

Lesson 2

Traditional Literature

Traditional literature includes stories we know as myths, folktales, fairy tales, fables, and legends—stories that originated long ago as oral tales and were passed down from person to person, then were later recorded in writing. These stories reflect the cultures in which they've been told. They express a comment about life, explain an event in the natural world, or give a lesson about behavior. This photo shows the constellation Orion. Early peoples from different parts of the world had various stories to explain the significance of this pattern of stars in the sky. Are there any constellations you can identify in the night sky? Do you know any stories about them?

Skills Focus

The Turnip

Draw Inferences

Analyze Theme

Thunderbird / The Power of Rain

Ask and Answer Questions

Setting

Practice the Skill

First Read Draw Inferences

Authors don't always express ideas directly. Often, they use literary techniques to help readers determine what it is they want to say. Authors may describe what a character does, for example, but allow readers to interpret those actions to determine what the character is like.

To **draw inferences** means to decide what the author implies but does not state directly. Drawing inferences requires that you use the facts and details in the text as well as your prior knowledge and experiences to understand ideas that the author intends to convey but does not state directly.

Try It Read the following paragraph.

Andrea looked at the runners lined up at the starting line. Some were stretching; others were jogging in place. Andrea felt sure that they had taken the time to train for this event, and in fact, may have even been training for months. Andrea had made the decision to enter the race at the last minute. She had never run more than a mile in her life, but she had no time to worry about that. She had only heard about the race a few hours earlier, and she had hurried downtown to the race headquarters and gotten in line. When Andrea got an idea in her head, she acted on it quickly and thought about it later.

Discuss

What kind of person is Andrea? How do you know? Underline the clues in the text that help you make inferences about her character.

As you read, complete the Inference Chart on page 285.

Practice the Skill

Second Read Analyze Theme

The **theme** of the story is the central message the author wants to convey. The theme might be a lesson the author wants to teach, but it can also be a general observation about life. The theme in any work of fiction is revealed through its plot, setting, and character development. In traditional literature, the theme is usually more obvious than it is in contemporary fiction and can often be expressed as a comment about life. Fables, for instance, usually have morals that explicitly state the theme.

Theme and topic are not the same. Think back to the example paragraph on the previous page. The topic of the story is a girl who on a whim decides to enter a race. The theme, however, might be that it is important to plan and prepare for things ahead of time.

Try It Read the following paragraph.

The tree stood tall and proud at the edge of the forest, as it always had, marking the path that would lead the woodcutter back home. When he looked at that magnificent trunk, he thought of the wood it would provide for his people. It would provide enough wood to rebuild the homes in his village that had been damaged by the storm. The woodcutter weighed his decision, and he considered his duty to help the villagers. Then, in a moment of sadness, he lifted his ax.

Discuss

What is the topic of the story? What is the theme? Circle the words that tell you the woodcutter's predicament. Draw a box around words that describe the tree.

As you read, record your answers to questions about theme on the Close Reading Worksheet on page 286. 

Purpose for Reading

Read along with your teacher. Each time, read for a different purpose.

First Read

Focus on drawing inferences.

Second Read

Focus on analyzing the theme.

Third Read

Focus on thinking critically about the story.

The Turnip

Circle traits that describe the two main characters. What theme might be developing, based on what you know about the characters so far?



How might the merchant feel about his hardworking brother? Cite textual evidence to support your ideas.



- 1 Long, long ago in a kingdom far away, there lived two brothers who were as different in mind and deed as any two brothers could be. They had grown up together, and as children, they had vowed to stay together always. But one brother was diligent about work and amiable toward his fellow man, while the other brother was indolent and hostile, so as they grew up, their differences drove them apart.
- 2 The amiable and hardworking brother made enough money to buy a small plot of land, on which he built a comfortable home and farmed his field for a living. But hard times had come to the kingdom, and no matter how diligently the man worked, he had only just enough to feed himself and nothing to sell at market. He never complained, however, because he had enough food to survive and enough land to keep him busy. He was industrious by nature, and he placed far more value on contentment than on riches.
- 3 The indolent and hostile brother derived little contentment from anything other than scheming ways to get rich and swindle others out of their fortunes. He moved to the city and became a successful merchant. The people who knew him well knew that he was dishonest, and they were aware that he made his money through unscrupulous methods. Nevertheless, he soon made enough money to buy a large chunk of land and enough servants to work it, and he worked his servants long and hard so that he could enjoy the fruits of their labor.

4 When the merchant brother saw how his industrious brother was struggling, he felt superior. To show his brother how much richer he was, he sent some of his servants to help in the industrious brother's fields. The brother with the small farm had noticed the way his rich brother treated his servants and said no to the offer of help.

5 As time passed, a long drought devastated much of the kingdom, and farmers fell upon harder and harder times. The hardworking brother persevered. He worked to improve his farming **techniques** so that his land would yield more crops. When his crops died, he planted more. When they died as well, he planted turnips. Turnips, he knew, grew under the ground, where they would be protected from the scorching sun and would have a better chance of surviving.

6 Every day the industrious brother worked hard to nurture his turnips, and soon he was rewarded for his efforts when the first signs of green turnip tops sprouted. He began to dig up his harvest, but he left one of the turnips in the ground for good luck. Each day it grew bigger and bigger. In time, it grew as large as a pumpkin. Soon it was as large as a rooster. When it had grown to be as large and heavy as the farmer could manage, he dug it up, hoisted it onto a cart, and tied the cart to his donkey. Then he rode on the donkey to the royal palace to take the turnip to the king.


7 "Your majesty," said the kind farmer, "I have been blessed with a fruitful harvest. I have plenty of turnips to eat, and it would be selfish to keep more than I need. This turnip is large enough to feed many others in the kingdom. Please accept this gift, and distribute it as you see fit."

