

Study Guide

Time of the Eagle ***A Story of an Ojibwe Winter***

by Stephanie Golightly Lowden
(Blue Horse Books, 2004)

Welcome! This Teacher’s Guide includes a Reading & Comprehension section, with questions and comments to help young readers better understand the story of Autumn and Coyote Boy’s winter journey.

It also offers ideas for class activities and study projects, along with ideas for field trips, classroom visits, and further resources.

Please note: this is a draft version, in progress! Feel free to email any ideas or comments to Philip Martin, editor, at info@bluehorsebooks.org.

CONTENTS OF STUDY GUIDE

- Reading and Comprehension • p. 2
 - Introduction: A story of a journey • p. 2
 - Class Activity: Create a “Story Map”* • p. 2
 - Discussing the Characters • p. 3
 - Discussing the Story Events • p. 3
 - Writing Project: What comes next?* • p. 4
 - Discussing the Themes • p. 4
- Social Studies: Ojibwa History & Culture • p. 5
 - Class Activity: Plan a Journey (What 5 Things to Take?)* • p. 5
 - Study Project: Ojibwe Relationships to Animals* • p. 5
 - Class Activity: Word Scramble (Ojibwe months of the year)* • p. 6
 - Study Project: Map Study* • p. 6
- Field Trip Opportunities • p. 7
- Classroom Visits by Individuals of Native Heritage • p. 8
- Classroom Visits by the Author • p. 8
- Other Recommended Reading • p. 8
- Website Resources • p. 9
- Two Traditional Stories, by Anne Dunn • p. 10

Reading and Comprehension

Introduction: A story of a journey

Time of the Eagle is

- a survival story (young castaways face a challenging environment)
- a coming-of-age story (Autumn grows up as she travels and learns about herself as well as the world)
- a story of sibling affection (Autumn's relationship with her little brother is a central theme)

A journey (or quest of some sort) is often at the heart of the best-loved stories. Frequently, the person making the journey is young and not fully prepared for such a journey. Along the way, often mistakes are made and important lessons are learned. And the character grows.

Time of the Eagle is about a remarkable journey. Surely Autumn Dawn Shines on Leaf is better prepared than most 13-year-olds today. As a young Ojibwe girl of the 1700s, when she must flee her village due to a smallpox outbreak, Autumn would already be familiar with how to travel on foot and by canoe through the woods, how to identify edible plants, and how to catch small animals.

Still she is young and not accustomed to being on her own. Traveling with only her 6-year-old brother as a companion through a northwoods winter landscape is a serious challenge, even for her.

Class Activity: Create a "Story Map"

Create a big "story map" on a large piece of paper (or using a series of smaller sheets of paper). The goal is to create a visual map of the story, depicting important places and story elements that trace Autumn's journey from the beginning to the end of the story.

Perhaps divided up into small groups, the students can start by making a list of the main scenes in order, then selecting which scenes they will draw. Then, each group can discuss its assigned scene and draw a picture to represent its main features: lodges or shelters, natural features like rivers, items encountered like the canoe, and so on.

If drawn on separate sheets of paper, the individual pictures can be put in order, perhaps with a piece of yarn to suggest a path from one to the next, to illustrate Autumn Dawn's and Coyote Boy's story.

Discussing the Characters

Autumn

How is Autumn's life changed by her journey? Does the journey cause her to question herself along the way? How does she make the decisions she does?

Coyote Boy

How does Coyote Boy's presence influence Autumn's decisions? Would she have made different choices if she had been alone?

Eagle

What kind of a character is Eagle? How does he influence Autumn and the choices she must make along the way?

Other Characters

Do you think the winter weather or the woods could be considered a character? Why or why not?

