

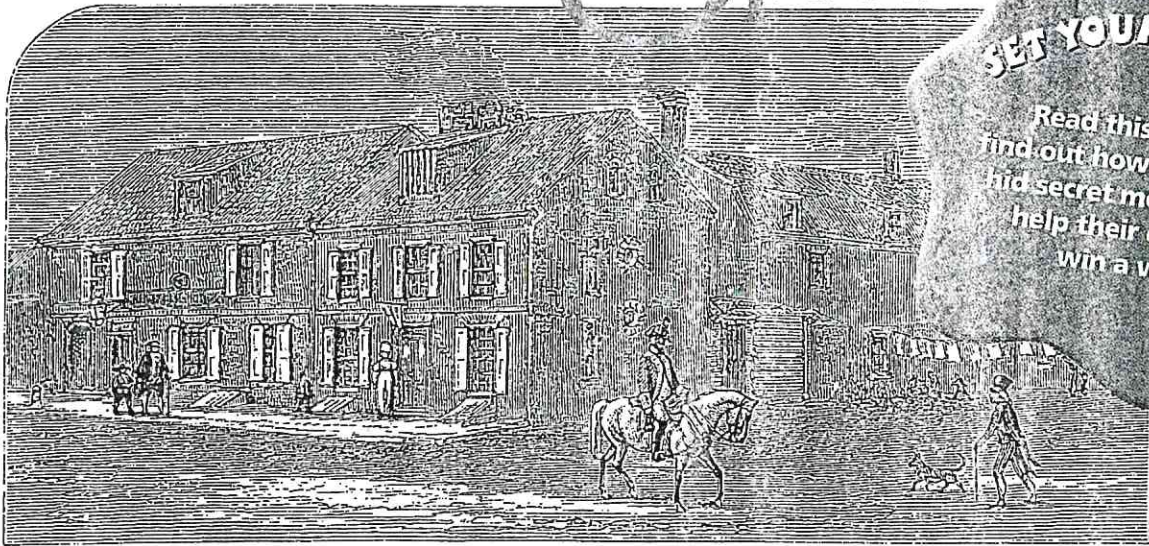


The Button Spies

Reading comprehension
with vocabulary and
grammar practice
- 3 passages

SET YOUR PURPOSE

Read this play to
find out how one family
hid secret messages to
help their country
win a war.



THE EVENTS IN THIS PLAY ARE BASED ON ACTUAL EVENTS. THE DARRAGH FAMILY HELPED FIGHT FOR AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE. IN 1777, THE YEAR OF THIS PLAY, JOHN DARRAGH WAS 15. HIS SISTER ANN WAS 12.

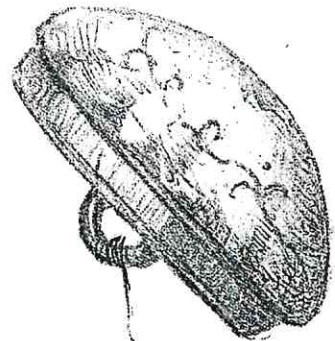
Scene One (the Darraghs' kitchen, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

Narrator: Travel back with me through time. The year is 1777. It is a cold November evening. The Americans and the British are at war, and the fight is going badly for the Americans. Philadelphia has just fallen to the British. American soldiers, under the command of General George Washington, are camped fifteen miles away. And here, in this tiny kitchen, history is about to be made.

Ann (enters running): Father! Father! Hannah Haines stopped me at the corner. (takes a tiny slip of paper from her pocket) She said I was to bring you this at once.

Mr. Darragh (taking the paper, reads, says to family):

So this is how the British will attack General Washington. Two days, that's not much time . . .



Ann: But how . . . how did Hannah . . . ?

Mr. Darragh: Hannah took work as a servant girl for the British so she could gather information without making anyone suspicious. *(holds up paper)* I've been expecting this for several days now.

Mrs. Darragh: We must get the message to General Washington. But how can we tell him? It's almost time for the curfew to start.

Mr. Darragh: Whoever goes will need to dodge the soldiers. Fifteen miles . . .