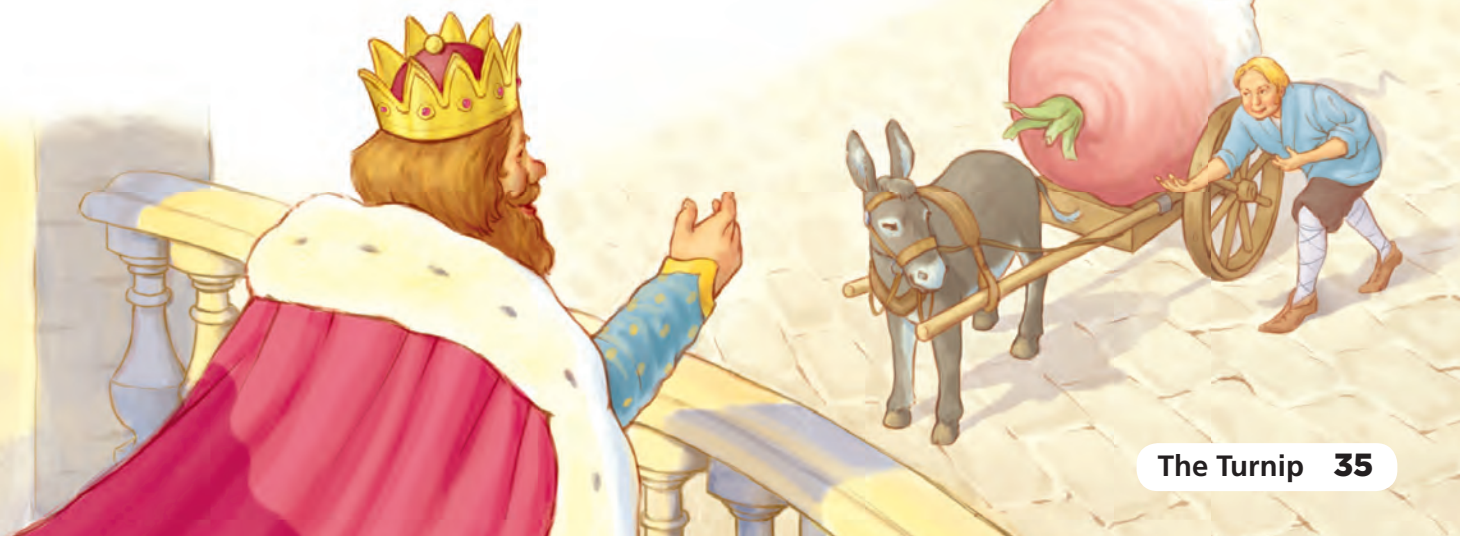
8 The king was touched by the man's generosity, and he wanted to reward his kindness. He gave the man a pile of gold, a magnificent house, and a much larger plot of land. The man planted the land and worked hard to grow enough food to feed any villagers in need. He had no use for the gold, however, so he buried it in the yard.

9 "Someday, I may need it," he said.

Why does the farmer refuse the merchant's help? Underline textual evidence that supports your answer. Record your inference and support on the **Inference Chart**.

Why does the farmer have no use for the gold? Underline textual evidence that supports your answer. Record your inference and support on the **Inference Chart**.

Why does the king consider gold and land a fitting reward for the farmer? Cite textual evidence that supports your answer. 



Why does the merchant plot revenge against his brother? Underline the details in the story that support your inference. Record your answers on the **Inference Chart**.

What theme about the relationship between wealth and happiness is the author developing?



10 Before long, everyone in the kingdom knew that the poor farmer had become the recipient of the king's gift and had more than he could ever hope for. His brother the merchant was beside himself with anger and decided that the only way to best his brother was to take a gift to the king that was much grander than the turnip.

11 The indolent and jealous merchant had plenty of gold to give the king, but he was hardly predisposed to part with his possessions. Still, he took a few coins from his stash and tied them in a bag. Then, just as his brother had done, he rode his donkey to the king's palace and presented his gift. The king appeared touched by the merchant's gift, as he had been touched by the gift of the hardworking brother, and he saw fit to bestow the merchant with a reward that was much more precious than gold.

12 "The most fitting reward I can think of is the fruits of the labor of a man who gave most generously when he had nothing," said the king.

13 He gave the selfish brother the giant turnip. The merchant turned red with anger and fell speechless in his rage and despair.

14 The merchant spent the following weeks plotting revenge against his brother. He had heard that this brother had buried his gold, and he planned to steal his brother's wealth and get rid of his rival for good. The selfish man took more gold coins from his stash, and he paid the village thieves to assist him.

15 "Go to my brother's farm tonight after dark and kidnap him," he told the thieves, "and then take him deep into the forest, tie him up in a bag, secure the bag tightly, and hang it from a tree."

16 The selfish man was sure that with his brother disabled and tied up in a tree, he would have plenty of time to dig up the gold—and then he would have plenty of time to move from the city and take over his brother's farm. The wicked merchant continued plotting and gloating until the sun set below the horizon and darkness fell over the land.





17 When it was dark and all good people were asleep, the thieves carried out the merchant's orders. They kidnapped the kindly farmer, took him to the forest, tied him up in a bag, and hung it from a tree. When the thieves reported to the merchant that his brother had been **captured**, he ordered them to carry out the rest of his evil plan.

18 "Go to my brother's farm and find and dig up that gold, but don't do it yet," he admonished them. "Wait until I give you the orders, because there is something else I have to take care of first. Stay right here, and wait for my return."


19 As eager as the merchant was to find the gold and take over the farm, he wanted to make absolutely sure that the thieves had done their job. He ordered the servant he trusted the most to go into the forest and look for his brother, though he paid him only one copper penny in return for his labors.

20 The servant did what his master instructed. He walked deep into the forest, and in the thickest, darkest part, he saw a very large bag hanging from a tree.


21 In the bag, the farmer came to with a start, having heard the servant's footsteps. He knew those were not the footsteps of his brother, who had a much harsher and heavier gait.

22 "Is someone there?" he cried out. "Oh, what a lucky day it is for you!"


Underline the textual evidence that supports the idea that the merchant is lazy and cheap.

Why doesn't the merchant order the thieves to kill his brother? 

Why does the farmer consider the servant worthy of the gold? Write your answer on the **Inference Chart**.

What is the theme of the story? Cite textual evidence that supports your answer. 

Interpret

What is the purpose of the farmer's telling the servant about the bag of wisdom? Cite textual evidence that supports your answer. 

23 The servant stopped in his tracks, bewildered. "I am here," he said hesitantly, "and I could use all the luck that I can get."

24 "Then this is certainly your lucky day, indeed," said the farmer from inside the bag. "For I have accidentally but fortunately stumbled upon the bag of wisdom, and as long as I stay in here, I know everything there is to know."

