This collection of texts and media will be used in a second grade classroom. It is designed to catch the interest of every level of my students. It will guide instruction of the Native American Folk Tales essential knowledge strand of the S.O.L.’s for second grade Social Studies. I will use it as a supplement to the textbook, which is written above many of my students’ reading levels. This text set will engage the students in the study of history and allow them to picture themselves in a different time period.

This books chosen for this text set all tell a certain Native American folktale, where the students will learn an important lesson, right along with the characters in the book. Each text will be evaluated based on its reading level, the appropriateness for the level of students, and my rational for choosing the text.

This set relates to the following S.O.L. and its strand of Essential Knowledge:

**HSS: 2.2** The student will compare the lives and contributions of American Indians (First Americans), with emphasis on the Powhatan of the Eastern Woodlands, the Sioux of the Plains, and the Pueblo people of the Southwest.

**Essential Knowledge:** What are some contributions of the American Indians (First Americans)? Arts, legends and stories, respect for nature, and farming.

1.) **Knots on a Counting Rope** by Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault

Grade Level of Flesh-Kincaid 2.1
Summary:

This story is about a young boy sitting by the fire at night. He listens to his grandfather tell him the story of the boy’s birth. Each time, the grandfather adds a knot to a counting rope. When the grandfather feels there are enough knots, then the boy is confident enough to carry on through life. The students learn that the boy is blind, but they must infer it from the words, it is never explicitly stated.

Rationale:

I chose this book because it teaches the students a great lesson about life. They learn that nothing can get you down. They get a glimpse into the life of a boy struggling to find himself in a world he cannot see. From the pictures, they get an understanding of the life of a Plains Indian. They see how the Native Americans were storytellers, passing on their history to their young children.

Usage of Text:

I would use this text as a dual-purpose text. The students will have to use their inference skills to understand the full meaning of the story. They will also get a picture of what it may have looked like to be a Plains Indian. They can also see how they were storytellers, they worked hard, had fun, and respected their elders in the tribe, all much like we do today. This book would be used with all levels. The words are easy to read for the lower readers, but the concepts are a little high for the lower students. I would use buddy reading with this book, pairing a low student with a higher one. They can help each other, since the higher student would understand the inferences, while the lower student would still be able to read the words without much difficulty.

Readability:
Flesh-Kincaid put this book at 2.1. According to Bader, the words are somewhat easy to decode, the vocabulary is well controlled, and it is generally matched to the grade level. The concepts are not highlighted or framed. The concepts are developed through the illustrations for the majority of the pages. The ideas are expressed clearly and directly and word choice is somewhat appropriate. I agree, however would not use this book with the lower students unless support was provided so they could reach the deeper meaning from the text.

Reference:


2.) Coyote Places the Stars by Harriet Peck Taylor.

Grade Level of Flesh-Kincaid: 3.0

Summary: Coyote Places the Stars is about a young Coyote who always liked to lie on the ground at night and stare at the stars. He decides to make a ladder with arrows to climb up the sky to discover its secrets. He then decides to shoot the stars with the last of his arrows to make them move where he wants them to move. He climbs back down and howls at the stars, waking the other animals. He calls them to look at the animal shapes in the sky and always remember him and that he made the stars look like that.

Rationale: I picked this book because it was not a typical folktale that the student might have heard already. I feel the material is just right for a read-aloud. It will keep the students engaged and interested. It will show them that not all stories the Native
Americans told were about people, many were about animals. They taught their lessons to their children using animals as the main characters.

Usage:

I would use this book as a read aloud with all the students. We would talk about what we see in the story, letting the words put a picture in our minds of a coyote climbing a ladder made of arrows to arrange the stars in the sky. I would also use this book in a small group with my higher level students. They could definitely handle the words and the harder material on their own. After reading, I would use the book as a jumping off point to find the constellations, have students draw their own for a friend to solve, etc.

Readability:

Flesh-Kincaid puts this book at the 3rd grade reading level. According to Bader, the words are easy to decode, the vocabulary is well controlled, and it is generally matched to the grade level. The concepts are developed through the illustrations for the majority of the pages. The ideas are expressed clearly and directly and word choice is appropriate. I would agree with the 3rd grade assessment by Flesh-Kincaid. I think the words are a little hard for a second grader, and the material is harder. This would be a read aloud, a small group with my higher students, homework for my higher students, or as a read aloud book.

Reference:


3.) The Legend of the Indian Paintbrush by Tomie dePaola.

