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## Aboriginal Storytelling Background

Every society in the world, past and present, has had its stories and storytellers. Storytelling is an oral sharing of personal or traditional stories and is one of the earliest art forms. The inter-generational transmission of knowledge was, and is, integral for cultural survival. Stories were used as a mode of entertainment but more importantly, were used as a teaching tool to infuse moral values in the younger generation. Stories were a way of recording pivotal events in a culture's or a person's history. Traditionally stories were told in a way that reflected the customs and culture from which they originated. Cultural languages, norms, traditions, gender roles and humour, were all transmitted through oral storytelling.

Oral storytelling is a mode of teaching and learning that requires the learner to listen, visualize and imagine. Storytelling is a natural shared experience between the storyteller and the listener. It offers natural language experiences for all students and is a wonderful way to share and understand each other as cultural beings.

Among Canada's culturally diverse population, there are approximately 1.3 million First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. Demographic projections suggest the population of First Nations and Métis people will continue to grow. These statistics, coupled with a continuing increase in immigration, indicate a strong need for cross-cultural awareness. As Canadian citizens, we need to interact and communicate among diverse groups of people. We must also continue to refine our cross-cultural skills, knowledge and values if we are to effectively promote multiculturalism and equality within our communities.

### Aboriginal Oral Tradition

- There is a difference between ordinary storytelling and Aboriginal storytelling.
- Traditional Aboriginal storytellers earned the right to be a storyteller. They were important in teaching and in preserving the history of the group.
- Traditional stories contain some of the most authentic content and perspective of Aboriginal peoples.
- Different Aboriginal groups have different stories although some characters or themes may be similar.

Try this educational resource's **Storytelling Hints** to inspire creativity and expression.