



Reading for Information: Oral Narratives

Strategy Focus: *Marking the Text, Rereading, Summarizing/ Paraphrasing, Word Map*

What is an Oral Narrative?

What is an oral narrative? To answer this question you need to know what the words *oral* and *narrative* mean. Maybe you know **oral** means *spoken*. Did you also know **narrative** is another word for *story*? An oral narrative is a spoken story. Oral narratives are the stories people tell.

Oral + Narrative = Spoken Story

People have been telling stories for a long time. Some oral narratives are thousands of years old. These stories were told before writing was invented. Long ago adults told stories to children. When these children grew up they told the same stories. This is how oral narratives were passed on.

Now many oral narratives have been written down. Some are written down exactly as they are told. When you read these stories they sound like someone is speaking. They sound like the storyteller. Some oral narratives are changed when they are written down. Words and sentences are changed. These stories sound more like a story book. Oral narratives are best when you can see and hear the storyteller. A talented storyteller can make an oral narrative come to life.



Learning from Oral Narratives

You can learn a lot from oral narratives. You can learn about history and science. You can learn about the land. You can learn about the people who came before you. You can learn about your culture. You can learn how to treat others. If an oral narrative belongs to your family you can learn about your past. If a story belongs to your clan you can learn who you are and where you came from. Oral narratives are full of important information.

Examples of Oral Narratives

- Telling a friend about something that happened to you.
- Telling a friend about something that happened to somebody else.
- Telling a family story.
- Listening to a relative tell a family story.
- Listening to an adult tell about a childhood experience.
- Listening to a Tlingit elder tell a clan story.
- Clan songs

In your own words:

