

# Title: Folklore and Zora Neale Hurston

Grade Level: 9-12

Subject: English Language Arts & Social Studies

Keywords: Folklore, Fables, Myths, Folktales

<b>Lesson Plan:</b>	Folklore and Zora Neale Hurston
<b>Subject(s):</b>	English Language Arts & Social Studies
<b>Grade(s):</b>	9-12
<b>Description/ Abstract of Lesson</b>	Examine key events and people in Florida history as they relate to United States history.
<b>LAFS.910.RL.1.2 LAFS.1112.RL.1.2</b>	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text. (Same standard Grades 9-12)
<b>LAFS.910.RL.2.5</b>	Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g., parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise.
<b>LAFS.1112.RL.2.5</b>	Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
<b>LAFS.910.W.1.3 LAFS.1112.W1.3</b>	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. (Same standard Grades 9-12)
<b>LAFS.910.W.4.10 LAFS.1112.W.4.10</b>	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. (Same standard Grades 9-12)
<b>SS.912.A.5.12</b>	Analyze the effects of the changing social, political and economic conditions on the Roaring Twenties and the Great Depression.
<b>Objective(s):</b>	Students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Explain the importance of folktales in African and African American History</li><li>● Interpret folktales</li><li>● Conduct research and write a family or community folktale.</li></ul>
<b>Materials:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <a href="#">The Fable, Folktale, Myth, Legend: Differences and Examples - Video &amp; Lesson Transcript</a></li><li>● <a href="#">Qualities of Folktales</a></li><li>● <a href="#">African Folktales: Importance, Commonalities &amp; Changes</a></li><li>● Folktales from <i>Mules and Men</i> by Zora Neale Hurston</li><li>● <a href="#">Criteria for Success: Original Folktale</a></li><li>● <a href="#">Original Folktale Tips</a></li></ul>
<b>Duration:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● 1-4 class periods</li><li>● Block Scheduling (90 min.) 1 class period</li></ul>

<b>Lesson Lead In/ Opening:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Warm-Up: Analyze and interpret the quote by Zora Neale Hurston: “I do not weep at being Negro, I am too busy sharpening my oyster knife.” Students write at least a three-sentence paragraph. Debrief as a class. Tell students that today they will learn about African American folklore, focusing on the folktales of Zora Neale Hurston. Discuss <a href="#">folklore</a>, including fables, myths, and folktales. Ask students for examples of myths, fables, or folktales. You can use this <a href="#">Resource on Folklore</a>.</li> <li>2. Discuss African folklore, such as <a href="#">Aesop's Fables</a>. Explain the difference between a folktale and a fable. Explain the elements of a <a href="#">folktale</a>. Share information on <a href="#">African folktales</a>.</li> </ol>
<b>Activity 1:</b>	Introduce author Zora Neale Hurston who wrote African folktales she collected primarily in Central Florida in her book <i>Mules and Men</i> published in 1935. The class views <a href="#">Great Floridian Zora Neale Hurston</a> . While viewing the biographical video, students write down at least five things they learn about Zora Neale Hurston. After the video, have students share their findings with two partners .Debrief as a class, telling students they will explore two of Hurston’s folktales from <i>Mules and Men</i> after which they will do research and write a narrative from their own family or community folklore.
<b>Activity 2:</b>	Small-Group Work: Distribute two folktales from <i>Mules and Men</i> , included in this lesson. Divide the students into groups. Each group reads and writes one-page interpretations of two folktales. Compare and contrast interpretations in the all-class setting.
<b>Activity 3:</b>	Students conduct research and write a family or community folktale, according to <a href="#">teacher criteria</a> and <a href="#">tips</a> , sharing in small groups the next class meeting. Provide time for students to conduct research; draft writing; and to participate in peer editing and publishing.
<b>Activity 4:</b>	As a culminating activity, each class could publish a hard-copy or virtual folktale collection for presentation in the media center or on the media center website, respectively.
<b>Higher Order Thinking Questions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the Harlem Renaissance, how did Jazz influence writings of African American poetry and folklore?</li> <li>• What was the significance of folktales in African and African American History?</li> </ul>
<b>Suggested Books:</b>	<p><i>From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans. Ninth Edition.</i> John Hope Franklin and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham. (2011). McGraw Hill Publishers.</p> <p><i>Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters.</i> John Steptoe. (1987). HarperCollins Publishers.</p> <p><i>Mules and Men.</i> Zora Neale Hurston. (1935). Harper Perennial Modern Classics.</p>
<b>Web Resources</b>	<p><a href="#">About Zora Neale Hurston</a></p> <p><a href="#">10 African and African American Folktales for Children   The New York Public Library</a></p> <p><a href="#">Reading _Mules and Men</a></p>

Folktales from *Mules and Men* are in separate lesson handouts below.

