



Instruction Coach **English Language Arts**



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Reading Myths

Look at this erupting volcano in Hawaii. How do you think Hawaiians viewed volcanoes before scientists explained them?

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do myths help people understand the world around them?

Listen and Learn

Consider ►

What forces of nature have shaped the Hawaiian Islands?
Why might people explain these forces with a myth?

Fires of Pele

adapted from a traditional Hawaiian myth



1 A time long ago, in a faraway land known as Kahiki, there lived a mother named Haumea and a father named Kanehoalani. Together they had seven sons and seven daughters. All of them were gods and goddesses. Whenever the clouds swelled and clung to the mountaintops, or rain fell, or the earth broke open and belched steam or fire, one of these powerful siblings had caused it.

One of the seven daughters was named Pele. She was the goddess of fire and volcanoes. She had learned much from the fire god Lonomakua. Pele had a terrible temper. Whenever she became angry or jealous, she would fly into a wild rage. If she stamped her feet, the ground would shake. If she cried, fiery lava would flow down the mountainsides. When she screamed or tossed her hair, the lava would shoot high into the air. Then it would rain down upon the valleys and the ocean below.

Pele didn't often stop to think about whether something seemed good or bad. She simply did whatever she felt like doing at that moment. This often brought her trouble. The fires she tended sometimes burned out of control. The fire that she rained down on the ocean sometimes burned the wooden canoes of the people who lived along the shore. This angered Pele's sister Makore. Makore was the goddess of the sea. When Makore herself was angry, she liked to show her displeasure by sending fearsome waves to break the canoes and pound them to splinters against the shore. But this was not the last time Pele would anger Makore.

MYTH A myth is often a story that explains something about the world and involves gods or superheroes. Myths usually explain how something in the world began or was created. What forces of nature are part of this myth?

THEME The theme of a story is the truth about life shown in that story. The beginning of this myth talks about Pele's anger. What truth about anger do you think the story may be suggesting?

Makore was older than Pele. She had taken notice of a strong, handsome warrior whom she had carried, this way and that, upon the waves she commanded. After some years, she admitted to him that she was in love with him. She then told her younger sister Pele about her feelings for the warrior. Pele wanted to see who had inspired Makore's love. When Pele saw him for herself, she too began to fall in love. Soon after, without considering Makore's feelings, Pele told the warrior that she loved him.

- 5 When Makore learned what Pele had done, she became enraged. She set out to chase Pele away from Kahiki forever. Pele quickly packed her things into a canoe her brother gave her. Then she paddled away from Kahiki as quickly as she could. She traveled for a long time, south and east across the warm Pacific Ocean, through the blinding brightness of day and the lonely darkness of night.

