

# Great Serpent and the Great Flood and Vocabulary

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## Section Objective:

- Reading skills: Monitor reading comprehension; evaluate an author's argument; and identify cause and effect
- Vocabulary: Analyze similes; understand synonyms and epithets; understand words from folktales; and understand idioms
- Literary skills: Understand the way a work of literature is related to its historical period



### **Chippewa Myth “Great Serpent and the Great flood”**

#### **Cause and Effect**

Nanabozho returned to his lodge and found his cousin missing (cause). He then picked up his bow and arrow and went out to find the enemy, the serpent (effect). He found the serpent and evil spirits and his dead cousin (effect). That is when he decided to get revenge on the serpent (effect).

He talked to the wind and the sun to help him (cause). The water in the lake boiled and made the serpent and evil spirits to seek the coolness of the shore (effect) where Nanabozho had turned himself into a stump, ready to wait the serpent and the evil spirits (effect).

Patiently, Nanabozho waited for the serpents and evil spirit to sleep. Once they were asleep (cause), Nanbozho hit the serpent squarely with an arrow(effect). The great serpent and evil spirits dove back into the lake and tore Nanabozho's cousin apart (cause), and his lungs rose to the surface and covered the lake with whiteness (effect).

The great serpent and the evil spirit caused the waters in the lake to rise and flood the area to kill Nanbozho(cause). Nanbozho ran up the highest mountain he could find, beyond Lake Superior, and he built a raft so that he and others could survive the flood (cause). For many days, they floated until the wasters subsided and then learned that the great serpent was dead, the evil spirits were sent back to the depths of the lake where they would remain foreve, and everyone was safe (effect).

The Chippewa, or Ojibwe, are the third-largest Native American group in the United States. Today there are about 56,440 Ojibwe living in the United States, mostly in the northern region stretching from Montana to Michigan.

## *Folklore*

Native American tales are part of American folklore. They are used by Native Americans to help explain much of the nature that surrounds them. Many are in the form of myths.

## *Myth*



The “Great Serpent and the Great Flood” is a myth probably used to explain the Great Flood that Noah and his ark survived. There is much research that confirms that the flood was a real event. Perhaps, through the tales that they passed on, the Chippewa are reporting what their ancestors experienced.

Also, there are more religious implications – the serpent, innocent death, ascent of the mountain, rescue, survival. Nanabozho is the defender of good and the protector of the innocent.

## *Vocabulary Practice*

### **Simile**

A simile is a comparison using like or as.

**Example:** Her tears were like dew drops.

*(Her tears are similar to dew drops.)*

“Great Serpent and the Great Flood”

**Directions:** Find the two similes in this tale.

1. Write a few similes that could refer to people you know.

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## **Growth Activities**

1. Research and read more Native American tales.