John: Please, Father, let me go. I can get past the soldiers.

Mr. Darragh: I'd go myself, but the British would notice a missing schoolmaster.

Ann: But they won't miss one student!

Mrs. Darragh: But, John, what if the British search you? *(Thinks)* I know! We'll hide the message in your button.

John: My button?

Mrs. Darragh: Yes. I'll fold it and sew it inside one of the cloth button covers. John, bring me your green coat quickly.

Scene Two (the next evening)

Ann *(at the window)*: Father! Mother! John's back!

John *(enters, panting)*: Ooh! That was close!

Mrs. Darragh: What happened?

John: The British stopped and interrogated me.

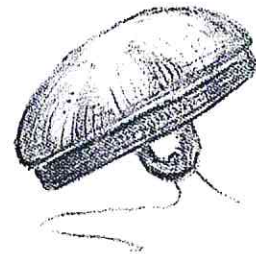
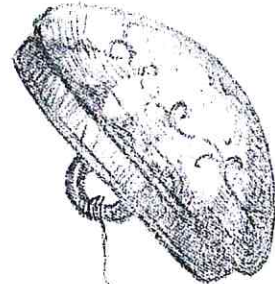
Mr. Darragh: But you had already delivered the message. What did they want to know?

John *(laughs)*: I told them I was running because I was late for supper. Then they told me to "button up" my coat and get on home!

Mr. Darragh: Well! Let's not disobey the redcoats!
(family laughs)

Narrator: This was the first of many crucial messages the Darraghs sent to General George Washington during the war. Years later, Ann told the story to a newspaper writer.

— adapted by Lois Randolph



CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Write the letter of the best answer for each question.

- Between the first and second scenes, John had been —
 - sewing button covers
 - playing outside
 - delivering the message
 - spying on the British
- Why was Mr. Darragh concerned about the distance to the American camp?
 - It was a long way to travel, and there wasn't much time.
 - He was afraid John would get lost.
 - Their horse had never traveled that far before.
 - He was afraid John would stop and waste time.
- John laughed at the end of the play because —
 - he thought it was funny to send messages inside of buttons
 - he thought being stopped by the soldiers was fun
 - he wasn't able to get to General Washington
 - the British soldiers had mentioned buttons
- What did the narrator mean by saying, "And here in this tiny kitchen, history is about to be made."
 - The kitchen is too tiny for making up history.
 - The kitchen is very old.
 - History lessons will be held in the kitchen.
 - An important decision or action will happen in this kitchen.
- John's message was very important because General Washington —
 - didn't know the British were in Philadelphia
 - was planning to march through Philadelphia soon
 - could defeat the British if he knew their plans
 - wanted to keep up with the social news of Philadelphia

VOCABULARY

Find each vocabulary word in the selection. The words and sentences around it will help you figure out its meaning.

Write the letter of the best definition of the underlined word.

- I have been expecting this.
 - angry about
 - afraid of
 - waiting for
 - able to understand
- John knew he had to be inside before the curfew started.
 - rule that prevents people from traveling freely
 - military plan
 - road map
 - homework lesson
- The British interrogated me.
 - annoyed
 - shouted at
 - greeted
 - formally questioned
- Let's not disobey the redcoats.
 - give presents to
 - grow fond of
 - ignore the orders of
 - make laugh
- This was the first of many crucial messages the Darraghs sent.
 - unusual
 - very important
 - undeliverable
 - extremely long

WORD WORK

A **noun** names a person, place, or thing. A plural noun names more than one person, place, or thing. To make the plural of most nouns, add *s*. Add *-es* if the noun ends with *s*, *ss*, *x*, *sh*, *ch*, or *tch*. For example:

block → blocks
match → matches

Many one-syllable verbs ending with a consonant will double the consonant when the suffix *-ed* (or *-ing*) is added. Many one-syllable verbs that end with an *e* will drop the *e* when *-ed* or *-ing* is added. For example:

hop → hopped, hopping
love → loved, loving

Read each sentence and the words in the box. Write the plural form of a word in the box that best completes each sentence.

fox watch loss beech marsh

1. The American troops had suffered heavy _____.
2. Spies need to be as clever as _____.
3. John went through forests and _____ on his way to Washington's camp.
4. Some of the trees were oaks and some were _____.
5. John had to be careful since the British had night _____ after curfew.

