

How the Chipmunk Got Its Stripes

A Legend of the Iroquois

Long ago, the Earth was covered in darkness. None of the creatures living there knew what daylight looked like.

One day, all of the animals of the forest gathered together in a clearing. They wondered if it would be better to remain in darkness, or if it would be better to also have light. Deer, Chipmunk, Raccoon, Wolf, Bear, and many other creatures climbed to the top of the highest mountain. The mountain stood so tall that there were no trees on its top, and it was covered only with rocks. Millions of stars blinked in the dark sky overhead. The biggest and most powerful animal in the forest was the bear, and he was the first to reach the mountaintop. Bear stood on the highest peak, looked out over the forest below, and argued for remaining in darkness. He said that the creatures of the forest would be able to sleep better in darkness because there would be no light to keep them awake. Most of the other animals were afraid, and they agreed with Bear. Raccoon said that he did not mind the darkness because he was so smart that he could find plenty of food, even in the dark. Wolf was easy to please, too. She didn't mind the darkness because she could howl in darkness or in light.

But one animal did stand up to Bear. Chipmunk, the smallest of the animals, argued that it would be better to have both light and dark. Chipmunk was very clever. As Bear continued to argue for darkness, she made many good arguments for light.

Slowly, the night passed. Bear grew tired of talking, but Chipmunk chattered on and on, as if she had all of the energy in the world. As the other animals dropped off to sleep, one by one, Chipmunk kept arguing. Finally, the first sunrise ever seen by the animals appeared over the top of the mountain. They woke up and were amazed by what they saw.

Chipmunk began to dance from rock to rock. Bear became angry because he didn't get his way. He roared loudly and ran after Chipmunk. He chased Chipmunk all the way down the mountain. Bear was fast, and he reached out his giant paw to grab Chipmunk. Chipmunk got away, but not before Bear managed to scratch her back with his long claws. And that is why, to this day, you can see stripes on Chipmunk's back!

1. What happened after Chipmunk's argument with Bear?
 - A. The animals saw their first sunrise ever.
 - B. Bear was happy that he got his way.
 - C. The animals continued to live in darkness.
 - D. Chipmunk fell asleep.

0%

100%

Confident

Confident

2. The word clever means

- A. Fast
- B. Witty
- C. Dull
- D. Persistent

0% _____ 100%
Confident _____ Confident

2. What is the theme of this story?

- A. Stand up for what you believe in.
- B. It is always better to go along with the crowd.
- C. There is only one right way to do things.
- D. Making decisions is easy.

0% _____ 100%
Confident _____ Confident

3. How is Chipmunk different from the other animals?

- A. Chipmunk was afraid of the darkness.
- B. Chipmunk was the only animal to fall asleep.
- C. Chipmunk was the largest creature on the mountain.
- D. Chipmunk outsmarted the Bear, making clever arguments for light.

0% _____ 100%
Confident _____ Confident

5. Folk tales such as this story:

- A. Always have a happy ending
- B. Are taught the same in every culture
- C. Explain the origins of something observed in the present time
- D. Are factual accounts from history

0% _____ 100%
Confident _____ Confident

On a scale between 1 and 10 with 1 being low and 10 being how well did you like this passage?

Didn't												I Really
Like It	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		Liked It
At All												

Connections: Create your own folk tale to describe how something came to be similar to how the chipmunk got its stripes.