



Language Arts

A **Myth** is a story that tells about the belief of a group of people. Myths often tell about gods and heroes. Sometimes they explain something that happens in nature.



Literary Elements

Symbolism is the use of concrete objects to represent abstract ideas or qualities.

Figurative Language, such as simile and metaphor, uses imaginative language to describe objects, places, or people.

Mountain of **FIRE!**

A Native American Myth

retold by Grace Armstrong

Long ago when the world was new, there was one land and one people. All lived together by the great river in peace, worked well, and were happy.

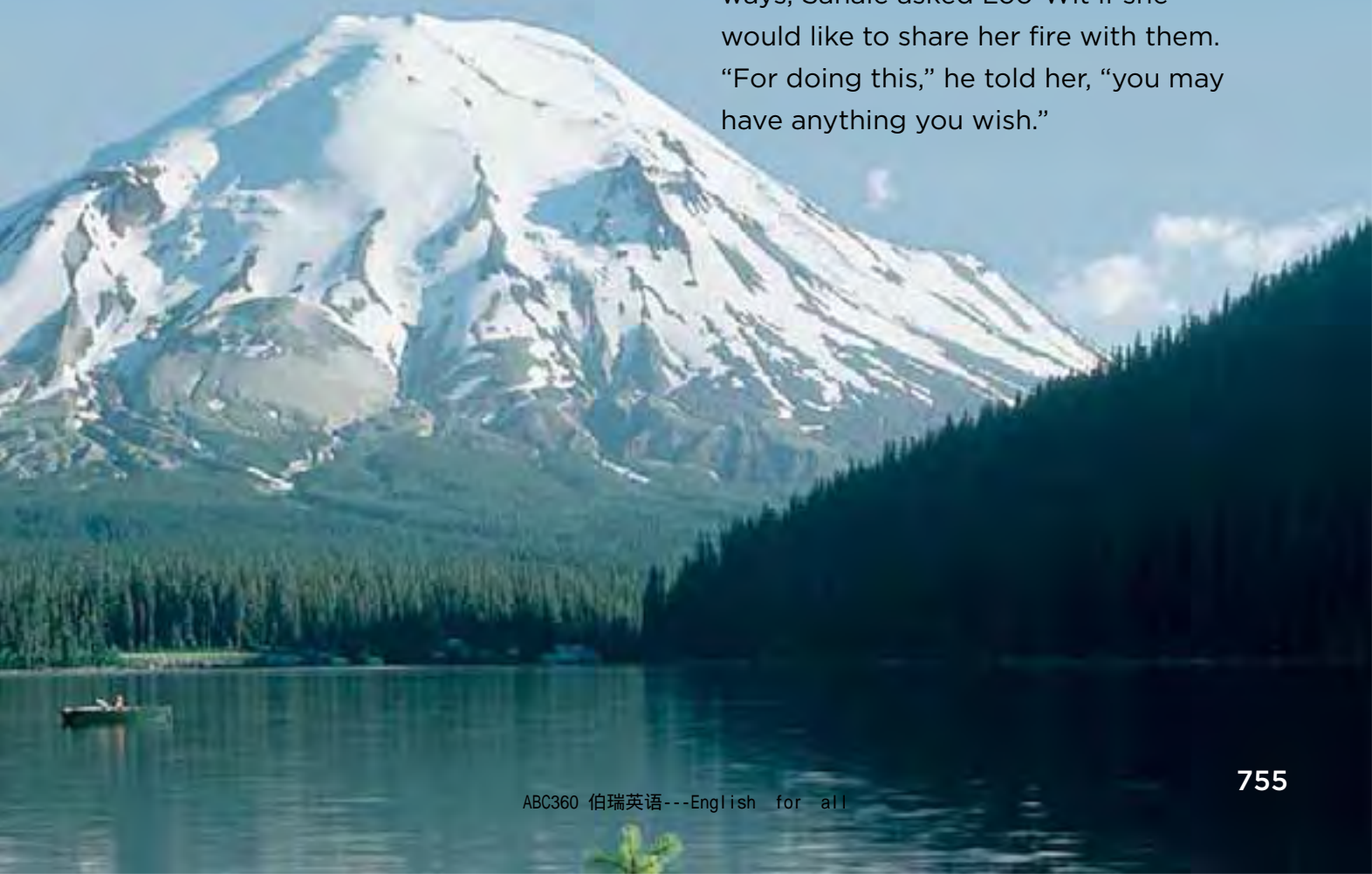
Into this world were born two brothers who grew up quarreling. They argued over who was stronger and who had better land to work. Soon all the people had taken sides. The Great Spirit, Sahale, saw this quarreling and decided to end it.

This simile, comparing the voice to thunder, is an example of figurative language.

