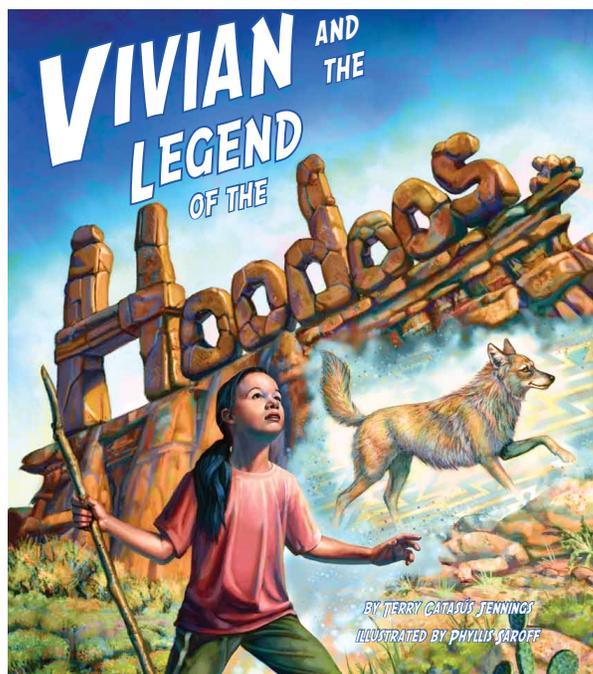


# Vivian and The Legend of the Hoodoos

BY TERRY CATASÚS JENNINGS

Native Culture Teacher Guide



Long ago, the Old Ones drank all the water, ate all the pine nuts and left nothing for the other creatures. Sinawav the coyote punished them by turning them into rocky hoodoos. Now their spirits shimmer like shadows at the base of their stone columns. When children are bad, the hoodoos are there. Vivian has heard the stories, but this year she has something more important on her mind: basketball tryouts! When Grandma takes her up on the mesa to pick pine nuts, Vivian is too impatient for the old traditions and would rather practice her basketball shots than respect the trees. Will she listen to Grandma when she teaches her about her Paiute ancestors?

This is one of two teacher's guides: Native Culture and Erosion. Erosion Teacher Guide may be obtained at: <http://www.terrycjennings.com/Teacher-Resources---Erosion.html>

For core standards to which *Vivian* is aligned, please visit: <http://www.arbordalepublishing.com/Standards.php>

For publisher's teacher guides and activities on sound, please visit: [http://arbordalepublishing.com/documents/TeachingActivities/VivianLegend\\_TA](http://arbordalepublishing.com/documents/TeachingActivities/VivianLegend_TA)

For additional downloadable activities from author, please visit: <http://www.terrycjennings.com/Teacher-Resources---Erosion.html>

## Pre-Reading Discussion

Ask students to share what they know about native people. Discuss how long native people have inhabited the Americas and in the United States in particular. Estimates of when humans first inhabited the Americas range from 9,000 years ago to 16,000 years ago. There is evidence of migrations from north eastern Asia through a land bridge which appeared between Siberia and Alaska at the end of the Ice Age. There is evidence of migration from Australia. Ancient settlements have been found in Pennsylvania and Virginia which may date more than 18,000 years ago. A conservative estimate is that humans have been in the Americas since more than 12,000 years ago. But the number of migrants that came along the land bridge, or on boats from Australia or however, were not large. They entered vast continents. They lived off the land.

Discuss how these native people might have lived—homes, food, tools. Why would people have moved? They would follow their resources—especially food and water. As they migrated to find a place which had suitable resources, they scattered across the landscape. What native people ate and used, was dictated by the place where they lived. And by the number of people in an area. Just because they were Indians, their behavior was not homogeneous. Different Indian bands and nations lived differently, had different cultures because of where they lived, what access to resources they had and their numbers.

Consider how cultures have stories and legends passed down by the generations. Why might a culture need to pass down legends orally? What is the purpose for the stories? Discuss with students how native legends and stories would center around stewardship of the land because they were totally dependent on the land.

