



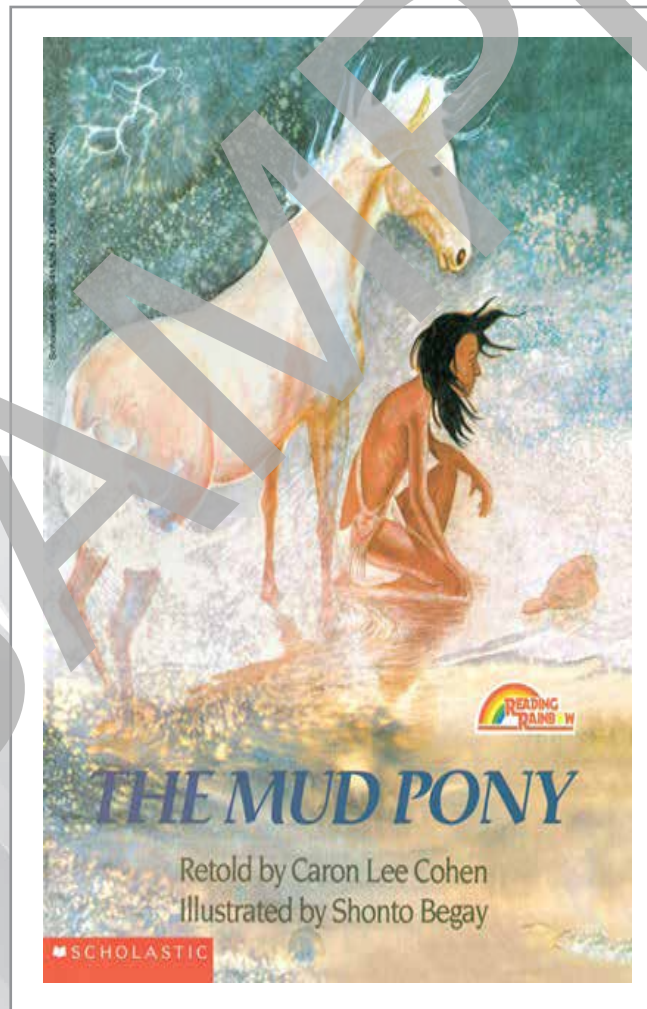
**TEACHER GUIDE**

**GRADES K-3**

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

# The Mud Pony

Caron Lee Cohen



**READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT**

# The Mud Pony

Caron Lee Cohen

## TEACHER GUIDE

**NOTE:**

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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## Skills and Strategies

### Thinking

Extension

### Writing

Poetry, pattern writing

### Literary Elements

Legend as a story form, story elements, characterization, alliteration

### Comprehension

Predicting, sequencing

### Vocabulary

Alphabetical order

### Listening/Speaking

Music, discussion, simulation

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## Summary

This is a traditional Skidi Pawnee tale, and one of a number of ancient stories that exhibit the Pawnee belief that the path to honor is open to all.

In this story, an Indian boy is left behind as his people go to hunt the buffalo. He has fashioned a pony out of mud, and this gift from the earth helps him to find and aid his people. The boy, with guidance from his pony, eventually becomes a powerful leader, and chief of his people. After a time, the pony returns to the earth, assuring the chief, *"I am here, your Mother Earth. You are not alone!"*

## About the Author

Caron Lee Cohen was born in Newton, Massachusetts, and made her home in New York City with her family. She attended the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, and earned an Ed.M. degree from Columbia University Teachers College.

Her interest in folk tales and folk songs prompted her to study them in working toward a doctoral degree.

Among her books for children are *Whiffle Squeak*, Dodd, 1987 and *Three Yellow Dogs*, Greenwillow Press, 1986.

## Initiating Activities

You may choose to do one of these activities previous to the reading of the story, and the other activity after the story has been read. They are appropriate at any time.

### 1. Native American Legends

Cover the bulletin board with background paper. On that put an outline of North America. Make a caption for it, such as "Native American Legends." Make a book cover of *The Mud Pony*, and add on the bottom, "A Pawnee Tale." Place this in the appropriate area on the map. As more stories are read from the different areas of North America, have children volunteer to make the book covers, and to place them on the map in the appropriate areas of origin.

