

## 1. American Indian Origin Stories

Storytelling has always been important to American Indians. In some tribes, members would meet in a [kiva](#) and share stories or reenact them during spiritual ceremonies. They told stories to entertain one another and to teach about their beliefs and ways of life. They used stories to explain and record their experiences for future generations.



One kind of story American Indians passed down through the years was the [origin story](#). These kinds of stories explained how Earth and its people came to be. The Hopis (HO-pees) are an American Indian group who live in the Southwest, in what is now the state of Arizona. The following is a Hopi origin story.

### Hopi Origin Story

In the beginning, Earth was damp and dark. There were no animals or birds. At first, the people lived happily inside Earth. After a while, however, their caves became too crowded. People began to argue with one another. The worried chief agreed that his people needed to leave Earth's dark inside.

The chief's advisors made a mockingbird that found a hole at the top of Earth and flew around the world. When the bird came back, he reported that life above them was very different.

The chief's advisors grew sturdy plants that reached like a ladder to a hole in Earth's crust. The chief guided his people up the plants to Earth's surface.

Once there, the people did not know where they should settle, so they set out in different directions. They traveled east, west, north, and south

until they found good land upon which they could grow crops and build villages. This is how it all began for the Hopis.