

Tsapah Talks of Pheasant

Developed by Members of the Muckleshoot Planning Committee

Geographical Area: Coastal Region

Vocabulary:	hurriedly	contagious	anticipated
	persuade	cafeteria	anticipation
	Muckleshoot	tetherball	maliciously
	Postud	offended	expressionless
	enthralled	presence	ventures
	retorted	intend	disappointment
	preparations	instantly	respect
	compromise	jealous	assistance
	merely	anxiously	pleaded
	influence	intently	light-hearted

Reading Motivators: Look at pictures of a pheasant and discuss its characteristics. Ask students to identify how this bird might be considered unique from all others.

Ask students to describe what they like best about their grandparents, or favorite relative.

Discuss oral tradition and what it takes to be a good storyteller.

Locate the Muckleshoot tribe on the map of Washington State and ask students to imagine what type of lifestyle the people might live. What things would determine how those people live today or have lived in the past?

Discussion Topics: Ask students to describe the different personalities of the characters (Wolf, Weasel, Cougar, Woodpecker, Pheasant) in Tsapah's story. What were their strengths and weaknesses?

Discuss how Tsapah may have learned his story. Did he learn it from the young Indian boy?

Discuss Tsapah's messages to the students:

- Find a better way out of a bad situation.
- Remember, being big and boastful does not show people that you are the best. Saying nothing but proving you are good has greater influence.
- Don't pull all your feathers out.
- Don't consider yourself important because you can do one thing better than someone else. Everyone has talents.

Discuss why the hunters respected Pheasant and why the students respected Tsapah. How does a person earn respect?

**Follow-up
Activities:**

1. Just as Pheasant had special powers in his feathers, have students identify the things they do well. Using magazines, have students locate pictures of things they like to do and have each make a collage of their special powers.
2. Tsapah used his hand a great deal while he talked. Have students role play (without speaking) the different animal hunters, using their body movements to describe the personalities of the characters (good for introduction to theatrical productions).
3. Using the script, *Tsapah Talks of Pheasant*, do a puppet play or readers theater. To help with expression have students take turns reading each line. Have several different students try each line until it gets close to how it should be read.
4. Have students list ways to “say nothing, and prove how good they are.” See how many “real life” examples they can generate.
5. Have students research information about the Muckleshoot tribe.

Tsapah Talks of Pheasant

*Tsapah or Narrator
Cougar
Weasel*

*Woodpecker
Pheasant
Wolf*

Tsapah: Many, many years ago all of the men were hunters. They had to go out and bring in all the deer and elk to keep the people healthy and content. The hunters all had animal names. They were named according to the way they hunted and killed. They would sit around the campfire at night and talk about their hunting.

Cougar: I am cougar. I enjoy stalking an animal as much as finally killing it. I am a great hunter! I'm the greatest hunter in the world. You should have seen me sneak up on that deer today. He was a twelve point buck. I killed him easily.

Wolf: I'm even a better hunter! I am wolf. I am quick. When I chase and kill an animal sometimes I destroy a lot of the meat.

Tsapah: Each evening the hunters never seemed to tire bragging about their hunting.

Wolf: Oh, you should have been with me today. I got the biggest deer I've seen in a long time. I **really** had to chase him, but I caught him. When I got him down, he jumped up again. Three times that deer did that to me. By that time I was very angry. When I got that deer down I really killed him quickly. You all know that I got the biggest deer today because I am such a good hunter. Owoo-owoo-!!

Weasel: Wolf, you know sometimes you go out on a hunt and bring back nothing. I'm weasel. When I hunt I always bring back something. I chase the animal and stick my teeth into the animal's neck. I don't let go until the animal is dead.

Woodpecker: I'm Woodpecker. I'm special because I can travel in the sky and see what's below. You have to see an animal before you can kill it.

Tsapah: The only hunter who was silent was Pheasant. Pheasant would merely sit among the hunters and listen.

Cougar: At least we don't have to worry about Pheasant. We **all** know he can't hunt.

Wolf: He never even tries to kill anything.

**Cougar, Wolf,
Weasel,
Woodpecker:** *(All laugh)*

Weasel: Yeah, old Pheasant can't hunt. He never brings back anything.

Tsapah: Pheasant would never answer them and they would soon tire of teasing him and go back to their hunting tales.

Weasel: I am the best hunter.

Cougar: If you're best, where is the fresh meat?

Wolf: I am the greatest hunter! There's just no deer.

Woodpecker: Yeah, but that old Wolf, he wastes all the meat.