Read each sentence. Add the suffix *-ed* or *-ing* to the word in dark type. Write the whole word.

6. **camp** General Washington's troops had _____ by the river.
7. **hide** Mrs. Darragh thought of _____ the paper in a coat button.
8. **hope** The Darraghs _____ the British would not find the paper in the button.
9. **stop** The soldiers had _____ John on his way home.
10. **run** John came _____ into the kitchen.

WRITE NOW! ** optional*

In the play "The Button Spies," you learned about one creative way a family helped win the war for American independence. The play only mentions Hannah Haines briefly, but without her there would be no story. How do you think she got hold of that important paper?

- Plan to write another short scene for the play you just read. This scene will take place before the play begins. In your scene, Hannah will be asked by Mr. Darragh to go to work as a servant for the British so that she can be a spy. Copy and complete the chart at right to organize your thoughts.
- Write your scene. Use your chart to help you write.

<p>How does Hannah feel?</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted black;"/> <p>scared</p>	<p>What does she say?</p> <hr style="border-top: 1px dotted black;"/> <p>I might get caught.</p>
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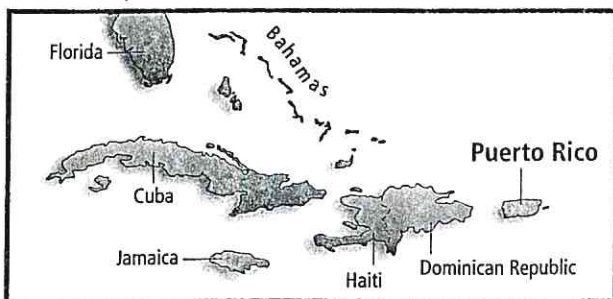
Puerto Rico

The 51st State?

Since 1959, the American flag has had 50 stars—one for each state. Now some people want the island of Puerto Rico to become a state. That would give the American flag 51 stars!

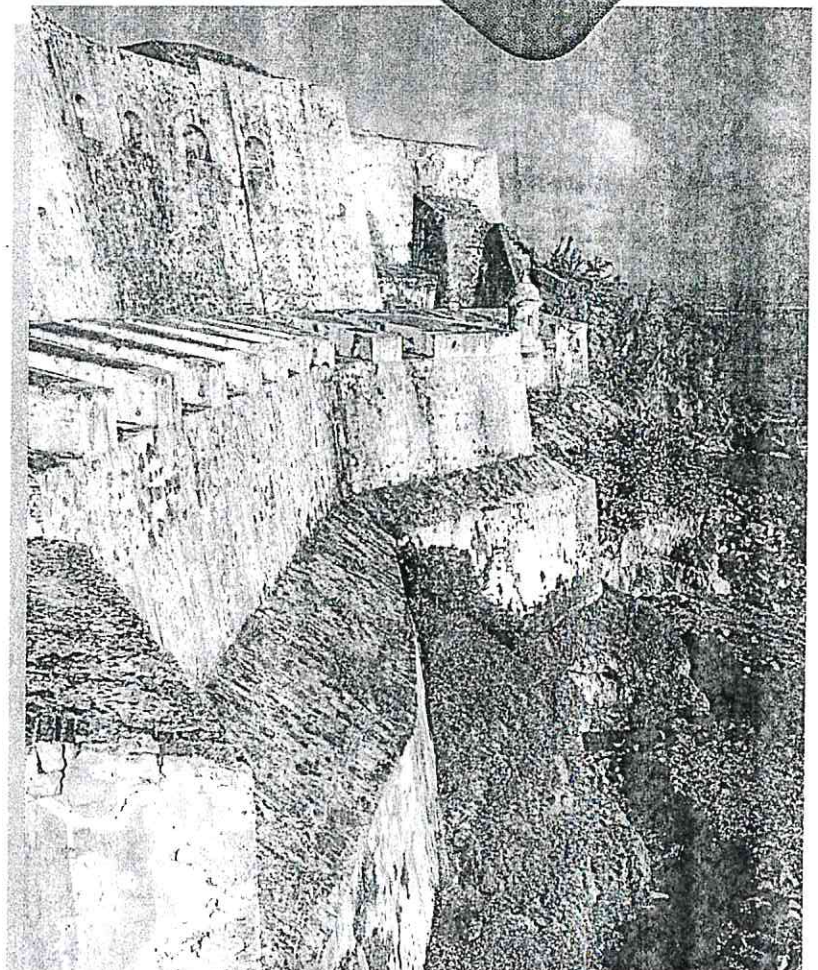
Puerto Rico is an island 1,000 miles from the coast of Florida. It is not a state. It is a commonwealth of the United States. This means it is protected by the U.S.

