

Looking at Ecology and Culture through Stories: Ecuador

Curriculum Project
Fulbright-Hays Seminars Abroad
Sustainability in Action: Ecuador as a Case Study
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As an educator, I strive to develop my students' critical thinking and problem solving skills. I seek to accomplish this, in part, by asking my students to examine and evaluate the complex interrelationships that make up the world around them. Through my instruction, I also try to impart an appreciation for the wealth of human diversity in order to prepare my students to be responsible and compassionate citizens of the globe.

In an effort to promote critical thinking and cross-cultural understanding, I have developed a unit that provides a cross-cultural perspective on environmental stewardship. The unique cultures of the world are intimately linked to the natural environments in which they are found. From the Quechua culture of the Andean highlands to the urban rhythms of Baltimore, Maryland, where we live largely defines our existence. By exploring how the natural environment is reflected in culture, the impact human activity has on the environment, and how the preservation of the local environment can be promoted through story telling, students gain cultural and environmental insights while honing their critical thinking and problem solving skills.

This unit integrates language arts curriculum with social studies and science curriculum by exploring the unique habitats of Ecuador's three continental geographic regions through pictures and stories. I have presented this unit as a series of five lessons. While the lessons presented are language arts lessons, more detailed social studies and science lessons could be developed to complement and extend the lessons. I have provided an outline of activities for each lesson as well as suggestions for extensions. The duration of the unit is flexible and could be anywhere from one week to a month. I have also included an annotated bibliography of resources that may be used when preparing these lessons or when looking for primary level text resources on South America.

[Lesson 1:](#) Students begin to reflect on how geographic features vary from place to place by sharing their experiences. Students are introduced to Ecuador on a map and begin to think about the geography of Ecuador based on map reading skills.

[Lessons 2-4:](#) In each of these lessons students are introduced to one of the three geographic regions of continental Ecuador; the coastal region, Andean region, or Amazon basin region. Through the presentation of pictures and subsequent class discussion, students describe the region based on land formation, vegetation, climate, and animal life and begin to relate this to the unique culture of the region. The teacher will then share a story from the region, focusing class discussion on how the features they noted from the pictures are reflected in the story. At the end of the lesson, students are asked to reflect on the environmental message of the story.

[Lesson 5:](#) In the final lesson, students will evaluate their local environment in the same way they did for the regions of Ecuador. Instead of reading a traditional story from the area, students will create their own stories that promote stewardship of their local environment.

[Grade Level:](#) While this unit was prepared using the content standards for grade 2, the

level could be easily adapted to meet the needs of any elementary class.

Key Questions:

How do the geographic features of a region affect the people who live there?

How can the activities of people affect the local environment?

How do the stories people tell reflect where they are from?

How can stories be used to persuade people to act in a particular way?

Background Notes:

ECUADOR:

Ecuador is a country rich in natural beauty. While only the size of California, continental Ecuador spans three distinct geographical zones. Coastal Ecuador stretches along the Pacific Ocean from the northern boarder with Columbia to the southern boarder with Peru. This region includes mangrove forests, desert lands, and the bustling port city of Guayaquil. The coast is also the economic heart of Ecuador. From shrimp farming to banana and cacao plantations, much of Ecuador's export power is based here. As you move east, you enter the Andean region. This mountainous landscape includes cloud forests, pampas, looming volcanoes, and towering peaks. The Andes are the home of the Quechua people and the richness of the Indian culture is evidenced in the arts and music of the area. The Andes is also where you find Quito, the political and cultural capital of Ecuador. Continuing east, you enter the Amazon rainforest, a region that remained largely isolated from the outside world until recently. The Amazon region contains a relatively small indigenous population within a habitat teeming with biodiversity. The Amazon basin is also home to rich oil deposits and has been the site of intense interest from foreign oil companies.

Ecuador also includes the unique ecosystems of the Galapagos Islands. While I did not include the Galapagos in this unit plan a lesson on this region could easily be added.