25 Now, the servant had no reason to trust the man, but he had nothing to lose by trusting him either. If he were privy to the wisdom of the world, he could escape his life of **servitude** and move on to build a life for himself. He would know how to help others in need, he would know how to solve all the world's problems, and he would know what to do to help people like the merchant see the error of their ways.

26 "Oh, please, kind sir," said the servant, "won't you let me sit in the bag of wisdom? Oh, it makes my head spin to think of the things I could do to help others if I had all the wisdom in the world."

27 "Well"—the farmer hesitated—"I suppose you could sit in the bag for a while—as long as you promise to let me back in when I return, but you'll have to cut me down from the tree and let me out first."

28 The servant jumped at the farmer's offer. He took a knife from his pocket, cut the rope, and let the farmer out of the bag.

29 The farmer tied the servant up in the bag. "I promise I'll be back in one hour," he told the servant, and he ran home to dig up his gold. He was as good as his word. He went home and dug up the gold, then brought it back to the forest and gave it to the servant. In that one instant, the merchant's servant became the richest man in the kingdom. The merchant was sent to prison. And the farmer—well, he simply went back to his farm and carried on.



Vocabulary: Greek and Latin Roots

Many words in English have a Greek or Latin root. A **root** is the main part of a word that carries its core meaning. Knowing the meanings of these roots can help you determine the meanings of many words you do not recognize. Though a word can be composed of parts, such as the root, a prefix, and a suffix, the root carries the main meaning.

Try It Read this sentence from the selection.

If he were privy to the wisdom of the world, he could escape his life of **servitude** and move on to build a life for himself.

Discuss

The word *servitude* contains the root *serv*. This root comes from the Latin word *servus*, which means “slave.” Based on the context of the selection and your knowledge of this root, what does *servitude* mean?

Read the sentence from the selection that contains each word. Based on the context of the sentence and the meaning of the root given, write a definition of the word. Then write a new sentence using the word.

1. **techniques**, p. 35: The Greek root *tech* means “craft or skill.” _____

2. **captured**, p. 37: The Latin root *capt* means “to seize.” _____

Practice the Skill

First Read Ask and Answer Questions

Asking and answering questions while reading can help you make sure you understand what is going on in a text. You can begin by asking questions that news writers refer to as “the five Ws.” The five Ws are questions that begin with *who*, *what*, *where*, *when*, and *why*.

While reading, it’s important to ask yourself questions about the characters, the plot, and the setting. If you can’t answer questions about these elements, reread the paragraphs. If you still are unsure about what is happening, read on, because your question might be answered later in the selection.

Try It Read the following story.

The Tortoise and the Hare

Everyone knows that a hare can run faster than a tortoise, and no one knew that better than Hare himself. Hare was quite proud of that fact, too, and he took to boasting about it quite shamelessly.

“I’ll prove to you that I am faster,” said Hare to Tortoise. “Race me,” he said, and Tortoise agreed.

Tortoise and Hare left the starting line at the same time. Hare darted off and, in a flash, he had disappeared around the bend. He was about a mile from the finish line when he decided to stop for a nap.

“This is ridiculous,” said Hare. “I’m tired. I’ll still beat that old Tortoise even if I sleep for a while.”

He fell fast asleep. When he awoke, Tortoise was slowly but surely crossing the finish line. He had beaten Hare by a mile!

Discuss

Whom is the story about? What happens at the end? Where does Hare take a nap? When does Tortoise take the lead? Why does Tortoise win the race? Underline the answers to these questions in the story.

As you read, record your answers about asking and answering questions on the Close Reading Worksheet on page 287. 

Practice the Skill

Second Read **Setting**

The **setting** of a story is where and when the action takes place. It includes the geographic location and the physical scenery that helps define that location. Setting includes the historical period in which the story takes place.

Setting also includes the cultural and social environment in which a story takes place. These affect the characters and plot. For example, a character in a story that takes place in colonial times might face very different problems than a character in a story that takes place in the present day. However, each story might convey a similar theme, or message about life.

Setting can also be affected by circumstances. For instance, if a village is poverty-stricken, it would affect the plot of a story set there.

Try It Read the following paragraph.

Henry and David were not friends, but they saw each other every day on the track at their middle school. They were both preparing to try out for the track team, and they both prided themselves on their speed. They decided to have a race to determine who was the fastest. Each called all his friends to come and watch the race because each was certain that he would win. On the day of the race, it rained hard and turned the field into mud. David failed to show up for the race, so Henry was declared the winner.

Discuss

What words does the author use to describe the setting? How many elements of setting can you identify? Circle the words that describe the setting. What is the main difference between the setting of this paragraph and the setting of “The Tortoise and the Hare”?

As you read, complete the Setting Chart on page 288.

Purpose for Reading

Read along with your teacher. Each time, read for a different purpose.

First Read

Focus on asking and answering questions.

Second Read

Focus on words the author uses to describe setting.

Third Read

Focus on thinking critically about the stories.

