

INTRODUCTION TO ORIGIN STORIES

Purpose

In this activity, students will become familiar with the idea of an origin story. Cultures around the world have their own origin stories, ways in which they believe and describe how the Universe came to be. It's important that you understand that all origin stories should be respected, as they often relate to people's cultures and beliefs. Big History is another one of these origin stories. Specifically, it is what many consider a modern, scientific origin story.

Process

Students will start by filling in the sections on the Origin Stories Comparison Worksheet using the information from the "Modern Scientific" article. Use the Three Close Reads process if you wish - this will help students to better understand the article. They'll fill in the rest of the chart when they get to the rest of the Origin Stories.

INTRODUCTION TO ORIGIN STORIES

Directions: Use this chart to highlight the differences - and any similarities - between the origin stories you read.

	Modern Scientific	Chinese	Judeo-Christian	Iroquois	Mayan	Greek	Zulu	Efik
Source of the world	<i>Big Bang</i>	<i>Chaos within a huge egg</i>	<i>God forms Heaven, Earth, light and dark</i>	<i>First people lived beyond the sky. Chief's daughter falls through a hole in the sky.</i>	<i>Makers in the sky and the sea</i>	<i>Chaos within a void</i>	<i>The darkness</i>	<i>World is created by Abassi, from nothing</i>
Originator of the world		<i>Pan gu</i>	<i>God</i>	<i>Great turtle in an endless sheet of water</i>	<i>Plumed serpent</i>	<i>Gaia, Eros, Erebus</i>	<i>Umvelinqangi</i>	<i>Abassi, god of the Universe</i>
How the Earth formed	<i>Left over matter dispersed during the formation of our sun</i>	<i>Pan gu died</i>	<i>God made water, sky, ground, vegetation, creatures</i>	<i>Old lady toad spits out a mouthful of dirt on the back of the turtle</i>	<i>Like a cloud unfolding</i>	<i>Gaia births Uranus</i>	<i>Umvelinqangi created it out of the darkness. He created life from a tiny seed that he sent to Earth.</i>	<i>Abassi created it, as well as the stars and all life.</i>
Age of the Earth	<i>4.5 Billion years ago</i>							
First life forms	<i>One-celled organisms</i>	<i>Fleas, lice of Pan gu</i>	<i>All living creatures</i>	<i>Swans, muskrat, beaver, toad, turtle</i>	<i>Deer, pumas, jaguars rattlesnakes</i>	<i>Titans</i>	<i>The seed Umvelinqangi sent to Earth was the first life. From the reed that grew from that seed came more reeds, out of which more life forms grew.</i>	<i>Origin story doesn't go into detail. It's possible that all wildlife was created at once.</i>
How humans formed	<i>Evolution, adaptation over about 100,000 years</i>	<i>Fleas and lice on his body became human ancestors</i>	<i>Created in Gods image</i>	<i>Dirt grows to form the world island supporting the daughter</i>	<i>Third attempt, derived from corn</i>	<i>Prometheus / Athena made man. Zeus made first woman.</i>	<i>Unkulunkulu grew out of one reed and picked the humans from the reeds that they grew from.</i>	<i>Abassi created the first man and woman. They defied Abassi and married and had children.</i>
Relationship between humans and animals / plants	<i>Dominant and jeopardize the planet's stability</i>	<i>Yin yang, find balance</i>	<i>Rule over nature</i>	<i>Respectful of the nature which supports humanity</i>	<i>Hunt, gather praise the gods</i>	<i>All subservient to the gods</i>	<i>All life stems from one common ancestor.</i>	<i>All are subservient to Abassi. The Earth has many secrets for humans to learn</i>



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THREE CLOSE READS

Name: Date:

Directions: Before each of the three reads, look at the “Pay Attention to” and “Questions” columns for the reading. Write your answers in the third column.

Article Title: _____

Article Author: _____

Overall question or idea to think about as you read:

Reading 1: Skimming for Gist

This reading is more of a skim—it should help you get the general idea of the reading.

Pay attention to ...	Questions	Your answers
Title and headings	What is this article going to be about?	
Images, image captions, graphs, tables	How do these add to your idea of what the article is going to be about?	

THREE CLOSE READS

Name: Date:

Reading 2: Understanding Content

In this read, you will pay attention to the information that most helps you understand the article.

Pay attention to ...	Questions	Your answers
Vocabulary	Are there words you don't understand or recognize? Underline and write down the words, then follow your teachers directions for how to look up and define those words.	
Major Claim	What is the main idea of this article? This could be a thesis statement or the primary focus of the article.	
Analysis and Evidence	What evidence does the author use that supports or extends the main idea? Provide 2-3 examples.	
Claim Testers	What claim testers did the author use when providing support for the major claim? Name one claim tester (authority, intuition, evidence, logic) and explain how it was used.	

THREE CLOSE READS

Name: Date:

Reading 3: Thinking Conceptually

The third reading is really about understanding how the article relates to the unit driving question or other questions and ideas from the course. Your teacher may give you some sentence starters to help you respond to these questions.

Pay attention to ...	Questions	Your answers
Support	What from this article confirmed what you already knew about Big History, the unit driving question, or the question or idea you thought about as you read?	
Extend	In what ways did this article deepen your thinking about Big History, the unit driving question, or the question or idea you thought about as you read?	
Challenge	How did this article change or challenge your thinking Big History, the unit driving question, or the question or idea you thought about as you read.	

