



Reading #1 Ute Creation Story

Unit 1 Lesson 1

Far to the south Sinauf^{*} was preparing for a long journey to the north. He had made a bag, and in this bag he placed selected pieces of sticks—all different yet the same size. The bag was a magic bag. Once Sinauf put the sticks into the bag, they changed into people. As he put more and more sticks into the bag, the noise the people made grew louder, thus gaining the curiosity of the animals.

After filling his magic bag, Sinauf closed it and went to prepare for his journey. Among the animals, Coyote was the most curious and often gets into trouble. When Coyote



heard about Sinauf's magic bag full of stick people, he grew very curious, "I want to see what those people look like." He thought. With that, he made a little hole with his flint knife near the top of the bag and peeked in. He laughed at what he saw and heard, for the people were a strange new creation and had many languages and sons.

When Sinauf finished his preparations and prayers he was ready for the journey northward. He picked up the bag, threw it over his shoulder and headed for the *Una-u-quich*, the distant high mountains. From the tops of those mountains, Sinauf could see long distances across the plains to the east and north, and from there he planned to distribute the people throughout the world.





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Sinauf was anxious to complete his long journey, so he did not take time to eat and soon became very weak. Due to his weakness, he did not notice the bag getting lighter. Through Coyote's hole in the top of the bag, the people had been jumping out, a few at a time. Those who jumped out created their families, bands, and tribes.

Finally reaching the *Una-u-quich*, Sinauf stopped. As he sat down he noticed the hole in the bag and how light it was. The only people left were those at the bottom of the bag. As gently lifted them out he spoke to them and said, "My children, I will call you Utikas, and you shall roam these beautiful mountains. Be brave and strong." When he finished, he left them there and returned to his home in the south.

*Sinauf - the Ute creator

Source: Adapted from the *Ute Knowledge Bowl, Ute Tribe, Uintah & Ouray 2012 Study Guide*.

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