But Puerto Rico's people do not have the same rights as citizens in the 50 states. People in Puerto Rico must obey U.S. laws. But Puerto Rico does not have a vote when our government makes new laws. Also, people in Puerto Rico cannot vote in presidential elections.

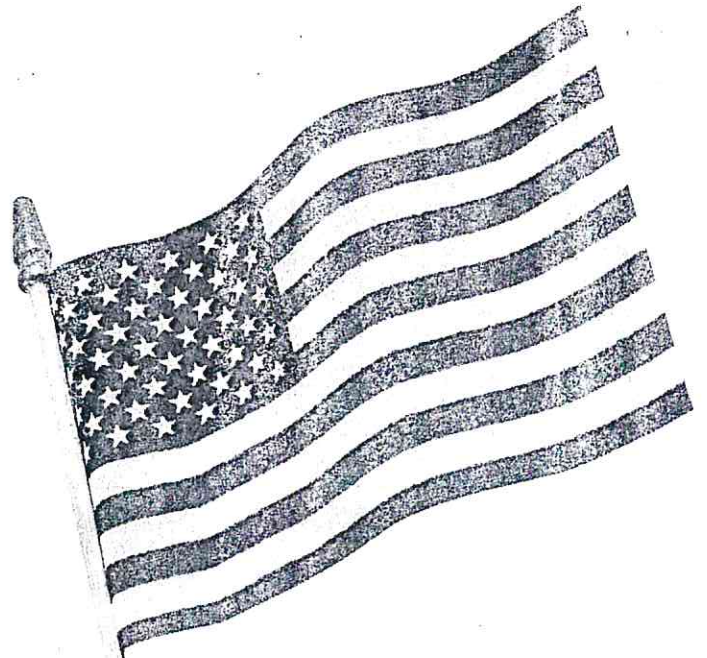
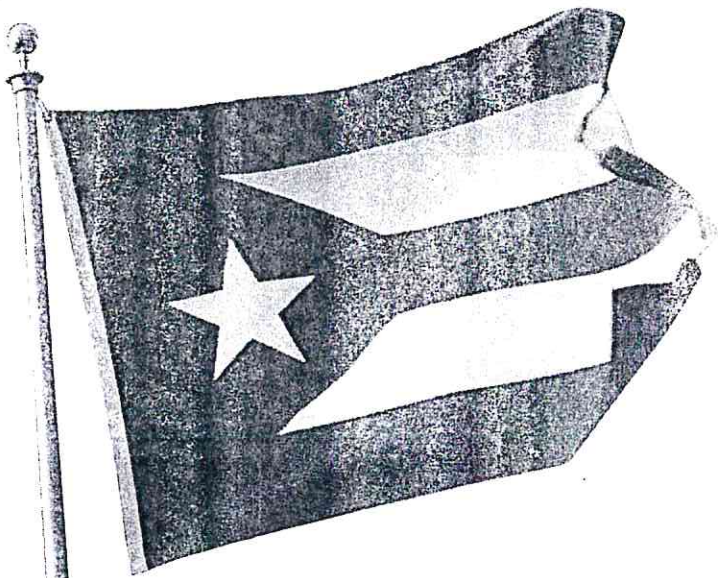


SET YOUR PURPOSE

A big debate has been taking place in Puerto Rico for many years. Read this article to find out what the debate is about.



