

ELA Common Core Content Standards:

Reading Standards for Literature 3, 7
 Reading Standards: Foundational Skills 1, 2, 3
 Writing Standards 2
 Speaking and Listening Standards 1, 2, 4, 5, 6
 Language Standards 2, 4, 6

Estimated duration:

Two one-hour sessions

Goal: Students will develop knowledge and understanding of traditional Karuk land-related values and special relationships to land that form the foundation for Indian cultural identity and sense of place on earth. The story of the Tan Oak Acorn will introduce students to the characteristics of a traditional Karuk origin story (told only when it is cold enough for snow to be in the high mountains). It will also help them recognize the different types of acorns found in our region and their identifying features, and learn why the local tribes prefer to eat the tan oak acorn discussed in Lesson 3.

Teacher Background: The Karuk way of life is known to us through [píkva](#) (origin stories) that have been told and re-told, heard and re-heard for countless generations. Listening to the stories together, we again re-imagine “the times before” human existence, “when the animals, plants, rocks were people.” These First People are called the [ikxaréeyav](#)¹ (or often in English, “Spirit People”). The stories are dramatic retellings of the ancient actions and interactions of these First Peoples. The Karuk, like most indigenous peoples, traditionally only tell stories when it is cold enough for snow to be in the high mountains. Please respect this tribal code.

These First People understood their responsibility to figure out how the yet-to-come humans should live.² Hearing the stories, we learn that they fulfilled that responsibility through repeated sequences of contemplation, discussion, inspiration, and both collaborative and random experimentation. As human re-hearers, we inherit the same ancient responsibilities of the First People, each of us in our own way trying to figure out “how people should be living.” We also inherit their time-proven methods of proceeding as well.

Rehearing the stories, the lives of the First People function as thought-templates for the listeners, as examples (both good and bad) of how to think about our place and our conduct in the world. Káruk

¹ Pronounced something like “ik- ha-RAY-yav” with the “h” in the second syllable gargled like the Spanish “j” and the final “v” sounding something between the English pronunciation of “v” and “w.” Please refer to the Karuk Pronunciation Guide.

² This figuring of the **ikxareeyavs** has been called “laying down the world.”

multi-species storytelling provides us with a shared imagined background for understanding complex relationships between ourselves and the many other creatures with which we still live today.

Origin Stories usually carry a great deal of cultural weight, sometimes melodramatically so. But many of the stories bear that weight lightly with the help of ironic humor.

The survival and flourishing of American Indian Peoples depends on their ability to know, retain, make use of, and pass on their special connections with their homelands. Traditions, origin stories, and prayers that provide a sense of tribal uniqueness and identity originate in special places, from land-related incidents or from natural gifts of the land. Additionally, Tribal nations were, and to differing extents, still are supported and sustained by their lands.

Theme/Big Idea:	We All Take Care of Each Other
Big Questions:	Who are we? Where are we? How did we get here?
Vocabulary:	humanity, scornful, prepare, project, lobe

Materials:

Special item to pass around during discussion circle, e.g. acorn, tree leaf (not included)

New Caps, illustration by Bari Talley (included)

The Story of Tan Oak Acorn, an adapted version by Lisa Hillman from Phoebe Maddux, Phoebe's mother, and Mary Ike between 1928 and 1930 (included)

The Karuk Story of Oaks, recorded by E.W. Gifford, as told by Mary Ike (1939), which includes Karuk language words (included)

Vocabulary Black Line Master (included)

Acorn Maidens Kindergarten, worksheet (included)

Story of Tan Oak Acorns Sequencing Worksheets (included)

Oak Tree Worksheet (included)

Preparation:

Write the following sentence on the board: "i like story"

Copy **Tan Oak Acorn Sequencing Worksheets** on separate sheets of paper for students

Prepare to display the New Caps Illustration to the entire class while reading aloud

Discussion Circle: Tell students that today we will continue on our adventure, learning who we are and where we came from. Explain that we often learn about ourselves through stories: parents or an auntie may talk about something you did when you were a baby; your grandparents may talk about a flood or fire that happened close to home long ago. These are some of the ways that we learn about ourselves, but we also learn from traditional stories. A traditional Karuk origin story, like many other traditional Native American stories, is only told in the winter. In our area, this means that these stories are told when it is cold enough for snow to be in the high mountains. While this may seem strange, it is simply the right thing to do for Karuk people and is a part of the cultural identity of the people. Tell them that if they agree that stories help us learn about who we are, say, "*Chími!*"³ (fine, alright).