Discussing the Story Events

1. Where does the story take place? How does the author establish a sense of the place? Do you feel as if you can see, hear, and smell the woods? Give some examples.
2. How do you think living with her family differed from Autumn's journey with her brother?
3. What does Autumn think the first time she sees the eagle? What does she do?
4. What does she decide to do when she finds her aunt dead? What helped her make that decision?
5. How does the weather affect the decisions Autumn must make?
6. Autumn decides to hunt a deer. Why? Why is this such a challenge for her?
7. Autumn has two dreams in which Coyote Boy dies. How do these dreams affect the choices she makes?
8. Several times Autumn is forced to move on when she doesn't want to. Why does she finally decide to move?
9. Coyote Boy is injured. How does this event affect their journey?

Discussing the Story Events (cont.)

10. Why does Autumn fear the French fur traders and the *Bwaan* (Eastern Sioux)? What does she do about her fears?

11. When she is found by Little Wolf, why does he tell her that *she* saved *him*?

12. At the end of the novel, why does she tell Coyote Boy that they are *home*? What do you think will happen next?

Writing Project: What comes next?

Write the next chapter of Autumn's story. What comes next as she and Coyote Boy begin life in a new village?

Discussing the Themes

1. What is the purpose of the eagle in this story? Why do you think the author chose an eagle rather than some other animal?

2. Discuss the use of dreams and visions in this story. How do they contribute to your understanding of the story? What elements can be presented in a dream or vision that cannot be seen or told in an ordinary real-life story?

3. The theme of cultures coming into contact with each other weaves its way throughout this book. What are some examples from the story? Do you think the episodes are good, bad, or a mix for Autumn and her brother? Why?

4. Autumn tells or sings several traditional stories. Why? How does she use them?

5. Discuss the importance of a journey. Can you think of other stories in which there was a quest or a journey?

6. Have you ever found yourself on an important journey? Do you think you ever will — or is that just something people did a long time ago?

Social Studies: Ojibwa History & Culture

Class Activity: Plan a Journey (What 5 Things to Take?)

Divide class into small groups. Each group can come up with a list of the five most important things to take on this journey:

A three-day journey on foot in the 1700s.

You are a Native American engaged in the fur trade. You wish to travel to the nearest fur-trade post, many miles away. You will have to spend at least two nights in the woods. What five things would you take? Keep in mind what is available from your home — and what will be available in the woods.

Have the students compare their lists and discuss why they chose what they did.

Resource

An excellent resource can be found at the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife website. This is a conservation organization for tribes in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota, with links to individual tribal websites. It offers a downloadable PDF publication called *Ojibwe Treaty Rights: Understanding & Impact*, a 38-page booklet aimed for students in 4th to 8th grades. This booklet provides a background of Ojibwe history and culture. It also includes traditional stories and legends told by tribal elders, activities, pictures, games, and other excellent materials, plus information about treaty rights and hunting and fishing.

Additional printed copies can be ordered via the website for only \$2.00 apiece. The website is: <http://www.glifwc.org>, click on Publications, then Ojibwe Treaty Rights: Understanding & Impact.

Study Project: Ojibwe Relationships to Animals

Investigate the importance of the eagle and other animals to the Ojibwe or other Indian peoples. Animals appear in many different connections and uses — in art and ceremonies, in practical form in food, clothing, shelter, and more. How many ways can students find that native peoples connected with animals that lived in their area:

- in practical ways? (for food, clothing, shelter, tools, etc.)
- in ceremonial ways? (in dance ceremonies, as decorative depictions, and so on)
- in entertainment and educational ways (as characters in stories, for example)?
- as “neighbors” to be respected and treated fairly (as fellow living creatures who share the same natural environment?)

Class Activity: Word Scramble (Ojibwe months of the year)

Scramble the order, then have students try to re-match the Ojibwe months (given here in English) with the January–December names brought to America by the Europeans. (The following guide was taken from “On Turtle Island is a Place Called Wa-swa-gon,” published by the Chippewa Museum and Cultural Center of Lac du Flambeau. The names of the months vary slightly from source to source.)

Afterwards, discuss what kind of knowledge is seen in the names (practical, spiritual, poetic).