Fortress in San Juan, Puerto Rico



Some people in Puerto Rico want to change all that. They want Puerto Rico to become a state. They also want Puerto Rican members of Congress to vote on laws. And they want to be able to vote in presidential elections.

Other people in Puerto Rico disagree. Puerto Rico is a Spanish-speaking island with its own traditions. Some Puerto Ricans fear they would lose touch with their culture if the island became a state.

Companies in Puerto Rico also disagree. They like doing business in Puerto Rico because they do not have to pay the federal income taxes imposed by the U.S. government. If they have to pay these taxes, they might leave Puerto Rico. People, not just companies, would have to pay this tax, too.

What do kids in Puerto Rico think about this debate? "Puerto Rico would be safer and cleaner if it were a state," says Sergio Palitio, 13, of San Juan. "But I don't want us to be too American. I like having our own Olympic team."

"We are part of the U.S.—but we are also our own island," says Juan Ramirez, 12. "So I feel like I'm American and Puerto Rican. But I want us to be more American."

— adapted by Julianne McNary

THINK ABOUT IT!

If you lived in Puerto Rico, which side of the debate would you be on? Why?

CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Write the letter of the best answer for each question.

- Which sentence supports the argument that Puerto Rico should become a state?
 - Puerto Ricans would lose their culture.
 - Puerto Ricans today cannot vote for the U.S. President.
 - Puerto Rico is a Spanish-speaking island.
 - Puerto Ricans would have to pay federal income tax.
- Which sentence supports the argument that Puerto Rico should remain a commonwealth?
 - People in Puerto Rico must obey U.S. laws.
 - Puerto Ricans today cannot vote to make new U.S. laws.
 - Companies in Puerto Rico today do not pay federal income tax.
 - Puerto Ricans today cannot vote for U.S. President.
- Which sentence states an opinion?
 - Puerto Rico is an island.
 - Puerto Rico is a commonwealth of the U.S.
 - Puerto Rico would be safer and cleaner if it were a state.
 - Puerto Ricans must obey U.S. laws.
- What would happen if Puerto Rico became a state?
 - Puerto Ricans would have more money.
 - Puerto Ricans would have the same rights as citizens in the 50 states.
 - Puerto Ricans would vote for the governor of Florida.
 - Fewer tourists would visit Puerto Rico.
- Why might companies leave Puerto Rico if it became a state?
 - Companies would have to pay taxes.
 - Companies would hire more workers.
 - Company cafeterias would have to serve American food only.
 - Companies would buy more computers.

VOCABULARY

Find each vocabulary word in the selection. The words and sentences around it will help you figure out its meaning.

Write the letter of the best definition of the underlined word.

- Puerto Rico is an island 1,000 miles from the coast of Florida.
 - land that is next to the sea
 - valleys
 - hills and mountains
 - sand in the desert
- Puerto Ricans do not have the same rights as citizens in the 50 states.
 - government officials
 - police officers
 - hospital workers
 - members of a country
- Some Puerto Ricans are afraid of losing touch with their own culture.
 - family and friends
 - pets
 - way of life, customs, and traditions
 - teachers
- Citizens in the 50 states pay federal income taxes.
 - relating to the post office
 - relating to the national government
 - relating to the weather
 - relating to crime
- The opposing sides are active in this debate.
 - plan made by two groups
 - discussion between sides with different views
 - worm to catch fish with
 - experiment

WORD WORK

A **possessive noun** shows ownership. To form the possessive of a singular noun, add an apostrophe and s to the noun ('s). To form the possessive of a plural noun, just add an apostrophe after the final s (s').

state	state's
company	company's
states	states'
companies	companies'

Match the word on the left with its correct possessive form on the right.

- | | | |
|---------------|-----|--------------|
| 1. citizen → | ___ | A. citizens' |
| 2. island → | ___ | B. ferries' |
| 3. citizens → | ___ | C. islands' |
| 4. ferries → | ___ | D. citizen's |
| 5. ferry → | ___ | E. ferry's |
| 6. islands → | ___ | F. island's |

Write the letter of the correct possessive form of the phrase.

