The Hunters and the Elk

SUMMARY This nonfiction book introduces students to the Snohomish people and tells how they created their own myth for how and why the Big Dipper is in the sky. The book invites students to think about why and how stories are created and passed down. The book helps students learn how to summarize.

LESSON VOCABULARY
- antlers
- languages
- overhead
- imagined
- narrator
- poke

INTRODUCE THE BOOK

INTRODUCE THE TITLE AND AUTHOR Discuss with students the title and the author of The Hunters and the Elk. Based on the title, ask students what kind of information they think this book will provide. Ask them what they imagine the people on the cover are doing and why they might be looking at the stars. Encourage them to support their answer with clues in the illustrations.

BUILD BACKGROUND Discuss with students what they know about the constellations and the stars. Ask students if they have ever stargazed, seen a shooting star, or looked through a telescope. Ask: What do you think about when you look at a star or wish upon it?

PREVIEW/USE TEXT FEATURES Invite students to take a picture walk through the illustrations. Ask how the illustrations give clues to the meaning of the story. Discuss with students which illustrations seem realistic and which seem like fantasy, and why.

READ THE BOOK

SET PURPOSE Have students set a purpose for reading The Hunters and the Elk. Their curiosity about the stars, myths, and Native American culture should guide this purpose. Suggest that as students read, they take notes to summarize the story and to provide answers for any questions they might have about the stars, myths, or Native American culture.

STRATEGY SUPPORT: INFERRING Explain to students the inferring is using information they already know and combining it with information in the text to form their own ideas about the text. Model making an inference about the Snohomish languages using page 5. Say: I read that the Creator gave his leftover languages to the Snohomish people. I know that it is difficult to understand other languages. I can infer that the Snohomish people had a difficult time understanding each other.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

PAGE 3 Summarize why the elk are important to the Snohomish. (They give meat for food; their skin is used for clothing; and tools, weapons, and art are made from their antlers.)

PAGE 6 Can you imagine a reason why the Creator had not made the sky high enough? (Possible responses: The Creator was busy and forgot; the Creator wanted the people to work together to push the sky up.)

PAGE 9 What was the author’s purpose in writing about why the elk were important? (To explain why the Snohomish would name a constellation after them.)

PAGE 11 How does this story prove that it’s important to work together? (That’s how the Snohomish were able to lift the sky.)
REVISIT THE BOOK
READER RESPONSE
1. Characters: The Snohomish people, the elk, the hunters, and the Creator. Setting: Washington State. Plot: The sky was too low. The Snohomish people decided to push the sky higher. They raised the sky together.

2. Responses will vary, but should include prior knowledge and text from story.

3. Possible responses: I could look at the other words around it. I could look it up in a dictionary.

4. Possible response: Instead of the hunters chasing elk, they would probably be chasing another animal.

EXTEND UNDERSTANDING Remind students that sequence is the order in which story events happen. Have students write the sequence of events in *The Hunters and the Elk*. Ask: How might the story be different if any of the events were shuffled around? Invite students to change the events and write a new myth.

RESPONSE OPTIONS
WRITING Introduce students to a variety of different myths and then suggest that they write their own myth about the Big Dipper. Have students present their myths to the class.

SCIENCE CONNECTIONS Provide or have students choose a constellation to research. Encourage them to use the library or the Internet. Then have students either draw their constellation or create one using black paper and white chalk. Remind them to draw lines between the stars to create pictures. Have students share their findings with the class.

Skill Work
TEACH/REVIEW VOCABULARY To reinforce the contextual meaning of *overhead* on page 4, discuss with students how the phrase “in the night sky” helps to guess the meaning of *overhead*. Do this with the other vocabulary words in the story.

TARGET SKILL AND STRATEGY
- **CHARACTER, PLOT, AND SETTING** Share with students that a character is a person who takes part in the events of the story. Ask children to identify two characters in the story. Then, explain that the plot is the sequence of events that take place in a story from the beginning to the middle to the end. Ask students to tell the plot of the story by reviewing the events in sequence. Tell students the setting is where the story takes place. Ask students how the story would be different if it took place in a different setting.

- **INFERRING** Remind students that as they read, they should think about information from the text along with what they already know. Students can use this information to form their own ideas about the text. Have children infer how the Snohomish solved their problems using pages 6, 9, and 11. (Possible response: The sky was too low. The Snohomish people decided to raise the sky. They worked together to accomplish this task.)

- **ELL** Ask students to summarize what they did yesterday. Have them provide one main idea and three supporting details.

ADDITIONAL SKILL INSTRUCTION
**THEME** Without using the word theme, remind students that every story has one big idea or lesson. Discuss with students the themes of familiar stories like *The Ant and the Grasshopper*. (prepare for the future) Ask students how that big idea teaches them a lesson.
Character, Plot, and Setting

- A character is a person who takes part in events in the story.
- The plot is the sequence of events that take place in a story from the beginning to the middle to the end.
- The setting is where the story takes place.

Directions Fill in the following information about *The Hunters and the Elk*.

1. Title: __________________________________________

2. This story is about __________________________________________
   (name of characters)

3. This story takes place __________________________________________
   (where and when)

4. ____________  
   5. ____________  
   6. ____________

Directions Complete the diagram above. Write two events in each box to tell what happened in *The Hunters and the Elk*. Then answer the questions that below.

7. What is the important message of the story?

8. How would the story have changed if the Creator was not in the story?
Vocabulary

Directions: Circle the best definition for each word below. Then use the word in a sentence.

1. antlers
   a. the horns on an animal’s head
   b. the sharp hoofs of an animal

2. ____________________________
   ____________________________

3. imagined
   a. laughed very loudly
   b. formed a mental image

4. ____________________________
   ____________________________

5. languages
   a. the words people use to communicate
   b. the way people sing

6. ____________________________
   ____________________________

7. overheard
   a. listened intently
   b. heard without the speaker’s knowledge

8. ____________________________
   ____________________________

Check the Words You Know

antlers  imagined  languages
narrator  overheard  poked