

The Gossiping Clams *A Suquamish Native American Folk Tale*

1. Long, long ago, when the world was new and the animals could talk, clams were the most talkative of all. An no wonder, for their mouths stretched the full length of their bodies. The clams not only loved to talk, they told stories as well. Some of their stories were true and some were not.
2. "Did you know," said one clam to Eagle, who was eating a fish on the beach, "that Ravens says he is a much better hunter than you?"
3. Eagle's feathers ruffled in annoyance. "Perhaps that is true," scoffed Eagle, "if you picking at carrion can be called 'hunting'."
4. Once when Otter came down to the beach to splash in the water, another clam said to him, "I don't think you make yourself look foolish when you come down to play in the waves."
5. "Who said I look foolish?" demanded Otter.
6. "I really shouldn't say," said the clam, "but you might go and ask Beaver. Beaver thinks that everyone should work as hard as she does."
7. It wasn't long before all the animals were quarreling with each other, and all because of the stories that the clams were spreading. Raven finally got so tired of all the gossiping that he called a council meeting and invited all the animals. Bear, Eagle, Mink, Otter, Wolf, and many others came. It was decided at that meeting that, in order to preserve the peace, a way must be found to put a stop to these unkind stories.
8. "Beaver," said Raven, "we cannot decided how to punish the clams. You are a good worker. We know that you will keep working until you discover a solution, so we have chosen you to rid us of this problem."
9. Beaver thought and thought, and at last she thought of a plan. She gathered up armloads of the clams—every last one of them—and carried them to the edge of the water.
10. "What are you doing?" they asked in alarm.
11. "You shall see soon enough," replied Beaver. "Never again will you spread your mean-spirited tales."
12. Beaver waited there until the tide went out and then, quickly, she buried each and every one of those clams in the sand. The clams were outraged! When Bear came down to walk along the beach, one of the clams opened up its mouth to tattle on Beaver. But as soon as it did, sand and water ran in. The clam sputtered and spit out the water. Again it opened its mouth, but as soon as it did, the sand and water ran into it, and all the poor clam could do was spit out the water and close its mouth.
13. Even today, if you walk along the beach at low tide, you might see a little spurt of water squirting up from beneath the sand here and there. That is just a clam spitting out the water it swallowed when it opened its mouth to gossip!

1. In which word does the suffix –ance mean the same as it does in the word annoyance?

- A. ancestor
- B. balance
- C. disturbance
- D. advance

2. Select the best synonym of the word scoffed as it is used in the passage

Retreated	Discovered
Chuckled	Sneered
Scorned	agreed

3. All of the following questions were NOT answered in paragraph 7 EXCEPT—

- A. Where was the council meeting held?
- B. What did the wolf say at the meeting?
- C. Why were all the animals quarreling?
- D. How long did the meeting last?

4. The beaver in this story is shown as the—

- A. group leader
- B. party giver
- C. silent partner
- D. problem solver

5. The author uses the term “mean-spirited” to show that the clams—

- A. had strong ideas
- B. wanted to cause problems
- C. said things that had two meanings
- D. showed unusual qualities

6. If the author wants to use another word for scoff, she will use a—

- A. dictionary
- B. atlas
- C. thesaurus
- D. encyclopedia

7. How did the animals solve their problem?

- A. They asked the clams to quit talking so much.
- B. They left the beach when the clams started talking
- C. They found a way to shut the clams up
- D. They told funny stories about the clams

8. Which information from the story supports the idea that the clams thought they were treated unfairly?

- A. One of the clams opened its mouth to tattle on the beaver.
- B. The clams talked with everyone who visited the beach.
- C. One of the clams said something unkind about the Raven.
- D. The clams’ mouths stretched the full length of their bodies.

9. What is the most likely reason that the author wrote this story?

- A. to encourage readers to listen to each other
- B. to explain why readers should become storytellers
- C. to tell readers how to take care of a problem
- D. to teach a lesson about the harm of gossiping