³ Pronounced something like "CHI-me".

Daily Language Practice

Have students correct the following sentence: i like story

Preparing to read

Tell them that today they will hear a version of a traditional Karuk story called the “Acorn Maidens.” Tell them that all traditional stories are told just a little bit differently, depending on the storyteller and on the context. If you’ve had a storyteller come in to tell this story, as suggested in Lesson 3, tell them this version may be a little different, but that neither version is wrong. The story they will hear is called a creation story, which is a very old story that helps explain why things are the way they are. Creation stories are passed down from our elders and it is important to learn these stories so that the students can pass them on to their own children and grandchildren one day. “If you agree that this is important, say, “*Chími*” (fine, alright).

Let students know that when you finish reading the story, you will all talk about the sequence of events, which is to decide what happened first in the story, what happened second, next, and so on until the end of the story.

Developing Story Vocabulary

Display Vocabulary Black Line Master on document reader. Point to the underlined word and have the students read it aloud with you. Clarify definition. Follow a similar procedure with the rest of the sentences.

humanity – people considered as a group; the human race.

scornful – showing disrespect toward (someone or something)

prepare – to get ready

project – to stick out beyond an edge or surface

Read Aloud

Explain to the students that there are many versions of that story, and the one you are going to read to them now is an adaptation from three versions of the story. Two were told in 1929 by the Karuk Language Speakers Phoebe Maddux and her mother to J.P. Harrington and the other in 1930 by the Karuk Language Speaker Mary Ike to a man named E.W. Gifford.

Display the New Caps illustration and read “The Acorn Maidens” aloud to the class in English, pointing to the pictures of the acorns as they come up in the story: 1) black oak acorn, 2) tan oak acorn, 3) white oak acorn, and 4) live oak acorn (Caution: the maidens are not illustrated in this order. From left to right, they are white, live, black, and tan oak maidens).

Oral Tradition and Comprehension: Display the New Caps illustration and read “The Karuk Story of Oaks” to the class, pointing to the pictures of the acorns as they come up in the story: 1) tan oak acorn 2) live oak acorn 3) black oak acorn 4) white oak acorn.

Strategy Focus: Evaluate

Ask students what they thought of the story. Encourage students to raise their hands before speaking, and tell them that you will pass the special item to the student whose turn it is to speak.

Skill Focus: Details, Cause and Effect

Ask them what they thought about the way White Oak and Live Oak acorns acted. Describe this behavior as being “scornful.” Ask why these acorns were scornful of the other acorns. Ask if they think this is a good way to behave.

Ask what they thought about the way Tan Oak acorn acted.

Ask how they would feel if someone laughed at the way they completed a project or assignment.

Ask students what the consequences were for the acorns’ behavior. Examples include:

- Tan Oak acorn – has a rough cap but is the favorite of the people because it tastes the best.
- Live Oak acorn – has a beautiful cap but is hard to pound and makes a black and bitter soup.
- Black Oak acorn – has a long and funny looking cap and doesn’t taste quite as good as Tan Oak Acorn (extra information: it is the acorn of choice for the Shasta Indians and is used by the local tribes to make bread).
- White Oak acorn – has a nice cap and but no one likes to eat it much (extra information: is the earliest acorn to ripen. Although it is hard to grind up, people used to eat it when they were very hungry after a long winter.)

Comprehension Focus: Sequence of Events

Tell students that now they will have to recall the story, and you will ask questions about the sequence of events. This is important so that they will remember how to retell the story one day.

Ask students what happened first. (The Spirit people told the acorn maidens to hurry and make their caps)

Ask children who finished their caps? (white and live oak)

Ask students what Black Oak Maiden did. (She put her cooking basket on her head)

Ask children what Tan Oak Maiden did. (She turned her unfinished cap inside out and wore it like that)

Ask students why the White and Live Oak Maidens laughed at the other maidens. (They laughed because the others looked silly, and perhaps they laughed scornfully because they felt superior for having completed the task well).

What did Tan Oak Acorn Maiden wish for? (She wished that she would be the best tasting acorn.)

Ask, "Did her wish come true?" (Yes!)