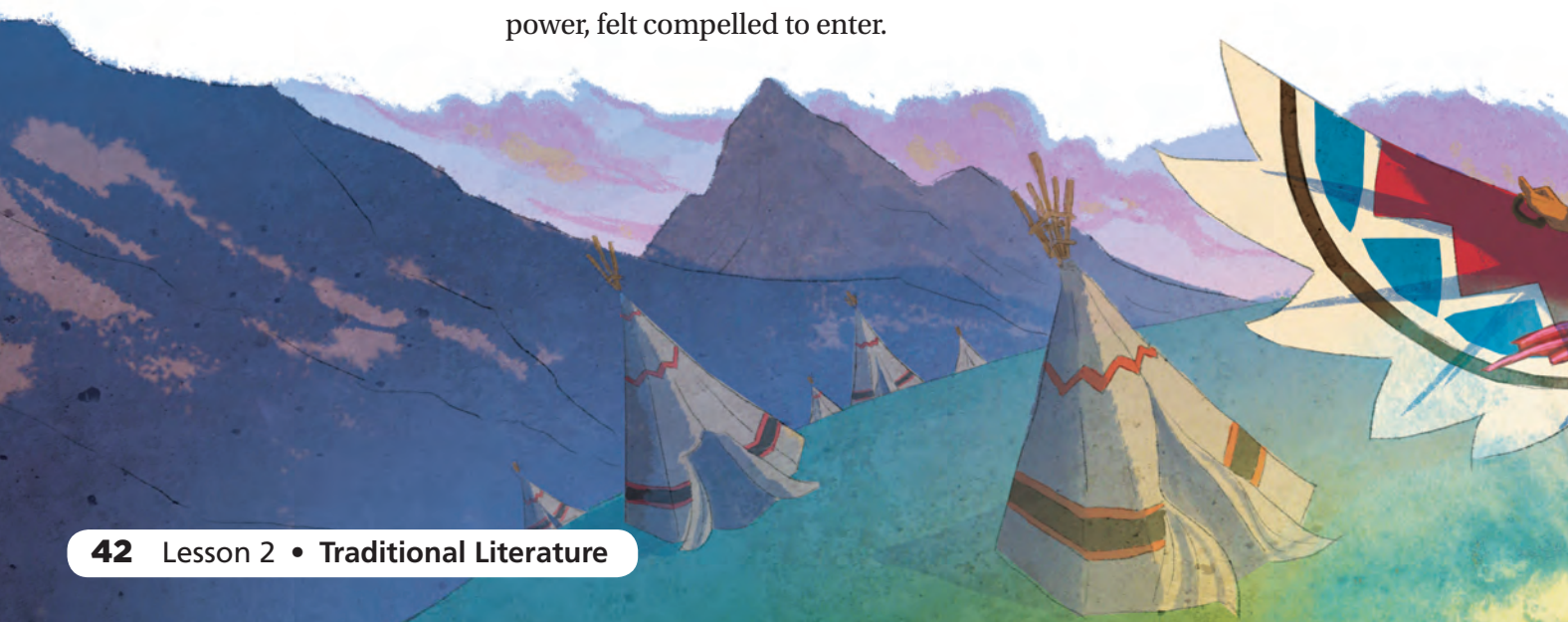
Thunderbird

Underline the details that describe what the main characters want to find and why.

Circle the words that describe the brothers' village and the mountain they find. Write them on the **Setting Chart**.

1 Long, long ago, when the world was new, two brothers from a northern tribe set out to find the origin of thunder. One day in the dead of winter, the brothers left their family and their village and set out farther north to find the source of the rejuvenating thunderstorms that would bring about seasonal change. For far too long the deadly winter wind had held an icy grip on the villages, and the people suffered. The young boys were brave and strong and felt they had no choice but to set out on a long and treacherous journey to find thunder and bring it back to their people.

2 For weeks the brothers walked through frosty villages and across frozen streams, until finally they came to a mountain enshrouded in clouds, silhouetted against the black sky, and surrounded by a halo of light. The boys walked toward the mountain, and as they did, the mountain opened, and in the next instant, it slammed shut. Some **mysterious** force within this magnificent landform opened and shut the mountain repeatedly, and the brothers, awestruck by this show of power, felt compelled to enter.



3 For a long time the boys stood in silence, their eyes focused on a cleft in the mountain, as if attempting to summon up courage from the powers inside. If they wanted to enter, they had only a split second to jump through the cleft in the rock when it opened before the force would slam the mountain shut again. Finally, fueled by some mysterious energy, the first boy jumped through the cleft and landed safely on the other side of the mountain. His brother jumped in next, but the mountain slammed shut and engulfed him, and he did not come out on the other side.

4 The first boy, overcome with sorrow over the loss of his brother, found himself thrust into a world of eternal summer, alone beyond the clouds, where the sun shone brightly and everything was in bloom. He walked along bubbling streams and across fields lush with berries and flowers, and he allowed the bright golden sun to warm his cold heart. At last, he came to what appeared to be a clearing in the woods, and as he approached the clearing, he heard voices. He tucked himself behind a large tree, where he watched and listened.


5 A group of boys was sitting in a circle, chanting. The boys looked much like the boys from his own village, and the young boy squinted through the bushes and watched them intently. Before too long, one of them spoke. "Come," he said to the others. "Now it is time for us to go."

6 The boys went into their wigwams. In just a few minutes, they emerged wearing wings that were large and **unwieldy**, and the boys appeared to struggle to support them. Then, in seconds, they took off and were airborne. The boys steadily gained control of their wings as they rose swiftly into the air, and soon they were flying and soaring gracefully in the sky. They flew off together.


7 The first brother continued watching until they disappeared. Cautiously, he stepped out from behind the tree and walked across the clearing toward the wigwams. An elderly gentleman came out of the biggest one, and he greeted the boy and inquired as to his business there.

Underline details that explain where both boys end up after jumping into the mountain.

How is the setting different on the other side of the mountain than in the village? Record your answers on the **Setting Chart**.

What does the mountain represent? 



What does the elderly gentleman explain to the boy? 

Underline the text that explains Thunderbird's responsibility.

Circle details that explain how the tribe's weather will change as a result of Thunderbird's coming.

Draw a box around the details that show how the messenger's feelings have changed.

8 The boy explained that he had come with his brother in search of thunder and that his brother had been trapped in the mountain when he tried to jump through the cleft. The old man smiled kindly, as if he held the wisdom of the world in his hands, and touched the boy's arm. The old man told the boy that while inside the mountain, his brother had become the Thunderbird, that he had been entrusted with the honor of renewing the earth each year with rejuvenating rains. The old man told the young boy that the boys he had just seen were thunderbirds themselves, and that his brother had been chosen to lead them.

9 "The thunderbirds are young boys, like your brother, who have been chosen to serve the mountain," the old man explained. "We are not to question the ways of the mountain," he admonished. "We are to accept them, and that you shall. Your brother is now Thunderbird. And you, my son, are his messenger. You will tell your people to watch the skies for the flash of Thunderbird's eyes in the darkness. Tell them to listen to the thunderous roars and know that he is flapping his wings."

10 "I will tell them, and we will watch for Thunderbird," said the boy. "We will watch for the return of my brother."

11 Suddenly and without warning, the boy's sadness disappeared. He felt comforted by the knowledge that his brother had become guardian of the change of the seasons, and he felt honored to be the chosen messenger who would bring this news to his people. From that day forward, the people have known that Thunderbird will always protect them by ensuring that the seasons come and go as they always have, that the cleansing rains will come in the spring, and that summer renews the land.