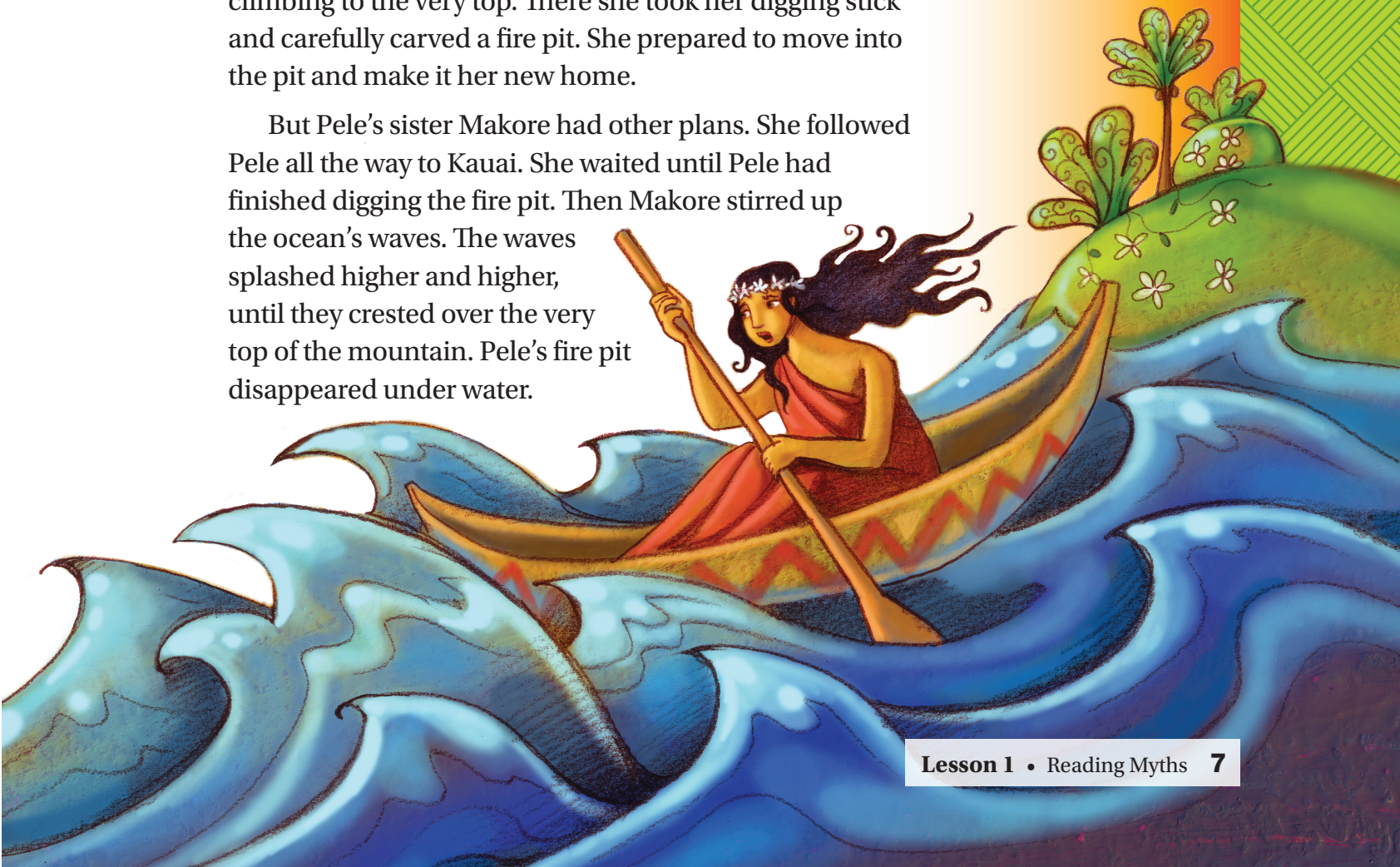
At last Pele reached the island of Kauai. There she rested for a while before choosing a mountain and climbing to the very top. There she took her digging stick and carefully carved a fire pit. She prepared to move into the pit and make it her new home.

But Pele's sister Makore had other plans. She followed Pele all the way to Kauai. She waited until Pele had finished digging the fire pit. Then Makore stirred up the ocean's waves. The waves splashed higher and higher, until they crested over the very top of the mountain. Pele's fire pit disappeared under water.

CONNECT TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustrations can be used to help readers imagine a scene, understand characters, or better grasp ideas in the text. How does the illustration on this page help you understand Pele's feelings as she sets out in her canoe?

PLOT The plot of a story is the sequence of events that includes the actions of the characters and a conflict. How do one character's actions make another character act in this story?



