

American Literature
Study Guide - World on Turtle's Back.tgt

Name: _____ Date: _____

	Not Important	Very Important
1. To instill a sense of awe toward the mystery of the universe		
2. To explain the workings of the natural world		
3. To support and validate social customs		
4. To guide people through the trials of living		

1. Think about Joseph Campbell's ideas concerning the functions of myths. Then, on the shaded bars above, make a mark in the appropriate spot to show how important you think each function is in this myth. In the box below each bar, write notes explaining your reasons for rating each function's importance as you did.

Read over the questions below and think about the characters and events in the selection. Then answer each question in one or two sentences.

2. What is the source of the roots that the woman from the sky planted on the turtle's back?

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3. Why are the twins in conflict even before their birth?

4. How do the twins create balance in the world?

5. Why does the left-handed twin choose a "mere stick" to fight the duel, while the right-handed twin selects a deer antler?

6. What happens to the left-handed twin after the duel?

Answer Sheet

1. 1. Notes will vary. Students could rank "to instill a sense of awe toward the universe" as moderately or completely unimportant because
 - a. by explaining many aspects of the universe, the myth takes away from its awesomeness.
 - b. The Great Tree in the sky is the only element of the universe that appears to inspire awe in the characters and the narrator.
2. Notes will vary. Students could rank "to explain the workings of the natural world" as very important because the myth attempts to explain
 - a. how the world was created.
 - b. how people were created.
 - c. why human nature contains constructive and destructive aspects.
3. Notes will vary. Students could rank "to support and validate customs" as moderately important because the myth explains
 - a. the meaning behind certain rituals and ceremonies.
 - b. the need to continue practicing those rituals and ceremonies.
4. Notes will vary. Students could rank "to guide people through the trials of living" as moderately or completely unimportant because the myth
 - a. doesn't directly tell people how to lead their lives.
 - b. doesn't focus on the behavior of ordinary humans.
2. The roots came from the Sky-World. The woman had them clutched between her fingers when she fell.
3. The right-handed twin wants to be born in the normal way; the left-handed twin wants to be born in the direction where he sees light.
4. Possible responses: The right-handed twin makes berries and fruits for creatures to live on, suggesting a life-giving approach. The left-handed twin makes briars, poison ivy, and poisonous plants, suggesting a more destructive approach. The right-handed twin creates plant-eating animals; the left-handed twin creates carnivorous animals. The plant-eating animals would eat up all the vegetation if their number were not kept down by meat-eating animals. The population of meat-eating animals was controlled, too; if they ate too many animals, they would run out of meat and starve.
5. Both twins know what is going to happen; they know how the right-handed twin will kill his brother.
6. Possible response: He dies, but still lives and reigns some place below the world. People pay respect to both twins. In their daytime rituals, they honor and thank the right-handed twin. In the nighttime, they sing and dance for the left-handed twin.

Standards Summary: All Standards In Test

SAT 9 2.2.1	Specific Detail
Terra Nova 1.1.1	identifying stated information
Terra Nova 2.2.1	plot
Terra Nova 2.2	Identifying theme and story elements such as plot, climax, character and setting.