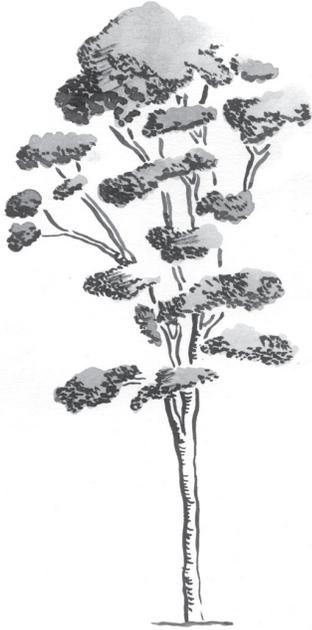




Reading a text

Read this **text**, then answer the questions in complete sentences.

The Voice of Nature



An Aboriginal myth from southern Australia relates how, in the beginning, the voice of the Ancestor spoke each day from a great gum tree, and the tribe gathered around to listen. But as time went by the people grew weary of hearing his words of wisdom. One by one they turned their backs on the voice to pursue their own pleasures, and a vast silence settled over the whole of the land and the sea. There was no wind and the tides were still, no birds sang, and the earth seemed to be dying.

The tribe soon wearied of the pleasures of their own making and began to be afraid and lonely. They returned to the great tree again and again, hoping to hear the words that would ease their misery. And one day the voice of their Ancestor spoke again.

He told them it was the last time his voice would be heard, but that he would give them a sign. The great tree split open, a huge tongue of light came down into its trunk, and then it closed up again.

Since that time the Aboriginals have known that the voice of their Ancestor exists in all things, and speaks to them through every part of nature.



From *Dreamtime Heritage* by A. & M. J. Roberts

Why did the tribe traditionally gather around the great gum tree?

.....
.....

Why did the people abandon this custom (stop going to the tree)?

.....
.....

What happened to the natural world when the people broke this tradition?

.....
.....

What feelings made the people return to the tree?

.....
.....

Reading and understanding



Reread the **text** *The Voice of Nature*, then answer the following questions in complete sentences.

What is an **ancestor**?

.....
.....

Describe the sign given to the people by the Ancestor. Explain the meaning of the sign.

.....
.....
.....

The Australian gum tree has a **scientific** name. Use **reference books** or a **computer** to find out what it is, and write it here.

.....

Explain the word **tribe**. What do we mean by **tribal society**?

.....
.....

What evidence can you find in the text to suggest that **nature** was important to the people? Can you explain why this was?

.....
.....

Gum trees will grow again after they have burnt to the ground. Do you think this fact might be connected with the story?

.....
.....
.....

Use a **dictionary** to find out what the saying "up a gum tree" means.

.....
.....
.....





Reading a text

Read this **text**, then answer the questions in complete sentences.

The Voice of Nature



An Aboriginal myth from southern Australia relates how, in the beginning, the voice of the Ancestor spoke each day from a great gum tree, and the tribe gathered around to listen. But as time went by the people grew weary of hearing his words of wisdom. One by one they turned their backs on the voice to pursue their own pleasures, and a vast silence settled over the whole of the land and the sea. There was no wind and the tides were still, no birds sang, and the earth seemed to be dying.

The tribe soon wearied of the pleasures of their own making and began to be afraid and lonely. They returned to the great tree again and again, hoping to hear the words that would ease their misery. And one day the voice of their Ancestor spoke again.

He told them it was the last time his voice would be heard, but that he would give them a sign. The great tree split open, a huge tongue of light came down into its trunk, and then it closed up again.

Since that time the Aboriginals have known that the voice of their Ancestor exists in all things, and speaks to them through every part of nature.



From *Dreamtime Heritage* by A. & M. J. Roberts

Why did the tribe traditionally gather around the great gum tree?

The tribe used to gather around the great gum tree to hear the Ancestor speak.

Why did the people abandon this custom (stop going to the tree)?

They abandoned this custom because they grew weary of hearing the Ancestor's words of wisdom.

What happened to the natural world when the people broke this tradition?

When the people broke this tradition there was no wind or tides, no birds sang, and the earth seemed to be dying.

What feelings made the people return to the tree?

Feelings of fear and loneliness made the people return to the tree.

The National Literacy Strategy requires your child to examine a range of texts from different cultures. Listen to your child read the extract, and help him or her with difficult words. Then discuss the customs and beliefs of this tribe.

Reading and understanding



Reread the **text** *The Voice of Nature*, then answer the following questions in complete sentences.

What is an **ancestor**?

An ancestor is someone from whom a person is descended.

Describe the sign given to the people by the Ancestor. Explain the meaning of the sign.

The great tree split open, a huge tongue of light came down into its trunk, and then it closed up again. This was a sign that the Ancestor is present in all things and speaks to the people through every part of nature.

The Australian gum tree has a **scientific** name. Use **reference books** or a **computer** to find out what it is, and write it here.

Eucalyptus

Explain the word **tribe**. What do we mean by **tribal society**?

A tribe is a group of people with common ancestors. Tribal society is a society organized "around" the culture and rules of a tribe.

What evidence can you find in the text to suggest that **nature** was important to the people? Can you explain why this was?

The people felt afraid and lonely when the earth seemed to be dying.

They gathered round the gum tree every day to listen to their Ancestor.

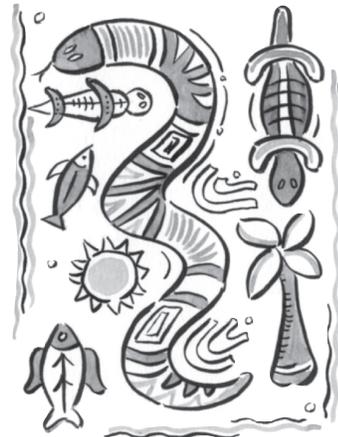
Gum trees will grow again after they have burnt to the ground.

Do you think this fact might be connected with the story?

Yes. In the story, the tree splitting and the tongue of light could describe a lightning strike.

Use a **dictionary** to find out what the saying "up a gum tree" means.

The saying "up a gum tree" means to be in a very awkward or difficult position.



The questions on this page refer to the extract *The Voice of Nature*. Encourage your child to develop good research skills. He or she could use reference books or the Internet, which should all be available at your local library.