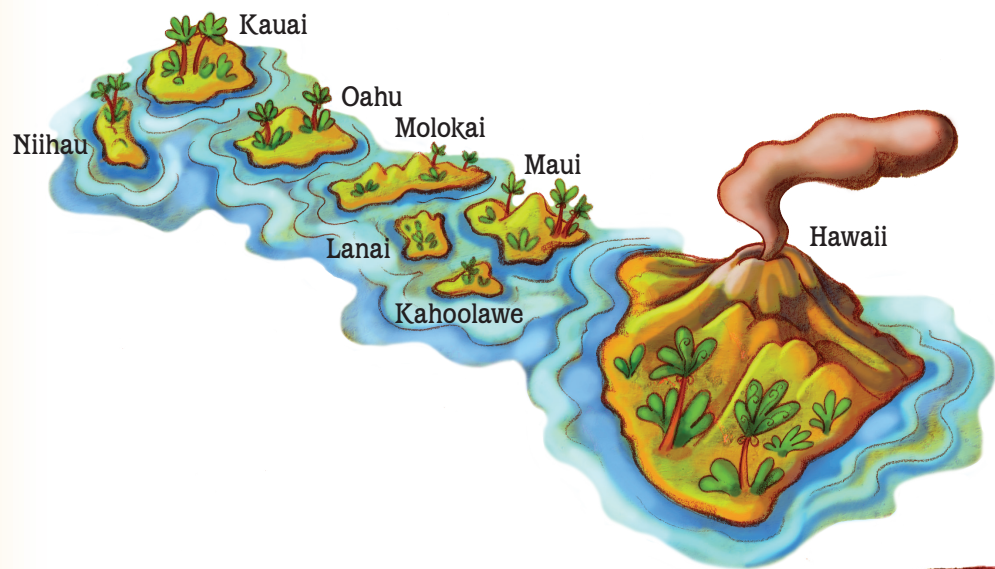
Pele was not discouraged when her fire pit was flooded. She slid down the mountain with her things and set out in her canoe once more. She forced her tired arms to paddle until she came ashore at the island of Oahu. Slowly, she climbed to the peak of a mountaintop there. Again she dug a large fire pit for herself.

Makore, still furious, was not so easily discouraged, either. She followed Pele to Oahu. When she saw the new pit Pele had dug, she stirred the sea again until waves flooded the mountaintop. For many days, Pele paddled patiently from island to island, with Makore pursuing her. From Oahu Pele went to Molokai, then to Lanai, and then to Maui. At each island, she would climb a mountain, dig a fire pit, and prepare to move in. Then her sister Makore would appear, sending enormous waves rolling at the mountainside. Each time, the pit was flooded, and Pele had to flee.

10 Finally, Pele landed on the “Big Island” of Hawaii. She climbed the mountain known as Kilauea. She found that she was very distant from the ocean waves. Her sister followed her to Hawaii and pushed the waves as high as she could. But Makore couldn’t send the waves high enough or fast enough to wash to the top of Kilauea.

THEME Makore continues to chase Pele from island to island. Each time Pele digs a new fire pit, Makore floods and destroys it. The story describes how the two sisters’ anger begins to change the Hawaiian Islands. How does this add to the theme of the story?

CONNECT TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS The map on this page shows the islands that Pele went to as Makore chased her. What features of the map connect to the details of the story?



At last Makore relented. She gave up her anger and slowly returned to Kahiki. No longer pursued by her sister, Pele settled into her fire pit on Kilauea, and there she stayed. But just as before, when Pele lost her temper, a roar could be heard as the ground rumbled. Hot lava shot high into the air. Then it flowed down the mountain as Pele screamed and tossed her hair.

That is how the Hawaiian Islands came to be the way they are. Pele, in retreat from Makore, would dig her mountaintop fire pit. Then Makore would push ocean waves at the mountain until the pit was filled with water. As they went along, the sisters left the story of their conflict behind them. It was forever carved into the rocks.

If you visit the island of Hawaii today, you can go to Kapoho and look for Green Mountain. Green Mountain holds an old pit—a volcanic crater. The crater is filled with water. If you visit Kilauea, where Pele resides, you can still hear a roar. You can feel rumbling beneath you. You can see the lava explode into the air and flow down the mountain slopes. As you watch and listen to the earth stir, you may tell yourself that Pele has once more lost her temper.

THEME In this story, the theme is that anger can have lasting effects. Stories can have more than one theme or message. What other message about anger is in this story?

SUMMARIZE A good summary states only the most important details of a story. *Two sisters who were goddesses were angry. One sister chased the other from island to island. As they went, they shaped the mountains as they still are today.* How would you summarize the story?

MYTH The purpose of this myth is to explain how the volcanoes of Hawaii were shaped. Why do you think this story was important to people who lived in Hawaii long ago?



Listen and Learn

Consider ▶

How does a myth in graphic form differ from a traditional telling of a myth?

How are the gods and goddesses in myths like real people?

