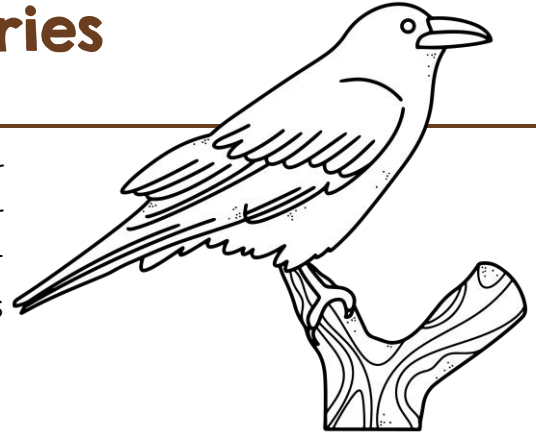


Traditional Stories

What makes a Native traditional story?

A **traditional story** is a story that has been told aloud for many generations. Elders pass these stories to younger people so that knowledge, values, and history are not lost. Every Native nation has its own stories, told in its own way.



Features of many traditional stories

Feature	What it means
Told aloud	The story was passed down by telling, often by an elder, long before it was written in a book.
Belongs to a nation	The story comes from one nation, such as the Inuit or the Santa Ana Pueblo. Stories from different nations are not the same.
Explains the world	Many stories explain something in nature, such as day and night, the stars, or why an animal looks the way it does.
Teaches a lesson	The story shows how to live: share, be patient, respect the land, listen to elders.
Animal characters	Animals such as Coyote, Raven, Rabbit, Fox, or Turtle often talk and act like people. Some are tricksters who cause trouble.
Told at the right time	Some stories are told only in certain seasons, often winter. Some are sacred and are not shared outside the nation.

How is a traditional story different from a fairy tale? European fairy tales often begin with "Once upon a time," have kings, queens, or princesses, and end "happily ever after." Traditional stories usually do not. They belong to a specific people and place, and they are still told today.

Traditional stories I have heard this year

Title	Nation	What it explains or teaches