

Beginnings



Before Reading

Motivation / Purpose

The purpose of this text is to explain some of the stories of creation amongst different cultures. It links with the *Social Studies* theme *People and Beliefs*.

Text Type

Draw students' attention to the:

- title
- illustrations
- maps.

Ask "What type of book is this?" (Explanation). If students are unsure, read the chapter headings to provide a clue. What would you expect this text to contain? Why?

Visual Literacy

Look at the front cover of the text. What do you think this text will be about?

Discuss with the students why they think there are illustrations in a factual text. Compare the styles of illustrations used for each creation story. Which style do they prefer? Which style works well with the story?

Background Knowledge

Discuss with the students how they think the world began. Ask why there are different opinions on this subject. Why do different cultures have different beliefs? Talk about the fact that the earth began a long time ago. How have these stories been passed on to us?

Phonological Awareness

Make sure students know the following phonological patterns:

- 'i_e' for long i: alike (p.4), life (p.6), time (p.13), wife (p.16)
- 'igh' for long i: right (p.11), light (p.14)
- 'y' for long i: why (p.5), sky (p.14), lying (p.14)
- 'i' for long i: Finally (p.12)

Write the letters representing these sounds on the board. Have one student say a word containing one of these sounds. Ask another to tell which letters make up that sound in that particular word.

Vocabulary

attacked, breath, breathe, breathed, cloud, creation, creator, cultures, darkness, destroy, evil, forces, human, intelligent, power, women

Spell out one of the above sounds (e.g. 'igh' as in 'sight') and ask students to write three words which contain that sound made by the same combination of letters (e.g. 'light', 'fright' and 'night').

High Frequency Words

animals, gods, good, human, life, made, men, tried, women, world

Make a set of cards with one word on each card. Make groups with the cards. Ask the students to decide how you have chosen to group the words.

Each student then selects a word card and says something about the word. (e.g. 'women' is the plural of 'woman'; 'tried' is past tense of 'try'; 'human' has two syllables.)

During Reading

Vocabulary in Context

Make sure students understand the difference between 'woman' (singular) and 'women' (plural).

Discuss how some words such as 'cloud' can be used as a noun or a verb, and need to be considered in context to determine their grammatical function.

Revise the use of the final 'e' in creating the long vowel sound, which changes 'breath' to 'breathe'.

Checking for Meaning

Literal:

What do all creation stories have in common? (They all explain how the world was made and why things happen as they do.)

What was the name of the main god in Persian stories? (The main god was Ahura Mazda.)

How did the Mayan people believe the gods created the world? (They believed the world was created from the sea.)

Inferential:

Why do you think the evil god tried to destroy the good things Ahura Mazda created?

On page 19, what do you think the 'strange things' were that the animals said?

What might the gods have done to give the corn-people life? Make sure students understand the difference between literal and inferential information.

Response:

How do creation stories help people to understand their place in the world?

Why is it easy to imagine the world began in darkness?

Grammatical Patterns

Make sure students understand the following components of an explanation:

- Identifying statement about what is to be explained: *What all creation stories have in common ... the way they do.* (p.5)
- Series of events known as the explanation sequence: (pp.8-13; pp.14-17; pp.18-23). (Note that this text is a series of three explanations and doesn't have a concluding statement.)
- General nouns: *stories* (p.4), *life* (p.6), *animals* (p.10)
- Action verbs: *attacked* (p.10), *destroyed* (p.10), *forced* (p.15), *found* (p.21)
- Simple present tense: *Creation stories help people everywhere ...* (p.7)
- Conjunctions of time and cause: *while* (p.4), *Before* (p.10), *Finally* (p.12), *because* (p.13), *As* (p.17), *So* (p.17), *After* (p.18), *First* (p.20), *Then* (p.20)
- Noun groups: *animal life* (p.6), *more good things* (p.11), *the corn people* (p.22)
- Abstract nouns: *darkness* (p.8)
- Adverbial phrases: *From the darkness* (p.8), *in darkness* (p.14), *on the earth* (p.16)
- Complex sentences: *Before Ahura Mazda had finished creating everything ... including the man.* (p.10)
- Technical language: *cultures* (p.4), *creation* (p.4), *gods* (p.9), *Maori* (p.14), *Mayan* (p.18), *intelligent* (p.20)
- Glossary and Index: (p.24)

Discuss with students whether this explanation is based on time (sequence) or cause and effect, or both.

Fluency / Punctuation Patterns

These punctuation patterns occur in the text:

- A comma is used to separate items in a list: *animal life, plant life and human life began.* (p.6), *he made the sun, the stars, humans, animals and plants.* (p.8)
- A comma is used to allow for greater clarity when extra information is added to the text: *They say it was dark because Rangī, the sky father, and Papa, the earth mother, were lying together, keeping out the light.* (p.14)

- A comma is used to separate an adverb or adverbial phrase from the main clause: *Finally, Ahura Mazda ...* (p.12), *From this time on, they would ...* (p.13)
- A dash is used to add information to a sentence: *two humans – a man and a woman.* (p.12)
- An apostrophe is used to indicate possession: *the people's minds* (p.23), *life's problems* (p.23)

Critical Literacy

What is the subject matter of this text? What does the author want us to believe about the world and the people in it? How would you describe the kind of language used in this text?

Linking Visual and Written

Compare how the illustrator has drawn the main god and the evil god on pages 8–9. How are the gods different? How are they alike? How has the illustrator helped to show that one is good and one is evil?

On page 13 how has the illustrator shown the forces of evil? Do you think this use of symbols is effective?

How has the illustrator shown Tane breathing life into his wife on page 17?

On pages 22–23 discuss the effect of the gods being in the illustration of the corn people. Do you think this is effective?

After Reading

Locate Persia, New Zealand and Central America on a map of the world. Discuss why you think the author chose to explain creation in these countries.

Use the library to locate some stories about creation in other parts of the world.

Activities

Students will:

- make decisions about what the author said and what the author meant
- select the correct word to complete sentences
- write words from the text to match meanings
- identify words indicating time, or cause and effect, and join sentence fragments to demonstrate this relationship.

Comprehension (meaning) Vocabulary (structure) Phonics (visual) Writing (structure)

