WINTER MONTHS
The Indian Reading Series

Level V Book 11
THE INDIAN READING SERIES: Stories and Legends of the Northwest is a collection of authentic material cooperatively developed by Indian people from twelve reservations. Development activities are guided by a Policy Board which represents the Indian community of the Pacific Northwest. The Pacific Northwest Indian Reading and Language Development Program Policy Board members are:

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Winter Months
Series V

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A long time ago when animals and birds were people, many different kinds lived together in a large village. This was the time when the earth was first formed and there were no seasons.
The people in the village were undecided about the length of the seasons. They were especially concerned about the length of the winter season.
It was decided that the leaders would have a meeting and vote on the length of the cold months. The meeting was to be held in the largest tepee.
All the leaders except Coyote agreed winter should last three months.
This worried the leaders because they thought Coyote's vote would make winter last longer. They tried desperately to think of a way to block Coyote's vote. One of the elders said, "My brother Woe-bee-bah-noh-ch (Jumping Mouse) can block Coyote's vote."
A plan was formed. Jumping Mouse was to sit next to the doorway. As soon as Coyote started counting the Spring months, Jumping Mouse was to jump up and say, "We only want three months of Winter."
Then Jumping Mouse was to walk out and everyone was to follow him. This was the only way they knew to outsmart that tricky old Coyote.
The meeting went just as expected. Coyote sat in the center of the tepee and Jumping Mouse sat by the door.
One of the leaders started naming the months in Indian, starting with Fall (November). Coyote just couldn't sit still any longer, so he yelled out in a real loud, excited voice, "Wait a minute. Let me count out the months."
Coyote immediately held up his hands and starting counting on his fingers.
When he had run out of fingers he laid down, sticking his feet in the air, so he could count on his toes.
When Coyote got to Spring, the signal word, Jumping Mouse jumped up.

Jumping Mouse hollered out, "That’s it! That’s it! We will have three months of winter."

After saying that Jumping Mouse walked out of the tepee just as planned and the others followed him.
This left poor old Coyote on his back with all fours in the air, right in the middle of that huge tepee.
He was so surprised all he could do was sputter.
That is how the people won the vote to have only three months of cold Winter.
Booklets available in the Level IV sequence are listed below. Numbers refer to the Planned Sequence of use in the Teacher’s Manual. Materials developed by these tribes and others in the Northwest are included in the Levels I, II and III sequences.

1. Warm Springs Animal Stories
   The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon

2. Snail Women at Squa’le
   The Suquamish Tribe of the Port Madison Reservation

3. Blue Jay – Star Child/Basket Woman
   Muckleshoot Tribe

4. Assiniboine Woman Making Grease
   Assiniboine Tribe of the Fort Peck Reservation

5. Coyote
   The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon

6. How the Summer Season Came
   Assiniboine Tribe of the Fort Belknap Reservation

7. Little Weasel’s Dream
   Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

8. Fort Hall Stories
   Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation

9. The Bear Tepee
   Northern Cheyenne Tribe

10. Sioux Stories and Legends
    Sioux Tribe of the Fort Peck Reservation

11. Kootenai Stories
    Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

12. Chief Mountain’s Medicine
    Gros Ventre Tribe from the Fort Belknap Reservation

13. Coyote the Trickster
    Burns Paiute Reservation

14. Running Free
    Shoalwater Bay

15. Salish Coyote Stories
    Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

16. Coyote and the Cowboys
    Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation

17. Napi’s Journey
    Blackfeet Tribe

18. Warm Springs Stories
    The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon

19. Tepee Making
    Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

20. Baskets and Canoes
    Skokomish Tribe

21. Warrior People
    Blackfeet Tribe
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