The Project:

I have always been a believer in the power of literature to affect change. I have seen countless examples of a good story opening up previously unimagined worlds for students eager to take learning beyond the confines of their classroom. Through a "Literary Trip Around the World" I have been able to fuse my social studies and language arts curriculum. By combining a variety of fiction and non-fiction texts, I have transported my students out of the inner city of Baltimore and into countries as close as Mexico and as far away as Australia. When I set out on the Fulbright trip to Ecuador I was excited to extend my knowledge of the South American continent and use this experience to develop a more engaging and meaningful "trip" to South America for my students.

Through the seminar's examination of sustainable development in Ecuador, I found a perfect bridge for connecting my language arts and social studies curriculum with the science curriculum already in place. As my school is situated within a wetlands area of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, studying the local ecology through school yard projects is standard practice. While the students are familiar with the delicate task of balancing the needs of an urban population with the preservation of the environment, they have not explored how the natural environment is reflected in culture. Through this unit I hope to bring environmental studies and cultural studies together under the umbrella of a "Literary Trip Around the World."

Though this unit was prepared with reference to the Voluntary State Curriculum for the State of Maryland, it can easily be fitted to meet the needs of teachers in other states. While the project focuses on Ecuador and the surrounding countries, the basic outline of the unit could be adapted to other regions of the world. As age appropriate English-language texts on Ecuador are limited, I have also included resources from surrounding countries that cover the same geographic zones.

Unit Plan: Looking at Ecology and Culture through Stories: Ecuador

Lesson 1: Introduction and Map Reading

Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum Standards Addressed:

Reading:

- 2.2.A.1.b Read and identify functional documents
- 2.2.A.2.b Use graphic aids
- 2.1.D.3.c Use word structure to determine meanings of words

Social Studies:

- 2.2.A.2.a Describe and classify how natural /physical features, such as deserts, peninsulas, beaches, and coastlines identify a place
- 2.2.A.2.c Describe places using weather, climate, vegetation and natural/physical features, such as mountains, beaches, and plains
- 2.2.A.1.a Identify the purpose and use of a variety of maps, such as physical maps, school maps, and neighborhood maps
- 2.2.A.1.b Identify the equator, poles and hemispheres on a globe

Objective: Students will learn map reading skills by using maps to gather information for their journey to Ecuador.

Motivation: Tell students that today they will begin their visit to a new country. Have the students take out their desk world maps. Tell them that they will be map detectives and will use clues to figure out what country they are visiting. Give the students clues such as: This country is in both the southern and northern hemisphere, this country is north of Peru, the country is along the Pacific Ocean, the equator runs through this country, or this country is in South America. After giving several clues, ask the students to share what country they think they will be visiting. Have students explain why they think this is the country they are visiting using the clues given (I think we are going to Ecuador because it is in South America, the equator runs through it and it is north of Peru). Once the students have located the country have a student come up to the large world map and put a “we are here” label on Ecuador.

Procedure:

- 1) Have a student locate Ecuador on the globe. Ask the students to look closely at both the world map and the globe and tell what they know about Ecuador from the information given on the maps. Be sure to review how a map key works. Record their ideas on chart paper.
- 2) Have students discuss different uses for maps. Introduce the class to a variety of maps and have them identify the different uses for these maps. Model how to gather information from one of these map types using a map of Maryland.
- 3) Split students into small groups and give each group one of the maps of Ecuador (geo political/ economic/ physical) from www.ecuadorexplorer.com/html/map_center.html. You may choose to differentiate here by giving the more challenging maps to the advanced learners. Give the groups about ten minutes to examine the map, discuss what they map tells them about Ecuador, and record their ideas to share with the class.
- 4) Have a reporter from each group share what their group learned about Ecuador from the map. Compile a master list of information.

- 5) Ask students to think about the name Ecuador and where it might come from. If necessary, return to the chart of information gathered from the maps to get the students to think about the word “equator.”
- 6) Tell students that on their trip to Ecuador they will be exploring the different parts of the country. Ask students to think about trips they have taken to other places and how these places were like and unlike where they live in Maryland. Be sure to have the students think about the physical and natural differences of these places. Tell students that Ecuador differs from place to place just like America. Using the information collected from the map activity show how Ecuador is divided into three geographic zones.

Materials: Chart paper, large world map, globe, class set of world maps, variety of Ecuador maps

Summary: Have students look back at the maps of Ecuador and think about where in Ecuador they would like to visit and why. Have students share their ideas.