Like Fire and Water!

CONNECT TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS

This version of the story is a graphic novel. Most of the story is told through illustrations and dialogue. The illustrations on this page show Makore and her mother. How does this version help you understand why Makore acts the way she does?

COMPARE PLOT

In this part of the plot, Makore and her mother talk about Pele's anger. How does this differ from the events in the first version?





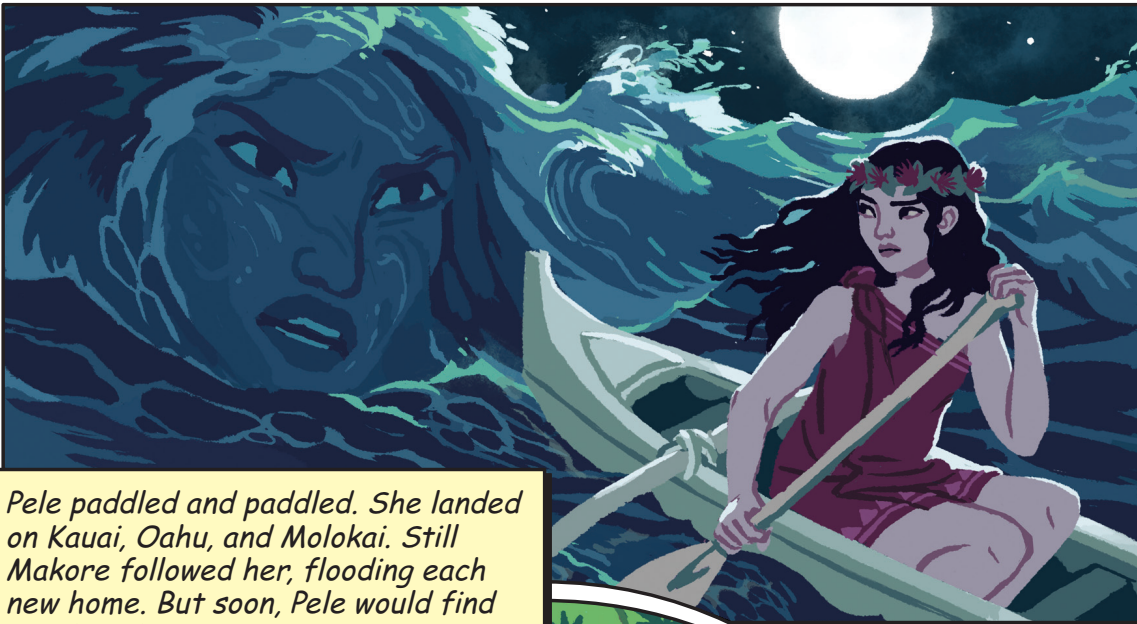
COMPARE PLOT In both versions of the story, Pele gets the canoe from her brother. But in this version, the plot includes different details about Makore and her brother. What details are included here that were not in the first version of the story? How do those details help you understand the characters?

CONNECT TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS

In the first version of the story, Pele uses a digging stick to dig her fire pit. Compare that description with the illustration and dialogue at the top of this page. How is this version different? How does it add to your understanding of the story?

COMPARE PLOT Unlike the first version, this version of the story includes dialogue between Pele and Makore. How does that make the story different?





Pele paddled and paddled. She landed on Kauai, Oahu, and Molokai. Still Makore followed her, flooding each new home. But soon, Pele would find an island large enough to protect her.



Now forgive me and leave me in peace, Makore!

I will leave, Pele . . . but don't ever return to Kahiki!



Pele had found her new home. She remained forever sad that she could not return to the home of her birth, and she still grumbles and weeps tears of fire to this day.

COMPARE THEME

In the first version of the story, the theme focuses on how anger can have lasting effects. This version focuses more on the relationship between Pele and Makore. How does this make the theme of the graphic novel different?

COMPARE PLOT

The ending of the first story tells what you might experience if you visit Kilauea. The graphic novel ends with Pele alone on the mountain. How are the endings in the two versions different? How are they the same?