Make a banner of the word LEGEND. Have the word LEGEND written vertically on a large sheet of paper.

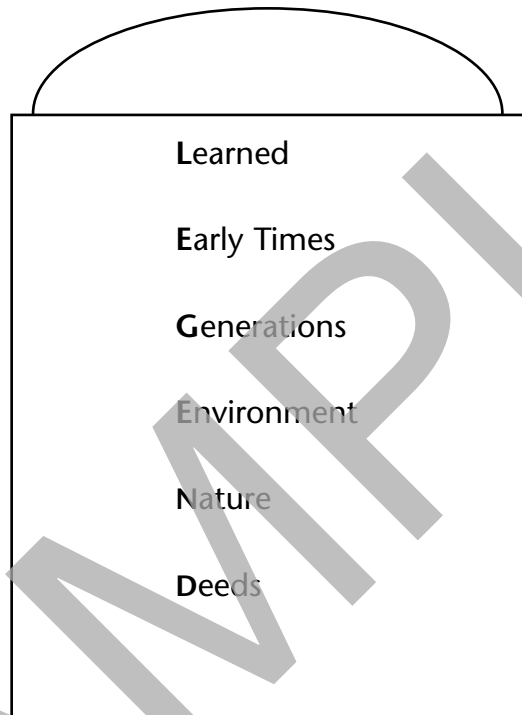
Have Native American music playing in the background, as the children gather in the area.

Introduce, or review, the legend as a story form. Bring into the discussion the legends handed down by the Native Americans. (The Native American Indians have told their tales to one

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another for centuries. Their stories reflect their ways of life, their beliefs, the laws of their tribes, and a regard for the beings, animate and inanimate, among which each must live his life.)

Referring to the word LEGEND written vertically, ask for words that may be used to describe the Native American Legend, beginning with each of the letters.



## 2. Pony

Cover the bulletin board with background paper. Wallpaper or gift wrap with a southwestern motif would be very appropriate. Add one large picture of a wild pony. If you find current information or news articles about wild horses or ponies, place those nearby.

Make a copy of the poem "*The Wild, the Free*" by Lord Byron.

This poem gives an excellent verbal description of the wild horse. Have this in the area where the children will gather. Read the poem to the children. Ask for opinions as to the subject of the poem, the time that it depicts, and other things learned from it.

Are there still wild horses? Where are they? Has the fate of the wild horse been in the news lately? Discuss. Get opinions as to the decisions made about the wild horse.

If appropriate for this time, discuss the origin of the wild horse.

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## Vocabulary

sighted  
wandered

journey  
tattered

everywhere  
huddled

## Discussion Questions and Activities

1. What did the boy long for more than anything else? *(The boy longed for a pony of his own.)*
2. What did the boy make? What did he use to make it? *(The boy dug the wet earth out of the creek, and shaped a pony out of the mud.)*
3. Describe the pony. *(The pony was small. It could be held in the boy's hands. The pony had a white face.)*
4. Why did the people break camp? *(Scouts had sighted buffalo to the west. They went to hunt the buffalo.)*
5. What would happen if the people did not hunt the buffalo? *(They would starve in the months ahead if they didn't hunt the buffalo.)*
6. What did the boy's parents do? *(They hunted for him, but could not find him. They had to leave without him.)*
7. Where was the boy? *(with his mud pony)*
8. How did the boy feel when he returned to camp? *(He was heartsick and hungry.)*
9. How would you feel if you were in the boy's position? *(Answers will vary.)*
10. Make predictions as to what will happen next.
11. Start a story map. (See page 11 of this guide.)

## Vocabulary

dreamt  
guide  
disappeared

empty  
marveled  
astonished

chief  
continue

## Discussion Questions and Activities

1. What did the boy do on the first night? *(He picked up scraps of dried meat and a tattered old blanket that someone had thrown away. He ate, then huddled in the blanket and cried himself to sleep.)*
2. What did the boy dream? *(He dreamt that his mud pony was alive, and spoke to him.)*
3. What did the mud pony tell the boy in the dream? *(She told the boy that he was not alone and that she was a gift to him from Mother Earth.)*
4. In your opinion, who is Mother Earth? *(Answers will vary.)*
5. What did the boy find when he awoke? *(The mud pony was alive.)*