Assessment: Teacher observation of class and group discussions: were students able to gather information from the maps?

Extension: This lesson could be used in conjunction with a more in depth study of maps. Students could also begin their own map of Ecuador that could be filled out as they are introduced to each region.

Lesson 2-4: Exploring the Three Continental Regions of Ecuador

Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum Standards Addressed:

Reading:

2.3.A.1.a Listen to, read, and discuss a variety of self-selected and assigned literary texts representing diverse cultures, perspectives, ethnicities, and time periods

2.3.A.3.b Identify the setting and explain its importance to the story

Social Studies:

2.2.A.2.a Describe and classify how natural /physical features, such as deserts, peninsulas, beaches, coastlines identify a place

2.2.A.2.c Describe places using weather, climate, vegetation and natural/physical features, such as mountains, beaches, and plains

2.2.A.4.a Describe ways that people adapt to the natural environment for food, clothing, and shelter

2.2.A.4.b Describe ways that people modify their natural environment and the impact of those modifications, such as clearing trees, building dams, and farming land

2.5.A.1.a Compare elements of at least two diverse cultures

Science:

2.6.C.1 Recognize and explain how Earth's natural resources from the natural environment are used to meet human needs

2.6.D.1 Recognize and describe that the activities of individuals or groups of individuals can affect the environment.

Objective: Students will learn to identify the setting of a story and explain how it is important by examining a text representing one of three regions in Ecuador in relation to a photo journey to that region.

Motivation: Show PowerPoint presentation or visit a Web site from one of the three regions of Ecuador. Have students discuss what they noticed about the natural environment/people.

Procedure:

- 1) Revisit the PowerPoint presentation/Web site. Have students note features of the natural environment and people on a chart. Allow students to discuss what they see.
- 2) Ask: How have the people of this region adapted to their environment? Have the students think about the clothes, food, and shelter used in this region. They may come up with their own ideas or refer to pictures.
- 3) Ask: What kinds of environmental problems do you think this area may have? How is this region the same/different from the other regions/Maryland (refer to chart from previous days)?
- 4) Introduce the story of the day
 - Coastal Region: "The Tree Goddess" from [*Latin American Tales: From the Pampas to the Pyramids of Mexico*](#)
 - Andean Region: "The Yavirac," in [*3 Magical Legends From Ecuador*](#) ; or [*The Condor Who Fell In Love*](#)
 - Amazon Region: [*The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest*](#)

and tell the students to listen closely to see which observations they made from the slide show are evident in the text/illustrations.

- 5) Read the story and ask questions as appropriate
- 6) Have students discuss how the story reflected the natural environment. Refer back to the chart and see what elements they found in the story and see if they wish to add anything to the chart.
- 7) Ask students if the story promotes protecting the environment and if so, how. Have students think about how the message may be different from the other regions.

Materials: computer, stories, chart, markers

Andes: [PowerPoint](#), Web site, www.ecuador365.com/andes.html.

Coast: [PowerPoint](#), Web site, www.ecuador365.com/canoal.html.

Amazon: Web sites, www.ecuador365.com/jungle.html ,
www.Matuschek.net/vacation/ecuador2002/gal1/index.html.

Extension: There are many non-fiction resources available, particularly for the Amazon region. You could expand this lesson to include readings from the non-fiction texts. These lessons can be integrated with science lessons on habitat and adaptation. You could also extend your focus on the cultures of the region by examining the food, music, and art. Have the students explore how these aspects of the culture are affected by the natural environment.

Assessment: Teacher observation of class discussion. Were students able to identify the geographic/natural features that distinguish this region and what role the environment/setting played in the story?