January	Great Spirit Moon
February	Sucker Fish Moon
March	Crust on the Snow Moon
April	Boiling of Maple Sap Moon
May	Flowering Moon
June	Strawberry Moon
July	Midsummer Moon
August	Blueberry Moon
September	Wild Rice Moon
October	Falling Leaves Moon
November	Freezing Moon
December	Spirit Moon

Study Project: Map Study

Get a historic map of the Indian lands and see how they’ve changed over time. In what way have they changed? Why?

Map Resource

The September 2004 issue of *National Geographic* includes a large map titled “North American Indian Cultures.” It shows the location of native tribes at the time of the arrival of Europeans on the continent.

Map Resource

A 192-page book of resources for teaching about native issues in the classroom, titled *Rethinking Columbus: The Next 500 Years*, was published in 1998 by the quarterly journal *Rethinking Schools*. The edition includes a map of what is today the territory of the U.S. in the years 1492, 1790 1830, and 1890, documenting the tremendous loss of Indian lands to a tiny fraction of their original spread across the continent. Copies can be ordered for just \$8.00 apiece from Rethinking Schools (www.rethinkingschools.org), with quantity discounts available.

Field Trip Opportunities

You might consider a field trip to one of these educational and cultural sites open to the public.

Wa-swa-goning Ojibwe Village

This is a recreated Ojibwe village on the Lac du Flambeau reservation, run by Ojibwe educator Nick Hockings. Tour and programs; tipis available for overnight group stays, May-Sept. Tel: 715-588-2615. <http://www.waswagoning.com>.

George W. Brown Jr. Ojibwe Museum & Cultural Center

Located in downtown Lac du Flambeau, Wisconsin. Tel: 715-588-3333. <http://www.studiots.com/ojibwemuseum>

Folle Avoine Historical Park

Located near Webster, Wis. Presents the rich heritage of the fur-trade region and heritage of St. Croix Chippewa of northwestern Wisconsin. Costumed interpreters greet visitors in an Ojibwe village and four traders' cabins (from the 1802-1804 winter of the North West and XY Fur Trade Companies). Special programs and demonstrations, plus a reenacted fur-trade rendezvous (4th weekend in July). Open Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Take Hwy 35 north 4 miles from Webster to Cty U, turn west on Cty U and go 2.5 miles. Tel: 715-866-8890. Email: fahp@centurytel.net

Forest County Potawatomi Cultural Center and Museum

Located in Crandon, Wis., on Hwy 8. Tel: 715-478-7474

Oneida Nation Museum

Located in Oneida, Wis., 7 miles west of Green Bay, WI on Cty. EE (One block west from the corner of E & EE). Tel: 920-869-2768.

Winnebago Indian Museum

5 mi. north of Wisconsin Dells, at junction of River Rd. & Hwy 13. Open summers. Tel: (608) 254-2268. School trips by appointment, call (608) 253-7777

Arvid W. Miller Memorial Library and Museum

Stockbridge/Munsee. N8510 Mo-He-Con-Nuck Rd., Bowler, WI.

Classroom Visits by Individuals of Native Heritage

You may wish to consider a way to invite a person of Native ancestry to your classroom to speak to your students. If your budget is limited, you might wish to look for a speaker who is a student at a local college. Many colleges have American Indian student services; they may be able to help you find a student willing to visit your school for a small fee and expenses.

For information on traditional artists who offer school programs, contact:
Wisconsin Folks, c/o Wisconsin Arts Board
Anne Pryor, 608-266-8106
101 E. Wilson Street, 1st Floor, Madison, Wisconsin 53702
<http://arts.state.wi.us/static/folkdir/index.htm>
email: anne.pryor@arts.state.wi.us

Classroom Visits by the Author

Stephanie Golightly Lowden, the author of *Time of the Eagle*, offers a variety of classroom and other programs. She will tailor her presentation to your needs. The subject content can vary from teaching children how to become better writers to discussing the history of the fur trade and the story of *Time of the Eagle*.

She can be reached at her author's website: <http://my.execpc.com/~lowdenkr/>, or via Blue Horse Books (414-294-4319), www.bluehorsebooks.org.