7. the people that belong to Puerto Rico
 - A. Puerto Rico's people
 - B. Puerto Ricos people
 - C. Puerto Ricos' people
8. the stars that belong to the flag
 - A. the flags stars
 - B. the flags' stars
 - C. the flag's stars
9. the laws of the countries
 - A. the country laws
 - B. the countries' laws
 - C. the country's laws
10. the mayor of the city
 - A. the cities mayor
 - B. the city's mayor
 - C. the cities' mayor

WRITE NOW!

*optional

You just read about a debate taking place in Puerto Rico. What issue do you feel strongly about? Pretend you're on the air. In a 30-second radio broadcast, you must try to persuade the public to think like you do.

- Plan to write your radio broadcast. First, pick a topic you feel strongly about, and fill in a chart similar to the one shown. Support your argument with as many reasons as possible, but give at least three.
- Write your radio broadcast. Make sure it lasts only 30 seconds because radio time is expensive! Begin with an attention-grabbing sentence. Try to sound sincere and convincing!

Topic:	
What you want people to do or think:	Reasons that support your argument:
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

HOW MAHEO MADE THE WORLD

adapted from a Cheyenne myth

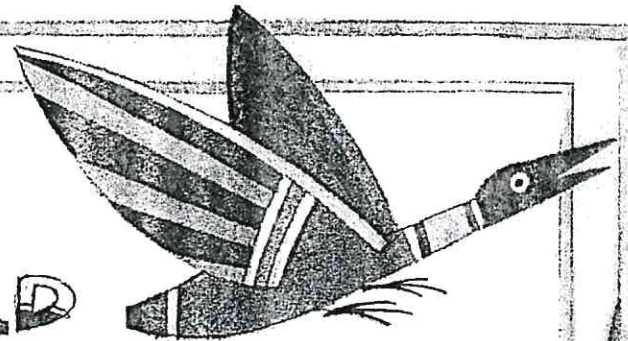
(native tribe of the Great Plains)

In the time when there was no time, as the Cheyenne people say, nothing existed except Maheo, the creator. Maheo had great power but nowhere to use it. So he decided to make a huge ocean of salty water. He made it salty because he liked the tang of it on his lips.

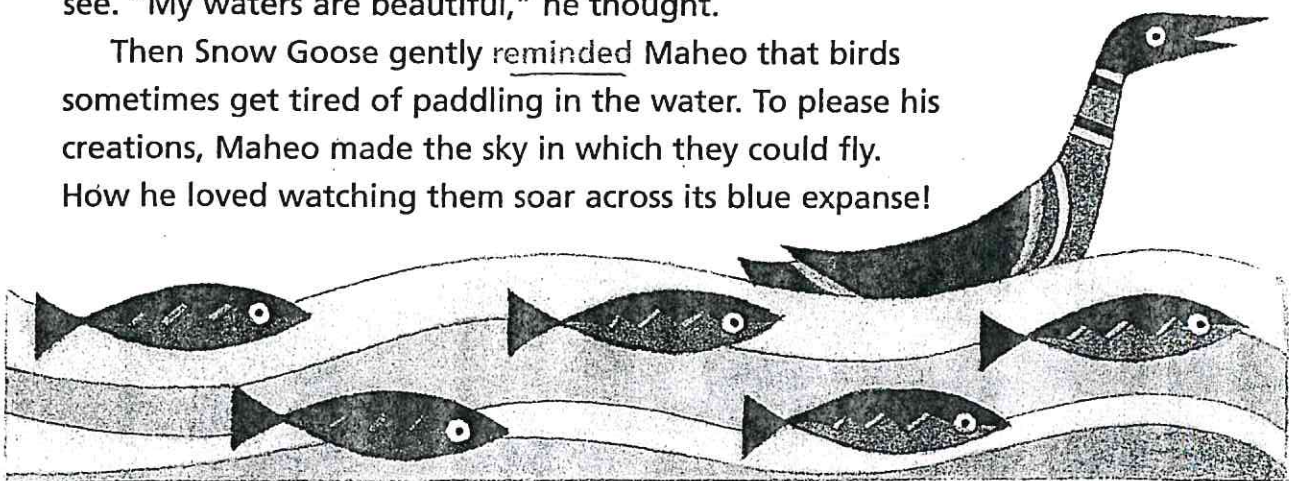
The ocean was very nice, but very empty. So, Maheo made the water beings — the fish and the snails, the mussels and crawfish. They, too, were very nice, but very quiet. Maheo wanted someone with whom he could talk. So finally, he made the water birds — the snow goose, the duck, the coot, and many others. Now he could hear their honking and splashing, but he couldn't see them.