Cougar: Let's have a contest to see who the best hunter really is. The first hunter to come back with meat shall be the best hunter.

Wolf: That sounds like a good idea. Then we will know for sure. I intend to show you all.

Tsapah: The next day each hunter prepared for the hunt and went out into the forest. All the hunters left camp. All that is except Pheasant. He merely watched.

The people waited anxiously for the hunters' return. Late that day the hunters struggled back to camp. Not one of them had any meat and there was much complaining around the campfire that night.

Cougar: Pheasant, why don't you ever tell about the deer **you** get.

Wolf: Yeah, Pheasant, don't you ever kill a deer or elk?

Weasel: I don't think Pheasant ever killed a deer.

Woodpecker: Ah, forget about Pheasant. He's no good.

Tsapah: All the people listened to the hunter's stories with interest. The hunters brought food that would last all year long. The people smoked or dried the meat, but they really enjoyed fresh meat when they could get it. Sometimes the people

would have to go many months without fresh meat because the hunters would occasionally have a bad season. Even during these bad seasons, the hunters would gather to brag and laugh.

Woodpecker: Wolf, I saw you headed right toward a deer. How is it you didn't bring him down?

Wolf: Well, if you saw the deer, why didn't **you** get it? I just had a little bad luck. It can happen to the best hunter. Tomorrow I intend to be first with a big buck. That will show you, Woodpecker.

Tsapah: Pheasant was kneeling in his usual place listening to the disappointment of the hunters.

Pheasant: *(Speaks quietly to himself.)* Well, tomorrow I shall go out and perhaps these hunters will learn a lesson.

Tsapah: The next morning as the other hunters prepared to leave camp, they noticed Pheasant making preparations also.

Cougar: Hah! Everyone, come and see what is happening. Pheasant is making arrows to hunt with. So, you decided to join the hunt, Pheasant. Well, it is an open contest. Anyone can be in it, even you!

Tsapah: The hunters left for the forest and Pheasant was still preparing his arrows. Pheasant plucked a feather from his own clothing and attached it to his arrow.

Pheasant: Now, I am ready to go on the hunt. I know for certain I shall get some meat. It is this feather which will guide my arrow straight and true.

Tsapah: Pheasant had not gone far when he saw a deer. He shot the arrow and killed the deer instantly. On his way back to camp, Pheasant came upon Weasel.

Pheasant: Hey! Weasel, will you help me take the meat back to camp?

Weasel: Yes, I will help you. Oh, the other hunters are going to be surprised. No one knew you could even hunt, let alone be a good hunter. Now you have proven yourself to be the best hunter among our people.

Tsapah: There was much excitement in the camp that night. The people were happy to have fresh meat. The people talked quietly about how Pheasant had beaten them all.

- Wolf:** How is it that you shot so straight today?
- Pheasant:** It is my feathers. When I put one of my own feathers on the arrow, I never miss an animal. I can even get an animal if it is very far away. Only my feathers will work to make the arrows go straight and far.
- Cougar:** I want a feather, Pheasant.
- Weasel:** I want a feather too!
- Wolf:** Give us a feather or we'll be forced to take one.
- Pheasant:** No, I will not give you any. They are my clothes and keep me warm. If I were to allow you to take feathers whenever you wanted them, I would get cold. I cannot give you my feathers.
- Cougar:** Give us a feather or we will take them away from you.
- Tsapah:** The other hunters were jealous of Pheasant and tried to fight with him. Pheasant knew that they could harm him if they really wanted to.
- Pheasant:** Please do not harm me! I do not consider myself important because of the hunting contest. When I am hungry, I go out for meat. I do not abuse my power and I am not greedy. I am willing to compromise. I will give one of you a feather of mine. You must decide among yourselves who will get the feather.
- Tsapah:** The hunters held a council and decided they would let Black Eagle have the feather.
- Black Eagle:** I will make an arrow and take it to Pheasant.
- Pheasant:** Here is my feather. When you are hunting and see game, aim and shoot. Bring the arrow back to me and I will fix it right away.
- Black Eagle:** (*Aims and shoots*) It works! Now when the people are hungry, I can kill a deer with your feather on my arrow.
- Tsapah:** Because Black Eagle could use Pheasant's feather, this proved to the other hunters that Pheasant was a good person. He was the best hunter and a real sportsman.
- When the Indian people came they received Pheasant's power. They also remembered that if you're good at something and you know it, you do not have to brag and tell everyone. Being big and boastful does not show people that you are the best. Saying nothing, but proving you are good has greater influence.