Assign Story of Oaks Sequencing Worksheets

Have the students open their trace over the words that help tell the story. Explain to students that they will make a book using these pictures. They should color the pictures and put the pictures in the correct sequences.

Assign Story of Oaks Comprehension Worksheet

Display the Story of Oaks Comprehension worksheet on the document reader. Read the directions. Teacher/student reads each question and answer choices. Help students rule out the obviously wrong answers and choose the correct answer. Students fill in the bubble for the correct answer.

Skill Focus: Sequence of Events.

Using a Poster board: Write the title of the story on the top of the page.

Ask students to identify the main character(s).

Ask student what happened first and why.

What happened next?

What happened after that?

Assign **Oak Tree Worksheet** page to students. Students should cut and paste the pictures in the boxes onto the main picture with the high frequency words. The acorns should be pasted onto the sky like they are falling to the ground. The leaves can be pasted onto the trees and/or on the ground below the trees. They should finish coloring the picture and trace the words and sound out the sentence, "I see an acorn." Staple this as the top sheet of their booklets for them to take home. Encourage them to use this to help remember how to tell the story to someone in their family.

Students will choose one of the events outlined above to illustrate and write a sentence(s) about. The teacher may also assign a specific part to each student to write/illustrate.

Put all students pages together, and make enough copies for each student to have a finished book.

Optional

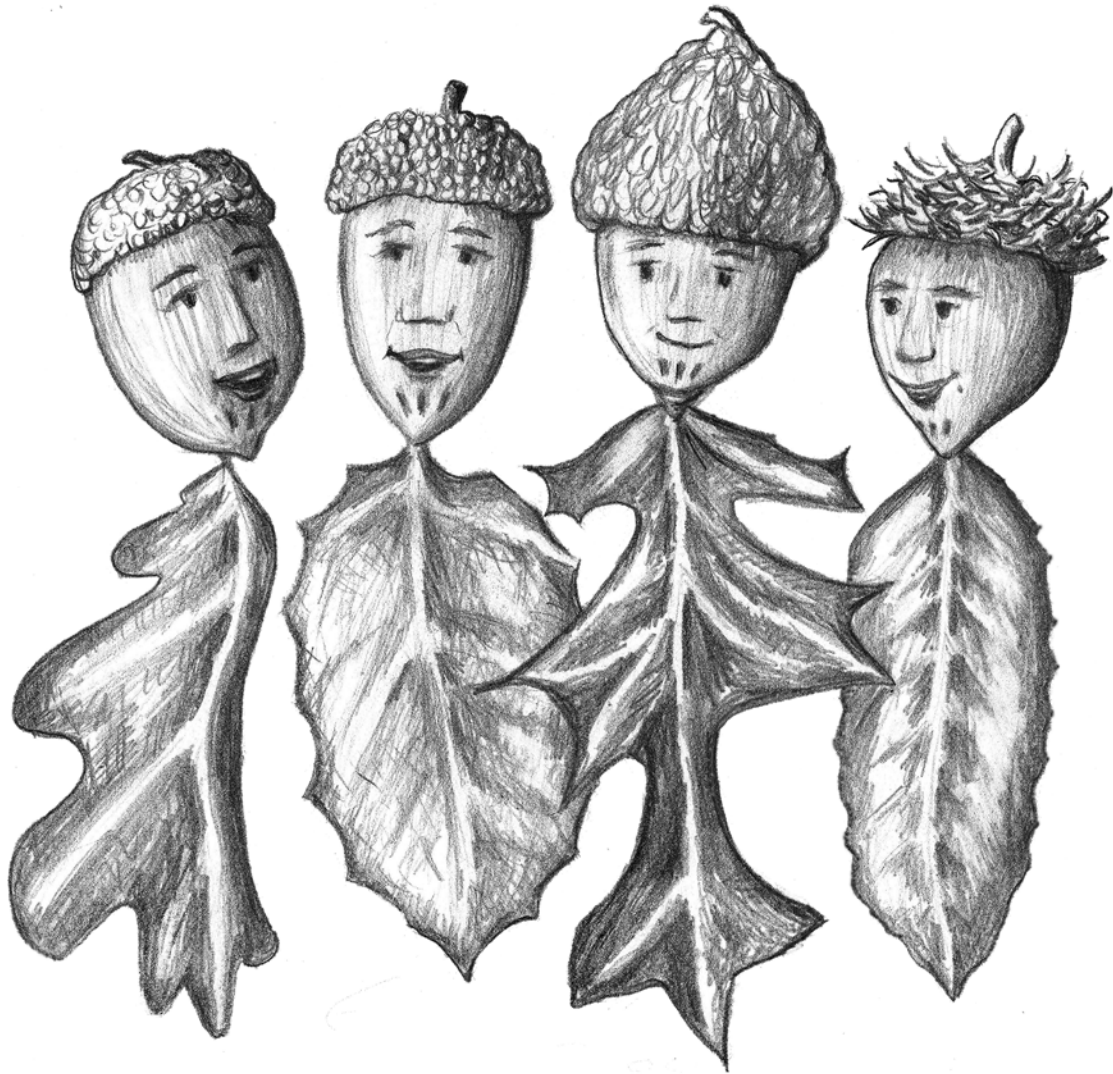
Comparing Stories: Read Mary Ike's version of the story, included in this lesson as "The Karuk Story of Oaks." Ask the students to compare the two versions, and/or try to decide what the main lessons of each story are.

