

TÂPWÊ

and the Magic Hat



COMPANION GUIDE



Title: *Tâpwê and the Magic Hat*

Author: Buffy Sainte-Marie

Illustrator: Buffy Sainte-Marie and Michelle Alynn Clement

Genre: Fiction

Themes: Indigenous studies, legends, traditional storytelling, risk-taking and self-exploration, family relationships

Suitable for: 6-10 years; Grades 1-5

Guided Reading Level: T

Lexile Level: 740

Common Core Standards:

RL.5.1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9

W.5.3,3a,3b,3c,3d,4,5,6,9

SL.5.1,1a,1b,1c,1d,2,3,4,5,6

L.5.1,2,2a,2b,2c,2d,2e,3,3a,4,4a,4b,4c,5b,5c,6

Also available in Cree from Greystone Kids

tâpwê êkwa mamâhtâwastotin, translated by Solomon Ratt

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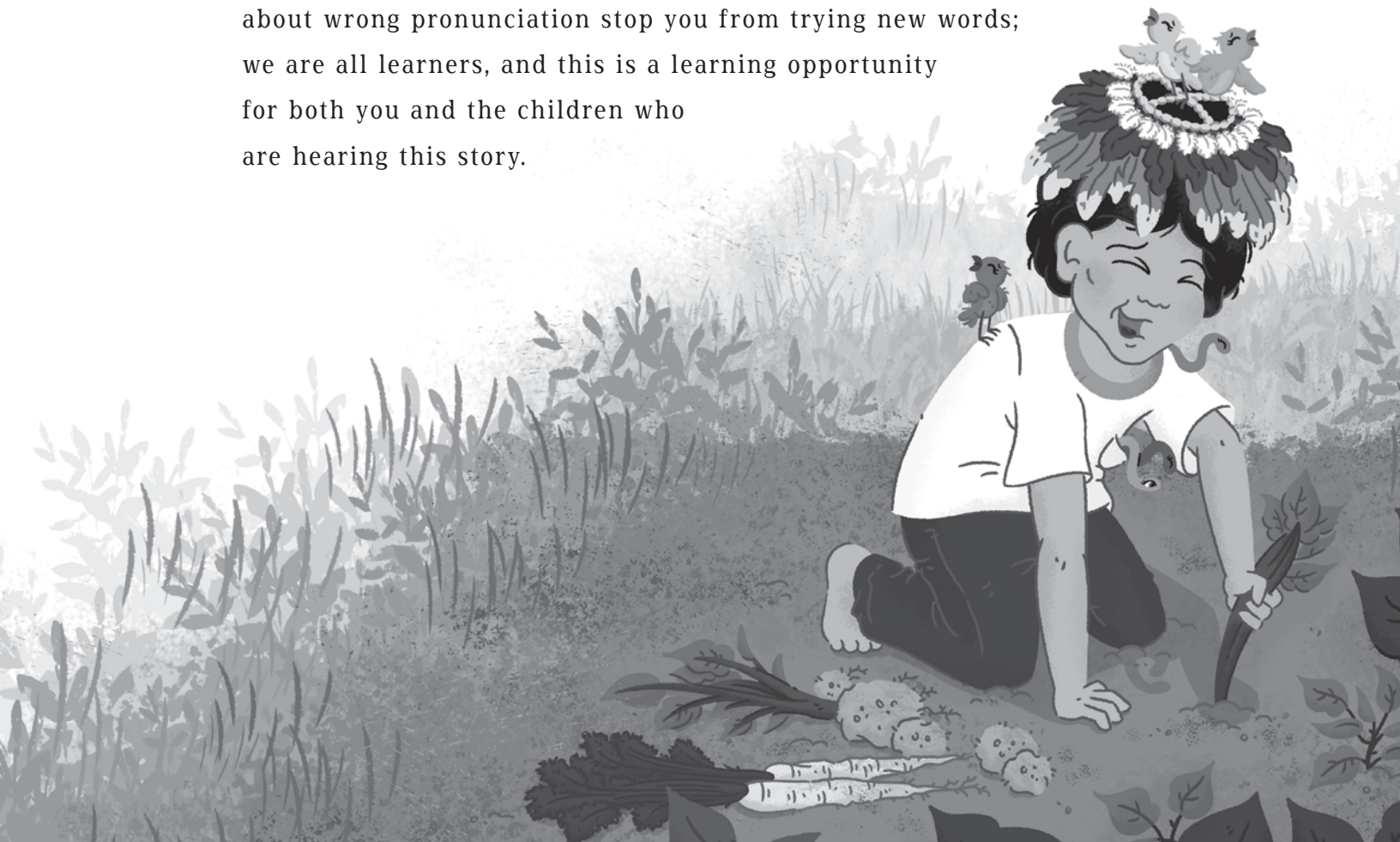
Introduction

