

The Wolf's Tale

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Extension 2

Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?

There are many legends and fables about wolves. Some, like *Little Red Riding Hood*, have shown the wolf as an evil monster. But those are only stories! Wolves are not that bad and they don't usually eat people!

However, the fear of wolves is still common in many cultures. Let's see what different peoples and traditions think about wolves:

- In Greek mythology **Lycaon** is transformed into a wolf as a result of eating human flesh.
- In Latvian mythology, the **Vilkacis** is a person changed into a wolf-like monster, though the *Vilkacis* is beneficial.
- According to **Christian dogma**, Jesus Christ advised against false prophets dressed in sheep's clothing which in fact were wolves.
- In the Middle Ages, it was believed that men would turn into **werewolves** through an evil spell or as a punishment for a serious sin.



Werewolves, half human and half animal, roamed the streets at night and drank warm blood from their innocent victims. Sometimes their transformation was associated with the appearance of the full moon.

Most modern references agree that a werewolf can be killed if shot by a silver bullet, although this is not an authentic feature of traditional legends.

Over to you:

1

- **Are there any proverbs or stories about wolves and werewolves in your culture?**
- **Have you seen any films where werewolves appear? Do you believe in these stories?**
- **Do a web search to find out more about how different cultures see the wolf. See if you can find any interesting stories!**

For example, find out about Romulus and Remus, the founders of the city of Rome. And what do native American cultures think about wolves?

2 As you can see in the short story by Louise Cooper 'Wolf's Tale' the only way to kill a werewolf is supposed to be a silver bullet.

The film *Silver Bullet* is an adaptation of Stephen King's novel *Cycle of the Werewolf* and tells the story of a small town terrorised by mysterious killings. Guess who did the killings?

Find information about the film and the book on the web and write a short review.

3. Look up information in books or on the Internet and fill in this ID (Identity Card) for the wolf:

Canis Lupus



Class: _____

Order: _____

Family: _____

Physical characteristics:

Reproduction rituals:

Forms of Communication:

3 a) Look at the site www.wolftrust.org.uk and try to find the answers to the following questions based on 'The Wolf Manifesto- Declaration of Principles for Wolf Conservation':

- What is this manifesto about?
- What does it say about the wolf as a "mammalian predator"?
- How have human beings reacted to wolves throughout recorded history?
- What has the harsh judgement on wolves been based on?
- What have the main reasons for the conflicts between human beings and Wolves been?
- What does this Manifesto suggest about managing this conflict?

b) With the information you have gathered, try to give an accurate, realistic picture of the wolf and present it to the rest of the class in a poster or Powerpoint presentation.

4. Today, wolves are in **danger of extinction**: this means that soon wolves may no longer exist! They have long been classed as an **endangered species**.

Men are ultimately responsible for the survival of wolves. **How can YOU help the wolf?**

You can't do it all yourself, but you can pick one action to take today. Have a look at this list of suggestions and, with the help of your teacher, **try point 7 at your school**:

1. **Become a member** of an organization that supports wolf survival.
2. **Learn more about wolves**, then talk to the people you know about wolves and wolf-human coexistence.
3. **Think globally, act locally** – get involved in local environmental projects. Everything is connected, so every improvement to the environment ultimately helps wolves.
4. **Keep an open mind** to all sides of wolf recovery and management. Avoid assuming wolves are the good guys, and humans (especially livestock owners or hunters) are the bad guys. All needs and values must be weighed equally.
5. **Write articles and letters** to appropriate publications with your opinion.
6. **Organize a fund-raiser**, and donate the proceeds to an organization that supports wolf survival. Be sure to check with the organization first to find out if any regulations apply.
7. **Give an educational talk** about wolves at your school or in other public places in your area.