Lesson 5: Looking At Our Own Environment

Maryland Voluntary State Curriculum Standards Addressed:

Writing:

2.4.A.2.a Write to express personal ideas using a variety of forms, such as journals, narratives, letters, and reports

2.4.A.2.c Use sensory details to expand ideas

Social Studies:

2.2.A.2.a Describe and classify how natural /physical features, such as deserts, peninsulas, beaches, coastlines identify a place

2.2.A.2.c Describe places using weather, climate, vegetation and natural/physical features, such as mountains, beaches, and plains

2.2.A.4.a Describe ways that people adapt to the natural environment for food, clothing, and shelter

2.2.A.4.b Describe ways that people modify their natural environment and the impact of those modifications, such as clearing trees, building dams, and farming land

2.5.A.1.a Compare elements of at least two diverse cultures

Science:

2.6.C.1 Recognize and explain how Earth's natural resources from the natural environment are used to meet human needs

2.6.D.1 Recognize and describe that the activities of individuals or groups of individuals can affect the environment.

Objective: Students will demonstrate their understanding of the importance of a story's setting by composing stories that promote environmental stewardship.

Motivation: Tell students that today, rather than watching a PowerPoint presentation/visiting a Web site of Ecuador, they will be going outside and making observations of their local environment. Review the chart from the previous lessons and tell students that they need to think about where they live in the same way.

Procedure:

- 1) Have students note features of the natural environment and people on a chart. Allow students to discuss what they have seen.
- 2) Ask: How have the people around them adapted to their environment? Have the students think about the clothes, food, and shelter they use.
- 3) Ask: What kinds of environmental problems have they seen in the area? How is this region the same/different from the regions they visited in Ecuador (refer to chart from previous days)?
- 4) Tell the students that today, instead of reading a story from their area, they will be writing their own stories. (This lesson could be adapted to be a shared writing activity.)
- 5) Review the stories from the previous lessons and have the students identify how these stories encouraged preservation of the environment. Have students develop a scoring rubric for their stories by thinking about what worked in the stories they read in the previous lessons.

* Going through the writing process takes time. You may want to take a day or two for each of the steps in the writing process.

- 6) *Brainstorming/pre-writing*: Lead students in a discussion of the ways the environment around them is threatened by human activity. Tell each student to select an aspect of the environment to write their story about. Remind them that one of the goals of their story is to make their audience aware of the need to protect the environment. As a class have students brainstorm which aspects of the environment they think are important to include in their story. Ask the students how they can make their descriptions of the setting vivid so that their audience, who might be a group of school children in Ecuador, can imagine where they live. Have students complete a story outline including: problem, solution, characters, setting, beginning, middle, and end. Review the outlines and offer support as needed.
- 7) *Drafting*: Have students develop drafts of their stories based on their outlines. Have the students reread their draft and score it based on the rubric
- 8) *Revising*: Have students share their draft with a peer. Have partners mark areas for improvement. Allow students to expand ideas/make revisions based on the feedback of their peers and self-reflection.
- 9) *Editing*: Meet individually with students to edit their stories.
- 10) *Publishing*: Have students put their stories into a final copy complete with illustrations.

Extensions: The stories written by the students could be compiled into a class book and shared with other classes or even students from other parts of the country/world. If the technology is available, you could have the students create their own PowerPoint/Web site of their local environment to complement those on Ecuador.

Materials: writing/ publishing materials, story outline template

Summary: Celebrate the students' stories by having a reading. Invite another class to come and enjoy the great work your students have done.

Assessment: Stories as scored by rubric.

[Annotated Bibliography](#)

This bibliography is divided into general topics. Click on a title and you will be taken to the entry.

Amazon:

[The Amazon](#)

[Amazon Boy](#)

[Amazon River](#)

[Bats, Bugs, and Biodiversity](#)

[Best-loved Folktales of the World](#)

[Crow & Fox and Other Animal Legends](#)

[The Dial Book of Animal Tales from Around the World](#)

[The Emerald Lizard: Fifteen Latin American Stories to Tell](#)

[Folk Tales & Fables of the Americas & the Pacific](#)

[The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest](#)

[Latin American Tales: From the Pampas to the Pyramids of Mexico](#)

[The Legend of El Dorado](#)

[Natural Wonders: The Amazon Rain Forest](#)

[The Rain Forest Indians](#)

[South and North and East and West](#)

[Traditional Tales from South America](#)

[Wisdom Tales from Around the World](#)

Andes:

[3 Magical Legends From Ecuador](#)

[The Condor Who Fell In Love](#)

[Folk Tales & Fables of the Americas & the Pacific](#)

