

The Wolf in Literature

Age: 4 grade and up

Objectives: Students will be able to...

- Compare learned information about the timber wolf to what is presented in literature.
- Decide what is fact and what is fantasy.
- Identify information that is misleading about the timber wolf and that is harmful to the image of the wolf in today's society.

Standards

WI Social Studies: E.4.10 Give examples and explain how the media may influence opinions, choices, and decisions.

WI Social Studies: E.8.10 Explain how language, art, music, beliefs, and other components of culture can further global understanding or cause misunderstanding

WI Social Studies: E.12.7 Use scientific methods to assess the influence of media on people's behavior and decisions

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.1](#) Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.1](#) Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6/7/8.1](#) Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

[CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-12.2](#) Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Materials

- Copies of fictional wolf stories (suggestions: Little Red Riding Hood, Peter and the Wolf, The Three Little Pigs, Aesop's Fables). Try to get a range of reading levels for your student population.
- T-Chart Copies

Background Information

The focus of this lesson is to increase awareness of the children to misconceptions of the timber wolf in literature. The wolf has taken the role of the 'evil animal,' especially in folk tales or fairy tales. The wolf has been pitted against man in a variety of stories (such as Peter and the Wolf, Little Red Riding Hood, The Three Little Pigs, etc.).

The wolf hasn't always been perceived as a menace or a man eater. In the times when humans hunted for food the wolf was admired for its hunting skills. Many Native Americans imitated the wolf's hunting skills and even wore wolf skins to symbolize the traits admired in wolves- endurance, great hunter, wise and agile. The book *Of Wolves & Men* by Barry Hostun Lopez tells of the Native Americans great respect

for the wolf. “They were moved by his howling, which they sometimes regarded as talking with the spirit world. The wolf appears in many of their legends as a messenger in fact, a great long-distance traveler, a guide for anyone seeking the spirit world.” The wolf was also held in high esteem as it was seen to be a provider for the family as well as others. The Native Americans also admired the way the wolf put its needs beneath the needs of the pack.

The “bad” reputation given to the timber wolf has created some adverse effects. Timber wolves were killed in the US as well as Europe. During the mid-1900’s, there was time no wolves were in no lower states except Minnesota.

Before the Lesson

Invite TWA in to teach about wolves or have class learn about wolves prior to this activity.

Introduction

Have students “google” wolf logos and pictures. Have students print these out and tape them to the board or wall. As a class, sort the pictures into depicting wolves as ‘bad’ or ‘not.’ Try to identify trends of why we sorted pictures in certain categories.

Example:



Lesson

1. Read aloud one of the fictional stories about wolves. As you go throughout the story, ask “Is this true about wolves?” (For example, do wolves huff and puff to blow things down? Would wolves eat pigs?). When finished with the story, ask students if this book depicts the wolf from what we have learned previously.
2. Create a T-Chart to record the responses as Fact or Fantasy

Facts	Fantasy
Wolves would eat pigs	Wolves don’t use their breath to blow things down

Depending on grade level, this could be more in-depth. You may read more than 1 story, for students to get the hang of the fact or fantasy principle.

3. Divide the class into groups with 3 or 4 individuals. Have enough books to give one book to each group. Instruct the group to read through the book once. After finishing, have groups go through each page of the book, look at the way the wolf is drawn, where it lives, what it is preying on, etc.
 - a. If you have older kids and time, you may want to do book groups on longer texts and have them read through the book once. Meetings for book groups can include going through information for their T-chart.
4. Have group fill out a T-Chart like you did as a class.
5. Independently have students write an opinion piece answering “Is this a good depiction of the wolf? Why or why not?” Depending on age group, you can determine how much detail and length of this essay. Encourage groups to use their T-charts to provide evidence within their writing.
 - a. Alternative assessment: Make a poster having students advocate or discourage people from reading the book and provide a few reasons to support why.

Conclusion

Have students share their opinions with the class. Make a list of books that they would suggest would be a good book to read about wolves and a list of books to stay away from.

Extension Activities

Literacy

- Have students rewrite the children’s books to reflect facts about wolves.
- Create an accurate picture book of the wolf
- Research Native American Folklore (see story below, that could be used)
- Have older students read children’s books to younger students about wolves and explain to them about fact vs. fantasy

Math/Science

- Create a graph listing traits of wolves. Graph the frequency of these facts and share with class (could be done in the small groups)
- Develop a bar graph of accurate and inaccurate information about wolves in the book they are reading.

Original Lesson Plan Created by: Jill Kieslich-Rhuhe

Updated by: Angela Lee Rivera Rautmann

Produced by the Timber Wolf Alliance



Book Title: _____

Group Members: _____



**Timber Wolf
Alliance**

Read through your book, as you find information about wolves list as fact or fantasy. Don't forget to look at the cover and pictures.

Fact

Fantasy

Fact	Fantasy

Anishinabe (Original Man) and Ma-en'-gun (the wolf)

Excerpted from

The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway

by Edward Benton-Banai

"As he walked, Original Man talked with the animals. He named them as he went. He noted that some animals were good for we-sin'-in-win' (food) and medicine. He noticed that each type of animal had its own individual kind of wisdom. He did not know that all these plants and animals would play an important part for all the people that would be coming to live on the Earth at a later time.

Original Man traveled everywhere. There was not one plant, animal, or place that was not touched by him.

In his travels, Original Man began to notice that all the animals came in pairs and they reproduced. And yet, he was alone.

He spoke to his Grandfather the Creator and asked, "Why am I alone? Why are there no other ones like me?"

Gitche Manito answered, "I will send someone to walk, talk and play with you."

He sent Ma-en'-gun (the wolf).

With Ma-en'-gun by his side, Original Man again spoke to Gitche Manito, "I have finished what you asked me to do. I have visited and named all the plants, animals, and places of this Earth. What would you now have me to do?"

Gitche Manito answered Original Man and Ma-en'-gun, "Each of you are to be a brother to the other. Now, both of you are to walk the Earth and visit all its places."

So, Original Man and Ma-en'-gun walked the Earth and came to know all of her. In this journey they became very close to each other. They became like brothers. In their closeness they realized that they were brothers to all the Creation.

When they had completed the task that Gitche Manito asked them to do, they talked with the Creator once again.

The Creator said, "From this day on, you are to separate your paths. You must go different ways.

"what shall happen to one of you will also happen to the other. Each of you will be feared, respected and misunderstood by the people that will later join you on this Earth."

And so Ma-en'-gun and Original Man set off on their different journeys. This last teaching about the wolf is important for us today. What the

Grandfathers said to them has come true. Both the Indian and the wolf have come to be alike and have experienced the same thing. Both of them mate for life.

Both have a Clan System and a tribe. Both have had their land taken from them. Both have been hunted for their wee-nes-si-see (hair). And both have been pushed very close to destruction.

We can tell about our future as Indian people by looking at the wolf. It seems as though the wolf is beginning to come back to this land. Will this prove that Indian people will cease to be the "Vanishing Americans?" Will Indian people emerge to lead the way back to natural living and respect of our Earth Mother?"