

Florence Holbrook's  
*The Book of Nature  
Myths*



A Reading Guide by Lisa Kelly

This guide accompanies *selected* myths from *The Book of Nature Myths* by Florence Holbrook.



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## Author's Note

Literary Elements and Literary Techniques are incorporated as they best illustrate them based on the book itself. In other words, I do not predetermine which terms and elements I will include in advance, aside from being aware of the age range for which the guide is designed. The best introduction to them occurs when they are presented by the book itself. I then try to bring them forward as they appear.

Ideally, I will create guides for most every book and poem included in this entire curriculum. This will provide the balance needed to provide full coverage of literary elements and techniques. While this guide may introduce one or two specific terms, another guide may introduce a few different ones. There may also be some repetition, which of course offers review and repeated exposure.

I don't wish for literature to be analyzed to the point of destroying a child's natural interest in how an author creates it, especially in the younger years. This is why I emphasize that each teacher should introduce the elements and techniques as best fits each student and situation.

## Myths

A myth, according to Merriam-Webster, is "a story often describing the adventures of beings with more than human powers that attempts to explain mysterious events or that explains a religious belief or practice".

Here are some types of characters you might meet in a myth:

- Heroes
- Heroines
- Tricksters
- Mythical Creatures or Monsters

# Lesson Notes

1. “Connection” questions and prompts were written to bridge the gap between chapter readings. They were designed to bring forth what students already know about a topic so that the new information can be connected to it.
2. Have students define the words listed under “Words to Know” either independently or together orally with the teacher. Teachers and students should locate any listed places, read and discuss any notes included at the beginning of each lesson and discuss the pronunciation of any words, as needed.
3. Students should either have the book read aloud to them or should read each chapter (or reading section) together with the teacher or should read the book independently, whichever best fits.
4. After reading, students should narrate. There are multiple narration suggestions for each chapter.
5. Any lessons in literary terms can be included or omitted as it best fits the needs of your students.

## Literary Elements and Literary Techniques

- myths
- mood
- simile
- personification

# Exam Prompts

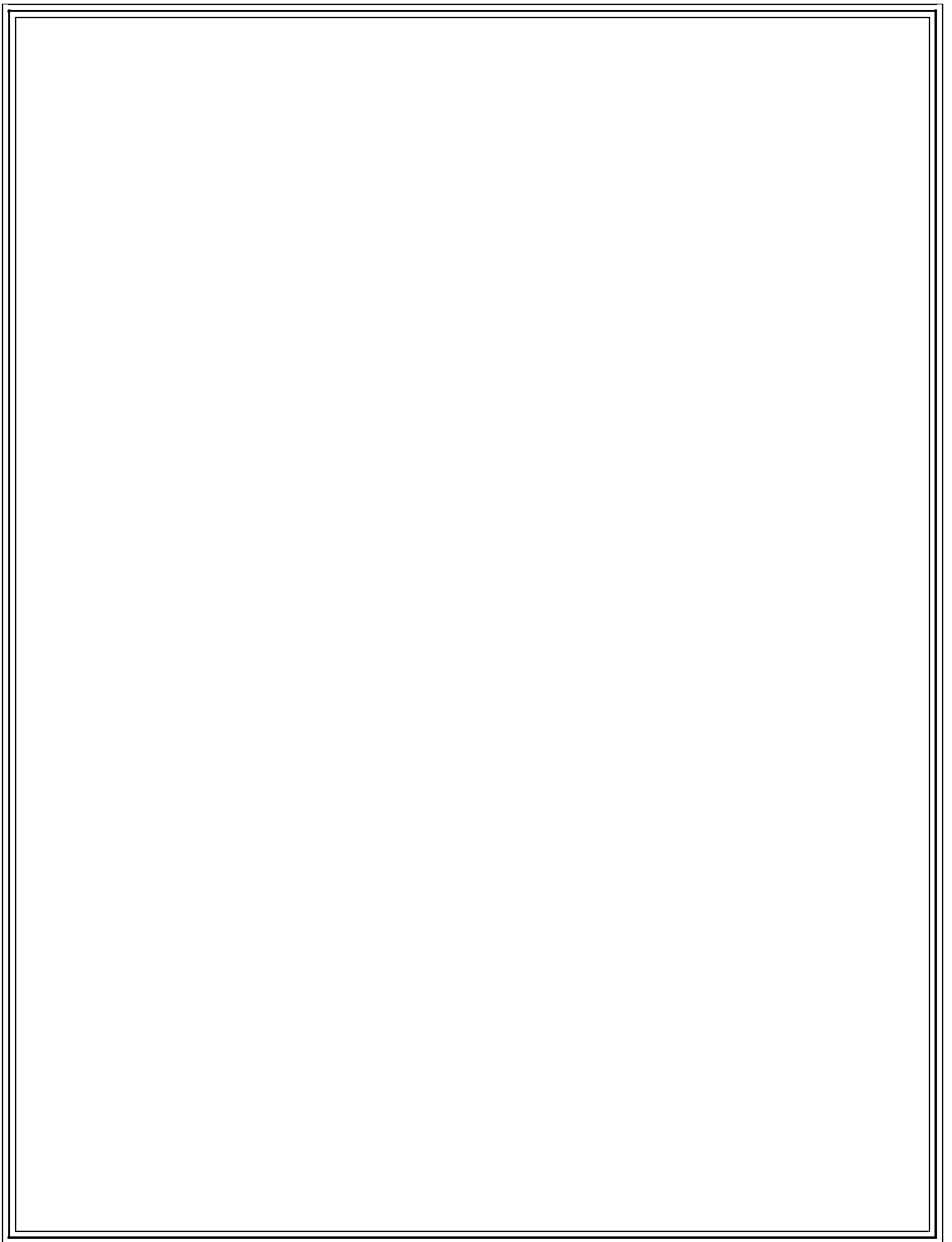
- Describe a memorable scene. What made this scene memorable?
- Draw a picture of your favorite scene from this book. Give your picture a title or caption and share it with someone, telling about that scene.