Comprehension Check

Look back at “Fires of Pele” and “Like Fire and Water!” How are the theme, plot, and structure different in the two stories? How are they the same? Use the Venn diagram below to list your ideas. In the center, write what is the same in both stories. On the sides, list what is different in the stories.

Fires of Pele

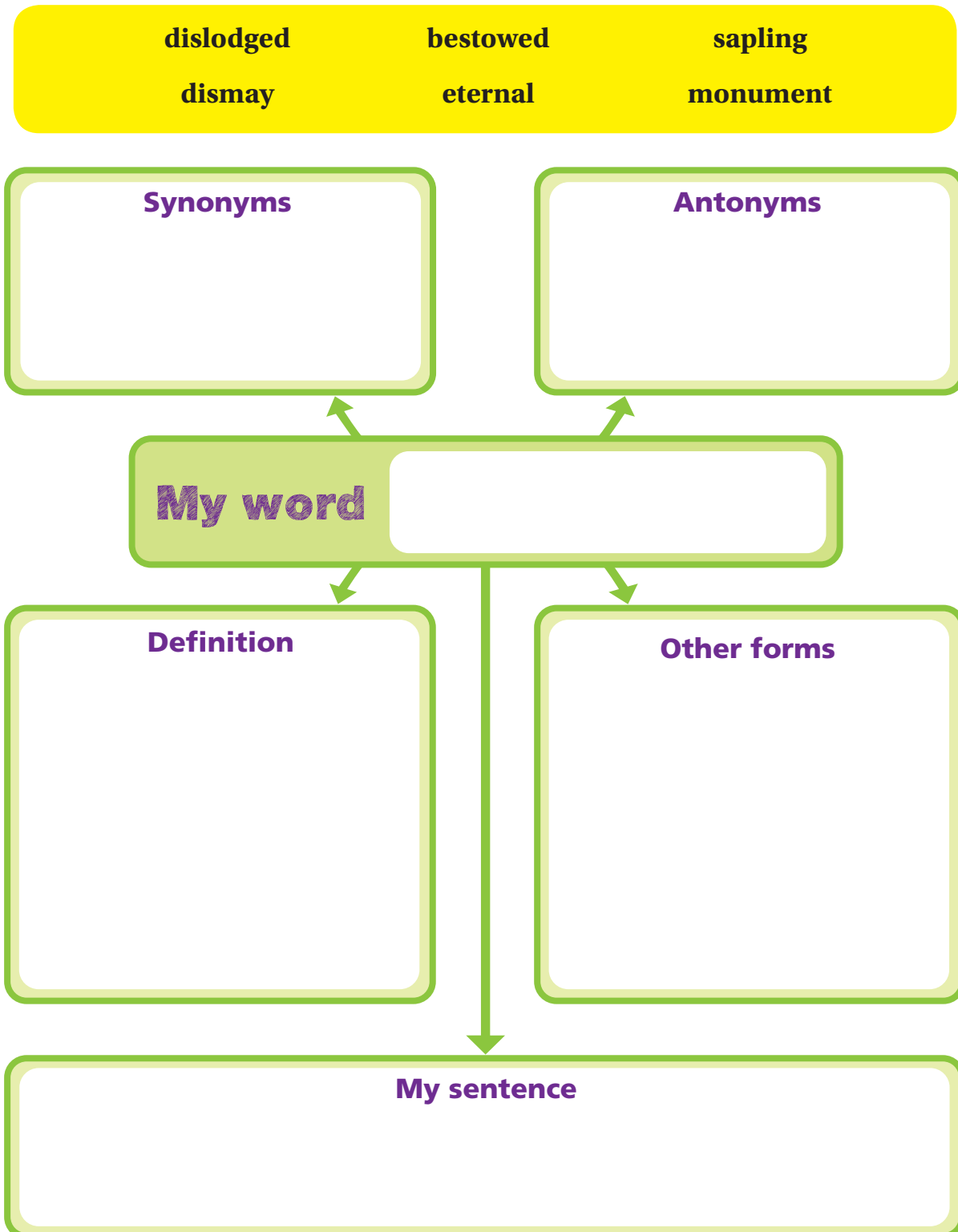
The story describes Pele's terrible temper.