The Power of Rain

1 Everyone in the village knew about Mudjadji, the rain queen of the Lovedu who lived deep within the Drakensberg Mountains and who had the power to control the clouds, the thunder, the lightning, and the rain. No one Savannah knew had actually met this mysterious rain queen, but Savannah accepted the queen's power as fully as she accepted the existence of the rain itself. Of course, in the Zimbabwean community where Savannah and her family had made their home, the rain tested that belief. It was dry as a bone most of the year—something Savannah had a hard time getting used to. She had grown up in the United States, in Seattle, Washington, where it rained much of the time. In this part of Africa, however, the rains were stubborn. The land depended on them, but for extended periods of time, they refused to **materialize**, and come November of each year, the people in the villages suffered. This year, Savannah vowed to make the journey to the Drakensberg Mountains for the annual rainmaking ceremony, which was presided over by Mudjadji herself. Savannah had confidence that the ceremony would ensure the return of the rain—and besides, ever since she had come to Africa, she had wanted to take part in this fascinating and mysterious tradition.

2 Savannah had already lived in the African village for several years by the time she decided to attend the rainmaking ceremony. Her life in the United States had been drastically different from her life here. Savannah's family had come to Zimbabwe with a volunteer group to build orphanages and medical clinics, and Savannah's parents had fallen in love with the village she had now come to call home. On their last trip, they had made the decision to stay for a while.

Underline the textual evidence that explains why Savannah lives in Zimbabwe.

What does the author explain about the setting of Savannah's village? Write your answer on the **Setting Chart**.

Why is Savannah so interested in attending the rainmaking ceremony?



What does Savannah enjoy about Abaju?



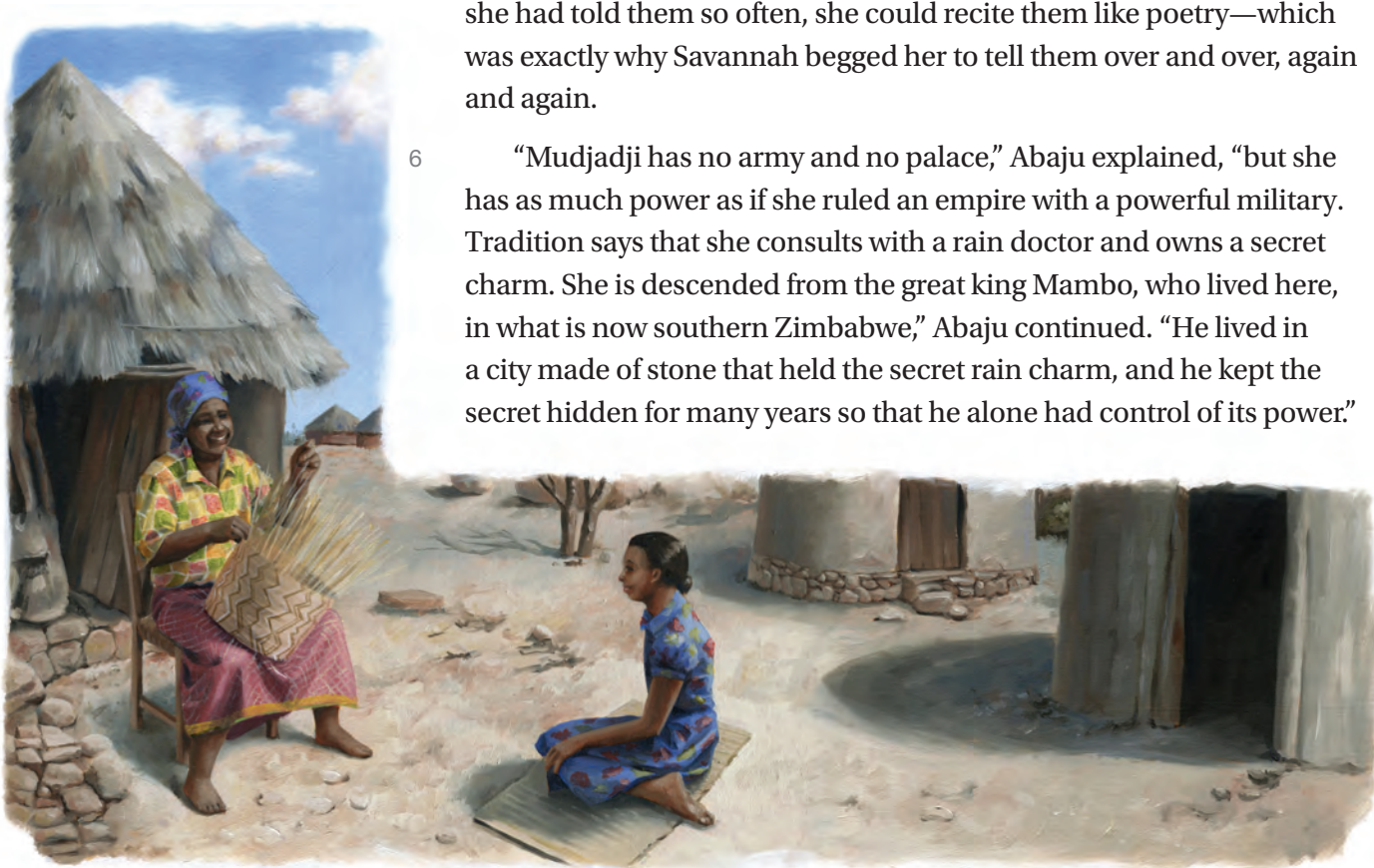
Record details on the **Setting Chart** that describe what the culture is like in Savannah's village.

3 Savannah still remembers the sense of belonging she felt when she first arrived in the village and the people there reached out to her. She fell in love with these people and their beliefs and traditions, and she proudly adopted the people, the village, and the land as her own. Savannah had especially fallen in love with the stories of Mudjadji, the queen of the Lovedu, who commanded the clouds and held the secret of rain. It was Abaju, the village weaver, who told Savannah about Mudjadji.

4 "She is a strong woman who has been entrusted with tremendous powers," Abaju explained. "Mudjadji comes from a long line of female monarchs who have ruled the Lovedu for centuries, and the people respect her greatly." Savannah could understand the idea of respecting a monarch, but she couldn't picture this mysterious rain queen. The only image that popped into her head was of a fairy tale queen in a red velvet robe sitting on a throne next to a king. *What would a rain queen look like?* she wondered.

