A brief overview of the influence of Native Americans on early American Literature.
Concepts

- To appreciate literary contributions of early American tribes to the canon of American literature
  - examine a sampling of Native American creation stories and legends
  - appreciate the rich culture of the Native American people
  - appreciate the oral literary traditions of Native American tribes
  - Appreciate the reverence for nature shown in Native American literature
Terms to know...

- oral tradition
- archetype
- trickster figure
- metamorphosis
Oral Tradition

- Form used in early Native American storytelling to pass the tribe’s history and culture from one generation to the next. **Rhythm, rhyme, and repetition** were important elements.
Archetypes

- This is a pattern that appears across cultures and is repeated through the ages.
- **Character**: hero, villain, higher being, trickster figure*
- **Situations**: quest, task, good vs. evil
- **Image**: ex. golden cup
Trickster Figure

- an archetype
- usually an animal
- a mischievous figure who is cunning and uses humor
- not completely unlikable

*Think Wile E. Coyote from *Looney Tunes*

“Jumping into thin air like Wile E. Coyote.” [http://timeless.justdave.net/blog/11/7](http://timeless.justdave.net/blog/11/7) 10/21/2014.
Metamorphosis

- This is an element often seen in Native American literature that depicts animals being able to change into humans or other animals.

- Meaning: a major change in the appearance of something or someone.
Nature is ALSO an important theme woven throughout Native American Literature.

- Great respect for nature
The Story Teller

- Most tribes had a person designated as the Story Teller
- Most honored and respected position
- Generation to generation
- Understood the importance and purpose of stories to the culture of the tribe and the preservation of its history
The Native Americans have a culture rich in history and tradition.
There are many oral legends and histories. There are many tribes!
Each tribe is distinct... the tribes vary in language, location, historical background, and beliefs.
A matter of chronology...

- Many of the oral histories were written down in later centuries...some as recent as the 20\textsuperscript{th} century.
- What we read is a 19\textsuperscript{th} or 20\textsuperscript{th} century writer’s interpretation of the oral histories.

Purpose and audience

- Oral tradition v. Literary (text) tradition
Across Cultures...

“‘When a Griot dies, it is as if a library has burned to the ground.’”

- Alex Haley, author of *Roots*

- *a griot is a story teller from Africa*
In the next four minutes, write a response to the information you just learned. You must write the entire four minutes, so keep pushing yourself!

Be objective – include facts you’ve learned as well as important terms or definitions.

Be subjective – include your connections and responses to the information...tell what is new to you or tell how this affects your perception of American literature.
Native American Literature Analysis

- Creation stories
  - From “Walum Olum” – Delaware (in class)
  - “Godasiyo, the Woman Chief” – Seneca (handout)
  - “The Sky Tree” – Huron (textbook p. 24)
  - “The Pima Creation Story” – Pima (handout)
  - “The Iroquois Creation Myth” – Iroquois (handout)
Native American Literature Analysis

- **Legends**
  - “Coyote and the Buffalo” – Okanogan (handout)
  - “Coyote Finishes His Work” – Nez Perce (textbook p. 25)
  - *Raven* – Pacific Northwest (paperback)
Assignments

- Today, read FOUR selections. Record info on the graphic organizer handout.
- Tomorrow, you’ll be working with a partner/group to more closely analyze a selection. We’ll be sharing this info with the class.
- We will be completing a comparison & contrast writing activity with a focus on these Native American stories in class soon.