Rebecca Sheinberg, National Connections Academy, Houston, Texas

This hour long lesson leads students to consider the uses of myth and legend to gain an understanding of the world around us. Specifically designed for students enrolled in an online course, it is readily adaptable to any learning structure. Students analyze an Iroquois creation story, “The World on the Turtle’s Back”, both individually and in small group discussions. The final assessment employs an out of class assignment in which students create their own legends to demonstrate their understanding of the nature of myth and legend.
Exploring Genres:
Creation Myths

Rebecca Sheinberg
11th Grade American Literature
American Frontiers in Global Perspective
NEH Institute 2012
It is human nature to question and search for answers about life, death, and the events that impact daily living. Often a myth offers an explanation – be it sensible or preposterous.

Response Requested:
What is a myth? What is a legend? What are some characteristics of each? Write your response in the chat box.

We will begin our Livelesson at 1:00 PM.
Objectives

• Read multiple genres, both literary and informative, fiction and non-fiction, with an emphasis on American literature from periods such as pre-colonial, colonial, revolutionary, romanticism and idealism, realism and naturalism.

• Interact effectively in academic discussions and formal presentations.
Materials

- “The World on the Turtle’s Back” Iroquois Myth text in Unit One Lesson Five or Use the copy sent to you electronically.

- **Native American Myth Film**
  [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3XoYZgvEH8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3XoYZgvEH8)

- **Viewing Guide**

- **National School Reform Protocol**
  ”The 4 A’s Protocol”

- **http://www.nsrfharmony.org/protocol/a_z.html**
Let’s see what you had to say....
Legend: It is a traditional narrative often focusing on a specific location or specific historical figure. Like the myth, a legend often provides an etiological narrative, and it often fills in gaps in historical records. Unlike myths, legends usually do not involve powerful gods or world-altering supernatural events—though they can to a small degree.

Famous examples of legends are the legend of Faust, the Flying Dutchman, King Arthur, and Pecos Bill.

Often tales that were originally myths about deities can devolve into legends, such as might be the case with several Arthurian legends. On the other hand, narratives that start as historical legends can also eventually turn into full-fledged cultural myths themselves.
A myth is a traditional tale of deep cultural significance to a people in terms of etiology, eschatology, ritual practice, or models of appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

The myth often (but not always) deals with gods, supernatural beings, or ancestral heroes.

The culture creating or retelling the myth may or may not believe that the myth refers to literal or factual events, but it values the mythic narrative regardless of its historical authenticity for its (conscious or unconscious) insights into the human condition or the model it provides for cultural behavior.

http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_A.html
Name some myths or legends ...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nature</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Fantasy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What creates a myth and or a legend? How are myths and legends created?
Characteristics of a Myth

Leads to a Myth
- Birth/beginning of life/a beginning of something
- Supreme being/supreme image
- Change

Structure
- Action and Reaction to the conflict
- Steps taken to resolve conflict
- Result, Resolution, Acceptance, or Resigned to the fate

When you think about a myth...
It explains how something in nature looks or happens. The characters are humans, animals, gods, or mythical creatures. A myth offers an explanation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functions of a Myth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To explain natural phenomena</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To control natural forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To bind a clan, tribe or nation together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To record historical events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To give a kind of verbal geography lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of landmarks to look for on a journey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually exaggerated for effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To set examples for people’s behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gods to emulate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Human heroes
• To justify a social structure
• Mythological heaven reflects social structure of culture
• Or king may claim society must be ordered this way to reflect gods’ order of things
• To control people
• Frighten people
• Claim authority comes from god -- divine right of kings
• Punishments in the afterlife
Characteristics of a Legend

- Stories told as though they are true
- A story from the past about a subject that was, or is believed to have been, historical
- Historical but not always factual
- Many legends tell about human beings who meet supernatural creatures and/or have supernatural powers
- Often blends fact with improbable elements
Native American Myth
You will need your copy of “The World on a Turtle’s Back”
Small Group

1. You will be placed in four groups.
2. You will read Sarah Baxter’s New York Times article, “History, but Not as America Knows It.” You will have 15 minutes to read the article and 10 minutes to collaborate with your group.
3. Use your “The 4 A’s Text Protocol” as your focus on your reading. Use your microphone or chat box to record your comments.
4. Select one person to be the spokesperson for your group to report-out your findings when we return to the whole group.
What did the groups have to say?

- What Assumptions does the author of the text hold?
- What do you Agree with in the text?
- What do you want to Argue with in the text?
- What parts of the text do you want to Aspire to?
Now that you have worked with Myths and Legends...
Review Characteristics of a Myth

Leads to a Myth
• Birth/beginning of life/a beginning of something
• Supreme being/supreme image
• Change

Structure
• Action and Reaction to the conflict
• Steps taken to resolve conflict
• Result, Resolution, Acceptance, or Resigned to the fate

When you think about a myth…
It explains how something in nature looks or happens. The characters are humans, animals, gods, or mythical creatures. A myth offers an explanation.
Review Characteristics of a Legend

- Stories told as though they are true
- A story from the past about a subject that was, or is believed to have been, historical
- Historical but not always factual
- Many legends tell about human beings who meet supernatural creatures and/or have supernatural powers
- Often blends fact with improbable elements
Multi-Media Project

Due Date: One week from this LiveLesson.
Time Limit: Presentation 15 minutes
Portfolio: Written composition for Unit 1 Lesson 10
1. Review the function and elements of myths and legends.
2. Review the analysis from the article you read.
3. You are to create a myth or legend using the following criteria:
   • 300 word written final draft using the The Elements of a Myth/Legend rubric as a guide
   • Present the myth/legend in a LiveLesson session using one of the following multimedia options:
Myth Project  Multi-Media Web Support

Prezi
http://prezi.com/

VoiceThread
http://voicethread.com/

Voki
http://www.voki.com/

Glogster
Http://www.glogster.com/dashboard/pulse

Animoto
http://animoto.com/

ToonDoo
http://www.toondoo.com/

BitStrips
http://www.bitstrips.com/landing

Powerpoint

EBSCOhost. Web. 10 Jul 2012.


rachaelrox1996, , dir. Native American Myth Film. YouTube, Film.