From *Mules and Men* by Zora Neale Hurston

**“A Man sittin straddle of a Cow”**

A man and his wife had a boy and they thought so much of him that they sent him off to college. At de end of seven years, he schooled out and come home and de old man and his ma was real proud to have de only boy ‘round there dat was book-learnt.

So de next mornin after he come home, de ma was milkin’ de cows and had one young cow dat had never been to de pail befo’ and she used to kick ever time anybody milked her.

She was actin extry bad dat mornin’ so de woman called her husband and ast him to come help her wid de cow. So, he went out and tried to hold her, but she kept on rearin’ and pitchin’ and kickin’ over de milk pail, so he said to his wife: “We don’t need to strain wid dis cow. We got a son inside that’s been to school for seben years and done learnt everthing. He’ll know u’ what do do wid a kickin; cow.

Ah’ll go call him,”

So he called de boy and told him.

De boy come on out to de cow-lot and looked everything over. Den he said, “Mama, cow-kickin’ is all a matter of scientific principle. You see before a cow can kick she has to hump herself up in the back. So all we need to do is to take the hump out the cow’s back.”

His paw said, “Son, Ah don’t see how you gointer do dat. But ‘course you been off to college and you know a heap mo’ than me and yo’ ma ever will know. Go ‘head and take de hump outa de heifer. We’d be mighty much obliged.”

De son put on his gold eyeglasses and studied de cow from head to foot. Then he said, “All we need to keep this animal from humping is a weight on her back.”

What kinda weight do she need, son?”

“Oh, any kind of a weight, jus’ so it’s heavy enough, papa,” de son told him, “It’s all in mathematics,”

“Where we gointer git any weight lak dat, son?”

“Why don’t you get up there, pap? You’re just about the weight we need.”

“Son, you been off to school a long time, and maybe you done forgot how hard it is for anybody to sit on a cow, and Ah’m gittin’old, you know.”

“But, pap, I can fix that part, too. I’ll tie your feet together under her belly so she can’t thro you. You just get on up there.”

“All right, son, if you say so, Ah’ll get straddle of dis cow. You know more’n Ah do, Ah reckon.”

So they tied de cow up short to a tree and de ole man got on by de hardest, and de boy passed a rope under her belly and tied his papa on. De old lady tried to milk de cow but she was buckin' and rearin' so till de ole man felt he couldn't stand it no mo'. So he hollered to de boy, "Cut de rope, son, cut de rope! Ah want to git down."

Instead of de boy cuttin' loose his papa's feet he cut de rope dat had de cow tied to de tree and she lit out cross de wood wid de ole man's feet tied under de cow. Wasn't no way for him to git off.

De cow went bustin' on down de back-road wid de ole man till they met a sister he knowed. She was surprised to see de man on de cow, so she ast: "My lawd, Brother So-and -so, where you goin'?"  
He tole her, "only God and dis cow knows."

**From *Mules and Men* by Zora Neale Hurston**

**“De Dawg Hates De Cat”**

De dog and de cat used to live next door to one 'nother and both of 'em loved ham. Every time they git a chance they'd buy a slice of ham.

One time both of 'em go holt of a li'l extry change so de dog said to de cat, “Sis Cat, we both got a li'l money, and it would be fine if bofe of us could buy a ham apiece. But neither one of us ain't got enough money to buy a whole ham by ourselves. Why don't we put our money together and buy us a ham together?”

“Aw right, Brer Dawg, T;orrer begin' Sat'day, le's we go to town and git ourselves a ham.”

So, de next day they went to town and bought de ham. They didn't have no convenience, so they had to walk and tote it. De dawg toted it first and he said as he walked up de road wid de ham over his shoulder, “Ours! Ours! Ours! Our ham!”

After while it was de cat's time to tote de meat. She said, “my ham, my ham, my ham.” Dawg heard her but he didn't say nothin’.

When de dawg took it agin he says, “ours, ours, our ham!” Cat toted it and says, “My ham, my ham.”

Dawg says, “Sis Cat, how come you keep on saying' “My ham' when you tote our meat. Ah always say, “Our ham.”

De Cat didn't turn him no answer, but every time she toted de ham, she'd say, “My ham” and every time de dawg toted it he'd say “Ours.”

When they was almost home, de cat was carryin' de ham and all of a sudden she sprung up a tree and set up there eatin' up de ham. De dawg did all he could to stop her, but he couldn't clim' and so he couldn't do nothin' but bark. But he tole de cat, you up dat tree eatin' all de ham, and Ah can't get to you. But when you come down ahm gointer make you take dis Indian River for uh dusty road.”