So Maheo made himself a glorious light by which to see. "My waters are beautiful," he thought.

Then Snow Goose gently reminded Maheo that birds sometimes get tired of paddling in the water. To please his creations, Maheo made the sky in which they could fly. How he loved watching them soar across its blue expanse!



SET YOUR PURPOSE
Read to find out
how one Cheyenne myth
explains the beginning
of the world.



Then Loon said humbly, "O great Maheo, we are so grateful for all that you have done, but I fear we grow tired from paddling and flying and now need a dry, solid place to rest."

"Then," answered Maheo, "I will need your help. Someone must bring me some mud from the water's bottom, for I have used all my power to make the water, the light, the sky, and the water creatures."

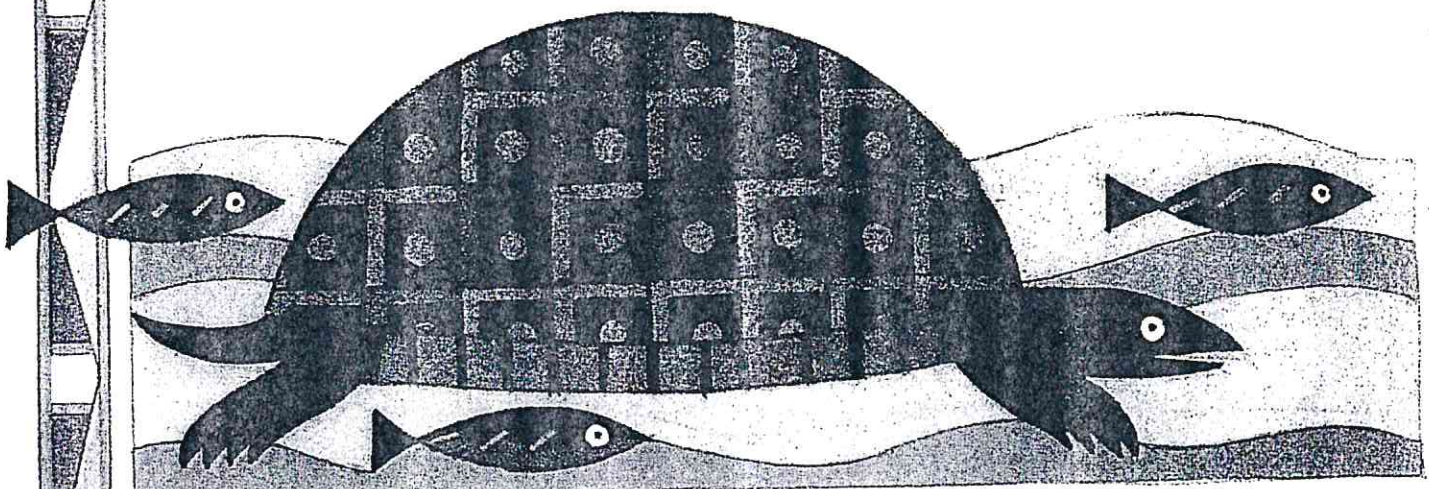
The creatures all tried. Snow Goose dove like an arrow but came up gasping. Loon tried, as did Mallard Duck, but they also failed. Then shy little Coot begged to try. Diving into the water, it swam down and down. At last it resurfaced, exhausted, a ball of mud in its tiny beak.