5 Savannah sat in the same spot on the ground in front of Abaju's hut now as she had when she first heard the story of Mudjadji. Abaju sat on her woven chair outside the door, where she could weave and keep her eye on the villagers. "I keep my eyes and ears open," she had told Savannah long ago, "and I see things, I hear things." Now, once again, Savannah sat and listened to Abaju. Abaju had wonderful stories, and she had told them so often, she could recite them like poetry—which was exactly why Savannah begged her to tell them over and over, again and again.

6 "Mudjadji has no army and no palace," Abaju explained, "but she has as much power as if she ruled an empire with a powerful military. Tradition says that she consults with a rain doctor and owns a secret charm. She is descended from the great king Mambo, who lived here, in what is now southern Zimbabwe," Abaju continued. "He lived in a city made of stone that held the secret rain charm, and he kept the secret hidden for many years so that he alone had control of its power."



7 Savannah looked at the parched lands around her and then looked down at the dust that swirled around Abaju's cracked, gray feet.

8 "Then one day, so they say, Mambo's daughter stole the rain charm," Abaju continued.


9 "She fled south with the charm and founded the Lovedu tribe. Because she could control the rain, she became the first of the Lovedu rain queens; she became the first to be called Mudjadji. But she became known to her people as 'She Who Does Not Fight' because she was a peacemaker among her people. She was highly respected among the neighboring chiefs; even the great Shaka Zulu admired her."

10 Savannah remembered reading about Shaka Zulu in history class; Mudjadji was starting to seem more like a real person. Savannah was determined to meet Mudjadji and find out what this rainmaking business was all about.

11 "I'm going to go to that ceremony," she told Abaju. "I can see the Drakensberg Mountains from here. Surely there's a bus I can take, isn't there? Do they let just anyone attend the rain ceremony? Do you think the queen would let me meet her—if she knew I really believed in her power?"

12 "I'm not sure about that," said Abaju, "because I don't know anyone who's ever actually seen her." Abaju did not want to tell Savannah that the rain queen was simply a modern woman and that Savannah would not be able to pick her out among a crowd of village women shopping in the square. So instead, she told Savannah that the Drakensberg Mountains were a long way away and that Mudjadji lived in the deepest part of them, in an area that was surrounded in mist. She told Savannah that whatever happened in those mountains today remained as secret as it had ever been and that the power of the ceremony lived strongest in the people's hearts. Abaju knew that the woman Savannah imagined was as mysterious as the legends made her out to be, and Abaju had no intention of destroying the magic.

13 "It is my belief that no one has seen Mudjadji," Abaju said with conviction, "not for a long, long time. The ceremony of legend may or may not still take place, but the people know the queen is there when they see the smoke billowing above her mountains. The people know that she holds ceremony with a rain doctor and that they burn secret medicines that release black smoke. They know that the smoke transforms the clouds and makes them heavy with water; they hear the thunderclouds burst over the mountains, and they feel the rain pour down on their land."

Why doesn't Abaju want to tell Savannah that Mudjadji lives like a modern woman? 

Circle details that describe Mudjadji's home. Think about how the description helps explain her appeal. Write your answers on the **Setting Chart**.



What does Savannah learn about the power of rain from the Lovedu rainmaking ceremony?



Circle details that explain how life in Zimbabwe differs from life in Seattle.

Analyze

Why do the people believe in Mudjadji's power? Cite textual evidence to support your ideas.

- 14 “So, the people farm the land,” Abaju continued, and out of the corner of her eye she watched Savannah. “They farm the land for food and shelter, for clothes and tools, for cooking vessels and medicine. The Lovedu are a peaceful people who rely on no one but themselves. They take care of their people. And they have a treasured tradition that holds them together.”
- 15 Savannah was a smart girl, and she was beginning to get the picture. She also realized why her parents had been so set on staying in the village. When the family had first come to build the orphanage, Savannah had felt like a stranger in a strange land. She was happy to be able to help, but she had felt no connection to these people, this village, this land, or these traditions. Savannah’s life was back in the States, and no one she knew there lived in a hut or told ancient legends or talked about the rain in any way other than to complain that it had ruined the activities they had planned for the day.
- 16 Savannah looked up and smiled at Abaju, who smiled back, her face cracked with age and wisdom. “You know the secret of the rain yourself, now, don’t you?” Abaju asked. Savannah looked at the sky and saw the beginnings of dark, heavy rain clouds forming in the distance. “Now you know the tradition that gives the Lovedu people hope,” Abaju said.
- 17 So, it was from Abaju the weaver that Savannah learned about tradition and hope. It was from Abaju the storyteller that she learned about a culture that, suddenly, Savannah felt very much a part of. A few months later, a reporter from the United States came in search of Mudjadji to gather information for an article he was writing on African rainmaking. The reporter talked to Abaju, and she told him about the Lovedu rain ceremony. Savannah read the article, and thought how, sadly, the reporter had missed the point.
- 18 He talked about heat as a **destructive** force in southern Zimbabwe and about the importance of rain to these agricultural people. What he failed to explain or to understand, however, was the power of tradition. That’s what Mudjadji’s story was all about—and that’s why Savannah came to love every part of the legend. Every year in October, the people approach the queen with gifts. They shower her with gifts; they dance for her. And every year without fail, the seasons turn, and the life-giving rains begin to fall on the earth. None of Savannah’s friends or family in Seattle had a queen that could make the rains fall, but Savannah did—it was part of her culture now. It made her different from the girl she had been in Seattle, and every day Savannah spent in the village, she felt a little bit more a part of Zimbabwe.

Vocabulary: Greek and Latin Affixes

Affixes are word parts that come either before or after a root word and help readers determine the word's meaning. A **prefix** comes at the beginning of a root word. A **suffix** comes at the end of a root word. Like roots, affixes can be derived from Greek or Latin.

Try It Read this sentence from "Thunderbird."

Some **mysterious** force within this magnificent landform opened and shut the mountain repeatedly, and the brothers, awestruck by this show of power, found themselves compelled to enter.

Discuss

The word *mysterious* contains the Latin suffix *-ious*, meaning "full of" or "having the quality of." Based on this, what does *mysterious* mean?

Read the sentence from the selection that contains each of these words. Based on the context of the sentence and the meaning of the prefix or suffix given, write a definition of the word. Then write a new sentence using the word.