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## Discussion



### Dependence on the Land

Indian Tribes can be as different as European countries, but they also have many characteristics and customs in common. Their customs and life style were dictated by the environment where they lived. The land and its plants and animals

provided food, clothing and

shelter. It provided the tools they needed to live. Before native peoples made contact with Euro-Americans, they had to live harmoniously with the land to survive. In *Vivian and the Legend of the Hoodoos*, Vivian is a member of a band of Southern Paiute Indians.

Southern Paiute live in the high desert. Their ancestral lands are in southern Utah and Nevada, Arizona above the Grand Canyon and the Mojave Desert in California. The land where they lived was dry, so water was their most precious resource. But the land where they lived also provided very stark changes in elevation within short distances. At each elevation, different plants and animals lived—the plants and animals on which they depended for food, clothing, tools and for making shelters—and the same plants ripened later at higher elevations. While some native peoples migrated long distances in search of food, the Southern Paiute stayed within close range. They migrated up and down nearby mountains following plants as they ripened, never far from the precious little water that was available from rivers and springs. They lived high atop mesas where it was cool in summers and in caves on the valley floors in winter to stay warm.

Southern Paiutes depended on pine nuts, the fruit of the piñon tree. Piñon groves provided food for many bands. The nuts were roasted, ground and made into cakes which were stored for use in the winter. Rice grass was another staple which was cooked into a porridge. Paiute also used the fruit of prickly pear cactus, agave, and century plant, seedpods from mesquite and other trees, berries, roots from Joshua trees and tule.

They farmed and irrigated small gardens which grew corn and gourds. They also ate bird's eggs as well as lizards and small mammals. Although they also hunted bigger prey, rabbits made up the largest part of their meat. Rabbit skin was dried and cut in strips which were woven into blankets or capes.



Tools were made from animal bones and wood, shelter from tree branches, bows from branches and yucca fiber, their arrow points obsidian from nearby volcanoes.

Southern Paiutes lived in scattered groups of 12-50 people because the food and water could not support large groups. Rain is never predictable or abundant in the high desert, and for that reason, neither is the food. An area that might have rain one year, may not have rain the next year. Paiutes learned to depend on each other. If a group did not have sufficient food, they could reach out to another group for help and they would not be denied. Each group knew that next year, or next month, it might be them who would be needing help.



It is easy to see how the Legend of the Hoodoos might have come about as a means of teaching the next generation about their responsibility to the land and to others.

Discuss with your students how, even if we don't live a precarious life like the Southern Paiute in the high desert, it is our responsibility to care for the environment so that we and all who come after us can continue to use the resources of the earth.

### Respect for the Traditions



Vivian's grandmother wants Vivian to ask the trees permission to take their fruit. But Vivian is not interested in the old ways. She rejects the ways of her grandmother and the tribe, as she embraces the "other" life—the life outside the reservation or the tribe.

Compare Vivian's experience with students' experience. Perhaps some students are immigrants. Their families brought customs and traditions with them to the United States that they may want to reject because it makes them feel different from others—from their friends. Or they may just not want to take the time. Students who are not immigrants may look upon these customs and traditions as making the immigrants different from them.

Discuss with your students how Vivian's grandmother showed Vivian the reason for the tradition. She helped Vivian understand the need to respect the land. Consider how we all have customs and traditions which, once we understand, we can respect.

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### Respect for the Land

Vivian's ancestors were totally dependent on the land. If there was no rain, the land could produce no food for them, or for the animals they hunted for food. They could not irrigate their small gardens and gather crops.

Because they were so dependent on the land, they were also dependent on each other. If rain missed the area where they normally gathered food, they may not be able to gather enough to feed their band. They had to depend on other bands to share what they had been able to collect.

Consider with your students how this applies to their lives and the resources of the earth. What did *The Legend of the*

*Hoodoos* teach about being responsible and respecting the land and the needs of others?