Both stories

Like Fire and Water!

Vocabulary

Use the word map below to help you define and use one of the highlighted vocabulary words from the Share and Learn reading or another word your teacher assigns you.



Share and Learn

Consider ▶

How is the world of myths different from the real world? Why do myths sometimes include angry or destructive actions?

Bridge of Fire

adapted from a Puyallup myth

1 Long ago, along the steep banks of the Columbia River, a pile of giant rocks was **dislodged** from the earth and tumbled into the water. There, the rocks created a bridge of stone. This bridge allowed the people to cross the river easily. Their feet stayed dry. There was no danger of being swept downstream by the rushing waters. The people loved the bridge. They named it Tamanawas Bridge, which means “Bridge of the Gods.”

For a long time, the people were thankful for the bridge. They felt as if a great gift had been **bestowed** upon them. And the bridge led to many other gifts. Using the bridge, people could easily seek plants, trees, and animals on both sides of the river. People from one side of the river would cross the bridge to look for rare stones. People from the other side would cross to cut strong, straight **saplings**, the young trees they used to build their camps. Then each group would cross the bridge again to return to their homes.

But as time passed, people on each side of the bridge began to grumble. They complained about the things people across the river were taking away. One began to accuse the other, saying, “You are taking things from our side of the bridge! You must find them on your own side!”

CONTEXT CLUES

Which clues help you figure out what **dislodged** means? Circle them. Then underline the words that help you figure out the meaning of **bestowed**. Finally, circle the words that help you figure out the meaning of **saplings**.

PLOT What conflict has developed as a result of characters' actions?



“But you take from our side of the bridge, also!” the others would respond. “The bridge serves each of us. What I find across it, I may keep. After all, who has the right to claim the gifts of the earth as their own? How can things be yours after they have been cut or carried by another?” The arguments grew worse. Soon, everyone was fighting. They fought about the bridge, the land around it, and just about everything upon the land.

- 5 The Great Spirit Tye Sahale watched with **dismay**. He grew sad and angry that the people were fighting with their neighbors. He decided that he must punish all of the people for their greediness. He thought about it for a long time. Finally, he caused all the fires in their homes to go out. There was only one way for people to light their fires again. They would have to travel to the one fire that still burned. Tye Sahale placed this fire in the middle of the Bridge of the Gods.

A very old woman named Loowitlatkla, or “Lady of Fire,” lived on the bridge. It was her job to look after the sacred fire. She was devoted to it. Night and day, Loowit worked to keep the fire going. Usually she added a handful of wood. If wood was scarce, she would use dry moss or anything else she could find to feed the fire.

COMPARE THEME

In “Fires of Pele,” the theme was that anger can have a lasting effect. How is the theme of this story similar?

CHARACTER

What kind of character is Tye Sahale? Why does he decide to punish the people?

CONTEXT CLUES

Circle the words that help explain the meaning of **dismay**.





THEME How does Loowit's hard work and kindness connect to the theme that anger and greed cause destruction?

CONNECT TEXT AND ILLUSTRATIONS

Look at the illustration of Loowit. What do you learn about Loowit from the illustration?

Sometimes Loowit heard thunder or felt a sudden cool breeze. Then she would build the fire very high. That way any coming rain would not extinguish it. She always began to worry when the fire's flames burned low.

Loowit knew that the fire she tended was vital to the people. How would they stay warm at night or cook a meal without their fires? So Loowit was always kind to those who came to her for some of the fire's glowing embers. Although her back was bent and her hands were hard and worn, she would greet each visitor warmly. She always sent them home with hot coals and her good wishes.

Loowit's hard work and kindness caught the attention of Tye Sahale. He could see that her back hurt and her hands ached. He wanted to give her something that would please her. He offered Loowit the gift of **eternal** life as a special reward for her efforts and her good nature. He had already given this same gift to his sons, Klickitat and Wyeast.

10 Tye Sahale gave eternal life to Loowit, only to find that she did not want it. She did not want to be an old woman forever. But Tye Sahale could not take back the gift he had given. He told Loowit he would grant her one wish. Loowit quickly wished to be full of youth and beauty again. Instantly she became a fair young woman.

