

The Legend of the Apache Tears

Many years ago the Apache¹ rode free across the valleys and mountains of southwestern United States, including what is now Arizona. The land, like the Apache, was rough but noble. Sunset mountains cut across miles of desert sands. Only the hardiest plants survived in the harsh conditions found on the faces of these towering rocky cliffs. The mountains and surrounding desert landscape kept the Apache safe from enemies far longer than other tribes who had settled in more fertile, and far more open areas. In the end, however, encroachers came searching for the precious metals contained within the mountain rock and the Apache way of life was destroyed.

The Apache fought fiercely to defend their homes and families. They maintained their strong fighting spirit even though the odds were against them. Small groups of Apache warriors made life miserable for their enemies, hoping to drive the intruders away. They raided campsites, stealing horses and cattle. They ambushed supply caravans, taking food and weapons for their own use. They attacked when least expected, catching their enemies off guard. For awhile tactics of the Apache warriors worked, but the lure of gold and silver proved too strong. The men, with no regard for the Apache or his land, were determined to establish their settlements and seek their fortunes in the mountains. Finally, a large cavalry unit was sent out to hunt down the Apache warriors.

A warrior party of seventy-five Apache galloped to the top of a pink-hued mountain, chased closely behind by the cavalry. The warriors wheeled their horses around, realizing they were trapped. Behind them, the sheer face of the mountain plummeted hundreds of feet to the desert floor. In front of them, hundreds of cavalry officers circled, guns in hand. At a signal from their leader, the officers fired. In the first round of shots, fifty Apache died. The remaining twenty five warriors were trapped and faced death at the hands of their enemies. These men knew there was no way out. Rather than be killed by the enemy, the remaining Apache warriors spun their horses around and leaped over the edge of the mountain.

When the Apache women and children discovered their fathers, husbands, and sons dead at the bottom of the cliff, their tears fell. Each tear drop, as it hit the hard, dry earth, turned to black stone. They mourned the death of their warriors. They mourned the loss of their fighting spirit. They mourned the life they had carved in the Arizona desert. Soon the ground at the bottom of the mountain, once bleached white from the searing sun, was blackened by Apache tears.²

It is said that a person who finds one of these tears beneath Apache Leap Mountain will never need to cry again, for the Apache women cried tears for all who mourn. These beautiful translucent gemstones are now known as Apache Tears Good Luck Stones.

¹ Apache is the collective name for several culturally related groups of Native Americans who speak the Apachean language. Western Apache is the group that remains within Arizona.

²Apache Tear Drop is a form of black obsidian rock. It is a type of volcanic glass that forms when lava comes into contact with water and is cooled quickly.

Apache Tears

Stanza 1

Hoof prints and foot prints deep ruts the wagons made
The victor and the loser came by here
No head stones but these bones bring Mescalero death moans³
See the smooth black nuggets by the thousands laying here
Petrified but justified are these Apache tears.

Stanza 3

The young men, the old men, the guilty and the innocent
Bled red blood and chilled alike with tears
The red men, the white men no fight ever took this land
So don't raise the dust when you pass here
They're sleeping and in my keeping are these Apache tears.

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Lyrics to "Apache Tears" by Johnny Cash
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³ Mescalero (or Mescalero Apache) is a Native American tribe of Southern Athabaskan heritage currently living on the Mescalero Apache Indian Reservation in south central New Mexico.

**Grade 8 Reading
Strands 1, 2, and 3
Reading Process, Literary Text, Informational Text
"Apache Tears"**

1. Read the following sentence from the passage:

"In the end, however, encroachers came searching for the precious metals contained within the mountain rock and the Apache way of life was destroyed."

Read the dictionary definition for the word encroach:

1. to enter by gradual steps or by stealth into the possessions or rights of another
2. to advance beyond the usual or proper limits without permission

Which of the following words is a synonym for the word encroachers?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="radio"/> A enemies | <input type="radio"/> C miners |
| <input type="radio"/> B intruders | <input type="radio"/> D settlers |

2. Based on your reading of "The Legend of the Apache Tears," what is the author's attitude toward the Apache?

- A** The author respects the Apache and considers the Apache to be a strong and honorable people.
- B** The author feels that the Apache are a violent people who steal and kill anyone who comes onto their land.
- C** The author believes that the Apache warriors were cowards, arguing that they should have stayed and fought the cavalry.
- D** The author appears to be indifferent toward the Apache, believing that the Apache warriors were responsible for their own death.

Identify at least one line from the passage that supports your answer.

3. The lyrics by Johnny Cash and the expository piece titled "The Legend of the Apache Tears" have a similar message. What is that message?

- A The killing of the Apache was appropriate and fair.
- B The black Apache tears will bring good fortune.
- C The tears cried by the Apache women were just.
- D The Apache warriors proudly defended their land.