Tell students that acorns are helpful to many species in that they provide needed food, and that they can develop into trees if they are given good growing conditions such as water and the nutrients found in certain soils. Using brown paper, cut out a tree with many limbs. Copy the "I am Helpful" acorn sheet and give students an acorn to put on the tree when they are observed doing things that are helpful to their fellow students, teacher, or environment.

Karuk Language: Invite a speaker to tell the Acorn Maiden story in Karuk (version included).

New Caps

Illustration by Bari Gayle Morehead Talley



Story of Tan Oak Acorn

(*xuntapanpíkva*)

Adapted from versions told by

Phoebe Maddux, Phoebe's mother, and Mary Ike between 1928 and 1930

A long time ago, before humans were in this world, there were *ikxaréeyavs*⁴ – Spirit People. The acorns used to be *ikxaréeyavs*, too, and one day the other *ikxaréeyav* told them that soon they were going to turn into different types of acorns. They said: “When you turn, you must be ready and have your caps prepared and looking very pretty.” Oh, how the acorn maidens started to work! They began to weave their hats.

All of a sudden, the *ikxaréeyavs* told them, “Hurry! It’s time for you to leave now. Humanity is here.”

“Oh!” some of them cried. Black Oak had not finished her cap yet, so she picked up the big bowl basket she used for cooking and put it on her head. Tan Oak hadn’t finished her basket cap either – she hadn’t trimmed off the projecting strands of root and beargrass from the inside of her cap. She thought, “What should I do?” She decided to turn it inside out and wear it with the strands sticking out on top.

Both White Oak Acorn and Live Oak Acorn had finished their caps: they were beautiful and all trimmed. These two laughed scornfully at the other two maidens, whose caps weren’t nearly as nice as theirs. “Maybe we should leave you behind!” they teased.

Tan Oak Acorn became angry with them and jealous of their caps. When it was time to paint themselves before dropping down to humanity, Tan Oak Acorn could only bring herself to paint her face a little bit. Black Oak Acorn painted herself proudly with stripes.

The Tan Oak Acorn maiden prayed that humans would not use the other acorns much, and then thought to herself: “I wish that I be the good acorn soup, the kind humans appreciate the most – even though my cap is not neatly trimmed.”

When it was time to leave, all of the acorn maidens turned their faces into their caps and tumbled down to the earth. This is what happened a long time ago, and to this day, people like to eat Tan Oak Acorns the most.

