

NEW WORDS:

hollered
outsmart
desperately
undecided

WINTER MONTHS

Developed By the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Fort Hall

GEOGRAPHICAL AREA: Plateau

STORY TYPE(S): Natural Phenomena

Summary:

Before there were seasons the animals and birds lived in a village together. It was decided that the leaders would have a meeting to vote on the length of the seasons. All but Coyote wanted the winter season to last three months. The animals devised a plan in which Mouse jumped up and said that winter should be three months in length and then left the meeting. All the others left too, leaving Coyote speechless.

Aside from giving a possible explanation for the origin of the length of winter, this story gives insights into the organization of the tribal council in which every member had a contribution to make and a majority vote was accepted as a final decision by which all should live.

Teacher Guided Activities:



1. Ask students to speculate on how the environment and our lives would be different if winter lasted much longer than it does. Examine the pros and cons of having winter. What purpose does it hold in the cycle of living things? Refer to the **Circles in Harmony** activity card, 5A-5B, to discuss the importance of cycles.



2. Make a list of rules needed when running a meeting. What is expected of members of a council? Structure a class meeting so students may practice skills in coming to joint decisions.

Discuss how your class makes decisions. Relate these points to various aspects of government including tribal governments. Discuss how individuals can influence decisions in government.

Have students research the origin of the constitution and discuss the impact of the League of the Iroquois on its conception.

3. Have students do some creative writing using the title, **Winter Is . . .**. Ask each to think of one word or phrases of words that winter might bring to mind.



Another idea is to have students write as if they were a snowflake, describing sights, sounds, smells, thoughts and feelings, beginning each line with the words, **If I were a snowflake . . .**

Student Activity Card(s)
See Echos of Time Activity Card (15A-15B).