There are more exam prompts in the guide. This is a sample only.

# Reading Schedule

Reading #	Page Numbers	Titles
1	8-10	The Story of the First Butterflies
2	25-27	Why the Magpie's Nest is Not Well Built
3	43-46	Why the Parrot Repeats the Words of Men

There are 22 readings in the guide. This is a sample only.





## Nature Myths –Reading 1

- \* Complete Reading 1 (pp. 8-10) –  
“The Story of the First Butterflies”  
from *The Book of Nature Myths*.



### Before the Reading

- Connection: Share what you know of a butterfly. Sketch one on the board.
- Review the characteristics of a myth [see notes below].
- Note: Please be aware that only selections are used from this book, therefore some stories are omitted.

### Literary Elements

A **myth**, according to Merriam-Webster, is “a story often describing the adventures of beings with more than human powers that attempts to explain mysterious events or that explains a religious belief or practice”.

Here are some types of characters you might meet in a myth:

- heroes
- heroines
- tricksters
- mythical creatures or monsters

What is the title of this book? What types of characters do you think that you might meet in this book? Have you read other books with myths? Tell about one of them.

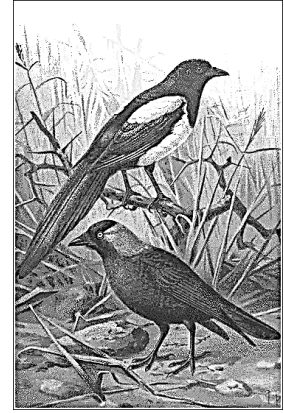
### After the Reading

#### Narration Suggestions –Choose One

- Tell the story of the first butterflies.
- Divide a sheet of paper into quarters [4 sections] and illustrate one scene each in a section: a) forest, b) prairie, c) sea and d) mountain. Share your picture, telling about it.
- Draw a picture of any scene from this story. Give your picture a title or caption and share it with someone, telling of the scene depicted.
- “So it was that the butterflies came from a beautiful thought...” (10). What is meant by this?

## Nature Myths –Reading 2

- \* Complete Reading 2 (pp. 25-27) –“Why the Magpie’s Nest is Not Well Built” from *The Book of Nature Myths*.



### Before the Reading

- Connection: Why were butterflies created, according to the previous story? Share what you know of the magpie? [Magpies are relatives of the crow and the jay.]
- Word to Know: wigwam
- Present an image of a magpie’s nest, if possible.
- Note: For clarification, magpies’ nests are not necessarily poorly built, but perhaps appear a bit sloppily built. Remind students that these are myths.

### After the Reading

#### Narration Suggestions –Choose One

- Tell why the nest of the magpie is not well built.
- Should the magpie have tried to build a nest? What will become of the magpie’s children?
- Draw a picture of any scene from this story. Give your picture a title or caption and share it with someone, telling of the scene depicted.
- Drawing a picture illustrating various birds [such as a robin, owl, humming-bird, swallow, etc.] and their nests. Share your picture, telling of it.
- “We will build nests so that our little ones will be warm” (25). Tell of this.



## *Nature Myths* –Reading 3

- \* Complete Reading 3 (pp. 43-46) –“Why the Parrot Repeats the Words of Men” from *The Book of Nature Myths*.

### Before the Reading

- Connection: Tell of the magpie and its nest. Have you ever seen a parrot? Tell of this. Point to the parrot in the picture on this page.

### After the Reading

#### Narration Suggestions –Choose One

- Explain why the parrot repeats the words of man.
- Should the man have lied about the ox?
- “... and I will never again be punished for telling the truth. I will only repeat the words of others” (46). What is meant by this? Should the parrot be punished for telling the truth?
- Act out any scene using models.
- Retell this story comic-strip style.