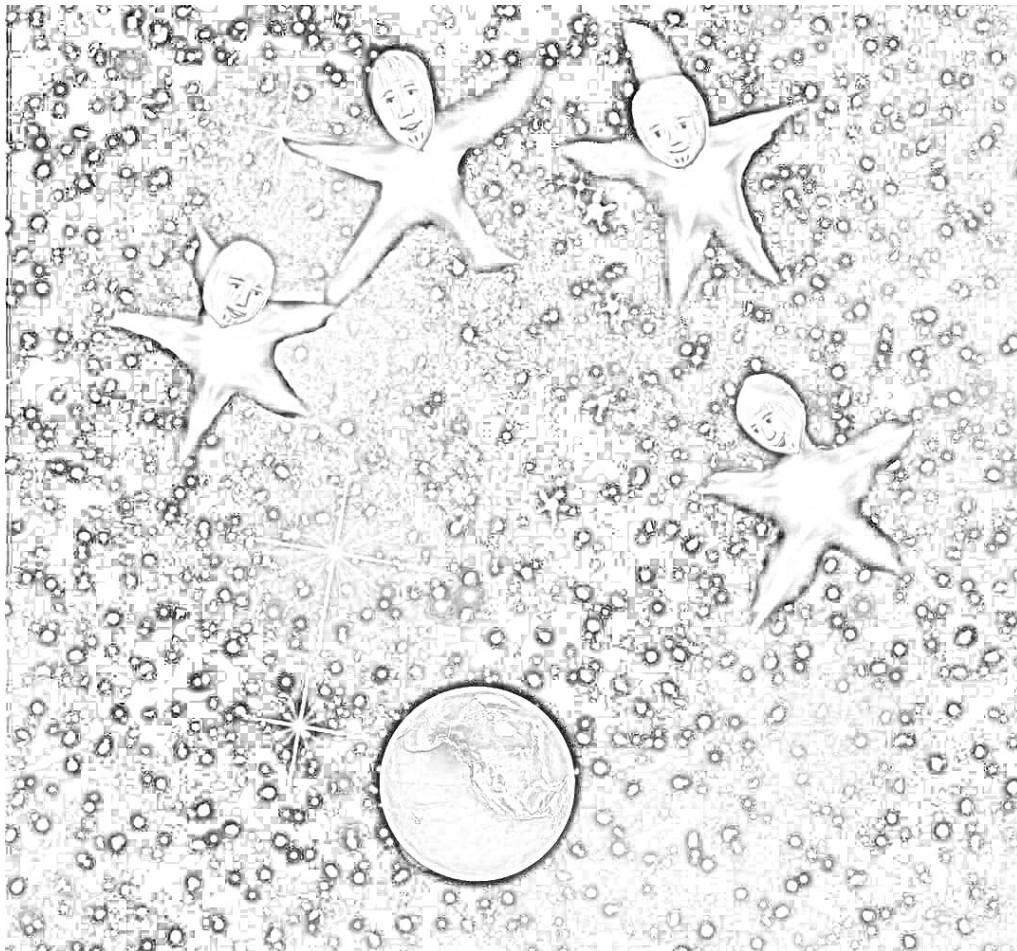
Wise words: Pick up the white-faced acorns and leave behind the ones with black faces or worm holes in them!

⁴ pronounced something like “ik- ha-RAY-yav” with the “h” in the second syllable gargled like the Spanish “j” and the final “v” sounding something between the English pronunciation of “v” and “w.” Please refer to the Karuk Pronunciation Guide.

Name _____

Story of Oaks Sequencing Worksheets

The Spirit people told the acorn maidens to hurry and make their caps and get ready to go to earth.

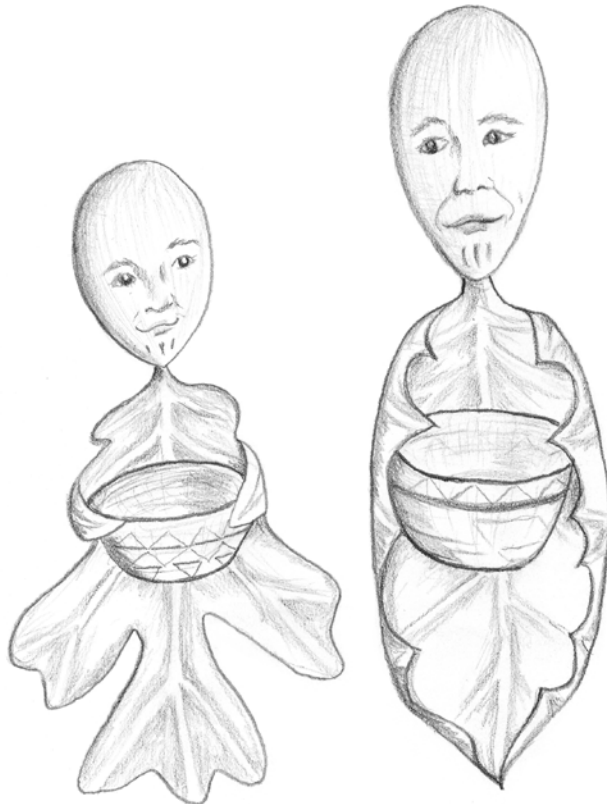


Hurry to finish caps.