The importance of Indigenous Peoples' knowledge, culture, history, and community in learning cannot be overstated. Everyone lives on the traditional territory of an Indigenous People, regardless of where they are. Bringing in the culture and community of our children allows people to see the importance of their own background. Bringing in the culture and community that is not our own creates a richness of experience and learning that is essential for growth—mentally, emotionally, and socially.

You can create rich learning opportunities about Indigenous Peoples regardless of whether you are a member of the community you are discussing, but providing children with the opportunity to learn about a culture and community from someone who is a member of that community is the best method. As educators and parents, you are facilitators who provide the space and time for community members to be the teachers. Only someone from an Indigenous community can speak authentically about their culture, community, and experiences. It is good practice to place yourself, and state what your background is, if you are not from the culture you are speaking about. We are all from different backgrounds, and expanding our understanding is important for building healthy communities.

Elders and knowledge keepers can speak about lived experiences and provide authentic cultural knowledge. Going to community cultural events, or attending presentations where an Indigenous person is the speaker, are also great learning experiences. Including the works of Indigenous authors, artists, musicians, and storytellers provides the authentic Indigenous Voices needed for quality learning experiences.

Often, Indigenous texts include Indigenous language(s), as well as English or French. It is important to include the Indigenous words into a reading of a text. There are many dictionaries and websites online that provide additional information—such as how to pronounce the words and what they mean. Word translations do not always do a word justice, and there is often a deeper meaning and connection to culture that the Indigenous word includes (besides just a direct translation). Having a speaker of the language talk about what a word means will provide a greater understanding for the reader. As well, it is important to try the words yourself. Don't let your concerns about wrong pronunciation stop you from trying new words; we are all learners, and this is a learning opportunity for both you and the children who are hearing this story.





Before Reading



1. Provide an author introduction. Who is Buffy Sainte-Marie? What is her background? Her lived experiences and interests will give you clues about the story. You can find information on her website: <https://buffysainte-marie.com/>
2. Using the cover art and pictures from *Tâpwê and the Magic Hat*, predict what the story could be about. The age of the reader will determine how many images to use, but three to five images are recommended. Predicting can be done in groups of two to three children, in larger groups, or individually. Children can record their predictions through writing a paragraph or two, or as a group story recorded by an adult.
3. Have you ever gone to stay with relatives without your immediate family? Discuss this question with the children. Have them talk a bit about the experience, and about how they felt both at the beginning of the stay and just before they left.
4. Read the Note to Parents and Teachers (pages 134–35), and the Glossary (pages 136–39) before you read the story. This will help you to understand more when reading the story. Practice saying words from the glossary to familiarize yourself with the words and the sound of the words. If an entire class is reading the book, create a display with some or all of the words (with pronunciations and images of the definition included) on a board so that the children can see it before they read or listen to the story. Images and names of main characters could also be displayed to spark interest.



