

Name _____

"Black Cowboy, Wild Horses" by Julius Lester
Vocabulary Warm-up Word Lists

Study these words from "Black Cowboy, Wild Horses." Then, complete the activities that follow.

Word List A

corral [kuh RAL] *n.* fenced-in area for holding animals

The boy led his horse through the gate and into the corral.

distinct [dis TINGKT] *adj.* clear and definite

The stronger athlete had a distinct advantage.

grazed [GRAYZD] *v.* fed on growing grass

As the shepherds watched, the sheep grazed in the field.

herd [HURD] *n.* group of cattle or other large animals feeding or moving together

The cowboys drove the herd of cattle hundreds of miles.

maintaining [mayn TAYN ing] *v.* keeping

Maintaining her self-control, she did not panic in the crisis.

plains [PLAYNZ] *n.* large areas of flat, open country

Buffalo used to roam the plains of North America.

presence [PREZ uhns] *n.* being in a place

Everyone was surprised at his presence at the meeting.

scarcely [SKAIRS lee] *adv.* not quite; only just

We had scarcely arrived when the show started.

Word List B

dusk [DUSK] *n.* the beginning of darkness in the evening

When the sun went down, dusk settled on the town.

faint [FAYNT] *adj.* weak; hard to see or hear

We barely saw the faint touches of blue in the painting.

flickered [FLIK erd] *v.* shined or burned unsteadily

The birthday candles flickered, but did not go out.

milled [MILLD] *v.* moved around slowly

People milled around, waiting for the doors to open.

peering [PEER ing] *v.* looking closely and searchingly

They kept peering through the window, but they could not see.

steep [STEEP] *adj.* having a sharp rise or slope

Those hills were too steep for the children to climb easily.

suspended [sus PEN ded] *v.* hung from above

The acrobat was suspended by one thin rope.

vastness [VAST nes] *n.* greatness of size

The vastness of the ocean must have terrified the sailors.

Learning About the Oral Tradition

Passing along stories from one generation to the next is called the **oral tradition**. Here are some common characteristics:

Characteristics of Stories in the Oral Tradition	Definitions and Examples
Universal theme	A universal theme is a message about life that can be understood by people of many cultures (the value of hard work).
Fantasy	Fantasy is writing that is highly imaginative and contains elements that are not found in real life (a man who can fly).
Figurative language	Hyperbole is exaggeration or overstatement. It is often used to create humor (a man as tall as a tree). Personification is the giving of human characteristics to a Nonhuman subject (an animal that can talk).
Story types	Folk tales often deal with heroes, adventure, magic, or romance (“Jack and the Beanstalk”). Some folk tales are tall tales—stories that contain hyperbole (stories about Paul Bunyan or Pecos Bill). Myths are tales that explain the actions of gods and heroes (the Greek god Apollo) or explain things in nature (how the leopard got its spots). Legends are stories about the past. They are often based on facts, but storytellers have added imaginative details (George Washington cutting down the cherry tree). Fables are brief stories, usually with animal characters, that teach a moral or lesson (Aesop’s fable “The Tortoise and the Hare,” which has the moral <i>Slow and steady wins the race</i>).

DIRECTIONS: *Underline the term in each pair that best describes each numbered item.*

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|--|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Friendship is the most valuable gift of all. | universal theme | personification |
| 2. The god Zeus hurls a bolt of thunder across the sky. | myth | folk tale |
| 3. A fox learns that it is important to be loyal and honest. | tall tale | fable |
| 4. Raindrops feel sorry for a hot traveler. | hyperbole | personification |
| 5. An elf grants hardworking farmer three magic wishes. | Tall tale | folk tale |

“Black Cowboy, Wild Horses” by Julius Lester

Model Selection: The Oral Tradition

“Black Cowboy, Wild Horses” is an example of literature in the **oral tradition**. A story in the oral tradition was passed down from generation to generation by word of mouth long before it was written down. Stories in the oral tradition often contain a **universal theme**, a message about life. They also contain **fantastic details** that could not happen in real life and **personification**, figurative language that gives human characteristics to nonhuman subjects. **Hyperbole**, an exaggeration or an overstatement, is often found in these stories as well.

Stories written in the oral tradition may be **folk tales** told to entertain and to communicate the shared values of a culture. Folk tales often deal with heroes, adventure, magic, or romance. **Myths** explain the actions of gods and heroes or explain natural phenomena. **Legends** are stories that are widely told about the past. These stories are often based on fact and are a culture’s familiar and traditional stories.

A. DIRECTIONS: *Answer the following items.*

1. In the opening paragraph, the author states that the land stretched out “as wide as love.” What term is used to describe this type of exaggeration? _____
2. Find another example of this type of exaggeration. _____
3. The author also states that at the edge of the world, “land and sky kissed.” What term describes this type of figurative language? _____
4. Find another example of this type of figurative language. _____

5. In what ways is Bob similar to other cowboys? In what ways is he different?

B. DIRECTIONS: *Tell what type of story you think “Black Cowboy, Wild Horses” is. Explain what features of the story led to your answer.*
