

Where Did the Sun Go?

Background:

- Many ancient civilizations had different beliefs about what was happening during the solar eclipse.
- Some ancient civilizations feared it was the end of the world, while others thought of it as a good omen.
- Many interpretations came about because of the loss of the Sun, including:
 - Norse: Believed their God of mischief, Loki, created wolflike giants, one of which ate the sun to get revenge on the Gods for locking him up.
 - Hindu: There were a few interpretations, that revolved around a “sun eater” which, like the Chinese would sometimes take the form of a dragon.
 - Mayan: Believed that the “star demons” which were the planets, were eating the sun and moon.
 - Aztec: Believed that a Jaguar (a symbol of darkness) was eating the sun, and they would yell and scream to scare it away.
 - Inuit: Believed the sun and moon were diseased so they covered their valuables, including themselves, so they wouldn’t become diseased.
 - Ojibwe: Believed the sun was extinguished and to relight it they would shoot flaming arrows at the sky.
 - Celts: Invented the Festival of Lights to welcome the eclipse and believed the alignment of Sun and Moon opened doorway to spiritual realm.
 - Diné (Navajo): Believed it was a sacred event that represented the rebirth of the sun and that the sun and moon were embracing each other.
 - Batammaliba (Pacific Islander): Believed the sun and moon were arguing and wanted them to stop so they took it as a sign to resolve disputes.

Background: China

- Many ancient civilizations believed in a type of “sun eater”, but the most prominent was the Chinese belief in the dragon eating the sun.
- The Chinese believed that a celestial dragon was eating the Sun during Solar Eclipses and the Moon during Lunar Eclipses.
- They would try to scare off the dragon by making loud noises in the streets to try and bring back their Sun or Moon.
- The Chinese though thought that it was a prediction that would foretell the future of their current Emperor.
- The Chinese were also the first to start predicting Eclipses accurately, this occurred during the Wei Dynasty around 237 CE.
- By 1300 CE they were able to predict eclipses within a 30-minute accuracy.
- They were able to do this by analyzing the motion of the moon.



Instructions:

- Now, it is your time to shine! Follow the Instructions below and show us what you have thought was “eating” the Sun if you lived in Ancient Times!
 1. Take a half-sheet
 2. Grab something to draw with
 3. Draw us what you would have thought was eating the sun and be as creative as you’d like!

Example:

What do you think is “eating” the sun?