Name _____

Story of Oaks Sequencing Worksheets

Who finished their caps?



White and Live Oak

finished their caps.

Name _____

Story of Tan Oak Acorns Sequencing Worksheets

What did Black Oak Maiden do?



Black oak wore a
cooking basket.

Name _____

Story of Tan Oak Acorns Sequencing Worksheets

What did Tan Oak Maiden do?



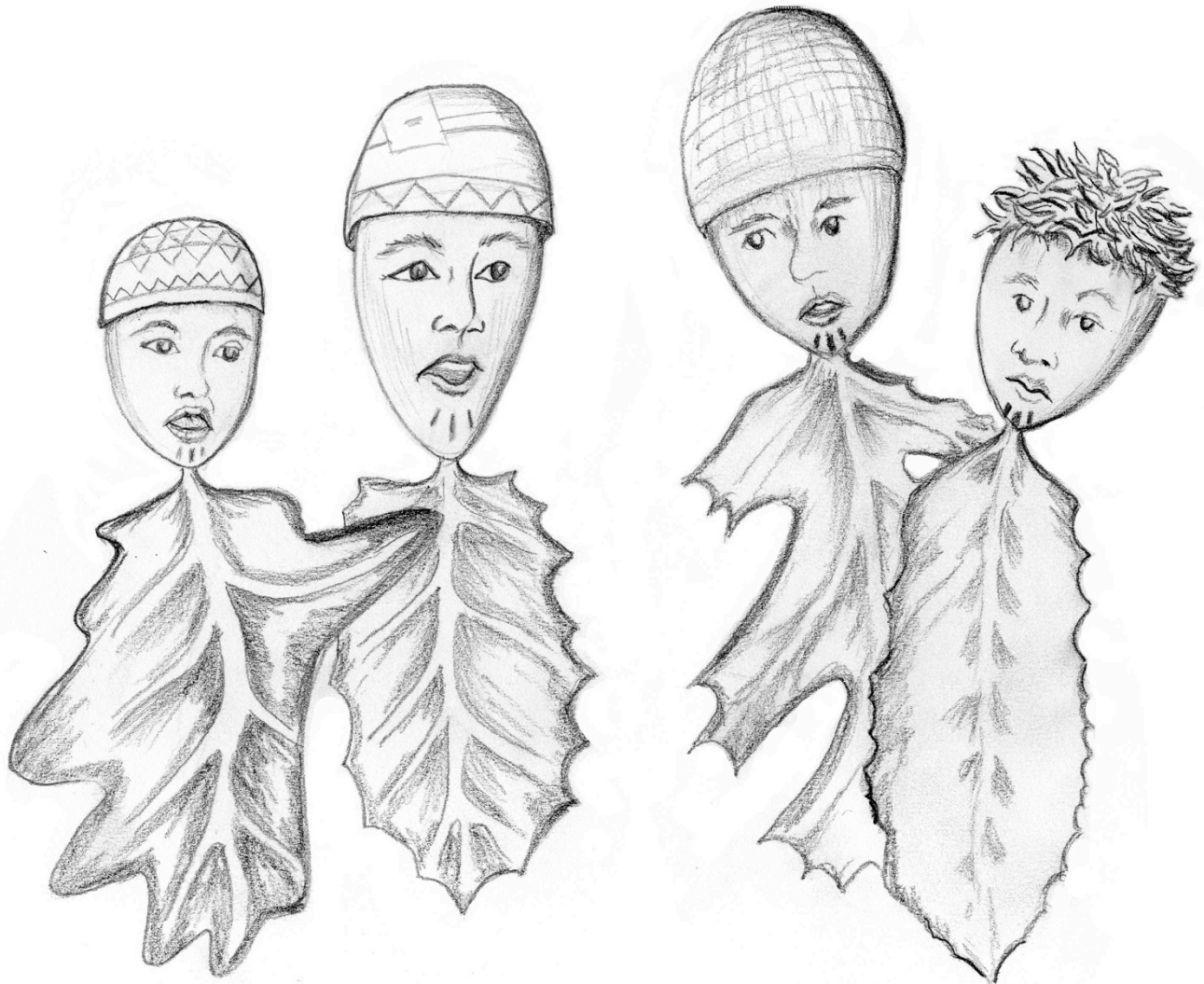
She turned her cap

inside out.

