Create your own Myth Assignment

Just as the Native Americans use myths to explain the beginnings of human life and the origins of the elements of the world, you will create an original myth that is either an **creation myth** or an **origin myth**.Plese review the elements of each type of myth and be certain to include them in your story.

Your myth must include elements of Native American myth (outlined on page one). It can be about how the world itself was created, but many lesser phenomena can be explained, too. There have been stories about why the sun crosses the sky each day, how the first tears were cried and why the nightingale’s voice is so sweet. If it exists in the natural world, there’s can be a story about how and why it does.

**You will produce TWO FINAL PRODUCTS to demonstrate your understanding of myths:**

1) Assignment #1-type written narrative (story) 1 ½ to 2 pages (400 to 750 words)

**AND**

2) A ssignment #2- creative presentation of your story through:

• A storybook with pictures; puppets, diorama, or a form agreed upon with your instructor

• Myth must be performed in front of the class

3) You may work in groups of 2 or you may work alone.

**DUE DATES:**

Assignment #1 (Written narrative) 50 pts: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Assignment #2 (Creative representation) 50pts : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Background information on Origin and Creation Myths**

Two basic types of myths:

•**Creation myths**–how human lives came to exist

•**Origin myths –**why phenomena like the stars, moon, and sky came to be

A **creation myth** is a symbolic narrative (a story) of how the world began and how people first

came to inhabit it.

An **origin myth** is a symbolic narrative (a story) that describes the origin of some feature of

the natural or social world such as a moral lesson.

Both types of myths have been passed down through the **oral tradition** long before they were

ever written down, and therefore typically have multiple versions.

Creation and origin myths often use supernatural beings to explain a why the world is the way it is or help make sense of the world. That is, a myth might explain a natural phenomenon or human behavior. They are important in giving people a sense of order and shared identity within a tribe or clan.

**Functions of myths in societies:**

• Explain the workings of the natural world

• Support and validate social customs, values or morals of that group

• Guide people through the trials of living

• Instill a sense of the mystery of the universe and attempts to explain that mystery

**Native American** myths often emphasize a strong spiritual bond between the creator, humanity and the natural world. It is the duty of humanity to maintain a balance between these entities. Recurring ideas among Native American stories:

• Humans have a connection with nature

• Conflict between ancient customs and modern life, past and present

• Storytelling is important

• Life as a circle

• Fire as a symbol

• Animal People– the first inhabitants of the world; spirit beings that could take the

shape of human or animal

• Other personification – Inanimate elements that function as living beings