

Urban Legends

Objective

Student Objective: Students analyze and retell an urban legend and then gather and retell one of their own.

What You Do:

1. What is an urban legend?
 - a. Ask students to tell you what they know about urban legends.
2. Share an example of an Arizona urban legend- *The Lost Dutchman*

A friend of my uncle swears he met an old hiker who claimed he saw the entrance to the Lost Dutchman's Gold Mine—a crack in the rocks, hidden deep in Arizona's Superstition Mountains. More than 100 years ago, a man named Jacob, known as "the Dutchman," would show up in town with sacks full of pure gold. He said it came from his secret mine, but he never told anyone where it was. One day, he got very sick while visiting town. As the fever took over, he whispered a few strange clues about where to find the mine.

*After he died, people began searching the mountains, hoping to find the Dutchman's gold. Some came back empty-handed, saying they saw strange lights or heard eerie whispers. Others... never came back at all. Locals believe the mine is protected—by the spirits of those who got too greedy. If you ask me it's a warning: **some treasures aren't meant to be found—and some places are better left alone.***
3. **Go over the Elements of Urban Legend and talk about where they heard it in the story**
 - a. Distancing the Teller
 - b. Location specific
 - c. Cautionary Tale with a warning or moral message
 - d. Evokes emotion
 - e. Believable with unexplainable parts
4. Talk about how Urban Legends evolve over time and change with the teller. To illustrate this have them rewrite the legend of the Lost Dutchman using the provided worksheet.
5. Ask students to read out their version of the lost Dutchman's story- have the narrator read the story and others pantomime the action
6. Talk about what makes the story different in the versions
7. Use the worksheet provided to have students write about another urban legend- they can use one they know or gather a story from a family member or community member.
8. This worksheet can be used to submit the lesson plans, or you can further develop the urban legends with images, writing, audio, or video recording.



Name: _____

Urban Legend Worksheet: The Lost Dutchman's Mine

_____ told me the _____ story of the Lost
(person) (adjective)

Dutchman's mine. Legend has it that in _____ in
(time period)

_____, Jacob Waltz went looking for gold. As the
(location)

story goes, he found a mine in the _____ mountains but
(adjective)

kept its location a secret. When he died, he left clues behind,

but _____, nobody ever found the mine. Many have gone
(adverb)

looking for it over the years, and strange things have happened

to them. In fact, in _____, _____ went looking
(year) (person)

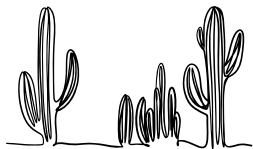
for the mine, but _____
(strange thing that happened to them)

Some people don't believe in the Lost Dutchman's mine because

_____, but others believe it because
(reason to doubt this story)

_____. In the end,
(reason to want it to be true)

this is a cautionary tale: _____
(lesson of story)



Name: _____

Urban Legend Worksheet: Your Story.

Ask an adult in your life about the urban legends they know. If the story takes place in Arizona, even better! Gather as many details as you can to fill out the outline below.

_____ told me the _____ story of
(person) (adjective)

_____. Legend has it that in
(name of your urban legend)

_____ in _____
(time period) (location) (basics of the story)

As the story goes, _____
(beginning of the story)

It may be hard to believe, but _____
(middle of the story)

Even more strange, _____
(end of the story)

Some people don't believe in this urban legend because

_____, but others believe it because
(reason to doubt this story)

_____. In the end,
(reason to want it to be true)

this is a cautionary tale: _____
(lesson of story)