Grade Level of Flesh Kincaid: 7.6
Summary: This story is about a young boy who is different from the rest of the children. He is not as fast, tall, big, etc. as the other children. However, he does have a special talent. He loved making toy warriors and decorating. As he grows, the elder member of the tribe helps him to realize his talent. He goes on a Dream Vision, where he is spoken to by spirits who give him a paintbrush and show him the way to his gift. He uses his brush to bring color to his People. He tries to make the colors of the sunset, but he cannot seem to make the right combinations. He is spoken to by the spirits as he sleeps and they give him paintbrushes filled with the colors he needs. He is so excited, he leaves his brushes on the hill and races back to his People with the painting. The brushes are then turned into beautiful flowers. Every spring, the flowers bloom again.

Rationale:

I decided to use the book because of the beautiful lesson the students learn when they read the book. They learn about perseverance, strength, finding beauty in everything, and so much more. They also get a culture lesson. They learn about the riders going off to hunt, how they believed in different spirits for everything. They also learn about young men going on the Dream Vision, and what that means, how it fits in with their culture. They get a better understanding of someone else’s beliefs and ideas.

Usage:

I would use this book with my middle students in a small group. I would guide them through the meanings and help them to understand all the underlying messages. They would then present what they learned to the rest of the class, like a book report.
They would have to be creative to allow for all the students to understand and be engaged.

**Readability:**

Flesh-Kincaid places this in the 7th grade reading level. According to Bader, the words are somewhat easy to decode, the vocabulary is well controlled, and it is generally matched to the grade level. The concepts are developed through the illustrations for the majority of the pages. The ideas are expressed clearly and directly and word choice is somewhat appropriate. I would have to disagree. I think it would be instructional on 2nd grade. I think with help, the students could understand it. I would not use it with my lower students, instead reading it aloud to them. I was very surprised by the results of the Flesh-Kincaid formula.

**Reference:**


4.) **Mystic Horse** by Paul Goble

Grade Level of Flesh-Kincaid: 11.8

**Summary:**

A young boy and his grandmother were very poor. They had no horses to carry their supplies as they followed the buffalo hunters. One day, the grandson found an old horse wandering between some trees. He took good care of the horse, but the other warriors laughed at him and his horse. One day, a warring tribe came to kill his tribe. The horse told him to cover his body in mud and ride him into the enemy 4 times. Each time...
the boy would hit an enemy with a stick. He was not supposed to go more than 4 times.
The boy struck 4 enemy warriors, but decided he would go again, since he had not gotten hurt. The last time, an arrow struck his horse and killed him. The boy mourned for the horse and the other members of the tribe felt bad for making fun of the boy and his horse. That night there is a terrible lightning storm. The horse is returned to the boy. He tells him to leave him alone behind the hill for 4 days. When the boy returns, the horse is still there, but he brought with him a huge herd of horses. Now the grandmother and her grandson will never be without a horse to ride while hunting buffalo.

Rationale:

I chose this book because of the fable quality to it. There is a lesson to learn, an animal that speaks, and a hero. The students can relate to it because they hear tales like this many times. They will be interested because it is about a horse and fighting. It gives the students another look at the culture of a tribe of Native Americans on the Plains.

Usage:

I would definitely use this book as a read aloud. The words are too hard for even my strongest reader. They can all understand and relate to the story, but not if they are trying to stumble through the words at the same time. We would go through and I would ask questions as we read. The students would have to take notes on the things they hear, look at the pictures and tell the details that show the students what region the Native Americans are in (the buffalo, the sparse country).

Readability:

Flesh-Kincaid puts this book at the 11th grade reading level. According to Bader, the words are somewhat easy to decode, the vocabulary is well controlled, and it is
generally matched to the grade level. The concepts are not highlighted or framed. The concepts are somewhat developed through the illustrations for the majority of the pages. The ideas are expressed clearly and directly and word choice is somewhat appropriate. I do not believe this book is as hard as the Flesh-Kincaid says it is. I feel it is maybe instructional at 3rd or 4th, but not 11th. That seems too high, even for the content of the material. I do believe it is higher than I originally anticipated, just glancing through it.

Reference:

5.) The Magic of Spider Woman by Lois Duncan

Grade Level of Flesh-Kincaid: 4.8

Summary:
This book tells the legend of why the Navajo weave blankets, and why they weave a passageway into each piece they create. The insects and animals came into the world and the Spirit created the Navajo people. These people were meant to keep a balance between work and rest and always stay within their borders. A woman is given the gift of weaving to keep her warm during Winter, but given the warning not to weave too long or let that become the purpose for her life. The woman ignores the warning and her spirit is trapped within the blanket. Spider Woman has to pull as thread out, creating a passageway for the woman’s spirit to come back to her. This is why Navajo women always weave a passageway into their pieces, so they never have to much pride as to think that it is perfect.

Rational:
I chose this book because it was one of the few stories I could find about the Navajo people. It is a good story and it still teaches a lesson. I like the lesson about not working so hard and not having so much pride to think that what you made is perfect.

