

Native American Folklore
Song of the Hermit Thrush

Name: _____
Mod: _____

1. In the first section of this activity, you will listen and read a Native American folktale entitled, *Song of the Hermit Thrush*.
2. Next, you will read an excerpt from *Song of Myself* by Walt Whitman and answer the questions that follow:



*In the swamp, in secluded recesses,
A shy and hidden bird is warbling a song.
Solitary, the thrush,
The hermit, withdrawn to himself, avoiding the settlements,
Sings by himself a song.*

A. What animal is focused on in the poem? _____

B. Highlight these words in the poem: *secluded recesses solitary hermit*
In the chart below, describe what you think these words mean. Look back at the context clues in the poem for ideas.

Secluded	Recesses	Solitary	Hermit

C. Why do you think the thrush is alone in this poem? Brainstorm three ideas of why he might be alone. Ex. *The thrush is alone because he does not fit in with the other birds.*

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

3. In line two, what part of speech is the word *warbling*?

- a. noun
- b. adjective
- c. verb
- d. adverb

4. Using the information from the story, why is the bird *withdrawn to himself* (line 4) in the poem?

5. From the story, describe the instructions the Great Spirit gives the birds in order to receive a song to sing.

6. The story, *Song of the Hermit Thrush*, is teaching how features of the world came to be. Which of these statements best describes what the story is trying to teach?

- a. How birds got their wings
- b. Why the Hermit Thrush lives alone
- c. How birds received their songs and why the Hermit Thrush lives alone.
- d. Why the Hermit Thrush lives alone and how birds got their wings.

7. Which of the following statements is not a fact from the story?

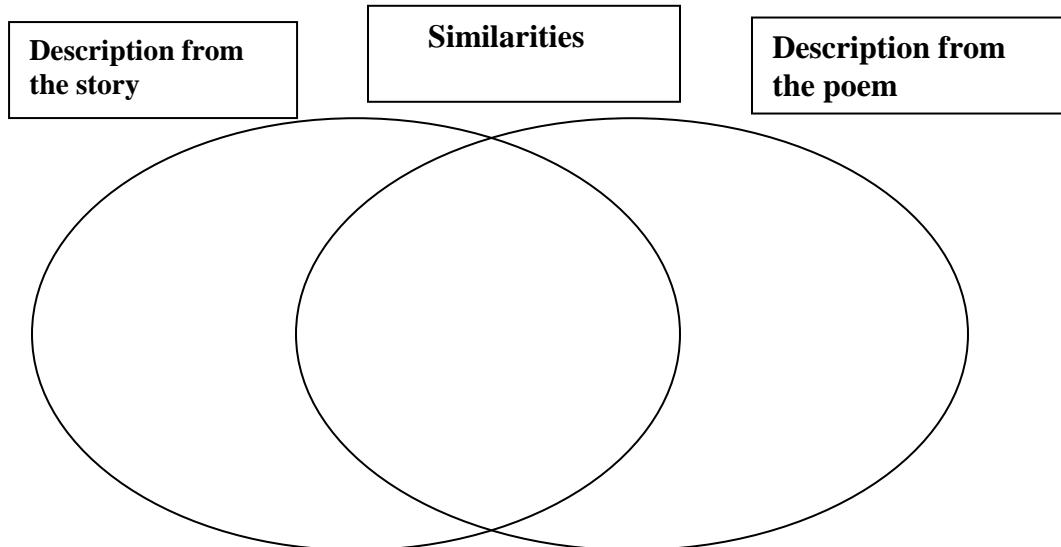
- a. The eagle did not know the Hermit Thrush was hiding under his feathers
- b. The other birds forced the Hermit Thrush to live alone in the forest
- c. The Good Spirit wanted birds to have songs
- d. The Hermit Thrush received the most beautiful song.

8. What moral did the Iroquois adults hope to teach their children when telling this story?

- a. Think before you speak
- b. Cheaters never win
- c. Be polite
- d. Chew with your mouth closed

9. Graphic Organizer:

Compare the story you heard with the poem. What are the similarities and the differences between the descriptions of the Hermit Thrush? Comment on his physical characteristics, his personality, and his surroundings.



10. Why did the Hermit Thrush cheat? What did he think he would gain from cheating? What were the consequences of his cheating?

Think about: what did he gain and what did he lose?

11. Do you think the Hermit Thrush could be forgiven for what he did? Why or why not? Write your response below. Be sure to support your answer with evidence from the story or the poem.



- Choose one idea from above and create a creative ending to the story to explain why the hermit thrush is alone. Please write this in 2-3 sentences.
- Illustrate your ending.