1. **unwieldy**, p. 43: The Latin prefix *un-* means "not." _____

2. **materialize**, p. 45: The Greek suffix *-ize* means "to become like." _____

3. **destructive**, p. 48: The Latin suffix *-ive* means "to perform an action." _____

Respond to Text: Compare a Modern and a Traditional Tale

“Thunderbird” and “The Power of Rain” are both fictional stories. “Thunderbird” is a traditional tale, while “The Power of Rain” is an example of modern fiction. You can compare and contrast traditional and modern stories by examining how they deal with elements such as theme, types of characters, or patterns of events.

Try It Both stories are about how the changing seasons and rain can bring renewal. Each story tells about a culture that has its own way of explaining how and why the rains come. What is the same and what is different about each story? Which one is more believable?

Discuss

How is the modern telling similar to the traditional story? How is it different?

On Your Own Compare and contrast the modern story “The Power of Rain” with the traditional story “Thunderbird.” Compare the pattern of events from each story that tells why and how the rains come. Use textual evidence from each story to support your response. Use the chart on the next page to help you write your response, and then write your paragraph on a separate piece of paper.



Checklist for a Good Response

A good paragraph

- ✓ compares the modern telling with the traditional tale.
- ✓ compares the pattern of events from each story.
- ✓ cites textual evidence from the story to support ideas.
- ✓ includes a topic sentence, supporting details, and a concluding sentence.

My Comparison of the Stories

1. **Topic Sentence** Include this information in your topic sentence:

"Thunderbird" and "The Power of Rain" have a similar pattern of events

that describe _____

2. **Detail Sentences** Compare and contrast the patterns of events in the two stories.

	"Thunderbird"	"The Power of Rain"
How does each story explain how the rains come?		
What are the major differences between the two stories?		
How is the pattern of events in the two stories similar?		

3. **Concluding Sentence** Your concluding sentence should summarize the similarities and differences between the patterns of events.

On a separate piece of paper, write your paragraph.

Read on Your Own

Read the story independently three times, using the skills you have learned. Then answer the Comprehension Check questions.

First Read

Practice the first-read skills you learned in this lesson.

Second Read

Practice the second-read skills you learned in this lesson.

Third Read

Think critically about the ideas in the story.

The Three Wishes

Draw Inferences

Why are the villagers so hesitant to change? Underline details that support your inference. Some details have been underlined for you.

Critical Thinking

Think about the contrast between how hard the villagers work and yet how passive they are in relation to their environment.

1 A long time ago in a village near the edge of a forest, there lived a poor woodcutter and his wife. The couple had been born in the village, their parents had been born in the village, their grandparents had been born in the village, and *their* grandparents had been born in the village. For as far back as anyone could remember, the village had always been the same.

2 Nothing changed in the village because no one had ever thought of changing anything. The people who lived there were common folk, and they were brought up to accept their lot in life and make the best of what they were given. Each family in the village had a modest hut that provided little more than shelter from the elements, and they had enough food to survive and not much more. There was a river full of fish, but the fish were too clever to be caught. There was a forest full of animals, but the animals were too clever to be hunted. The only food to be had was what the villagers grew themselves.

3 The poor woodcutter and his wife never thought of leaving the village to make a better life for themselves. No one in the village had ever left, and no one ever would. Even if they had, they likely would have starved before they got anywhere worth going to, as there was nothing around for miles and miles—or at least the villagers didn't think there was. No one had ever left, so no one knew for sure. But the people in the village accepted things as they were and never thought to question ideas that had been proven true through the test of time. They worked hard to make ends meet, and their children would work hard to make ends meet, and their children's children would work hard to make ends meet. That was simply the way things were.

4 The woodcutter and his wife had no children, so they had no one to care for but themselves. As a result, they had grown bitter and selfish, though they continued to long for a child. While the other villagers worked hard and shared the little food they grew with their neighbors, the woodcutter and his wife kept everything they had to themselves. Granted, they had little to share in the first place, but they did have a small area of land with good, rich soil. Had they exerted one iota of effort to farm that land and give the plants the tender care they needed to grow and thrive, they would have had more than enough food to keep themselves alive and healthy. But the woodcutter and his wife had grown lazy as well as bitter and selfish, and they were horrible **procrastinators**.

5 One could surmise that they recognized the error of their ways because they spent most of their time blaming each other. Instead of tilling the soil, they argued about whose turn it was to till it, and instead of planting the field, they argued about whose turn it was to plant it. They never argued about whose turn it was to reap the harvest, however, because there was nothing to reap. Instead of making their little home comfortable, they blamed each other for how bleak and inhospitable their hut was. Despite the fact that the woodcutter and his wife never expended the energy necessary to help themselves or anyone else, the other villagers could not bear to see them suffer and gave them enough food to keep them alive.

6 Now, wise men would say that souls as selfish and unkind as the woodcutter and his wife should never be bestowed with the blessing of children, but the couple wanted them nevertheless. Years went by, however, and the couple remained childless.

Ask and Answer

Questions Where do the woodcutter and his wife live? How do they spend their time? Circle the details that answer the questions.

Setting One part of the setting described is the fertile plot of land the man and woman own. Think about how what they do with this land shows their natures.

Analyze Theme Think about how the emphasis on the couple's wanting children is contributing to the development of the theme.





Draw Inferences

Why is the visitor described as mysterious? Think about how the woodcutter and his wife would probably describe her.

Analyze Theme Think about how unusual it is for someone to come to the door of the couple's hut.

- 7 Years went by, and the couple continued to argue and blame each other for having no blessings bestowed on them. They continued to blame each other for having no children and no food, for the poverty of their lives, and for their drab, cheerless home. The villagers continued to help them because nothing changed in the village, nothing had ever changed, and nothing would ever change. No one ever came to the village, and no one ever left.
- 8 Now, wise men would say that things happen when we least expect them, and wise men would say that everything happens for a reason, too. One day, a mysterious woman wandered out of the woods and into the village. She was old, the air was freezing cold, and she was wrapped in only a thin shawl. When she arrived in the village, she walked to the first hut she came upon and knocked weakly on the door. The hut happened to belong to the woodcutter and his wife.
- 9 For a while, neither the woodcutter nor his wife responded to the knock, and the old woman remained for what seemed like hours outside in the freezing cold. She could hear the man and his wife arguing about who would answer the door. The old woman knocked and knocked until it finally opened, and there stood the woodcutter and his wife. They both gave the intruder an angry look.
- 10 “Please, gentle people,” the woman said to the couple, “I have walked a long way and am freezing out here on this cold day. Would you be so kind as to let me warm myself by your fire for a spell before I go on my way?”



