

The Great Race

by Paul Goble

Classroom Favorites



Teacher's Guide by Vashti Ivy

A Perma-Bound Production

Notes to the Teacher:

You may wish to wear Indian dress, or just an Indian headband when you read the story. Have the students sit in a "pow-wow" circle. Explain that this story comes from the Plains Indians: Cheyenne, Sioux and other tribes.

Synopsis

The stories tell that, long ago, buffaloes used to eat people. That is where they got the long hair on their chins. The great Creator heard the people's cries and saw that they suffered. He sent Crow to gather all the creatures at the hills.

The Creator spoke to all. He told them that they would run a race. Four-leggeds would run against two-leggeds. The winners would be able to hunt and eat the losers. All the animals joined the buffaloes while the birds joined with the people. They all chose their fastest runners. Finally the coyote and the wolf gave the signal and the Great Race began.

Magpie was determined to win the race. She knew that she could not keep up, so she sat on Buffalo's back. No one noticed her. First the birds dropped out, then Beaver, Otter and Muskrat. Jack-rabbit disappeared onto the plains (away from Coyote). Many of the smaller animals dropped out, but Mole and Gopher tunneled underground and still think the race is on.

The young man was falling behind Buffalo, but Magpie was still clinging to her seat. As they approached the finish line, Buffalo speeded up. Magpie quickly flew off Buffalo's back towards the sun. Then she turned back and swooped across the finish line first. The two-leggeds won!

The Buffalo Nation conceded. The Creator commanded that the two-leggeds use their power wisely, look after the animals, and give thanks. Then the people were shown how to make bows and arrows.

Magpie and all the birds are honored by the people for taking their side in the Great Race. The race was the start of other things -- the Milky Way was caused by the dust clouds raised by the runners, and Magpie flew so near to the sun that her tail still carries the sun's iridescent colors.

Biographical Sketch

Paul Goble was born on September 27, 1933, in Surrey, England. He was educated at the Central School of Arts and Crafts in London, England.

Mr. Goble began writing about the Indians while still in England. He used Indians as critics of his books. He moved to the United States to get close to the subjects about which he wrote.

Mr. Goble is a Caldecott medalist, and an ALA Notable Children's Book author. He resides in Deadwood, South Dakota.

Objectives

1. To acquaint the child with folktales about Native Americans
2. To introduce the culture of the Native Americans to students

Word Study

In the story, find an antonym for the following:

valley	(hilltop)
won	(lost)
unpopular	(favorite)

In the story, find a synonym for the following:

burrow	(tunneled)
wearied	(exhausted)
plunge	(swoop)

Discussion Questions

1. Why were the people afraid of the buffaloes?
(*the buffaloes ate people*)
2. Who told Crow to gather all the living creatures together?
(*the Creator*)
3. Who represented the four-legged tribe in the race?
(*a young cow buffalo*)
4. Who represented the two-legged tribe in the race?
(*a young man*)
5. What happened to the birds in the race?
(*They got thirsty, drank too much water, and fell asleep in the trees.*)
6. Describe what happens to the following creatures:
 - a. The Jack-rabbit (*She fled onto the prairies to avoid the coyote.*)

- b. Prairie Dog (*wasted his energy chattering to Hawk*)
 - c. Toad (*was eaten by Rattlesnake*)
 - d. Mole and Gopher (*tunneled underground*)
7. Who won the race and how? (*Maggie won the race. She rode on Buffalo's back until she saw the finish line and flew over it before Buffalo.*)

Student Activities

1. The Indians regarded the buffalo as the staff of life. Using a pattern and some oak tag, have the students trace and cut out a buffalo. Complete the buffaloes using cotton and paint.
2. Given the following list of buffalo parts, have students guess for what each part was used (research): flesh, skin, bones, sinews, tufts of hair, horn, tongue, skeleton.
3. Make a word search of Indian tribes.
4. Recreate the story in play form.

Beyond the Story

Geography

1. Display a map of the U.S. including Hawaii and Alaska. Put the following names on placards: Choctaw, Navajo, Sioux, Winnebago Delaware, Comanche, Cajun, Cayuga, Sac, Creek, Seneca, Eskimo, Seminole.

Have students section off the map in the following geographical classifications:

Northwest Coast - Washington, Oregon, California

Southwest - New Mexico, Arizona

Great Basin - Nevada, Utah, Colorado

Great Plains - South & North Dakota, Kansas, Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma

Plateau - Idaho, Michigan

Northeast - Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Kentucky, Cape Cod, East Coast States, North Carolina

Southeast - Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Mississippi, Tennessee, Louisiana

Have students place placards where they think the tribes live.

2. Many of our states take their names from Indian names. Find the Indian name for each of the following: Texas, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Alabama, Wyoming, South Dakota, Illinois, Arizona, Minnesota, Idaho, Nebraska

Reading

Share some Indian legends with the students.

Art

1. Invite a Native American artist to school to help students create an Indian blanket.
2. Have students create Indian bowls out of papier mâché. Using designs from books (or students' original designs), paint the bowls. Display the finished products in class.

Writing

1. Indian tribes used symbols as a written language. Research these symbols with the students and have them create a story using them.
2. Have students write to Native American students, comparing lifestyles, hobbies, foods, schools, and stories (folktale, legends, bedtime stories, etc.). Share the letters.

COMPREHENSION TEST

Matching: Match the animal with its description.

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| _____ 1. Magpie | A. represented the two-legged tribe |
| _____ 2. Buffalo | B. had legs that were too short to race |
| _____ 3. Gopher | C. gathers the creatures together |
| _____ 4. Prairie Dog | D. won the race |
| _____ 5. Beaver | E. chattered to Hawk |
| _____ 6. Crow | F. tunneled underground |
| _____ 7. young man | G. ate people |

Completion: Using words from the story, complete the following sentences.

suffered thunder panting slipped
exhausted hunted honor Creator

1. The _____ stood on the highest hilltop.
2. The Creator saw how the people had _____.
3. The runners sped away with a _____ of feet and a great wind of flying birds.
4. Even Buffalo was almost _____, and her head hung low.
5. They _____ the buffaloes when they needed meat.
6. The animals swam past them; except for Beaver, whose legs were too short for such a long race, and he _____ into the lovely pool shaded by the trees.
7. They _____ them when they wear beautiful feathers.
8. The birds were _____, and when they came to a stream they stopped to drink.

ANSWER KEY

Matching:

1. D 2. G 3. F 4. E 5. B 6. C 7. A

Completion:

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Creator | 5. hunted |
| 2. suffered | 6. slipped |
| 3. thunder | 7. honor |
| 4. exhausted | 8. panting |

True/False:

- | | |
|------|------|
| 1. F | 5. F |
| 2. T | 6. F |
| 3. T | 6. T |
| 4. T | 8. F |

Short Answers:

1. The winners could hunt and eat the losers
2. power over the other animals
3. use it wisely, take care of animals, give thanks
4. by "letting our thoughts rise as high as the birds fly"
5. by flying so near the sun
6. the clouds of dust raised by the racers.

TEACHER'S NOTES

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