

Inquiry Journal

Name: _____ **Date:** _____ **Class:** _____

Directions: Read each of the supporting questions. For each “K,” write what you already **KNOW** about the topic. For each “W,” write what you **WONDER** about the topic.

Topic 1: Stories, Knowledge, and Power Supporting Questions	
LESSON 1	<i>What can origin stories tell us about how different cultures understand their place in the world?</i>
	K:
	W:
LESSON 2	<i>What can be learned by comparing dominant and non-dominant narratives about the origins of the universe?</i>
	K:
	W:
LESSON 3	<i>In what ways do stereotypes and single stories limit the understanding of the people and events of the past?</i>
	K:
	W:
LESSON 4	<i>How do we know what we know—and why does that matter across cultures and communities?</i>
	K:
	W:



Topic 1: Stories, Knowledge, and Power **Compelling Question**

How do the stories we tell shape what we know about the world and each other?

Directions: Read the compelling question. Explain what you **LEARNED** throughout the unit with a Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning (CER) paragraph.



Directions: Read each of the supporting questions. For each “K,” write what you already **KNOW** about the topic. For each “W,” write what you **WONDER** about the topic.

Topic 2: Trauma, Healing, and Historical Continuity Supporting Questions	
LESSON 5	<i>How does historical trauma, such as colonization, land theft, or forced removal cause harm to communities—and what are the long-term effects?</i>
	K:
	W:
LESSON 6	<i>What traditional practices have Indigenous communities used to preserve language, culture, and healing—and why are they essential for survival and identity?</i>
	K:
	W:



Topic 2: Trauma, Healing, and Historical Continuity

Compelling Question:

How do Indigenous communities confront the lasting harms of historical trauma through cultural practices that protect identity, restore well-being, and ensure survival?

Directions: Read the compelling question. Explain what you **LEARNED** throughout the unit with a Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning (CER) paragraph.



Essential Question

How have origin stories and cultural ways of knowing shaped what communities believe, how they live, and how they understand their place in history?

Directions: Read the essential question. Explain what you LEARNED throughout the unit with a Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning (CER) paragraph.



Paragraph Template

Claim, Evidence, Reasoning

CLAIM (Your argument)	
EVIDENCE #1 (Facts, examples, sources)	
REASONING #1 (Explanation of how the evidence supports the claim)	
EVIDENCE #2 (Facts, examples, sources)	
REASONING #2 (Explanation of how the evidence supports the claim)	



Unit 2: Origin Stories and Ways of Knowing

Inquiry Journal (Exemplar)

Name: _____ Date: _____ Class: _____

Directions: Read each of the supporting questions. For each “K,” write what you already **KNOW** about the topic. For each “W,” write what you **WONDER** about the topic.

Topic 1: Stories, Knowledge, and Power Supporting Questions	
LESSON 1	<i>What can origin stories tell us about how different cultures understand their place in the world?</i>
	K: Different cultures have different stories about how the world began.
	W: How do these stories influence the ways that people live today?
LESSON 2	<i>What can be learned by comparing dominant and non-dominant narratives about the origins of the universe?</i>
	K: Dominant narratives are the ones more likely to be known.
	W: Why are some stories more widely accepted and taught?
LESSON 3	<i>In what ways do stereotypes and single stories limit the understanding of the people and events of the past?</i>
	K: Stereotypes are oversimplified ideas.
	W: How can I tell if a story is limiting or stereotypical?
LESSON 4	<i>How do we know what we know—and why does that matter across cultures and communities?</i>
	K: People learn from stories, science, religion, traditions, and observations.
	W: Who decides what counts as knowledge?



Topic 1: Stories, Knowledge, and Power

Compelling Question

How do the stories we tell shape what we know about the world and each other?

Directions: Read the compelling question. Explain what you **LEARNED** throughout the unit with a Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning (CER) paragraph.

The stories we tell have a powerful impact on how we understand the world and view different cultures. In her TED Talk *"The Danger of a Single Story,"* Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie explains that her American roommate had a limited view of Africa because she had only heard negative stories about it. This shows how repeating one perspective can create stereotypes, making it harder to see people as complex or equal. Indigenous origin stories like the Haudenosaunee and Hopi emphasize relationships with land and community, while dominant stories like Genesis or the Big Bang are more widely taught in schools and media. This highlights how dominant narratives can overshadow other ways of knowing, limiting understanding of different cultural values and beliefs. When more voices are included, we get a fuller, more accurate picture of the world.



Directions: Read each of the supporting questions. For each “K,” write what you already **KNOW** about the topic. For each “W,” write what you **WONDER** about the topic.

Topic 2: Trauma, Healing, and Historical Continuity Supporting Questions	
LESSON 5	<i>How does historical trauma, such as colonization, land theft, or forced removal cause harm to communities—and what are the long-term effects?</i>
	K: Colonization involved violence and land being taken away.
	W: Why haven't the effects of colonization gone away after so many years?
LESSON 6	<i>What traditional practices have Indigenous communities used to preserve language, culture, and healing—and why are they essential for survival and identity?</i>
	K: Some Indigenous people still speak their native language.
	W: Why is language so important to identity?



Topic 2: Trauma, Healing, and Historical Continuity

Compelling Question:

How do Indigenous communities confront the lasting harms of historical trauma through cultural practices that protect identity, restore well-being, and ensure survival?

Directions: Read the compelling question. Explain what you **LEARNED** throughout the unit with a Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning (CER) paragraph.

Indigenous communities confront the lasting harms of historical trauma by revitalizing cultural practices that protect identity and restore well-being. Following colonization, land theft, and forced removal, many Indigenous peoples experienced cultural suppression, loss of language, and disconnection from sacred traditions. In response, communities have turned to healing circles, language revitalization, traditional foods, and ceremonies to rebuild what was lost. These practices are not just symbolic—they are rooted in deep knowledge systems that promote mental, emotional, and communal healing. Language, for example, carries cultural values, while ceremonies reconnect people with their ancestors and land. Programs like immersion schools, landback initiatives, and youth-led cultural camps demonstrate the ongoing efforts to pass on traditions and reclaim autonomy. These efforts address generational trauma while empowering the next generation. By anchoring healing in cultural knowledge, Indigenous communities assert their right to exist on their own terms. This continuity affirms identity and creates pathways for collective recovery. In reclaiming and practicing traditional ways of knowing, Indigenous communities transform trauma into resilience, ensuring their survival and strength across generations.



Essential Question

How have origin stories and cultural ways of knowing shaped what communities believe, how they live, and how they understand their place in history?

Directions: Read the essential question. Explain what you LEARNED throughout the unit with a Claim, Evidence, and Reasoning (CER) paragraph.

Origin stories and cultural ways of knowing have significantly shaped what communities believe, how they live, and how they understand their place in history. For example, many Indigenous communities in North America pass down origin stories through oral history that connect their people to specific landforms, animals, and spiritual forces. These stories influence daily practices, such as ceremonies, food traditions, and ecological stewardship, because they provide meaning and guidance that are tied to ancestral memory and identity. Similarly, the griot tradition in West African cultures preserves generational knowledge about leadership, family lineages, and values through spoken storytelling and music. Because griots serve as cultural memory keepers, their stories help communities see themselves as part of a long historical continuum and reinforce a sense of pride and self-determination. In modern classrooms, students who study origin stories from multiple cultures begin to understand that there are diverse ways of knowing—such as oral, spiritual, and experiential—beyond just the written or scientific. This broadens how history is understood and valued, challenging dominant narratives and giving space to marginalized communities to define their own place in the past and present.

