

Name _____

Date _____

Elements of Folk Tales

Folk tales are stories passed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. "The People Could Fly" is a folk tale that would have around a long time as an oral tradition before it was finally recorded.

Folk tales can vary from culture to culture, but often have these elements:

- supernatural events set in the distant past
- talking animals or other characters with supernatural abilities
- lessons about what is important to the culture of origin

Read the following folk tale excerpt and answer the questions.

The Magic Tortoise

Long, long ago, when the world was young, there lived a clever tortoise named Ijapa. Unlike other tortoises, Ijapa could speak to all the animals of the forest and possessed ancient wisdom passed down from his ancestors.

One dry season, when the rivers had dried up and the animals were dying of thirst, Ijapa discovered he could make rain fall by singing a special song his grandmother had taught him. The other animals laughed at him, saying, "How can such a slow, small creature help us?"

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But Ijapa climbed to the highest hill and sang the ancient rain song. Dark clouds gathered, and rain poured down, saving all the forest creatures. From that day forward, the animals learned never to judge others by their size or speed, but to respect the wisdom that comes from listening to one's elders.

1. Identify the supernatural events in this folk tale.

2. Which character has supernatural abilities?

What can they do?

3. What lesson does this folk tale teach about the culture it comes from?

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Elements of Folk Tales-**Answer Key**

1. Identify the supernatural events in this folk tale.

Ijapa can make rain fall by singing a special song; dark clouds gather and rain pours down immediately when he sings the ancient rain song.

2. Which character has supernatural abilities?

What can they do?

Ijapa the tortoise has supernatural abilities. He can speak to all the animals of the forest and make rain fall by singing an ancient song his grandmother taught him.

3. What lesson does this folk tale teach about the culture it comes from?

Don't judge others by their size, speed, or appearance; respect the wisdom that comes from listening to one's elders.