During Reading

1. After reading Chapter 1, discuss the possible benefits of a magic hat. What would a magic hat enable you to do?
2. As you read the story, keep a list of the different traits, characteristics, and actions of Wâpos, the trickster character. At the end of the book, write a character summary of Wâpos as he appears in this story.
3. Have you ever been to a powwow? Discuss what happens at the powwow Tâpwê attends. Is it similar to one you have been to? If the children have never been to a powwow, find videos on YouTube to see a real powwow so a comparison can be made. Additional information can be found in *My Summer on the Pow-wow Trail*, available here: <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1303138515580/1534960654974>
4. What kinds of activities and adventures do you do when you are bored or for play? Are there games you play that don't require anything except your imagination?
5. After reading Chapter 10, predict what you think is going to happen to Tâpwê, now that he is acting like Wâpos.
6. After Chapter 15, Tâpwê and Willie get to help Mr. Kaiswatum thank the Creator in a small ceremony. He uses sweetgrass in the story, but there are other medicines that can also be used. Have an Elder or knowledge keeper explain about the four medicines (sweetgrass, sage, cedar, and tobacco) and smudging ceremonies.



After Reading



1. Complete a character sketch of Tâpwê or Wâpos. Children will select five to six words that describe the character. Have the children then provide a quote or example from the story for each of the words that describe Tâpwê or Wâpos. Discuss if Tâpwê or Wâpos is someone you would like to be friends with.
2. This story covers themes of friendship and being true to one's own self. Choose one of these two themes for this activity. Using a Venn diagram, have the children fill one circle with all the traits and actions they associate with the chosen theme on their own piece of paper, then share ideas with the class to make one large class Venn diagram. Now, have the children go to their own sheet and fill out examples of their chosen theme as described in *Tâpwê and the Magic Hat*. Once again, share examples from the book for the larger diagram. Then, find the similarities between the two circles and write them in the area that overlaps. Through these shared traits found between themselves and the book, the children could create statements about friendship or self-truth that can be displayed in the classroom or used as reminders for daily behavior expectations.
3. Have Elders and/or knowledge keepers from a local Indigenous community come in to tell some trickster stories, as well as a bit about their culture and traditions. Have the children describe the traits of the trickster in the oral stories. Get to know about that trickster and its role in the culture of the storyteller.



Jigsaw Activity

Go to the library and find picture books that contain stories about tricksters such as Coyote, Wâpos, Raven, Glooscap, Wisakedjak, Nanabush, Napi, Chi-Jean, or others. The names may vary slightly in spelling. There are many short videos available through YouTube and other websites that could be used in place of or in combination with books. Note that not all supernatural beings in Indigenous stories are tricksters.

When looking for trickster books, find stories that are written by or in partnership with an Indigenous person or Nation about their own community and culture; this will ensure that the story is appropriate and not appropriated. For more information about Indigenous Voice, go to: <https://jackielever.weebly.com/indigenous-voice.html>

Not every trickster is the same, as some may be cruel while others are benign. Each Indigenous Nation has their own stories, so these tricksters are not interchangeable. Recognizing similarities between tricksters can be useful to gain a better understanding of their roles in Indigenous stories and cultures.

Choose as many different tricksters as possible while being able to create groups of four to six children. Each group will be the expert group on one trickster. If this activity is done with a small number of children, each child will be responsible for one trickster.

Have the children read a book (preferably more than one book) about a single trickster. Have them create a list of characteristics of the trickster. They are each an expert on this character. Then, rearrange the groups so that each group has a single expert for each different trickster. The children will now share the information about their trickster. Each combined group will then find similarities between their tricksters to create a summary of essential traits of tricksters.



Expert Project

Using the information and stories gathered about different tricksters, create a classroom display of each character. Create a picture of what the trickster may look like as the centerpiece. Around the image, display quotes from stories about them, write things they may say, or provide examples of how they may try to trick you. The picture could be a drawing, painting, or collage of images. Each display could also recommend books, videos, and more. Invite other classes to the display, and the children can teach about trickster stories as expert guides.