4. Which of the following sentences best summarizes the main idea of Paragraph 2 from "The Legend of the Apache Tears"?

- A The Apache warriors stole weapons and horses from the white man.
- B The Apaches did not give up their land willingly to the white man.
- C The white man wanted to steal the gold and silver from the Apache.
- D The white man called for the cavalry to hunt down the Apache.

5. Where does the Mescalero tribe live?

- A Western Arizona
- B In the rocky cliffs of the mountains
- C At the bottom of Apache Leap Mountain
- D South central New Mexico

6. Read the following line from the passage:

"Rather than be killed by the enemy, the remaining Apache warriors spun their horses around and leaped over the edge of the mountain."

What can the reader infer about the Apache warriors based on this line?

- A They were proud and courageous.
- B They were skilled fighters.
- C They were afraid of dying.
- D They were hopeful and confident.

7. Based on the reading, why did the white man first move onto the Apache land?

- A to destroy the Apache way of life
- B to establish new settlements in the West
- C to locate new sources of land for food
- D to mine valuable gems from the mountains

8. What is the author's primary purpose for writing "The Legend of the Apache Tears"?

- A to provide information about the death of the Western Apache
- B to tell about the strength and the spirit of the Apache people
- C to describe the harsh living conditions of the Apache tribe
- D to explain how the Apache Tear Drop gemstone is formed

9. Which of the following statements from the passage is an opinion?

- A The land, like the Apache, was rough but noble.
- B They raided campsites, stealing horses and cattle.
- C They mourned the life they had carved in the Arizona desert.
- D Each tear drop, as it hit the hard, dry earth, turned to black stone.

10. Read the following lines from Cash's song:

So don't raise the dust when you pass here
They're sleeping and in my keeping are these Apache tears.

What is Cash inferring by these lines?

- A That he is responsible for caring for the land and must protect the precious stones.
- B That one should pass by the site quietly so as not to awaken those that are sleeping.
- C That the ground where the Apache died is sacred and should not be disturbed.
- D That many tears have been shed by those men who fought valiantly for the land.

11. Read the following line from the passage:

Behind them, the sheer face of the mountain plummeted hundreds of feet to the desert floor.

Using context clues, which of the following means the same as plummeted?

- A rose suddenly
- B dropped sharply
- C fell rapidly
- D sunk quickly

12. Which of the following phrases from the passage contributes primarily to the establishment of imagery?

- A The Apache fought fiercely to defend their homes...
- B The mountains and surrounding desert landscape kept the Apache safe from enemies...
- C They mourned the life they had carved in the Arizona desert.
- D Sunset mountains cut across miles of desert sands.

13. Which of the following was NOT an effect of the arrival of the cavalry unit?

- A Fifty Apache warriors were shot and killed.
- B Twenty five warriors rode their horses off the cliff.
- C Apache warriors conducted sneak attacks on the enemies.
- D Apache women shed tears that turned the desert sand black.

14. The author compares the Apache to the land, stating that both were rough and noble. Which of the following supports the claim that the Apache were a noble people?

- A The Apache chose to die in their own way rather than be shot by the enemy.
- B The Apache women and men were strong enough to survive the harsh conditions.
- C The Apache warriors raided the campsites of their enemies.
- D The Apache women mourned the loss of their warriors.

15. Read the following line from the lyrics of "Apache Tears."

No head stones but these bones bring Mescalero death moans
See the smooth black nuggets by the thousands laying here
Petrified but justified are these Apache tears.

What is the purpose of these lines?

- A to prove that the tears of the Apache women have turned to stone
- B to explain why a visitor to the area might hear strange sounds
- C to describe the beauty of the thousands of Apache Tear stones
- D to create an image of the Apache burial ground for the reader

16. Identify the overall mood of "Apache Tears" by Cash. Use specific lines from the lyrics to support your answer.

**Grade 8 Reading
Strands 1, 2, and 3
Reading Process, Literary Text, Informational Text
"Apache Tears"**

QUESTION	ANSWER	PO
1	B	S1C4PO2 S1C4PO5
2	A The land, like the Apache, was rough but noble. Rather than be killed by the enemy, they leaped off the cliff. They mourned the loss of their fighting spirit. They maintained their strong fighting spirit even though the odds...	S3C1PO10
3	C	S3C1PO11
4	B	S3C1PO1
5	D	S3C1PO5
6	A	S3C1PO10
7	D	S1C6PO7
8	B	S3C1PO4
9	A	S3C1PO3
10	C	S2C1PO6
11	B	S1C4PO2
12	D	S3C1PO12 S1C4PO4
13	C	S3C1PO9
14	A	S3C1PO12
15	D	S2C1PO6
16	Cash creates a feeling/sense of sadness, of loss, of death, of despair throughout the lyrics. Words/phrases that contribute to this mood are death moans; dead grass, dry roots crying in the night; petrified but justified; bled red blood and chilled alike with tears; don't raise the dust; they're sleeping. All of the images he creates evoke despair and death.	S2C1PO6