

MONDO'S MYTHS: WHERE DID THE NIGHT COME FROM

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Directed by Andrés Lieban (Brazil / 8" / 2005)

The film opens with a look at contemporary Brazil, with its beaches, cities, swamps and rainforests. Then, viewers are taken back to "the age of dreams," when objects had life and when the "Big Snake," a terrible witch, kept Night locked inside a coconut. Based on a creation myth of the Brazilian Native Indians, this story takes us to a time when day lasted forever. Only the Big Snake got a good night's sleep.

But the Big Snake's daughter was a good witch who asked her mother for a wedding present – Night! When three faithful servants carry back the gift, they are warned, "Do not try to open it or everything will be lost in its darkness." Curiosity gets the better of the servants, who melt away a small piece of the yellow tar that safely seals Night. Through the hole, Night escapes and takes over the atmosphere, leaving everything in darkness.

To solve the problem, the good witch draws a line in the sky with Night on one side and Day on the other. She also sends some birds to sing only at night and other birds to sing only at dawn – to help mark the change from one into the other. But things were never the same after that – some objects were turned into animals; some objects lost their enchantment; and the 3 curious servants were changed into monkeys — with yellow faces and hands to remind them of the tar they melted that nearly caused the world an endless night!

What's THAT Word?

Look for it in the film: • enchanted
• myth

Questions for "FILM TALK!"

- Before the story begins, what does the film show of the country of Brazil, and how can you find out more?
- This type of story is called a *myth, a story explaining how things got to be the way they are—what does this story "explain"?
- How does the filmmaker describe the time in which the events of the myth took place?
- What was the problem when there was no night?
- Why do you think the three servants melt away the tar to look inside?
- How does the mythical world change after the night escaped?
- How does the snake's daughter solve the problem?
- How do the different birds help with the problem?
- How do the Brazilian Native Indians explain where the monkeys with the yellow faces and hands came from?
- How would you describe the style of drawing used to create this animated film?

ACTIVITIES AFTER-VIEWING

ACTIVITY 1 *The Age of Dreams*

The events of the films are described as taking place in "the age of dreams." Ask children to imagine what life might have been like during such a time. They can draw their ideas and describe them on the Activity Sheet.

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Life During the Age of Dreams

During the Age of Dreams, there was no gravity holding people onto the earth. People had a different relationship with the planets. They could ride on stars and visit different planets, where nice creatures lived. For example, the creatures on Saturn used hula hoops for toys. They wore hoop earrings and shot hoops to play basketball. They had jobs with round tires....

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ACTIVITY 2 Enchanted Objects

According to this myth, during the Age of Dreams objects were enchanted with magical powers. Ask children to imagine their own object with magical powers. They can draw their ideas and describe them on the Activity Sheet. Example:

My Film about: The Magic Pot that Feeds the Hungry People of the World



There was hunger in the world. But one day, a magic pot appeared. The pot was never empty! There was enough food to feed the entire world. The only problem was to get the food around the world. So, they hired Santa Claus who had experience reaching the entire world in one night....

ACTIVITY 3 Myths—Stories that explain: How things got to be the way they are

Discuss stories the children know that explain how things got to be the way they are — For example: how the tiger got its stripes. Ask children to plan their own film explaining how something got to be the way it is. Ask them to draw and describe an action from the beginning, the middle, and the end of their own story.

Example: My film explaining "How the Leopard Got its Spots"

Beginning



Long ago, leopards looked just like mountain lions.

Middle



One day, a huge elephant sprayed wet mud everywhere.

End



Spots appeared on the leopards, and from then on....

FIND OUT MORE!

Investigate with research

- Brazil: the country, the cultures, the languages, the history, the myths
- Creation myths

RELATED VIDEOS

Rabbit Ears Video: The Monkey People
(Amazon culture)

