



## Beaver Myth

Grade: 4th, adaptable for 2-5

### Overview

As students continue their study of Oregon history, this lesson plan—with a primary source document from the [Historic Oregon Newspapers](#) website—provides another connection between students and Oregon history. This lesson plan uses an article that was submitted to the *Sunday Oregonian* newspaper in 1906 by a reader, and as such, provides students with exposure and experience with primary documents, authenticating the history they are learning.

The type of story the reader has submitted is an animal myth, much like a fable but without a lesson or moral to be taught. This lesson can supplement any unit under the fiction literature theme with a variety of opportunities for extensions. Some extension ideas will be presented below.

### Oregon Common Core State Standards

*Language Arts Standards:*

- CCSS.ELA.RL.4.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.
- CCSS.ELA.W.4.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- CCSS.ELA.W.4.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1-3 above.)
- CCSS.ELA.W.4.5 With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1-3 up to and including grade 4 on page 29.)
- CCSS.ELA.SL.4.4 Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

### Materials

- Copies of "[When the Porcupine and the Bears Quarreled](#)"
- Art materials (*Optional*)

- Comprehension check sheet (*Optional*)
- Text features check sheet (*Optional*)
- Vocabulary definition sheet (*Optional*)

## Key Vocabulary

- Quarreled
- Provisions
- Bristled
- Quills
- Captive
- Convicted
- Condemned
- Imprisoned
- Sheer
- Lamenting
- Haunches
- Lurked
- Hearty
- Buzz-saw

## Lesson

- *Introduce article:* Go over key features of text such as title, author, page number, publication date, newspaper name, etc. A basic text feature comprehension sheet is provided below. *Note:* There are quite a few stories on this page; you may want to ask students to highlight which portion they will be focusing on. The article to be focused on, “When the Porcupine and the Bears Quarreled,” is found on the right side of the article about halfway down the page.
- Some prompt ideas to consider:
  - Point at the title.
  - Say the title out loud.
  - Where is the publication date?
  - What is the publication date?
  - How many years ago was that?
- In addition to discussion about text features of the article, have students make predictions about the story. Give students time to think of a prediction and then share with a partner, the table, or the whole class.
- *Introduce lesson:* Introduce students to the idea of myths, describing them as stories that were created to give light to how animals or beings came to be. [Merriam-Webster](#) provides a more informative definition: “A story often describing the adventures of superhuman beings that attempt to describe the origin of a people’s customs or beliefs or to explain mysterious events (as the changing of the seasons).”

- Provide some examples of animal myths. For example, “Why Zebra Has Stripes,” which is a story that describes how a zebra couple were trying to find the perfect outfit and came to agree about stripes.
- This may be a wonderful opportunity for students to have a short discussion about what animal myths they know, including animal myths from different parts of the world.
- *Read the story:* You may want to read the story several times because the vocabulary and sentence structure are different than that of today. You may also want to introduce some vocabulary words prior to the reading. A list of possibly difficult vocabulary words is presented above.
- After students have read the story once through, whether in groups, pairs, or individually, have them retell the events of the story to ensure comprehension.
  - This may be adapted using the comprehension worksheet provided below, or have students retell the story orally to each other.
- *Closing and debrief:* Once students have finished the comprehension sheet, gather and debrief.
- Some debrief questions to consider:
  - What did you think about the story?
  - What were some interesting points of the story?
  - What were some boring points of the story?
  - How do you feel about the language of the story?

## Extension Activity Ideas

Activities can be modified several different ways depending on grade level and focus of study. Listed are some activity ideas that can be adapted and extended to and for any grade level.

- *Create Animal Myth Story:* Students choose an animal and make up a story about how that animal was created. Once students have created their stories, have them present their stories to the class, since many animal myths are part of the oral tradition of storytelling. Additionally, students could create a book illustrating the evolution of the animal.
- *Reader’s Theater:* Though the stories presented in this article do not have characters to portray as in a play, students can still practice their oral reading skills by choral reading the stories to their classmates.
- *Dictionary Skills:* An important skill for students to have is the ability to utilize resources to find the meaning of words they do not know. Instead of introducing difficult vocabulary, have students use the vocabulary definition sheet to look up the words in the dictionary. The activity sheet requires students to write down the guide words, definition, and create their own sentence. Blank sheets have been provided as well.

## Text Feature Activity

1. Find the text feature in the newspaper article.
2. Write the answer in the "Answers" column.
3. Don't forget to read and follow what the question is asking.

| <b>Instructions</b>   | <b>Answers</b> |
|---|----------------|
| <b>What is the name of the publication?</b><br>Highlight in yellow.           |                |
| <b>What year was this article published?</b><br>Circle in pencil.             |                |
| <b>What month and day was this article published?</b><br>Underline in pencil. |                |
| <b>What is the title of the article?</b><br>Underline in yellow highlighter.  |                |
| <b>What page are these articles found?</b><br>Circle with yellow highlighter. |                |

## Comprehension Check Sheet

|   | Question  | Page # | Answer |
|---|---|--------|--------|
| 1 | Why did Beaver get mad at Porcupine?                          |        |        |
|   |   |        |        |
|   |   |        |        |
|   |   |        |        |
| 2 | What happened during the fight?                               |        |        |
|   |   |        |        |
|   |   |        |        |
|   |   |        |        |
| 3 | Where did Beaver people take Porcupine?                       |        |        |
|   |   |        |        |
|   |   |        |        |
|   |   |        |        |
| 4 | How did Porcupine escape the island?                          |        |        |
|   |   |        |        |
|   |   |        |        |
|   |   |        |        |
| 5 | How did Beaver people know that Porcupine people were coming? |        |        |
|   |   |        |        |
|   |   |        |        |
|   |   |        |        |
| 6 | How does Beaver escape his punishment?                        |        |        |
|   |   |        |        |
|   |   |        |        |
|   |   |        |        |

## Vocabulary Definition Sheet

# Vocabulary Definition Sheet

1. Look up the vocabulary word in a print dictionary.
2. Write down the guide words. *(Remember, there are two words.)*
3. Find the correct definition of the word.
4. Create a sentence using the vocabulary word.

| Vocabulary Word | Guide Words | Definition | In a sentence |
|-----------------|-------------|------------|---------------|
| quarreled       |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
| provisions      |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
| bristled        |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
| quills          |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |

| Vocabulary Word | Guide Words | Definition | In a sentence |
|-----------------|-------------|------------|---------------|
| captive         |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
| convicted       |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
| condemned       |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
| imprisoned      |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
| sheer           |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
| lamenting       |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |

| Vocabulary Word | Guide Words | Definition | In a sentence |
|-----------------|-------------|------------|---------------|
| haunches        |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
| lurked          |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
| hearty          |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
| buzz-saw        |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |
|                 |             |            |               |

| Vocabulary Word | Guide Words | Definition | In a sentence |
|-----------------|-------------|------------|---------------|
|                 |             |            |               |
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