Name _____

Story of Tan Oak Acorns Sequencing Worksheets

How did White and Live Oak tease the Oaks who had not finished?



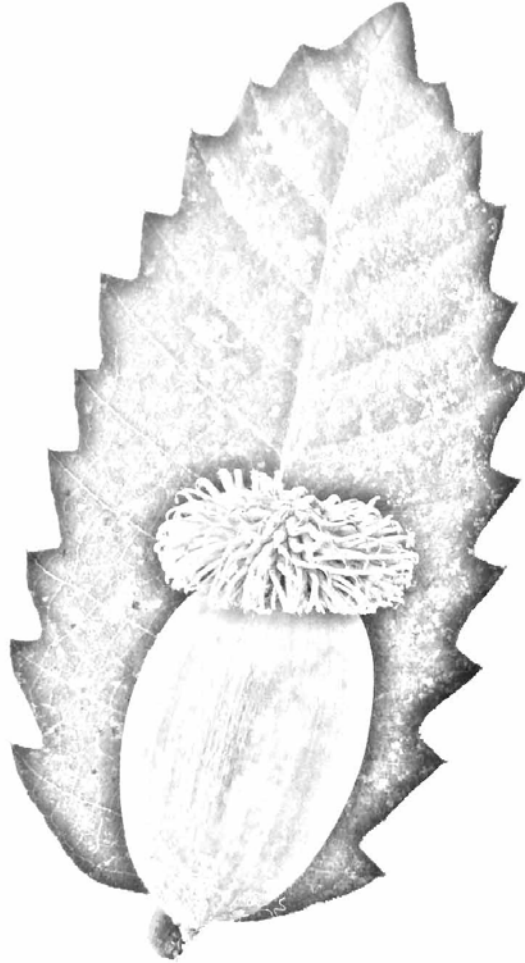
They laughed

scornfully.

Name _____

Story of Tan Oak Acorns Sequencing Worksheets

Did Tan Oak Acorn's Wish Come True?



I am the best

tasting acorn!

The Karuk Story of Oaks

Recorded by E.W. Gifford, as told by Mary Ike (1939)

The White Oak (*axvaam*) had her cap all finished nicely. The Live Oak (*xánpuut*⁵) had her cap all finished too. Black Oak (*xánthiip*) was making a long water-packing basket (*asipxánnahich*), and when they said, “Let’s go, she put her basket on her head. That is why her cap is long. Tan Oak (*xuntappan*⁶) was making an Indian cap (*apxaan*⁷) and hers wasn’t finished, but she put it on, and that is why the tan oak acorns look so rough.

The Spirit People (*ikxaréeyav*) were the beings before they became trees and rocks.

White and Live Oak laughed at Tan Oak because her cap looked so rough, and they laughed at Black Oak because her cap was so long. But these maidens retorted, “As long as people live, they will always eat us first and you—they won’t think much about you.” And that is why, when people are together, they always have tan oak acorn soup and then next they use is black oak.

axváam uum vúra tupikyaanáyaachha.
xánpuut uum káru vúra tupikyaanáyaachha.
xánthiip asipxánnahich ukyâatihanik.
xás pakunípeeraak chôorah, xás vaa vúr óothxuunanik.
vaa vúra kumá’ii vúr uum vâaram.

xúnyav arara’ápchaan ukyâanik.
xás púva takkúkkalik pamípxaan.
vaa vúra kumá’ii kóova nára pató omússahiti pamóopxaan.

ikxaréeyavs uumkun áraaras-hanik, xás íppaha kunipkêevishrishanik, káru vúra ás káru.
kuntákkaavtihanik xúnyav káru vúra xánthiip káru.
hûut kóo xára tá kun’íinish yaas’ára, uumkun îi(n) nuu kinpáttatiheesh pishshîich.
káru vúra iimkun—pukinxússeeratiheeshara.

vaa vúra kumá’ii pakunyíchchachheesh pa’áraaras xassík hittíhaan vúra xúun kunpáttatiheesh.
káru vúra xassík xánthiip kunpáttatiheesh.
[yakkún] uumkun kuntákkaavtihanik xúnyav, ayu’âach kóo nára tó omússahiti pamóopxaan.
uumkun káru vúra kuntákkaavtihanik xánthiip, ayu’âach kóo vâaram pamóopxaan.