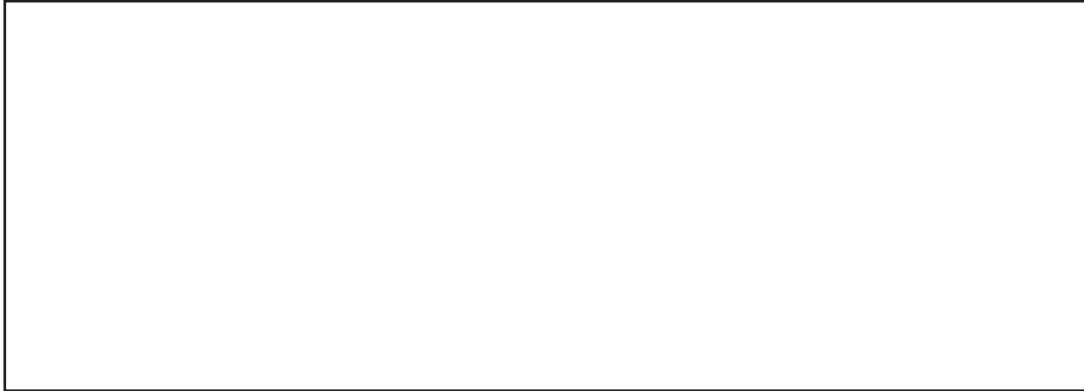
Families Around the World: My Family from Brazil

National Geographic Kids Videos:
Totally Tropical Rain Forest

Your Name _____

The Age of Dreams

Draw your own picture about life during "The Age of Dreams"



Explain your idea:

Draw your own picture of your own magic object

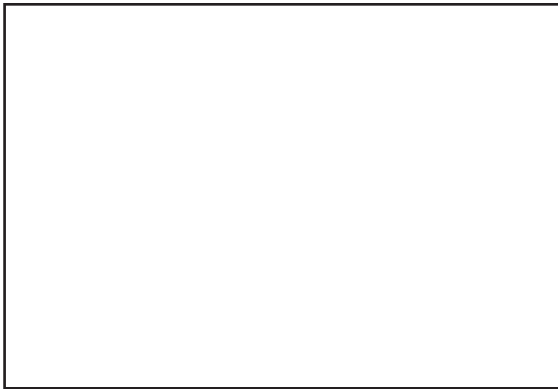


Explain the magic power your object has:

Your Name _____

Draw pictures from the film in order.

1. From the BEGINNING of the Film:



2. From the MIDDLE of the Film:



3. From the END of the Film:



Write words to explain the pictures you have drawn in order.

1. From the BEGINNING of the Film:

2. From the MIDDLE of the Film:

3. From the END of the Film:

Dear Family Members,

Today, your child attended the "Best of the Fest Film Festival"! While the films are great, you should know that the program was put together by experts in child development. We're sending you a film description so you can talk about the film with your child. It is important to help children understand film and media. The most important person who will help them to understand the messages of media are parents and guardians. We're including an activity sheet so you can continue film activities with your child. Adapt the activities for your child. All they need is a pencil and paper. *Enjoy!*

ACTIVITY 1

Ask your child to tell you about the film, *Mondo's Myths: Where Did the Night Come From?*

- What did they like best about the film?
- Why do they think the film was picked to be in the film festival?

ACTIVITY 2

Read the description of the story to your child. As you read, ask your child to explain how the different parts of the story looked in the film.

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ACTIVITY 3

After reading the film story description, be sure to ask your child the more important questions about the film—

- Why do they think it was made? and
- How do they think the filmmaker made it?

ACTIVITY *Types of Stories*

In the film, the storyteller says, "We will never stop asking questions. We will never know all the answers. We will never stop telling stories." Discuss stories and tales with your child. What are the many stories they know? What are the different types of stories: fairy tales, legends, myths, book-based stories or stories told in film?

Examples of Different Types of Stories

Myths	Fairy Tales	Legends
<i>Mondo's Myths: Where did Night Come From?—Brazil Pegasus – Greek....</i>	<i>Snow White Cinderella Rumpelstiltskin</i>	<i>Paul Bunyan—USA Pecos Bill—USA La Llorona, Mexican....</i>
Folk Tales	Book-based Stories	Film-based Stories
<i>Anansi the Spider—African Leprechauns—Irish</i>	<i>Goodnight Moon Oh, The Places You'll Go!</i>	<i>The Lion King Free Willy</i>

I KNOW STORIES

As you talk about the stories your child knows, ask them to draw pictures, titles and to describe them. (Younger children may need your help writing.)



Cinderella, was made a servant girl by her step-mother. She went to the ball in magic clothes, leaving behind a slipper that was found by her prince. He found her with the shoe!