Maheo looked at each of the water animals and chose Grandmother Turtle to help him. Taking the mud from little Coot, Maheo spread it over Turtle's broad back until he had made a vast dry island. Today, all Grandmother Turtle's children walk very slowly, for they carry the weight of the world. And that is why the Cheyenne honor Grandmother Turtle by calling the Earth our grandmother.

— Alice Chase



THINK ABOUT IT
How does this myth compare with other legends and tales you know?



CHECK YOUR UNDERSTANDING

Write the letter of the best answer for each question.

- In this myth, who existed in "the time when there was no time"?
 - Snow Goose
 - Maheo
 - Grandmother Turtle
 - Little Coot
- When did Maheo make his great light?
 - after he made the land
 - before he made the ocean
 - after he made the birds
 - at the same time he made the water creatures
- When did the water birds ask for some land?
 - after they had laid their eggs
 - after they had grown tired from swimming and flying
 - before Maheo made his great light
 - at the same time Maheo made the sky
- Loon asked Maheo for a dry, solid place to rest because Loon —
 - thought birds would get tired of flying and paddling
 - wanted a place that he could control
 - did not want to share space with the crawfish
 - thought land is prettier than water
- The best word to describe Maheo is —
 - angry
 - annoying
 - creative
 - lonely

VOCABULARY

Find each vocabulary word in the selection. The words and sentences around it will help you figure out its meaning.

Write the letter of the best definition of the underlined word.

- Maheo made himself a glorious light by which to see.
 - green
 - tiny
 - magnificent
 - dull
- Snow Goose gently reminded Maheo that birds sometimes get tired.
 - made someone remember
 - took on a trip
 - splashed around
 - hid away
- Loon humbly asked Maheo to help them.
 - not kindly
 - not quietly
 - not foolishly
 - not proudly
- Maheo made a vast, dry island.
 - round
 - beautiful
 - very large
 - very tiny
- The Cheyenne honor Grandmother Turtle by calling the Earth our grandmother.
 - color
 - honey
 - name
 - praise

WORD WORK

Synonyms are words that have similar meanings. For example, *little* and *small* are synonyms.

Write the letter of the word that means the same as the underlined word.

- To soar is to
 - cry
 - fly
 - swim
 - sink
- Another word for grateful is
 - annoying
 - confused
 - thankful
 - expensive
- Another word for creatures is
 - oceans
 - animals
 - shadows
 - dreams
- To attempt is to
 - try
 - fight
 - arrive
 - ask
- Something that is vast is
 - unpleasant
 - proud
 - lost
 - huge

The long e vowel sound /ē/ can be spelled in several different ways. For example:

be sea flee Eve

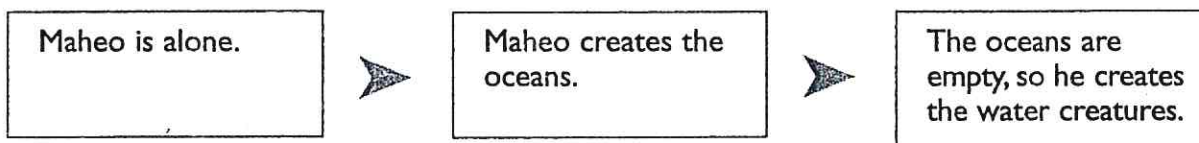
Write all the words in each sentence that have the long e sound.

- "I may be small, but I can swim deep," said little Coot.
- "We need to find land so that we can rest," said the birds.
- Grandmother Turtle is so wise, she knows all the answers.
- He took the mud from Coot's beak to make the land.
- My favorite scene in the myth is when the creator makes the sky.

WRITE NOW!

* optional

Before Maheo made the world, there was nothing. Then he made water, animals, sky, light, and land. Each action led to another. Look at the flow chart below. It shows the first few events of the story.



- Plan to write your own story about how something came to be. It could be about anything, for example, how apples came into the world. First, brainstorm some ideas by making a flow chart like the one shown.
- Using your flow chart, write your "myth." Add dialogue to make your story come alive.