↓ In a voice like low, rumbling thunder, Sahale called the brothers together and gave each one an arrow for his bow. He said, "Wherever your arrow falls, that will be your land, and there you will be a chief." The first brother shot his arrow high in the air, and it landed to the south of the great river. He went there with his people, and they became known as the Multnomahs. The second brother shot his arrow into the air and it landed north of the river. There he went with his people, who became known as the Klickitats.

The brothers lived with their people in peace for some time. As time passed though, envy began to cause quarrels. "The Klickitats have better land," some said. "The Multnomahs have more beautiful land," others cried. Sahale heard this bickering that seemed to grow like a storm and was unhappy with the two tribes. When violence threatened, Sahale stopped it by taking away all fire, even the sun, just as the autumn winds, cold, and snow were beginning.

Only one in all the land still had fire. She was Loo-Wit, an old, wrinkled woman with gray hair and quiet ways. She had stayed apart from all the quarrels. After the people had suffered and seemed to have mended their ways, Sahale asked Loo-Wit if she would like to share her fire with them. "For doing this," he told her, "you may have anything you wish."





“I wish to be young and beautiful,” she said.

“Then that is what you will be,” Sahale said.


Sahale led Loo-Wit to a great stone bridge over the river that joined the two lands. The people arrived at the bridge, led by their chiefs, to find the most beautiful woman they had ever seen. She began to give them fire. Loo-Wit kept the fire burning all day until fire was restored to all the people.

This was not to be the end of the quarreling. During this day the two chiefs had both fallen in love

with Loo-Wit and wanted her for a wife. Loo-Wit could not choose between them, and once again, fighting erupted.

The two brothers refused to compromise or work on a solution. Because the brothers were unyielding in their positions, Sahale angrily changed the brothers into mountains. The chief of the Klickitats was turned into the mountain known today as Mount Adams. The chief of the Multnomahs was turned into the mountain known today as Mount Hood.

The use of the mountains, which are rock hard and immovable, represents the brothers' stubbornness and is an example of *symbolism*.



Loo-Wit, her heart broken over this, lost her desire to be young and beautiful. Sahale, in his pity, also changed her into a mountain, and placed her between the two brother mountains. She was allowed to keep inside her the fire she had shared with the people.

Because Loo-Wit was beautiful, her mountain was a beautiful cone of

dazzling white. Today she is known as Mount St. Helens.

Loo-Wit wants to remind humans to care for Earth and for each other. When she is unhappy, she will awaken as she did in the 1980s.

Once her anger passes, though, the ground heals and plant and animal life have a chance to flourish once again.



Connect and Compare



1. What do you think of Sahale's decision to turn the quarreling brothers into mountains? What do mountains symbolize? **Symbolism**
2. What elements make this a myth? What would you choose to write a myth about? **Evaluate**
3. Compare the ways in which the narrator of "Mountain of Fire" and the scientists of *Hidden Worlds* view the eruption of Mount St. Helens. What is the value of having different versions of events? **Reading/Writing Across Texts**



Find out more about myths at www.macmillanmh.com

Write About Solving a Problem

Writer's Craft

Beginning, Middle, and End

Using a good **beginning, middle, and end** makes an essay about problem solving easy for readers to understand. State the problem in the beginning, and explain the solution in the middle and end.

The Problem of Hole #13

by Mary A.

I explained my problem to readers at the beginning of my essay.

My three best friends and I play miniature golf every Friday night. Hole #13 is an annoying problem for me. Every time, it takes me ten frustrating strokes to finish Hole #13.

I explained my solution with a good middle and end.

My dad suggested I attack the problem in a scientific way. He said I should do research, make observations, and experiment to solve my problem.

First, I did some research. I went to the library and found a book that showed me a better way to putt. Next, I made careful observations. I studied the technique my friends used as they played Hole #13. I saw how they aimed the first shot so that the ball skipped a few inches from the hole. Finally, I experimented on my own and practiced for hours. The next Friday night I used what I had learned. It worked! I improved my score and the problem of Hole #13 was solved.

Your Turn

What problem have you recently solved for yourself? Write an essay that explains the problem and the steps you took to solve it. Remember to describe the steps using a good beginning, middle, and end. Use the writer's checklist to check your writing.



Writer's Checklist

- Ideas and Content:** Did I describe a problem that I solved on my own?
- Organization:** Did I present the steps I took to solve the problem using a good **beginning, middle, and end**?
- Voice:** Can the reader tell that I worked hard to solve the problem and that I feel proud of my efforts?
- Word Choice:** Did I use clear, precise words to help the reader understand my solution?
- Sentence Fluency:** Did I combine some ideas to create longer, more interesting sentences?
- Conventions:** Is my essay punctuated correctly?
Did I check my spelling?