[Latin American Tales: From the Pampas to the Pyramids of Mexico](#)

[Love and Roast Chicken: A Trickster Tale from the Andes Mountains](#)

[The Silver Treasure: Myths and Legends of the World](#)

[South and North and East and West](#)

[Starry Tales](#)

[Trickster Tales: Forty Folk Stories from Around the World](#)

[Zorro and Quwi](#)

Bi-lingual Books:

[3 Magical Legends From Ecuador](#)

[The Condor Who Fell In Love](#)

[The Emerald Lizard: Fifteen Latin American Stories to Tell](#)

Conservation Theme:

[3 Magical Legends From Ecuador](#)

[The Amazon](#)

[Amazon Boy](#)

[Bats, Bugs, and Biodiversity](#)

[Earth Care: World Folk Tales to Talk About](#)

[The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest](#)

[Natural Wonders: The Amazon Rain Forest](#)

Cookbooks:

[*Cooking Up World History*](#)

[*Holidays of the World Cookbook*](#)

[*The Multicultural Cookbook for Students*](#)

Ecuador:

[*Wonder Tales from Around the World*](#)

[*Latin American Tales: From the Pampas to the Pyramids of Mexico*](#)

[*The Emerald Lizard: Fifteen Latin American Stories to Tell*](#)

[*3 Magical Legends From Ecuador*](#)

[*The Condor Who Fell In Love*](#)

Folktale Collections:

[*3 Magical Legends From Ecuador*](#)

[*Best-loved Folktales of the World*](#)

[*Crow & Fox and Other Animal Legends*](#)

[*The Dial Book of Animal Tales from Around the World*](#)

[*Earth Care: World Folk Tales to Talk About*](#)

[*The Emerald Lizard: Fifteen Latin American Stories to Tell*](#)

[*Folk Tales & Fables of the Americas & the Pacific*](#)

[*Latin American Tales: From the Pampas to the Pyramids of Mexico*](#)

[*Pre-Columbian Stories*](#)

[*Señor Cat's Romance*](#)

[*The Silver Treasure: Myths and Legends of the World*](#)

[*South and North and East and West*](#)

[*Starry Tales*](#)

[*Stories from the Amazon*](#)

[*Traditional Tales from South America*](#)

[*Trickster Tales: Forty Folk Stories from Around the World*](#)

[*Wisdom Tales from Around the World*](#)

[*Wonder Tales from Around the World*](#)

Non-Fiction:

[*The Amazon*](#)

[*Bats, Bugs, and Biodiversity*](#)

[*Amazon River*](#)

[*Natural Wonders: The Amazon Rain Forest*](#)

[*The Rain Forest Indians*](#)

Picture Books:

[*Amazon Boy*](#)

[*The Condor Who Fell In Love*](#)

[*The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest*](#)

[*The Legend of El Dorado*](#)

[*Love and Roast Chicken: A Trickster Tale from the Andes Mountains*](#)

[*Zorro and Quwi*](#)

Adler, N. (1996) [*The Dial Book of Animal Tales from Around the World*](#). New York: Dial Books.

This collection includes animal tales from around the world complemented by vibrant watercolor illustrations. From South America comes “The Magic in the Rain Forest,” a story of an enchanted battle between Jaguar, Snake, and Harpy Eagle over a pair of dancing eyes. Through this magical tale, readers are also introduced to numerous Amazonian plants and animals.

Albyn, C. L. & Webb, L.S. (1993) [*The Multicultural Cookbook for Students*](#). Phoenix: Oryx.

This recipe collection provides instructions for preparing dishes from around the world. The recipes are grouped by geographic regions and country. In addition to the introduction provided for each region, the book also includes an excellent introduction to the cuisine of each country. The section on Ecuador describes how the cuisine of the Ecuadorians is affected by the distinct geography of the three continental regions. The recipes included for Ecuador are for Coconut Bars and Coconut Pudding dessert. Unfortunately, the introduction does not mention the coconut as a staple food in any of Ecuador's regions. Additional recipes from Peru, Columbia, and Brazil draw on many Ecuadorian culinary traditions.

