

Montana Small Schools Alliance  
**HONORING MONTANA'S FIRST PEOPLES**

**UNIT:** Let's Write a Story to Share

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**SCHOOL AND COUNTY:** Helmville School in Powell County

**GRADE LEVEL:** 2-5

**OVERVIEW:** Students will learn to express thoughts and events through picture writing using American Indian symbols.

**DURATION:** 1-2 Weeks

**INDIAN RESERVATION REFERENCED:** Flathead

**SUBJECT AREA:** Reading, Writing

**OBJECTIVE:** Students will listen to a legend in the Salish language, listen to four more examples of legends, and write a story that teaches a moral or value.

**Students will be made aware of cultural protocol that stories are told in the winter.**

**CONTENT STANDARDS ADDRESSED:**

Reading/Literature Standard 1: Students construct meaning as they comprehend, interpret, and respond to what they read including literary works.

Reading/Literature Standard 2: Students apply a range of skills and strategies to read. They recognize and evaluate how language, literary devices, and elements contribute to the meaning and impact of literary works.

Reading/Literature Standard 3: Students set goals, monitor, and evaluate their progress in reading, and reflect upon their literary experiences and purposefully select from a range of works.

Reading/Literature Standard 4: Students interact with (select, read and respond to) print and nonprint material and literary works, from various cultures, ethnic groups, traditions and contemporary viewpoints written by both genders, for a variety of purposes.

Reading/Literature Standard 5: Students gather, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information from a variety of sources, and communicate their findings in ways appropriate for their purposes and audiences. Students use literary works to enrich personal experiences and to connect to the broader world of ideas, concepts and issues.

Writing Standard 1: Students write clearly and effectively.

Writing Standard 2: Students apply a range of skills and strategies in the writing process.

Writing Standard 3: Students evaluate and reflect on their growth as writers.

Writing Standard 4: Students write for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Writing Standard 5: Students recognize the structures of various forms and apply these characteristics to own writing.

Writing Standard 6: Students use the inquiry process, problem-solving strategies, and resources to synthesize and communicate information.

### **ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT MONTANA INDIANS:**

Essential Understanding 3: The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs.

Additionally, each tribe has its own oral history beginning with their origins that are as valid as written histories. These histories pre-date the “discovery” of North America.

Essential Understanding 6: History is a story and most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. Histories are being rediscovered and revised. History told from an Indian perspective conflicts with what most of mainstream history tells us.

### **MATERIALS:**

“Mali Npnaqs, The Story of a Mean Old Lady” by Johnny Arlee (book and tape)  
Ktunaxa Legends, Kootenai Culture Committee Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

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[www.salishworld.com](http://www.salishworld.com)

Computer paper and cover stock

Binder machine

**ACTIVITIES:** (to be done in 30 minute time slots for one to two weeks)

Students will listen to the teacher explain the absence of written language among Indian tribes and their rich oral tradition.

The teacher will show the students the pictures in the book, Mali Npnaqs, as the story unfold in the native language using the tape. After listening to the story in the native language the teacher will read the English version. Provide time for discussion, thoughts, feelings, recognition, etc.

Read four legends from the Ktunaxa Legends. Discuss each legend and be able to determine the lesson.

Discuss their favorite legend and challenge the students to think of their own legend, type it on the computer (younger children may use the teacher or older students as their 'secretaries'), and illustrate their story. (When typing, separate the story into three or four pages so that it provides room for more illustrations)

Bind all legends together in one book. The book will be added to the library.

**ASSESSMENT:**

Students will share their stories and drawings with each other. They will tell how they got the idea for their legend.

**EXTENSIONS:**

Make arrangements for the students to read their legends to the 6-8<sup>th</sup> grades. This gives the younger students practice reading using their own words as well as present in front of other age groups.