



Featured Teacher: Bill Ibach, Grade 5, Horace Mann Roosevelt, Fargo, ND

Pourquoi stories

A *pourquoi* story, also known as an origin story or an etiological tale, is a fictional narrative that explains why something is the way it is, for example why a snake has no legs, or why a tiger has stripes. Many legends and folk tales are *pourquoi* stories.

How the Bird Got It's Wings • By Martin C

Long ago, birds were just a small body and legs, no wings. That was because they didn't have to fly south. But then, one day, a giant snowstorm went over the North. A lot of the birds died, but one young bird went up a hill and asked the storm "Why are you doing this to us?" The storm felt bad, so he made a hill out of snow and said "jump off this hill and you will see what happens." He was scared, but he did it anyway. Then something weird happened; he started to fly! And that's how the birds got their wings.

How the Bobcat Got Its Stubby Tail • By Finn L

Well, you see, the bobcat was always lazy and slow. He was always grooming his tail. He hinted once in a while, and loved to eat his kill. So after eating, he would groom himself. He was distracted and didn't know that his tail was being eroded away. Before he knew it, it was only a stub. Since he no longer had a tail to groom, the bobcat was no longer lazy and spent most of its time hunting and eating his kill.

How the Cheetah Got So Fast • By Isaac S

One day, a long time ago in the savannah, some cheetahs were walking to a spot under a shady tree, but a bunch of lions ran and sat there first. "Ha ha!" they teased, "We are so much faster than you. We are the kings of the jungle and you are nothing."

That very night, the cheetahs went to the wise toucan. "Please, oh please, can you give us some speed? We want to show up those lions." The toucan thought for a moment and said "Go, and when you wake up tomorrow you will be fast, very fast. This speed will come with a price however. You will only be able to run for a short time and then you will need to rest for a long time."

The next morning, the cheetahs challenged the lions to a short race. The lions lost so badly that they were ashamed and trotted away whimpering. "Ha! That will show them." The cheetahs proclaimed.

Now you know why cheetahs are so fast.

How the Tiger Got Its Stripes • By Martha A

Tigers didn't always have stripes you know. They used to be just orange. Tigers got their stripes a long time ago all because of one silly tiger. He wanted to paint his cave black, so one night he told the moon he wanted black paint. Then he had it. As he was walking home, he had to put his big bucket of paint on a tree branch, so he could get some food. When he ate his food, he went to go get his bucket of paint. As he lifted his tail to grab the paint, he pushed it off the branch by accident. The bucket of black paint spilled all over him. He was now the only tiger with black stripes. The other tigers liked this look, so they painted stripes on themselves.

That is how the tiger got his stripes.

How the Zebra Got His Stripes • By Hayley B

One day a white zebra was walking along, when all of a sudden he stepped in some mud. "Weird!" he said as he looked down. "I have a stripe!" he cried with joy. "Now I'll be the latest fashion." He was filled with thoughts of how popular he would be. "I had better put some more on and take some home." he decided. But he wasn't alone. Other zebras soon found that pond also. So, from that day on all zebras had stripes. All because of a fashion statement!

Why the Bushbaby Has Such Big Eyes

• By Sage B

Bushbaby was a sightseer. But he had a problem. His eyes were so small, he could not even see his feet? He had a hard time seeing his prey, so he was starving. One day, he said to himself, "Buddy, you need to go to your God and ask for bigger eyes." So he set off in search of his God.

Meanwhile, God was observing the bushbaby's efforts. Two days later he was amazed at the persistency of the little guy. Five days later the bushbaby god was noticing that the poor thing was dying of hunger, so he gave him bigger eyes. The bushbaby was forever grateful for being able to live and eat well.

And that this how the bushbaby got its big eyes.

How the Cat Got Its Fur • By Deja D

The cat was playing in a field one day trying to catch a mouse. No matter how hard he tried, he couldn't catch the mouse. He colored his fur to trick the mouse and ate him. It worked so well that other cats did the same thing and that is how the cat got its fur.

