

Maui's Fish

by Susan Paris

Summary

For thousands of years, people have been telling myths to explain events in the natural world. The people of Hawaii tell this tale of Maui and his “big catch” to explain the origin of their islands.

Features of the Text

- Retelling of a myth
- Simple past tense
- Third-person narrative
- Based on oral tradition
- Explains origin of things in the natural world

Purpose

Maui's Fish can be used for the following purposes:

- introducing the ideas and vocabulary in the associated nonfiction title;
- exploring the features of myths;
- making inferences.

Guided Reading Summary

Introducing the text

Ask the students to look at the cover, the title page, and the illustration on page 3. Explain that this story is the retelling of a traditional Hawaiian myth.

- *What do you know about myths?* (traditionally told to explain natural phenomena)
- *What can you infer about the culture that first told this myth?* (lived in a warm climate, fishing important)

Reading and discussing the text

Ask the students to read to the end of page 5.

- *How would you describe Maui's relationship with his brothers?*
- *What do you think Maui's special powers might be?*

Explain that myths and traditional stories often contain tension between characters, trickery, and people who have special powers. Ask the students to read to the end of page 9 looking for examples of these.

- *How is Maui using his special powers?*
- *Why do you think characters with special powers often feature in myths?*

Ask the students to read to the end of the story. Discuss other myths they have read or heard.

- *How are myths influenced by the culture that created them?*
- *How are the stories of a culture influenced by the environment?*

Following Up:

The students can:

- use the blackline master on page 85 to write myths that explain other natural phenomena
- write another myth about how Hawaii was formed
- research how the islands of Hawaii were formed.