What are some ways in which students can show respect for the land and for others around them? What will happen if they don't?



### Interesting Facts

- Paiute leaders could be women as well as men, and leaders could change depending on the task at hand. If there was a rabbit hunt and one particular person was the best rabbit hunter, that person would be the hunt leader.
- Southern Paiutes were so welcoming that they expected Euro-Americans to behave like Paiutes. Instead, the colonizers took possession of the springs with a few men with guns and disrupted the Southern Paiute way of life forever.
- Paiutes, unlike many other Indian tribes, were never armed. They were peaceful. They never signed a treaty with the United States government.

- Did not live in tipis, but wikiups, which were a circular structure dug a few feet into the ground and bordered with stones. Wikiup frames were made of supple branches such as that of the willow bush and covered in brush. Inside the wiki up there would be fire pits, small indentations to store seeds. Ruins of Ancient Paiute villages often show the location of wikiups by the remains of a circle of rocks like those in Vivian's Vision.



- Paiute women made lightweight baskets from willow branches. Some were pointed for wedging in the rocky landscape where Paiutes lived and had shoulder straps



so hands could be free to gather fruit or scramble up rocks. Other baskets were woven tightly and lined in pitch to carry water.

- Most Paiute pottery is very plain but some uses geometric shapes and some color.



## Interesting Facts

- Desert varnish is a coating which bacteria lay on the surface of sandstone in arid regions. It is reddish brown in color, but sometimes may be black. It is made of manganese and iron.



- In the area where Southern Paiutes live and lived, there are ancient petroglyphs and pictographs painted on rocks by the Ancient People who inhabited that area more than 900 years ago. Petroglyphs are pictures pecked into desert varnish on flat rocks.
- Petroglyphs are often painted in large groups as if it were a newspaper.



- Or one single work, as if it were the work of an artist.



- Petroglyphs were etched into the rocks, through the desert varnish by striking the rock with another rock, or by a combination of two rocks, one being used as a hammer. Scholars believe that petroglyphs had many purposes. They may signify how many times a particular band had been by a place, depict a map, tell a story, show what kind of game is nearby.
- Pictographs were painted on rocks with natural pigments. Pictographs were of many colors, but mostly red pictographs remain. Petroglyphs tend to



last longer than pictographs unless protected from rain.

- Paiutes have no written language or history. Starting at the end of the 19th century, the government and non-tribal people felt that the best thing for Indian children was to send them to schools where they were forbidden from speaking their language, talking about home, and they only saw their parents a couple of times a year. In 1954, the Paiute Indian tribe was terminated and its members forced to assimilate into their neighborhoods. But that was very difficult. The government recognized them as a tribe again in 1980. These two breaks in the continuity of the tribe means that their customs and traditions, which were never written, are mostly lost.
- Paiutes believe that something which is in a place is of that place. That by moving it, we change the experience of those who come after us and those who have come before us. This is why it is very important to never take anything from an ancient ruin.
- Yucca root was good as a shampoo, the hard, pointy leaves provided needles and thread. The fibers from the leaves were made into rope and used in bows for hunting. Moccasins were also made from the yucca plant.

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## QUESTIONS TO PONDER:

- What is the purpose of legends in cultures?
- How did native peoples explain natural happenings?
- How did the Greeks explain natural happenings?
- What would have given rise to the Legend of the Hoodoos?
- If you come from another country, is it important to keep the traditions from the old country?
- If you had a choice, would you keep the old traditions or assimilate into the new culture?
- How would you want someone else to feel about you if you kept your old family or culture's traditions?
- How should you feel toward someone else who has different cultural or family traditions than you?
- Vivian's grandmother wanted her to thank the trees for their fruit. What is the point of thanking the trees for their fruit and the animals for their meat?
- Why is this legend relevant today? How can we show respect for the earth?
- What will happen if we don't show respect for the earth?