How the Sea Turtle Got Its Shell • By Anissa L

Long, long ago there were turtle without shells. They wondered why they had no shells. Then one day a lonely sea turtle was swimming in the big, blue, deep ocean, and fell across a shiny green rock, or so he thought. Turns out that it wasn't a rock, it was a big shell.

The turtle thought that it was so pretty that he put it on his back, and left it there. As he swam back home, all the turtles were commenting on how nice it looked. They thought it was so nice that they wanted one. The turtle showed them where they could get one and they all chose a beautiful shell for themselves. That is how the sea turtle got its shell.

Why Penguins Can't Fly • By Olivia M

One day in the freezing cold, there lived a little penguin. Because he was the same as all the other penguins, he could fly. One day the little penguin said to his father, "Daddy, I want to be different." His father was shocked. "How would you like to be different?" asked his father. "I don't want to fly," said the little penguin. His father was shocked and was angry. "Never!" he yelled. Little penguin began to cry. "Now, now, we can work this out" comforted little penguin's mother in a sweet, calming voice. But, it was too late. Little penguin had waddled off.

He found his way down to a cave that was the farthest spot away from his home. He was crying. Suddenly, he heard a voice. It was a shark! "Oh no!" cried little penguin as the shark rushed up beside him. Little penguin tripped and sprained his wing. He could no longer fly. He got up and rushed home. When he arrived there, his mom asked him what had happened. He told her the whole story as she was taking him to the doctor. The doctor told him that his wing couldn't be fixed. When he found out that he wouldn't be able to fly anymore, he cried even harder.

Suddenly, he stopped. "Wait," he said. "I can't fly." He was suddenly very happy and the next day all the other penguins, seeing how happy he was, decided they didn't want to fly anymore either. To this day, no penguins fly anymore – all because of little penguin!



How the Narwhal Got Its Tusks • By Lexi M

Long ago, in the depths of the Arctic Ocean there lived a Narwhal named Anne. She lived close to the coast. At this time, not one Narwhal had any teeth or tusks. The Narwhal traveled around in search of krill to eat. One day, while searching for food, Anne came across something shiny at the bottom of the sea. It was a bunch of shark teeth. Because she had no teeth of her own, she started putting the teeth in her mouth. She stacked them on top of each other until she had one bigTUSK.

Liking the way the new tusks looked, she swam away and lived happily forever.

How the Lion Got Its Mane • By Karine O

Once in a lifetime every lion gets its mane. Long ago, a lion was sitting in a field all by himself. Then some other lions walked by and said to themselves, "That lion looks like a girl. Ha Ha Ha!" The lion felt bad and said, "Hey, that's not very nice!"

Poor lion was so sad after that happened, he decided to be more manly. He could roar loud and hunt well....something was missing. A MANE!!! He had to grow a mane. He had seen it before on some other animals, but how? A few weeks after that he had a full head of hair and nobody called him a girl ever again.

That's how the lion got his mane.

How the Cat Got His Whiskers • By Naomi R

Once there was a cat that kept getting stuck between things. It kept happening time and again until one day his mom got tired of always having to help rescue him. She decided to put wires on the side of his face.

She told him, "If these don't fit into something you want to get into, you shouldn't go there because you will get stuck." If they fit, you will fit. This idea caught on and other cats' moms did the same thing for them. Problem solved.

And that is how cats ended up with whiskers.

Why the Kangaroo Has a Pouch • By Charlie E

Once there was a town called Kangie where all the kangaroos lived. The governor and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. K were very whiny, frustrated, and usually constipated. Mr. K was very popular, never came in second, and everyone loved him, but something was missing. Maybe it was because his wife was expecting a baby and this was new to him. His wife kept telling him to take the day off and sleep in, but that was impossible because he was the governor – it was very stressful.

Five days later, his wife called him and said "The baby is coming! I'll meet you at the hospital." Mr. K left his office and hurried to the hospital where his wife was waiting for him. Some time later, they had a baby boy. They didn't have anywhere to carry him, so Mr. K called his friend and asked him to put a pouch on. Soon the look caught on and everybody wanted one.

That is how the kangaroo ended up with a pouch.