenomena, the seasons and fire, came to be. During this time I will be reading Tales from the Odyssey and I will ask students about similarities in that story to the myths I am telling. I will also ask them about the big difference, The Odyssey sustains a narrative whereas the myths only provide an explanation and maybe a lesson.

#### **Lesson 4: Myths and Epics from Non-Western Traditions**

This can take as many days as you have time.

Content Objectives: Students will understand that myths are universal.

Standards: RL. 1.1, 1.2 1.3, 1.9, RI. 1.8

Day 1: I will read Monkey King by Ed Young. We will compare the plot of this Asian myth with the plot of the Greek myths we have read. Instead of explaining natural phenomena, Monkey King explains how Buddhist scriptures came to China. While not going into detail about Buddhism we will discuss how stories can explain not only why things are but also how things have come to be. We will discuss what makes Monkey King an interesting character and why the author (or authors) used such character in the story.

Day 2 etc. I will read myths from Hindu mythology, Native American etc. and look at why they were written and why certain characters may have been chosen. Ultimately I want students to understand that the “best” myths not only explain something but are also entertaining.

Last day of Myths: I will read the comic book of Thor’s origin. We will discuss how, even though we may not believe what the myths are telling us the characters, ideas, and lessons from mythology are still around.

#### **Lesson 5: Pourquoi Stories and Just So Stories**

This will take two or three days.

Content Objectives: Students will understand that as our understanding of the world has grown, the purpose for many tales has changed.

Standards: RL. 1.1, 1.2 1.3, 1.9, RI. 1.8

Day 1-2 I will read various pourquoi stories that explain how things came to be. We will compare these to myths. Students will describe the characters and how they have undergone change. Students will illustrate how the character has undergone change. We will then read Rudyard Kipling’s “Just So Stories” and compare them to the Pourquoi Stories. Can you tell if one was written to inform and one only to entertain? Why or why not?

#### **Lesson 6: Our Own Tales**

This will take as long as it needs. Time will be given whole group and then later at writing centers.

Standards: RL. 1.1, 1.2, 1.7 W. 1.2, 1.3

Students will be asked to write their own narrative. This narrative will take the shape of a pourquoi or just so story. Students will be asked to think of something special about an animal and will be asked to use their imagination to explain how that characteristic came to be.. “How the Elephant got its Trunk” and “How the Leopard Got Its Spots” or other tales will be reviewed as models. For many of my beginning writers, I will ask them to mimic these stories changing the key elements to fit the characteristic they are explaining.

Writers will first illustrate their tale, using cartoon panels, and then go back and add sentences. For example: how the animal looked at first, what happened to precipitate the change, why this happened, how the animal looked after the change and any lesson or moral learned (if appropriate). Students can act the story out, tell the story orally, or use puppets to retell the story. We will record the performances and upload them on a private YouTube channel. After their performance, students will then take their framework and write a coherent tale, incorporating elements from their illustrations, framework, and performance. These tales will be collected into a classroom book.

For more advanced students, they may attempt to write a myth or may, ambitiously, try their hands at a scene from an epic. An epic has been read during read alouds in the classroom. As part of the read aloud time, questions will be asked about how an epic is similar and different to a myth and students will use what they have learned about both myths and epics to formulate their own. These students will follow the same activity structure as those doing pourquoi stories but will reference myths we have read in class and Tales from the Odyssey.

## **Resources**

Amery, Heather, Linda Edwards, and Jenny Tyler. *Usborne Greek myths for young children*. New York: Scholastic Inc., 2002. Collection of Greek Myths appropriate for elementary school students.

"BBC World Service - The Documentary, A Short History Of Story, Episode 1." BBC News. Accessed December 26, 2016. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00ldy9q>. Noah Richler's podcast describing how story has evolved from lists to the novel.

"BBC World Service - The Documentary, A Short History Of Story, Episode 2." BBC News. Accessed December 26, 2016. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00lf0gh>.

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The history of stories for the layperson.

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Information on how day and night occur on Earth.

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"Gilgamesh - Influence Through Time." YouTube. 2010. Accessed December 18, 2016. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5k8u3HWyJ7c>. How the epic of Gilgamesh has influenced subsequent stories.

Kipling, Rudyard, and Barry Moser. *Just so stories*. New York: Books of Wonder, 1996. Fanciful stories told by Rudyard Kipling to his daughter in the Pourquoi Tale tradition.

"La grotte de Lascaux." Lascaux. Accessed December 18, 2016. <http://www.lascaux.culture.fr/>.

A website where you can "walk" the Lascaux cave and see the Neolithic paintings.

Osborne, Mary Pope., and Sal Murdocca. *Sunset of the sabre tooth*. London: Scholastic, 2000.

Jack and Annie go back in time to the Neolithic period.

Osborne, Mary Pope., and Homer. *Tales from the Odyssey*. New York: Disney/Hyperion, 2010.

"Teaching With Pourquoi Tales." Scholastic. Accessed January 16, 2017.

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/teaching-pourquoi-tales/>.

Thomas, Rich, and Jeff Clark. *The Mighty Thor: an origin story*. New York, NY: Marvel, 2011.

Graphic novel retelling of where Thor comes from.

Young, Ed. *Monkey King*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2001.

Retelling of Monkey King Legend from earlier Chinese novel Journey to the West appropriate for elementary students.

## **Appendices**

### Appendix A

This unit will implement Common Core State Standards for Literature and for Writing. Emphasis will be placed on Key Ideas and Details, including identifying them and retelling stories using them. Students will also be using illustrations and details to describe characters, settings, and events. Students will compare characters and events within and between stories. Students will identify reasons authors give to support ideas in the text. Students will follow accepted rules for discussion of ideas and be able to ask and answer questions about the readings and be able to describe people, places, things, and events with relevant details and in complete sentences.

When writing, students will name the topic, write details and appropriately sequenced events, and write a closing.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Brian Boyd, *On the origin of stories: evolution, cognition, and fiction* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009) pg 130.

<sup>2</sup> "BBC World Service - The Documentary, A Short History Of Story, Episode 1," BBC News, accessed December 26, 2016, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00ldy9q>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/myth>. accessed December 26, 2016

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fate>. accessed December 26, 2016

<sup>5</sup> "Teaching With Pourquoi Tales," Scholastic, accessed January 16, 2017,

<https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/articles/teaching-content/teaching-pourquoi-tales/>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/us/epic>. accessed December 26, 2016

<sup>7</sup> Brian Boyd, *On the origin of stories: evolution, cognition, and fiction* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2009) pg 130.