⁵ a Karuk version of The Story of Tan Oak Acorn is available at <http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/~karuk/index.php>

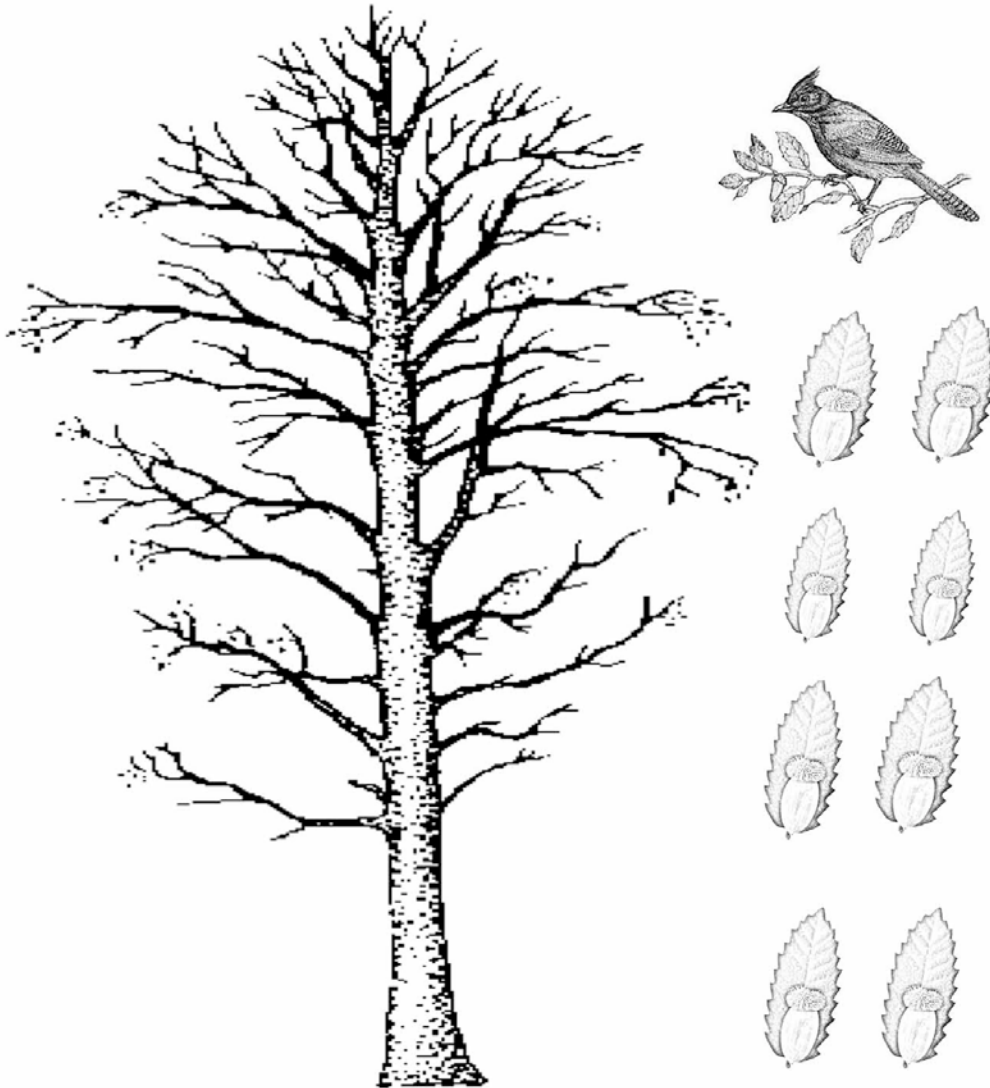
⁶ Sound file at <http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/~karuk/index.php>

⁷ sound file at <http://linguistics.berkeley.edu/~karuk/index.php>

Vocabulary

1. Treat all **humanity** equally.
2. She was **scornful** of the thief.
3. **Prepare** the acorn soup!
4. An eagle feather **projected** from his hair.

Name _____



I see an oak tree.