Barlow, G. (1966) [*Latin American Tales: From the Pampas to the Pyramids of Mexico*](#). New York: Rand McNally.

Latin American Tales is an extensive collection that includes stories from Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Columbia, Panama, Mexico, Honduras, and Venezuela. When the stories are attributed to a particular indigenous group, an introductory paragraph on the group is included. As the book was published in 1966, some of the information may be out of date. There are a few black and white sketches included with each story, but the book is primarily text. The collection includes “The Tree Goddess,” a story from the Esmeralda Indians of coastal Columbia and Ecuador. This tale of the Tree Goddess’s struggle to gain the respect of man has clear ecological implications. In the story, we find humans encroaching on the forest and sending both trees and animals further from the coast towards the Andean mountains. In an effort to gain the recognition of the humans for the beauty of her trees, the Tree Goddess gives humans the ability to see natural beauty. She then collaborates with the Goddess of the Grotto to transform a section of cave into a field of emeralds in honor of her trees.

Cherry, L. (1990) [*The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest*](#). New York: Gulliver Green.

Lynne Cherry matches her vibrant illustrations of the flora and fauna of the Amazon with an ecological fable that contrasts the needs of man with those of the rain forest. When a young man ordered to chop down a great Kapok tree falls asleep on the job, he is visited in his sleep by the animals that depend on the tree for survival. These animals successfully argue for the preservation of the Kapok tree.

Cole, J. (1982) [*Best-loved Folktales of the World*](#). Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

This extensive collection of world folktales includes seven stories from Central and South America and includes a version of the classic Incan/Ecuadorian story, “The Search for the Magic Lake” and the Brazilian/Amazonian story “The Deer and the Jaguar Share a House,” an excellent example of a “Why” story that explains why jaguars and deer are never found together.

DesSpain, P. (1999) [*The Emerald Lizard: Fifteen Latin American Stories to Tell*](#). Little Rock, AR: August House.

This bilingual collection includes stories from thirteen Latin American countries. These stories range from traditional stories of indigenous peoples to stories from the Spanish conquest, to modern day morality tales. There is an appendix which includes notes on the origins of each story. This collection includes two Ecuadorian tales, “Five Eggs” and “The Magic Lake.”

Forest, H. (1996) [*Wisdom Tales from Around the World*](#). Little Rock, AR: August House.

In this collection of world tales, Forest brings together a diversity of stories on wisdom. Included in the collection is the story of a beetle and a paca from the Brazilian rain forest. “Paca and the Beetle” provides an Amazonian twist to the tortoise and hare story. This story also explains the origins of the beetle’s shimmering green color thus providing a great example of a “how” story.

Forest, H. (1995) [*Wonder Tales from Around the World*](#). Little Rock, AR: August House.

This collection of world folk tales includes a version of “The Magic Lake” from Ecuador. The collection also includes a section of notes on the origin of each story. Some ink drawings are included but add little to the text.

Garcia, E.A. (2004) [*3 Magical Legends From Ecuador*](#). Self-published

This bilingual (Spanish/English) collection of stories from Quito, the capital city of Ecuador, draws on the Indian culture of the region and explores the influence of Catholicism and the Spanish conquest on the people of Quito. The third story, “The Yavirac,” is particularly interesting from the environmental perspective. This legend contrasts the traditional values of the Quechua people with the greed for gold that motivated the Spanish conquest. In this story, a hidden treasure is made available only to those whose hearts are free from greed. Wisdom is equated with the choice of the staple food of the Quechua people, corn, over a pile of gold. The very health of Mother Nature is linked to an appreciation of the land and the wealth in the form of nourishment it provides.

Gonzalez, L. (1997) [*Señor Cat's Romance*](#). New York: Scholastic.

This collection of tales draws on story telling traditions brought to Latin America by the Europeans and by the African slaves as well as the stories of the indigenous peoples of the Americas. Each story is only a few pages in length and includes a description of each story’s origin as well as a glossary of Spanish words.

Goodman, S. (1995) [*Bats, Bugs, and Biodiversity*](#). New York: Atheneum.

This photo-essay follows a group of seventh and eighth grade students from Michigan as they embark on the trip of a lifetime to the Peruvian Amazon. Through the students' experiences and photographs the reader is presented with an eye opening view of how the pressure to survive butts heads with conservation.

