

Topic Sentences in Legends

Overview:

Students read paragraphs about aurora legends and identify the topic sentence in each paragraph.

Objectives:

The student will:

- identify the topic sentence of a paragraph; and
- summarize a paragraph.

Materials:

- Highlighters (one per student)
- STUDENT WORKSHEET: “Topic Sentences in Legends”



Activity Procedure:

1. Distribute the STUDENT WORKSHEET: “Topic Sentences in Legends” to students. Ask students to read each legend. Point out that each legend is written as a complete paragraph.
2. Explain that complete paragraphs should have a topic sentence. The topic sentence, usually the first sentence in a paragraph, introduces the main idea of the paragraph.
3. Work as a group to identify the topic sentence and main idea of the first paragraph. Help students identify the first sentence in this paragraph as the topic sentence. This sentence explains the paragraph’s main idea (or theme): The Ottawas believed the Northern Lights were a message from the creator-hero.
4. Ask students to highlight the topic sentence of each of the first two paragraphs.
5. Review or explain how to summarize. Instruct students to summarize the third paragraph on their worksheets.

Answers to Student Worksheet:

*The first sentence of each paragraph should be highlighted.
The third paragraph should be summarized.*

Topic Sentences in Legends

Directions: Read the first two paragraphs below. Highlight the topic sentence in each paragraph. The topic sentence introduces the main idea (or theme) of a paragraph. The topic sentence usually is the first sentence of a paragraph.

Manitoulin Island, Canada

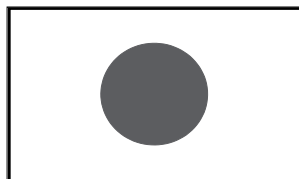


According to a legend recorded in 1850 by the Ottawas of Manitoulin Island in Lake Huron, the Northern Lights were a message from the creator-hero Nanahboozhoo, who restored the earth after the Flood and then went to live in the North. He told his people before he left that he would always watch over them. As a sign of his good will, he promised he would light large fires in the sky and that they would appear to the people as Northern Lights. Thus, the Northern Lights stand as a sign of harmony and trust between a people and their creator.

Canada

The Inuit of Canada believed the power of the Northern Lights could be used to cure disease. In 1920, Knud Rasmussen discovered that the aurora was in great demand as a helping spirit for the best shamans. It was the responsibility of the Inuit healers to make spirit journeys into the Northern Lights to get advice about how to treat sickness and how to rescue spirits from death.

Directions: Read the following paragraph. Summarize the paragraph in your own words in the space below. Be sure to follow the correct form in your summary: state the topic, provide a supporting statement and a conclusion.



Japan

The Japanese people believe that the Northern Lights were connected with the ability of a woman to become pregnant. This legend probably originates in ancient China. In 2,600 B.C., a Chinese record reveals that “the mother of the Yellow Emperor saw a big lightning circulating around the Su star of Bei Don (in the Big Dipper) with the light shining all over the field and then became pregnant.” To this day, many Japanese honeymooners visit northern Canada each year to see the aurora. They believe that a child conceived in the spell of the lights will be very lucky.