

NAVAJO EXERCISES

A - exercises

1. Look at a map of the world. Where do the Navajo originally come from? Where do they live today?
2. Make a little map showing this migration. Write down the dates (on the map) that these migrations took place.
3. Are the first six beings gods or do they resemble human beings. Explain your answer.
4. How about the "gods" that are mentioned in the pantheon?
5. Creation is seen as a "journey" from the First world to the Fourth world. Describe what the First, Second, Third and Fourth worlds looked like.
6. Why did Begochiddy and his people constantly leave their worlds? How did they do this?
7. Think about the following statement: The sun plays an important role in Navajo religion. Is this statement true? Why or why not?
8. What similarities do you see between the Yoruba creation myth and creation myths from other cultures?

B - exercises

Look at a few websites that deal with this culture and choose one or two that have images, sounds or text that you think are useful for preparing your presentation. Make a summary or a sketch of the Navajo creation myth on a piece of flip chart paper. As much as possible, try to use the illustrations and images you found on the internet.

Choose one of the following exercises:

1. The Navajo Creation myth contains a First World, Second World, Third World and Fourth World. Create a three-dimensional image of the first three worlds. Place the gods and other living beings in these images.

or

2. There are many traditional Navajo legends, in which an explanation is given for natural phenomena such as the existence of fire, sunset or sunrise. Find such a legend on internet or look at the legends given here and choose one. You are a group of Navajo storytellers and your task is to pass on the stories to others. Tell the classroom the legend your group has chosen to present. Try as much as possible to make a link between the legend and the Navajo creation myth. Also think about how to dress and dress-up in this way to present the story. When presenting remember that a true storyteller talks loudly and clearly.

or

3. Find geometrical designs on the internet. Look carefully at these designs and use them to design a "poster" that shows the relationship between the Navajo people and nature.

or

4. Look at the following comments:

"We also honor the Creator of the Universe that lies between the Four Sacred Mountains. For he placed here for us all things we need to live and be happy. He gave us father Sun who gives light and energy to Mother Earth. Mother Earth nurtures us and gives us all things including the mountains, trees, our animals, grass, food and the herbs to heal us of our infirmities. We are the children. All things are alive to us. The Holy Ones taught us to take care of Mother Earth. We honor them in our delight to take care of her. Many peoples of Mother Earth are now hurting her. A future day will come when the peoples of the Earth will come to us, the Navajo, to teach them how to care for Mother Earth. When that day comes, we will be ready."

What could the Navajo teach us about caring for the earth? Try to create a short "lesson" that they could teach us. When doing this use your knowledge of the Navajo creation myth and their religion.

C - exercises

In which of the four worlds would you want to live? Why?