Other Recommended Reading

Native People of Wisconsin, by Patty Loew (Madison, Wis.: State Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2003). Introduces students to the tribal traditions, history, and life today of the twelve Indian nations that live in Wisconsin, including the Ojibwe. Loew is a member of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe.

The Sacred Harvest: Ojibway Wild Rice Gathering, by Gordon Regguinti, with photos by Dale Kakkak (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 1992). An 11-year-old Ojibway boy learns how to become a wild ricer with the help of his grandfather. Takes place in modern-day Minnesota.

Shannon, An Ojibway Dancer, by Sandra King, photos by Catherine Whipple (Minneapolis: Lerner Publications, 2001). Shannon is a modern 13-year-old Ojibway girl who lives in Minneapolis and dances as a fancy shawl dancer at powwows across Minnesota.

The Ojibwe, text and photos by Raymond Bial (Benchmark Books, 2000). Modern and historical photographs of people engaged in everyday tasks; includes section of resources, including print materials, websites, and tribal organizations.

The Good Path: Ojibwe Learning and Activity Book for Kids, by Thomas Peacock, photos by Marlene Wisuri (Afton, Minn.: Afton Historical Society Press, 2002). Presents traditional tales and a history of the Ojibwe, with discussion of timeless values.

The Birchbark House, by Louise Erdrich (Hyperion, 1999). A beautiful novel, for ages 9-12, of four seasons in 1847 as seen through the eyes of a 7-year-old girl, Omakayas, or Little Frog, on Lake Superior's Madeline Island, including a winter when an outbreak of smallpox hits the island.

Native American Stories, by Joseph Bruchac, illustrated by John Kahionhes Fadden (Golden, Colo.: Fulcrum Publishing, 1991). This book contains stories from several different native traditions, including Anishinaabe. (Includes "How Fisher Went to the Skyland.")

The Mishomis Book: The Voice of the Ojibway, by Edward Benton-Banai, illustrated by Joe Liles (St. Paul, Minn.: Red School House, 1988). A cultural and historical account of the Anishinaabe. Benton-Banai is a Wisconsin Ojibway of the Fish Clan and a Spiritual Teacher of the Lac Court Orielles Band.

Website Resources

<http://www.millelacsojibwe.org>

Link with Mille Lac band website, with many excellent materials under the Ojibwe culture button, such as information on ceremonies for children in Ojibwe culture, including naming customs.

<http://www.minnesotahumanities.org/Teachers/2-04ojibwe.htm>

Many links to resources.

<http://www.fwhp.ca/homepage.html>

Old Fort William website, offers a CD-ROM on fur-trade history (\$55 Canadian, \$40 U.S. dollars (<http://www.fwhp.ca/cdrom.html>). 17 study units on fur-trade history, geography, science and technology. Includes lesson plans, suggested exercises, test questions, and in the Teachers' Guide included on the CD.

Two Traditional Stories

by Ojibwe storyteller Anne Dunn
from her book, *When Beaver Was Very Great: Stories To Live By*
(Midwest Traditions, 1995), © Anne M. Dunn

RABBIT AND OTTER

One day Rabbit went to visit his very good friend, Otter.

“Otter,” said Rabbit, “let us go camping down by the river.”

“But,” Otter worried, “I’ve never been anywhere. I might get lost! Furthermore, I’ve never even seen the river. I can’t swim. I might drown!”

“Come on,” Rabbit persuaded. “I’ve been everywhere. You won’t get lost if you follow me. And you don’t have to swim, if you don’t want to.”

So Otter agreed to go with Rabbit. When they reached the river they set up their camp. After they’d eaten, Rabbit said, “Let’s play a game.”

“No,” Otter replied. “I don’t play games.”

“Well,” Rabbit suggested, “should we dance?”

“I don’t dance, either,” said Otter.

“Well,” Rabbit wanted to know, “what do you do for fun?”

“Oh,” whined Otter, “I don’t have any fun.”

“Of course not,” snapped Rabbit, “you don’t even try!”

Now Rabbit had always been a bit jealous of Otter because he had such a fine coat. So he decided to have his own kind of fun . . . at Otter’s expense.

