



# Ocean stories

*People who have positive emotional connections to their environment and community are more likely to understand the value of looking after it. Indigenous concepts of interconnectedness and respect for the environment help students understand adaptation, survival and the importance of protecting our marine environment.*

## Orientation:

Ask Ss how they think the ocean was created? Tell them it doesn't have to be their own idea. It might be an idea they have heard someone else talk about. Also reinforce that there are no right or wrong answers to this question. Elicit answers and write them on the whiteboard.

## Dreamtime and creation stories:

Introduce the concepts of dreamtime and creation to Ss. Let them know that the different ideas that you have brainstormed as a class are all part of creation stories from different cultures. Every place in the world has its own culture and different creation stories.

## Legends:

Visit your teacher librarian and have them recommend an Aboriginal creation story. It would be ideal to have one from the indigenous group in your local area and one from a different culture such as Maori or African. Discuss what makes a story a legend? Many indigenous

legends tell the story of how things came to be. Generally speaking, a legend is a story that is believed to be true by the culture that tells it, although some elements of the story are exaggerated. There is usually a moral conflict in the story but, in the end good prevails.

## Story preparation:

Look at the ecosystem that your class created from art materials in an earlier lesson and ask them to imagine for a moment what a legend about the ecosystem might reveal. You may like to write some ideas on the whiteboard. Your Ss will each write a legend about one different element of the ecosystem: the birds, the water, the fish, the plants and so on to include every element you've listed.

## YEAR LEVEL

Years 4 – 6

## MATERIALS

PowerPoint presentation  
4-6 Lesson 3.ppt

Equipment for Ss to view  
PowerPoint presentation on

Tangaroa Blue Moko  
colouring page

## KEY WORDS

- Indigenous
- Dreamtime
- Creation
- Culture
- Legend
- Moko
- Element
- Beginning
- Characterisation
- Problem
- Resolution





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## Sea gods:

Sometimes different creation stories include characters such as sea gods. Show your Ss the Ocean Stories PowerPoint presentation that includes pictures of different sea gods and people drawn to represent protectors of the ocean. Notice that some are women and some are men. Spend some time asking Ss what these pictures look like and feel like. Let Ss know that in their story they may like to include a character such as a sea god.

## Make connections:

Instruct Ss to think of an organism or element from their ecosystems that they created in an earlier lesson. Ask them to close their eyes. Imagine that animal or plant as it is today. Now imagine it last week, last year or a thousand years ago. Imagine how that animal, plant or rock came to be. Why should we respect it? Why is it important? What would happen if that organism or element was being polluted? Use Ss' writing journals and encourage them to spend some time writing down a few ideas.

## Create:

Have Ss create a poem or story involving their element, including:

**A beginning** - how the element appeared, setting the scene

**Characterisation** - how the element became important, what its personality was like, what it was afraid of, who depended on it and why we should treat it with respect

**A problem and a resolution** - remember that good should triumph in the end and there should be a moral lesson in the story for all readers.

## Closure:

Prompt Ss with questions such as: 'How does a creation story or poem convey respect for the environment?', 'How do the legends you've created differ from the indigenous creation story read at the beginning of the lesson?', 'Do you feel some organisms are more important than others in an ecosystem?', 'What do you think people can learn from creation myths?', 'Do you think these legends are intended to be real?', 'Why do you think people tell them?'.

In indigenous history, many of these stories were part of an oral storytelling tradition and passed down from generation to generation. These oral histories have remained relatively unchanged over many thousands of years. How is this possible? Do you think you could remember a story like this to pass down to your grandchildren one day? What are some stories that your own family passes down through telling and retelling?





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## Extension activities:

Publish Ss stories. Ss edit and draw pictures to go with their stories. The stories could then be displayed in the classroom for Ss to share with each other or displayed in the school library for the rest of the term. Ss are even welcome to have their stories published on their school page on the Tangaroa Blue Foundation website.

**Tell:** Ss could read their story at a school assembly or visit one of the lower year classes and read to the Ss.

**Act out:** Ss could take turns in small groups acting out their stories through body movement.

## Cultural symbol:

Give Ss a copy of the Tangaroa Blue Moko (see the end of this lesson for a printout). A Moko is the permanent body and face marking by Maori, the indigenous people of New Zealand. Ss can colour in the Moko and then make their own cultural design for display. A Moko is something sacred to Maori people. Ss could use this concept to create a cultural symbol based on their own identity and personal expression. Use the internet to research more about Mokos and different cultural symbols to help prepare Ss for their own work. Some Ss may want to use different digital sites to create their symbol instead of drawing.