Hickox, R. (1997) [*Zorro and Quwi*](#). New York: Doubleday.

This colorful version of the classic Peruvian/Andean story tells how a trickster guinea pig repeatedly outsmarts a hungry fox.

Hull, R. (1994) [*Pre-Columbian Stories*](#). New York: Thomas Learning.

The stories in this collection are drawn from the oral traditions of Central and South America before the arrival of the conquistadors. The book begins with an introduction to the story telling tradition of the region. While the collection does not include a specifically Ecuadorian story, it does have “The First Inca City,” an Incan creation myth.

Ingpen, R. & Hayes, B. (1994) [*Folk Tales & Fables of the Americas & the Pacific*](#). New York: Chelsea House.

This collection includes a story from the Andean mountains of Bolivia and two stories from the Brazilian Amazon. Each story is two to four pages in length and includes both full-page color illustrations and ink drawings.

Knutson, B. (2004) [*Love and Roast Chicken: A Trickster Tale from the Andes Mountains*](#). Minneapolis: Carolrhoda Books.

This colorful retelling of the story of how guinea pig outsmarted fox includes a full page description of the story’s origins as well as a glossary of the Spanish and Quechua words found in the story.

Lewin, T. (1993) [*Amazon Boy*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster.

This is the story of a Brazilian boy who ventures with his father from his rain forest home to a large town at the mouth of the Amazon River. Here he observes first hand the pressures placed on the resources of the forest and river by the human population. Upon his return to the forest, the boy catches a large, rare, and very valuable fish but chooses to release the fish for the benefit of future generations even though he must sacrifice the equivalent of a year’s salary in doing so. This book, with its subtle story line and beautiful watercolor illustrations, is the perfect book for introducing the very difficult question of how to balance the needs of people with preservation of the natural environment.

MacDonald, M.R. (1999) [*Earth Care: World Folk Tales to Talk About*](#). New Haven, CT: Linnet Books.

This collection of world folktales focuses on the role folktales play in preserving the natural environment. The book is divided into sections based on the environmental message of the story. While there are no tales specific to Ecuador, this collection provides numerous examples of how stories are used to promote environmental stewardship.

Marden, P & Barchers, S. (1994) [*Cooking Up World History*](#). Englewood, CO: Teacher Ideas Press.

This cookbook provides recipes from around the world. The recipes are grouped according to geographic region or country. For South and Central America, there is no country designation for the recipes. There is a brief introduction to the cuisine of South America and a fairly extensive bibliography provides both fiction and non-fiction resources on South America. The recipes are very general and several require no cooking, which makes them ideal for classroom use. Each recipe also includes a question for further research.

McCaughrean, G. (1998) [*Starry Tales*](#). New York: Margaret K McElderry Books.

These myths from around the world explain the sun, moon, and stars. The collection includes the

Peruvian/Andean story “The Many Colored Llama” in which the movement of the stars is explained through the efforts of a poor but hard working farmer, his talking llama, and a great flood.

McCaughrean, G. (1996) [*The Silver Treasure: Myths and Legends of the World*](#). New York: McElderry Books.

Included in this collection is “The Silver-Miners,” a story of how the silver in the Andean mountains of Bolivia was magically hidden from the Spanish conquistadors. This story depicts the plight of the indigenous population under Spanish rule and the devastation the mining industry had on the land.

Meister, C. (2002) [*Amazon River*](#). Edina, MN: ABDO.

Not as graphically rich as either Pollard or Watson's books, *Amazon River* offers a limited introduction to the Amazon region. Meister fails to demonstrate the interconnectedness of her subsections and the reader is left with an incomplete sense of the Amazon region.

Parker, V. (2001) [*Traditional Tales from South America*](#). North Mankato, MN: Thameside.

This collection of South American myths and legends focuses primarily on the stories of various indigenous groups of the Brazilian Amazon with the exception of one Incan creation myth.

Pirotta, S. (2000) [*Stories from the Amazon*](#). Austin: RSVP.

