The Sun Still Rises...

Reading Check
1. Why did scholars have problems recognizing the traditions of Native American literature?
2. What three generalizations does Bruchac make about American Indian oral traditions?
3. Identify three comparisons Bruchac makes between American Indian and Western views of the world.

Thinking Critically
4. What does Bruchac’s title suggest?
5. What does the emphasis on oral literature tell you about Native American cultures?

The Sky Tree

Reading Check
1. According to this myth, what was the world like in the beginning?
2. What happens when Aataentsic cuts the tree?
3. How does this myth explain the origin of the earth as we know it today?

Thinking Critically
4. Would the people who told this myth feel hostile or supportive toward the natural world? Why?
5. What aspects of the settings in this myth are archetypes? What other stories have used the same archetypes?

The Earth Only

Thinking Critically
1. What does the idea repeated in the last three lines of this chant signify about the position of old men in this culture?
2. What profound philosophical comment does “The Earth Only” make by what it leaves out? In other words, what does not endure?

Coyote Finishes His Work

Reading Check
1. What aspects of life on earth are explained in this myth?
2. Metamorphoses, or shape changes, are common in myths of all cultures. What metamorphoses take place in this myth?
3. What does this myth promise for the future?

Thinking Critically
4. Old Man says that when he returns, earth “will require a change.” What do you think he means?
5. What does the archetype of the Earthmother in this story reveal about the Nez Perce vision of nature?