**Usage:**

I would use this book as a read aloud. The material is very hard for the students to read. We would read it together, with scaffolding to allow for everyone to be on the same page. The story is an important one, and many of my students recognize the Navajo by their beautiful blankets and shawls that they make.

**Readability:**

Flesh-Kincaid put this at a 4.8 reading level. According to Bader, the words are not easy to decode, the vocabulary is somewhat controlled, and it is generally matched to the grade level. The concepts are not highlighted or framed. The concepts are somewhat developed through the illustrations for the majority of the pages. The ideas are expressed clearly and directly and word choice is somewhat appropriate. The author did not take prior knowledge into account. I agree that this book is not on a 2nd grade level, but I would put it higher than 4th grade. I would actually switch the reading level for this book with the *Mystic Horse* story. I think the words in that story are easier to read and understand than the words in *The Magic of Spider Woman*. I feel the students would still be engaged and get the heart of the lesson that I would be teaching them.

**Reference:**


6.) **Arrow to the Sun** by Gerald McDermott

Grade Level by Flesh-Kincaid: 1.5
Summary:

This story is about an arrow that came from a Spirit that sent it through the rays of the sun into the pueblo of a young maiden. This arrow became a young boy. The others teased him because he didn’t have a father. He decided he would go find his father. He talks to people along his journey, looking for anyone who can lead him to his father. He finally comes to Arrow Maker, who makes the Boy into an arrow and shoots him back to the sun. The boy speaks to the Spirit of the Sun, and the spirit tells him he must prove that he is his son. He has to beat the trials of the 4 kivas, the Kiva of Lions, Kiva of Serpents, Kiva of Bees, and the Kiva of lightning. When he emerges from the Kiva of Lightning, he is filled with the power of the sun. The father and son are happy, and the father sends the Boy back to earth to bring the spirit of the sun to the Pueblo people.

Rationale:

I have loved this book ever since I was a young girl. When I started this text set, this was the first book I thought of. The pictures are amazing and the story is memorable. The illustrations of the kivas are so detailed. I think my students would love this book as much as I do.

Usage:

I would use this book with all my readers, whether they are struggling, on grade level, or above grade level. I think this book really reaches all levels. The words are easy to decode, with short, simple sentences. I think it is a really good fit for this text set.

Readability:

Flesh-Kincaid put this at a 1.5 reading level. According to Bader, the words are somewhat easy to decode, the vocabulary is well controlled, and it is generally matched
to the grade level. The concepts are not highlighted or framed. The concepts are
developed through the illustrations for the majority of the pages. The ideas are expressed
clearly and directly and word choice is somewhat appropriate. The readability for this
book is right on. It is not too high for my low students or too low for my high students. I
think the book is exactly what I am looking for to use with this text set.

Reference:


   Readability Level of Flesh-Kincaid: 2.4

Summary:

This is an excerpt from a very long poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. It
details the complete life of a Native American named Hiawatha. In the first part, “Peace”,
Longfellow details how the nations were formed and tried to keep peace between each
other. The elders of the tribe worked with the elders of the other tribes to smoke the
peace-pipe and create a peaceful world to live in.

Rationale:

This is a very famous poem. I wanted my students to be exposed to it. I also wanted to
bring poetry into the text set, and into my students’ lives. This poem is difficult, but I
believe the students can understand it with help.

Usage:
I would use this poem as an introduction to the unit. There is so much information the students can learn from reading the poem. I would use it with all my students, but as a read aloud with them having a copy to read, highlight, and make notes on.

**Readability:**

Flesh-Kincaid put this at a 2.4. According to Bader, the words are somewhat easy to decode, the vocabulary is well controlled, and it is generally matched to the grade level. The concepts are not highlighted or framed. The concepts are developed through the illustrations for the majority of the pages. The ideas are expressed clearly and directly and word choice is somewhat appropriate. The author did not take into account the background knowledge of the reader (because he gave them the background knowledge as he wrote the poem). The words are not very difficult in this poem, but the content is. I agree with the Flesh-Kincaid. I think my students could read this on their own, but they would struggle with the meaning behind it. I do not want to sacrifice their comprehension, so I would use this as a read aloud and guide them through the information.

**Reference:**


8.) “Hiawatha” from United Streaming (video)

Grade Level of Flesh-Kincaid: Not Applicable

**Summary:**

This is a video of the long Longfellow poem.
Rationale:

I wanted to students who had trouble with the poem to get a basic understanding. When you can view the text you are reading, you understand it even more.

Usage:

I would use this video at the end of the unit. It would be a culminating activity. It would be used for all my students, but targeted at my struggling readers. I want to give them another look at the poem, in another way.

Readability:

Not Applicable

Reference:

“Hiawatha”, accessed from www.unitedstreaming.com

Works Cited


“Hiawatha”, accessed from www.unitedstreaming.com