11 For a minute, the couple simply stared at her. Then for some reason, the woodcutter took pity on the old woman. Perhaps he saw that she was old and ill-prepared for the weather, or perhaps he was simply so exhausted from arguing with his wife that he welcomed the company of a stranger. Whatever it was, he invited the woman inside, gave her a warm blanket, and made her a bed by the fire.

12 “Oh, thank you, kind sir,” the old woman said to the woodcutter.
“Thank you, good lady,” the old woman said to the woodcutter’s wife.

13 “Perhaps she can be of some use,” the woodcutter said as he watched the old woman sleeping.

14 “You fool,” the woodcutter’s wife responded. “The woman is old and too weak to work. How can she possibly be of any use to us? She can stay the night and no longer.”

15 The woodcutter and his wife continued to argue through the night about the stranger who, due to the woodcutter’s moment of weakness, slept safe and warm by the fire. The next morning, the woman woke early, rested and **rejuvenated**, and she smiled sweetly at her hosts.

16 “You have shown me such kindness, sweet couple,” she said. “I shall now grant you three wishes. You may wish for anything your heart desires. But think carefully before you speak them aloud, for the minute you make a wish, it shall be granted.”

17 Then in an instant, the woman disappeared right before their eyes.

18 Now the woodcutter and his wife were foolish, but they recognized magic when they saw it. And far be it from them to snub magic when it came knocking at their door. The woodcutter and his wife were ecstatic and began thinking about all they could wish for.

Setting Think about how the hut seems different to the visitor than it does to the woodcutter and his wife.

Ask and Answer

Questions What happens after the old woman leaves? Circle the details that answer the question.

Setting Think about why most of the action takes place inside the hut.

Critical Thinking

Think about how things would be different between the woodcutter and his wife had they not wasted their wishes.

19 The woodcutter's wife wanted a child more than anything. "A child will come when we are prepared to care for it," the woodcutter insisted. "What we need now is gold and riches, a magnificent mansion to live in, and servants to work in the fields."

20 The woodcutter and his wife argued for hours. They argued throughout the day and into the night. By morning, their fire had gone out, and the woodcutter felt weak from hunger.

21 "I wish I had a big, juicy sausage," he said aloud, his mouth watering at the thought of it, and then, in an instant, a big, juicy sausage appeared in front of him. The man quickly began to devour it without stopping to think what he had done.

22 "You fool!" cried the wife. "You've wasted one of our wishes, and for what? A measly sausage! I wish that sausage were attached to your nose!"

23 Then in an instant, what was left of the sausage jumped off the table and stuck tight to the woodcutter's nose. He pulled and pulled at it but to no avail—the sausage wouldn't budge.

24 "Our second wish—gone!" the woodcutter blurted out to his wife in anger. "You get this sausage off my nose right now!"

25 The woodcutter's wife refused to help him, so the woodcutter had to help himself—he could hardly spend the rest of his life with a sausage attached to his nose. "I wish the sausage would disappear," he said aloud.

26 In an instant, the sausage was gone.

27 The couple had used their three wishes, and they were miserable. They always had been miserable and they always would be—because nothing ever changed in the village. Nothing ever changed at all.



Comprehension Check

1. Why does the author introduce the visitor?

2. Identify the theme of the selection. Write your response as a complete sentence.

3. Why does the woodcutter take pity on the old woman?

4. How does the setting contribute to the overall feeling of the story?

5. What message does the author convey about fortune by contrasting the actions of the visitor with those of her hosts?

6. This story was told a long time ago and in many different forms. What makes this tale significant today?

7. Read this sentence from the selection.

But the woodcutter and his wife had grown lazy as well as bitter and selfish, and they were horrible procrastinators.

The Latin word *crastinus* means “of tomorrow,” the Latin prefix *pro-* means “forward,” and the Latin suffix *-ate* makes a noun a verb. The suffix *-or* means “one who.” Based on the meanings of the root, prefixes, and suffixes, write a definition for the word *procrastinators*.

8. Read this sentence from the selection.

The next morning, the woman woke early, rested and rejuvenated, and she smiled sweetly at her hosts.

The Latin root *juv* means “young.” Based on the meaning of the root and the context of the sentence, write a definition for the word *rejuvenated*.

Name: _____

Inference Chart

Inference	Support
Page 35: The farmer refuses help because	
Page 35: The farmer feels he has no use for the gold because	
Page 36: The merchant plots revenge against his brother because	
Page 38: The farmer considers the servant worthy of gold because	

Name: _____



Close Reading Worksheet

Second Read: Analyze Theme (green boxes)

Page 34: Some qualities of the two main characters are _____

_____ and _____.

The theme might be about _____.

Page 36: The theme the author is developing is that _____

_____.

Page 38: The theme of the story is _____

_____.

Third Read: Critical Thinking (blue boxes)

Page 34: The merchant _____

_____.

Page 35: The king considers gold and land a fitting reward for the farmer because _____

_____.

_____.

Page 37: The merchant doesn't order the thieves to kill his brother because _____

_____.

Interpret—Page 38: The purpose of the farmer's telling the servant about the bag of

wisdom is _____

_____.

Name: _____



Close Reading Worksheet

First Read: Ask and Answer Questions (orange boxes)

Page 44: The elderly gentleman explains to the boy that _____

Page 46: Savannah enjoys _____

Page 47: Abaju doesn't want to tell Savannah about Mudjadji because _____

Page 48: From the Lovedu rainmaking ceremony, Savannah learns _____

Third Read: Critical Thinking (blue boxes)

Page 43: The mountain most likely represents _____

Page 45: Savannah is interested in attending the rainmaking ceremony because _____

Analyze—Page 48: The people believe in Mudjadji's power because _____

Name: _____

Setting Chart
"Thunderbird"

The Brothers' Village and the Mountain	Other Side of the Mountain / Home of the Thunderbirds
Page 42:	Page 43:

"The Power of Rain"

Savannah's Village	Mudjadji's Home
Page 45:	Page 47:
Page 46:	

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