Superstitions
Elementary

Historic Homes • Gardens • Artifacts • Costumed Crafts People
Boat Tours • Gift Shop • Restaurant
Standards

Standards as developed by the Louisiana Department of Education. Available online at http://www.vermilionville.org/vermilionville/educate/lesson-plans.

Grade 2
English Language Arts
- CCSS.RL.2.9: Compare and contrast the most important points presented by two texts on the same topic.
- CCSS.RL.2.2: Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.
- CCSS.SL.2.2: Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
- CCSS.ELA.2.14: Compare and contrast different versions of the same story from different culture through oral, written, and visual responses.

Grade 3
Social Studies
- GLE #49: Identify ways different cultures record their histories (e.g., oral, visual, written) (H-1A-E3)

English Language Arts
- CCSS.RL.3.2: Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.
- CCSS.RL.3.3: Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.

Objectives

1. The learner will compare and contrast the story of the Louisiana loup-garou and the common Werewolf.
2. The learner will recall characteristics revealed about both the loup-garou and Werewolf at the end of both stories with a drawing exercise.
3. The learner will identify the geographic location of each story on a map of the United States based off of descriptions in the stories.

Additional Information

The story of the loup-garou/werewolf dates back to ancient times and can be found in many cultures throughout history. The story usually involves a man or woman shapeshifting into a wolf or wolf-like beast. Others can become werewolves or loup-garous by being bitten or scratched by one. In French, loup means “wolf” and garou means “werewolf”. Loup-garou stories are told in southern Louisiana mostly as cautionary tales to children warning that misbehavior can attract a loup-garou to their doorsteps!
Pre-Visit Activity

Materials needed: Computer with internet access & access to YouTube, Projection system

Teachers. We have made two introduction documents available to you on our website – a word document as well as a PowerPoint with pictures depicting the cultures that we represent. Please take some time to review these two documents with your class prior to your visit here. You can access them here, by clicking on
- Introduction to Vermilionville
- Vermilionville PowerPoint

Students will watch a clip (2:05) from “Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein – The Wolfman Transforms” (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kr9_dJ6TPPQ) in the classroom to expose them to a comical take on the werewolf/loup-garou superstition. The teacher will then lead a discussion on what the loup-garou is, what superstitions are, and the general concepts on what makes something real or make-believe. Once students grasp the concept of superstitions, guide the students in making a list of superstitions that they are familiar with or have heard. Students’ lists will be used again during the Post-Visit Activity.

Anchor Lesson

Materials needed: Pencils, Quickdraw activity sheet, Map of the United States, Adhesive page markers (for marking places on the map).

Divide the class into two groups. For the first group, have students draw what they think the loup-garou looks like using the Quickdraw activity sheet before hearing the story. Next, tell a story about the loup-garou and have students draw what they think it looks like using details from the story. For the second group, conduct the same activity but with a werewolf story. Switch the groups or stories so that each group had heard the loup-garou story and the werewolf story. Make sure to have students include a drawing of the settings for each story in addition to the character. For example, did the story occur near the ocean or in the mountains? In the swamp or on the plains?

Once the activity is completed, volunteer students to locate on the United States map where each story took place based off of the clues given throughout the story. After, discuss with the class why those clues suggested the locations on the map.

Lead a discussion comparing and contrasting elements of the two stories. What is different in your before and after drawing? What did you add or take away from the character after hearing the story? How do you know the stories were superstitions? How do you explain the mayor being in the cage at the end of the werewolf story?

Loup-garou story: Collected by Pat Mire and Maida Owens on September 20, 1993.

Okay, this is a story I first heard when I must have been nine, ten years old. I remember the moment on the porch at my parents' house, and my parrain, my godfather -- who was also an uncle -- was the one who told it. But definitely he had heard it passed in his family.

And it was about days back, ooh, back even before the depression, and they were all oyster fishermen, because the family had been oyster fishermen for generations. And they would fish the oysters with big tongs . . . like ice tongs. And they'd tong them into the boat. But that was only half the battle, because they'd be all grown together in clusters, and you had to break them up with a hatchet into single oysters, because that's the way they were sold. Which was a lot of work. And at night, the boats would all tie up together, and they'd stay in their fishing camp, this palmetto camp they had built and tell stories and pass the time and go to bed and slap the
mosquitoes.

And it started happening that they'd come out in the morning and the oysters would be separated, and they'd be culled into singles for them. But also, half of them would be eaten. So you had a good thing -- a lot of your work would be gone. But you'd had a bad thing that the oysters would be eaten. And course, it scared them. They didn't know who was doing this. They could tell no other boats had come. There was no other house for miles around. It was open water. And one of the young men who was braver than most said he was going to stay on the boat and find out who or what was doing it.