Stories from the Amazon offers a collection of myths from the indigenous cultures of the Amazon rain forest. While these stories draw primarily from the peoples of Brazil, they provide an excellent introduction to the unique environment of the Amazon rain forest. In addition, each of the five stories includes a full page introduction accompanied by maps and/or photographs. Color illustrations are woven in with the text of each story. The book also includes a glossary of terms, a bibliography, and a page of rain forest related classroom activities.

Pollard, M. (1998) [*The Amazon*](#). New York: Benchmark Books.

This non-fiction introduction to the Amazon provides a wealth of information including chapters on the geography, history, politics, economy, culture, and ecology of the great Amazon and its tributaries. Each chapter includes numerous photographs to illustrate the text as well as maps and diagrams. At 44 pages, this book provides an excellent introduction to the broad range of issues facing the Amazon region. For the lower elementary classroom, *The Amazon* provides an excellent tool for teaching non-fiction text features and excerpts could be used as shared reading text. For upper elementary and middle school, the book would be useful as an independent research source.

Ed. Rosen, M. (1992) [*South and North and East and West*](#). Cambridge, MA: Oxfam.

This Oxfam folktale collection includes an Andean tale from Bolivia and an Amazonian tale from Brazil.

Sherman, J. (1996) [*Trickster Tales: Forty Folk Stories from Around the World*](#). Little Rock, AR: August House.

This collection of trickster stories includes a version of the classic Guinea Pig and Fox story of the Andes. Each story in this collection is only a few pages in length. Some black and white

sketches accompany the stories but this is primarily text.

Thomson, R. (1996) [*The Rain Forest Indians*](#). New York: Children's Press.

More of an activities guide than an introduction to the rain forest, this text provides seven rain forest inspired arts and crafts projects paired with a few pages of information on the lifestyle of the Yanomami of Brazil. The simple text makes it a good match for students in grades 1-3.

Thornhill, J. (1993) [*Crow & Fox and Other Animal Legends*](#). New York: Simon & Schuster.

Thornhill's collection of animal legends from around the world includes "Mouse and Tapir," a creation story from the Amazon. The collection includes beautiful full-page color illustrations with extensive botanical and geographic detail.

Toaquiza, A. (2002) [*The Condor Who Fell In Love*](#). Seeds for Communities.

This beautifully illustrated story is presented in three languages: English, Spanish, and Quechua, the language spoken by many of the indigenous people of the Andes. The vivid acrylic paintings use intense color to depict traditional Quechua imagery. This legend explains how the lonely messenger of the gods, the condor, took a Quechua shepherdess as his wife. Her transformation into a condor ensures continued communication between the human world and the world of the gods.

Vidal, B. (1991) [*The Legend of El Dorado*](#). New York: Knopf.

This retelling of the classic El Dorado tale draws from the wealth of pre-Columbian El Dorado legends told throughout South America. While not specific to a particular area, the story depicts plants and animals found throughout the Amazon region. The story also provides a nice bridge between discussion of indigenous groups and the conquistadors.

Watson, G. (2005) [*Natural Wonders: The Amazon Rain Forest*](#). New York: Weigl.

While less detailed than Pollard's *The Amazon*, this Natural Wonders book provides an excellent introduction to the Amazon Rain Forest through simple language, stunning photographs, and a wide variety of text features including bold vocabulary, maps, diagrams, time lines, and tables. Watson is able to provide a highly engaging and informative view of the Amazon region that is more accessible to a younger audience. Particularly interesting is the two-page presentation on the conservation debate. Rather than telling children what their view should be, this text attempts to present both sides of the issue and asks the reader to answer the question "Should trees be cut down in the Amazon rain forest?" on their own. The text also includes a self-test section at the end as well as a bibliography of additional book and Web resources on the Amazon.

Webb, L.S. (1995) [*Holidays of the World Cookbook*](#). Phoenix, NM: Oryx.

This cookbook provides holiday recipes from 136 countries. The recipes are divided by country and each country's recipes are prefaced by an explanation of the holiday traditions they represent. In addition, a brief explanation of the significance of a dish or ingredients is included before many of the recipes. The section on Ecuador includes Easter celebration recipes: Cream of Coconut Soup, Potato Cakes, Peanut Sauce, and Bread Pudding.