

NEW WORDS:

ledge
continue
journey
powerful
twirled
weasel
pestered
alligator

THE WEASEL AND THE EAGLE

Warm Springs Animal Stories

Developed by members of the Warm Springs Reservation Committee

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA: Plateau Region

STORY TYPE(S): Natural Phenomena/Indian Values

Summary:

Weasel and Eagle killed an alligator and proceeded on a journey to visit friends. Weasel decided to keep the alligator skin but got tired of carrying it. Weasel did a variety of things to keep himself entertained, often to the annoyance of Eagle. Finally, while dancing and singing, Weasel accidentally let go of the alligator skin, which landed on Eagle's back. Eagle flew away with the skin letting it eventually drop in Florida.

This story represents the type labeled **natural phenomena** because it offers one explanation of how something in nature became as we know it to be today. *The Weasel and the Eagle* explains why an animal, the alligator, may be found in one place and not another.

In addition this story is also an **Indian values** type story since it shows the consequences which often result when one pesters others. Disrespect for another's differences can alienate even the closest friends.

Teacher Guided Activities:



1. After reciting the story have students **read** the story and discuss the idea of passing stories from one generation to another orally. What things might happen to a story? Why?

In order to clarify changes which might occur due to word of mouth, have students form circles of ten or more students. Whisper a message into the ear of the first student and direct him or her to do the same to the following student in the circle until everyone has heard the message. Have the last student whisper the message to the teacher who should then write it down.

Using the same procedure repeat the **same** message and have students pass it on. When the message has completed the circle again write it on the board and compare.

How close were the two messages? How about the second time around the circle? Was the message distortion as great? What might practice and repetition do to a story?

Several days later ask students if anyone remembers what was contained in the message. Because they had to remember it to tell to someone else was it easier or harder to remember?

What positive things can be said about oral tradition? What are some negative things about it? Share the Firetalk activity card (1-A) with the class and suggest that when time permits, several students at a time should try the activity. Continue to use this card throughout the use of the Series. An area should be available and equipped with a tape recorder to encourage students to readily use this activity.



2. Weasel did not show respect for Eagle's desire to be left alone. In order to understand the meaning of the work **unique** and how that word relates to people, pass out an orange to each child.

Tell them to pretend that their orange is their friend. Ask them to spend time getting to know their friend. How does it look? How does it feel? Talk to it.

Then have all the oranges placed on a table together. Let the students come in pairs to pick out their orange. Once all oranges have been reclaimed, discuss how each was able to find his or her orange. Each was **unique** (similar yet different and special). How does this apply to people? We are all similar but each is different. Make a list of how we are different including appearances, likes and dislikes, talents, surroundings, etc. Let each child write and illustrate how he or she and their family are unique.

Explain that by reading the *Indian Reading Series* each will discover how different tribes are also unique.



3. In order to emphasize what it means to **pester** someone, have students impromptu role-play the story allowing different students to be the Weasel and the Eagle.



4. To encourage students to share written stories with others have students choose a favorite story. Provide a tape player so that they may practice reading the story and listening to themselves.

If the story is short they may be able to outline the story and piece it together from memory. Once the students feel secure in their knowledge of and familiarity with the story, they may then read it aloud to a group of children in another grade.

Student Activity Card(s):
See Firetalk Activity Card (1A-1B).