- How would you want to be treated if you were different from others?
- Why should we take care of our planet?
- What will happen if some of us are greedy now, like the Ancient Ones in the legend and we take all that the earth has to offer and we don't leave anything for those who come behind us?
- What would you do if someone took you away from your parents and forbid you from speaking your language or following your customs?

## WRITING ACTIVITIES - ESSAYS:

### Write a creative non-fiction story about two children harvesting pine nuts or rice grass.



Find facts about the plant or you picked. What does it look like? What part of the plant is used and for what? Where does it grow, in the valleys or on the mountains? How high? How do you get to it? How do you gather it? How do you cook it if it's cooked to be eaten right away. How do you prepare it for storing for the winter.

Write a fun creative non-fiction story about two children gathering pine nuts or rice grass which use some of the facts you learn. Don't forget to have them follow native customs. Have something happen to the children while they do their job. Will a bob cat scare them? Will a big wind take their seed? Will they have to compete with a pesky squirrel for pine nuts?

### Write a creative non-fiction story from the point of view of a Paiute family who had a year when the rains didn't come to their area.

Using what you know about Paiutes write about children who live in an area where the rains didn't come that year. What might they have to do? Can they go farther to find food? Do they have to depend on others? What can they offer the others in exchange for help now?

## WRITING ACTIVITIES - SHORT PROMPT:

- What would you tell Vivian if she complained about her grandmother asking her to thank the trees?
- How would you want your friends to say if you told them about a family custom that was different?
- How should you treat someone who is different from you?

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## WRITING ACTIVITIES - ESSAYS:

**Write a non-fiction report about a plant or animal which served as food for the native Paiutes.**

With the same kind of research used above, write a five-paragraph essay report about how native Paiutes used rice grass or pine nuts for survival.

**Write a persuasive essay.**

Write an essay to persuade colonizers who have come to your land and tried to take over your source of water. What would the colonizers say? What would you say? Describe what would happen to your way of life if new people came to your land? Describe what would happen if these people were armed.

## COMPARE AND CONTRAST CULTURES

**Compare and Contrast Native Southwestern Cultures to the Paiute**

Research another tribe which lived in the Southwest and compare and contrast their geographic location, type of terrain, housing, food, migrations, weather, tools and legends to the Paiute.

**Compare and Contrast Native Cultures from other regions to the Paiute.**

Research a tribe which lived in a region other than the Southwest and compare and contrast their geographic location, type of terrain, housing, food, migrations, weather, tools and legends to the Paiute.

**Have students share their findings**

As students share, write their findings on a class grid including geographic location, type of terrain, housing, food, migrations, weather, tools), make correlations and explore how location and weather influence life style.

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Visit <http://www.terrycjennings.com/Teacher-Resources---Erosion.html> for detailed lesson plans for other activities, and power point presentation of Paiute artifacts as well as handouts and research materials for this teacher guide.

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## RESOURCES

For core standards to which *Vivian* is aligned, please visit: <http://www.arbordalepublishing.com/Standards.php>

For publisher's teacher guides and activities on Paiute Culture, please visit: [http://arbordalepublishing.com/documents/TeachingActivities/VivianLegend\\_TA](http://arbordalepublishing.com/documents/TeachingActivities/VivianLegend_TA)

For additional downloadable activities from author, please visit: <http://www.terrycjennings.com/Teacher-Resources---Erosion.html>

For historical Paiute pictures from the John Wesley Powell expedition to the Southwest, please visit: [http://collections.si.edu/search/results.htm?fq=online\\_visual\\_material%3Atrue&tag.cstype=all&q=Images+Paiute+Indians+John+Wesley+Powell&start=440](http://collections.si.edu/search/results.htm?fq=online_visual_material%3Atrue&tag.cstype=all&q=Images+Paiute+Indians+John+Wesley+Powell&start=440)

For information on the migration of humans based on DNA studies, please visit: [news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/09/0903\\_030903\\_bajaskull\\_2.html](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2003/09/0903_030903_bajaskull_2.html)

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## Vivian

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