Soon the news of Loowit's wondrous beauty had travelled across the land. Tye Sahale's sons, the brothers Wyeast and Klickitat, were both curious to see Loowit for themselves. They both set out for the bridge. Wyeast came from the south. Klickitat stomped down from the north. The brothers arrived at the Bridge of Fire at the same time. Both of them instantly fell in love with Loowit.

Loowit was not used to having handsome young men pursue her. She did not want to cause any trouble between the brothers. When Klickitat and Wyeast each offered their love to her, she refused to choose between them. The brothers each believed that he alone could win Loowit's favor. They began a long and terrible battle.

They argued about which of them should be allowed to marry the beautiful Loowit. They stomped their feet and set fire to villages. The fires they lit burned out of control. Entire forests were swallowed by the flames. The people living in the river valley fled in terror. They never resolved their disagreements over the bridge.



CHARACTER What kind of person is Loowit? Why does she refuse to choose one of the brothers?

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE Explain the meaning of "entire forests were swallowed by the flames."

PLOT The people had to leave the river valley. How did their actions earlier in the story cause this to happen?

COMPARE MYTHS

Reread the last paragraph. How are the volcanoes in this myth similar to the volcanoes in "Fires of Pele"?

Tyee Sahale saw all of the destruction caused by his sons. He became angrier than before. In a fit of temper, he struck the Bridge of the Gods. The bridge tumbled into the river, where it still lies. So angry was Tyee Sahale that he destroyed the three people to whom he had given eternal life—Loowit, Klickitat, and Wyeast.

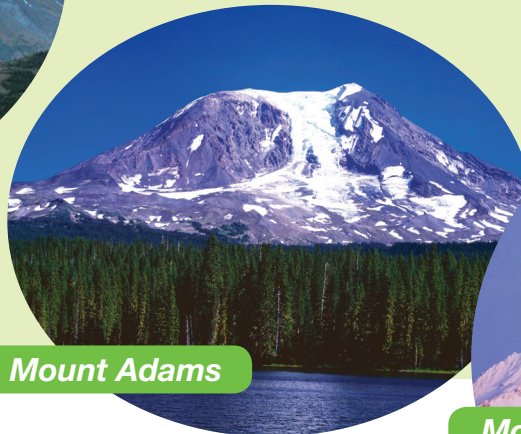
15 After Tyee Sahale had punished them and the world fell silent, he felt great sorrow. He decided that he would make a **monument** to each of them. Where each suitor had fallen, he pushed the ground up to form a volcano.

Loowit had been beautiful. Where she had fallen, Tyee Sahale raised a volcano covered with glittering white snow. This is Mount St. Helens. Where Wyeast fell, Mount Hood stands tall and proud. Klickitat, so much in love with Loowit, still weeps for her, his head hanging sorrowfully in the form of Mount Adams.



Mount St. Helens

This myth explains the origin of three volcanoes in the Pacific Northwest. Mount St. Helens and Mount Adams are in what is now Washington State. Mount Hood is near them in Oregon.



Mount Adams



Mount Hood

SUMMARIZE

Summarize the story by retelling only the most important ideas in your own words.

Discussion Questions

Discuss the following questions with your peer group. Then record your answers in the space provided.

1. How do the characters in the myths “Bridge of Fire” and “Fires of Pele” view nature? Support your opinions with examples from each text.

2. How would you represent Loowit’s kindness in a graphic novel? Using a scene of your choice from “Bridge of Fire,” create four panels that help readers better understand the goodness of her heart. Create your own dialogue and illustrations, and be prepared to support them with details from the text.

Comprehension Check

1. How does the characters' anger lead to problems in the plot of both "Fires of Pele" and "Bridge of Fire"?

2. How are the themes, or messages, about life in "Fires of Pele" and "Bridge of Fire" the same? How are they different?

3. Think about the endings of "Fires of Pele," "Like Fire and Water!" and "Bridge of Fire." Tell which ending you think is most hopeful, and why.

Read On Your Own

Read another myth, "How Night Came," independently. Apply what you learned in this lesson and check your understanding.