Well, he stayed, but he didn't quite make it through the whole night, because somewhere in the middle of the night -- everybody had been waiting up, trying to see what would happen, but one by one they fell asleep. In the middle of the night they heard screaming, and he came running down the dock into the camp and just was frantic and could hardly explain what he had seen--this creature that was huge and hairy and moved very quickly. But that was the end of it. After that whatever it was stopped appearing on the boats, stopped breaking them into singles, stopped eating half of them.

Of course it was the end of it for everybody else, but the one brave guy -- who started telling the others that whenever he was alone, this creature would come to him. It would sit on his shoulders with featherweight touch. And he'd lie on his bed and if he was in a house alone, he was alone in the bedroom -- it would rest on the bed head. Never hurt him, but frightened him, because it haunted him. And time went on and people -- I mean nobody really believed his stories, and more and more, they kind of avoided him, because he was obsessed with this thing. And he had been engaged to be married, and his fiancée -- elle a cassée la paille [she broke it off] -- you know, she didn't want anything to do with him. And he grew older and the young kids used to follow him around and sing songs after him to taunt him, because everybody thought he was a little nuts. And he talked to himself -- or so they thought -- because actually he was talking to the loup garou -- the creature -- which never answered but sure seemed to listen real well.

And again, as time went on, he grew older until finally he became an old man and had to walk with a cane. And he'd still go and meet all the oyster boats when they'd come in, walking on those shells with that cane. The end of the cane would get kind of sharp. And one day, he fell. And that sharpened end of the cane went up and cut the loup garou and -- if you know about the loups garoux, you know that one way to get rid of them -- probably the only way to get rid of them -- is to draw blood. And when he cut it, and it drew blood, that was the end.

And the old man realized he had just lost the only friend he had ever had. After spending years trying to get rid of the thing, he had gotten so used to it that nobody else would have anything to do with him, that it became his only friend and now -- click -- by accident he had killed his friend. And he suffered in loneliness for a while and then he died himself.

Werewolf story:

Once upon a time there was a mayor of a small village in the Appalachian Mountains. One day, he decided that he wanted to take a long, scenic hike. He packed up his backpack and started into the mountains along a bending creek. On the first night, the man heard a rumbling in the forest behind his tent. Concerned for the safety of his village, the mayor stepped into the forest to see just what was making the peculiar sound. Slowly, the mayor walked deeper and deeper into the woods until his campfire could no longer be seen. Just then, he was attacked by a ferocious wolf! The wolf was tearing at his limbs, and ripping at his skin. The man was almost dead. The wolf tore at his shirt right by his neck and yelped. The sight of the silver pendent around his neck deterred the wolf and it ran away into the darkness. The man, wasting no time, limped back home where he thought he would surely die. The people of his town came and brought him food and water. They kept a vigil by his bedside thinking it was the end, but somehow he managed to get better. The mayor told the villagers about the wild wolf that attacked him in the forest and warned them to be careful, that they may be in danger!
A few weeks passed and everything seemed to be getting better. There were no wolf sightings and the town was calm... until one night. Everybody went to sleep thinking it was going to be any ole night, but when they awoke there was a man dead in the middle of the center of that small mountain village. This started happening every full moon. The townspeople didn't know what to do. In a panic, the village called a meeting to decide what could be done. One man stood up and said “Why don't we trap it? We can put a cage in the middle of the village where he's been leaving his victims”. Little Emma offered herself to be the bait. So, the villagers waited until the next full moon came. The whole village watched the moon every night, waiting to set their trap. Finally, the next full moon came and little Emma, brave, was ready with the cage to trap the beast. Everyone went to bed with hopes that they would awake to find their assailant. The next morning, the villagers shot out of bed and hurried to the village square to see what had been trapped. When they arrived, they were awestruck and puzzled as they stood looking at the mayor sitting in the cage.

Post-Visit Activity

Using the lists of superstitious beings created in the Pre-Visit Activity, have students choose a character and research the story connected to the character. The student will create their own version of the story and use Louisiana as the setting. Once students have written their stories, have them share with the class.

Evaluation

The students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of what a superstition is, how the geographical setting affects the story, and how the stories are both alike and different through class discussion and the Quickdraw activity.

Differentiation of Instruction

Students who finish the Post-Visit Activity may create a loup-garou story of their own involving their town and people they know.

Students who have difficulty writing may illustrate their stories in a comic form.

Kinesthetic learners will benefit with the Quickdrawn activity and locating areas on the map.

Students with hearing disabilities can be placed in the front row to better hear the story being told.
Loup-garou Quickdraw Activity Sheet
Directions: Draw what you think the loup-garou looks like in its natural setting based on the story you’ve just heard.

BEFORE

AFTER
Werewolf Quickdraw Activity Sheet

Directions: Draw what you think the werewolf looks like in its natural setting based on the story you’ve just heard.

BEFORE

AFTER