“I’ll have fun . . . even if he doesn’t,” Rabbit chuckled to himself.

“Otter,” he whispered, “do you know where we are?”

“You know I don’t,” Otter replied.

“Well,” Rabbit began, “this is called “where fire falls from the sky.” It has been said that on cool, starry nights . . . like this is . . . when the wind sighs gently through the pines . . . as it’s doing now . . . and the water flows south . . . as you see it is flowing at this time . . . it might happen on such a night that the fire of legend will fall.”

“Well,” cried Otter, “I want to go home!”

“But,” Rabbit quickly continued, “we will sleep close to the river. If fire falls, I’ll warn you . . . then you jump into the river so you won’t get any holes in your beautiful coat.”

So Otter and Rabbit lay down close to the water. When Rabbit was sure that Otter was sleeping, he took a piece of bark and, with it, scooped up the coals from

the fire. He tossed them up into the air and screamed, "The fire is falling!"

Otter moved like lightening and hit the water as the glowing coals came down. Then, before he knew what had happened . . . he was swimming!

From that day to this, Otter chooses to live close to the water. He often praises his good friend Rabbit.

"Yes," Otter likes to say, "it was Rabbit who taught me to appreciate the pleasures of life. Didn't he take me camping? Didn't he teach me to swim? Surely no one ever had a friend as kind as he."

Rabbit is greatly annoyed by such gracious praise but Otter doesn't seem to notice.

Now, Otter has more fun than Rabbit, and when you see Otter sitting quietly on the river bank or swimming along on his back, you will notice that he always smiles a little.

Do you suppose Otter has had the last laugh after all?

HOW TURTLE CRACKED HIS SHELL

It happened one day in the long ago, as the aspen leaves were falling all around and the birds were preparing to fly south, that Turtle asked, "Why do you go away? Why can't you stay here with me?"

"Soon the winter spirits will return to this land," said Robin.

"They bring cold and snow," said Bluebird.

"We won't be able to find food then," said Hummingbird.

"In the south it is always warm," sang Bluebird.

"With plenty of food," hummed Hummingbird.

Turtle, who was always interested in good food, said, "I want to go, too."

"Can you fly?" laughed Robin.

"Of course not," snapped Turtle.

"Well, it's a long walk," Bluebird twittered. "Surely you can help me," begged Turtle. "If you wanted to take me with you . . . you would find a way!"

The birds talked it over.

Then Robin asked, "Can you hold a stick in your mouth?"

"I certainly can," boasted Turtle. "When I get something in my mouth, I never let it go."

Then Robin asked Blackbird and Crow if they would carry Turtle on a stick so he could go south with them.

“Very well,” they replied.

So Turtle picked up the stick with his mouth.

Blackbird and Crow took the ends in their claws and carried Turtle up into the sky.

Oh, it was so exciting! Turtle had never seen so many wonderful things before. He wanted to know everything. He wanted to know where they were. He wanted to know how far they had traveled. He wanted to know when they would arrive in the south.

Finally, he opened his mouth to ask his questions and . . . he fell off the stick! He tumbled end over end, all the way down to the earth.

When he hit the ground, his smooth polished shell cracked but it didn't break off. He looked up but the birds were too far away to call. Then he felt his shell shifting in a loose and terrible manner, and he suddenly lost interest in going south.

Turtle was glad to be alive, but he felt a little sick. So he found a small lake and swam to the bottom where he buried himself in the mud and went to sleep.

Today, Turtle still sleeps through the winter and carries a cracked shell.

The Lakota people often point to Turtle and tell their children to learn from his example.

They tell their children, “Sometimes it is best if you keep your mouth shut.”

[from *When Beaver Was Very Great: Stories to Live By*, by Anne M. Dunn, (Midwest Traditions, 1995), © Anne M. Dunn. Further reproduction except for educational use in a single classroom by an individual teacher is prohibited without the written permission of the publisher. For more information, contact Philip Martin, editor, at info@bluehorsebooks.org.]