

# Awâsis and the World-Famous Bannock

By Dallas Hunt Illustrated by Amanda Strong  
Winnipeg: Highwater Press

## Synopsis of the Story

"This . . . story celebrates the revitalization of Cree dialects and traditional methods of storytelling. During an unfortunate mishap, young Awâsis loses Kôhkum's freshly baked world-famous bannock. Not knowing what to do, Awâsis seeks out a variety of other-than-human relatives willing to help. What adventures are in store for Awâsis? The book includes a pronunciation guide and the recipe for Kôhkum's world-famous bannock"--Amazon.com.

Note - this story has many words in Cree. You should consider prereading to have some comfort with the vocabulary.

Strategies	Teacher Hints
<p data-bbox="428 940 737 974">Background Information</p> <p data-bbox="201 1010 930 1209">Invite students to think of their favourite foods. Start with expected answers (pizza, hamburgers etc...) but try to guide them to share stories of special meals they might have had with families. Try to elicit answers that incorporate home-cooked meals, or special treats that were enjoyed by the family.</p>	
<p data-bbox="201 1241 914 1308">Introduced them to Bannock. Explain that it is a special bread that has been made for hundreds of years.</p>	
<p data-bbox="485 1337 680 1371">Read the Book</p> <p data-bbox="201 1404 906 1604">Display the cover to the students. Invite them to make some predictions about what the story might be about based on the cover. Note the different animals and the basket that is empty. See if students can make a text-to-text connection to any other stories they might have read.</p> <p data-bbox="201 1640 959 1738">Read until the page "But then she was having so much fun Awâsis dropped Kokhum's world-famous bannock off the bridge.</p>	<p data-bbox="984 1337 1414 1570">The beginning of the story has some parallels to Little Red Riding Hood. You can misdirect the students a little bit to assume that this story will have nature in an antagonistic relationship with the characters.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Role Play</b></p> <p>Invite students to find a space within the classroom. Have them imagine that they are in a large forest. Have them pretend they are jumping over rocks, running through fields and skipping over bridges. Remind them to imagine that they are holding a basket of bannock while they do so. Have them pause and express their emotional state while having fun in the forest.</p>	<p>A larger space is optimal for this activity. If you have an outdoor space to do this activity it might be an excellent opportunity to have them actually connect with nature outdoors. Otherwise, ensure that students are moving safely.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Statues</b></p> <p>Ask the students to imagine that they have dropped the world-famous bannock off the bridge. Have them freeze in place as they watch the bannock float down the stream. Invite them to share their emotional state now. You can display the picture if students need help imagining an emotional state.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Read the Book</b></p> <p>Continue reading the story. Point out the bear in the pictures as it looks like the bear is following Awâsis. Read up until Kokum says they can make some more bannock together.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Role Play</b></p> <p>Have the students imagine that they are one of the forest creatures. Mention that you have seen maskwa (bear) prowling around following Awâsis. Have them come up with theories as to what the maskwa is up to.</p>	<p>Use this to continue to put suspicion on the maskwa.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Role on Wall</b></p> <p>Draw an outline of maskwa on chart paper. Invite students to think about everything they know about bears. Begin by discussing what they have heard and seen about bears from stories, and what they have seen of him in the story so far. Record these facts on the inside of the figure.</p> <p>Next, invite the students to consider what questions they have about maskwa. Record these questions on the outside of the figure.</p>	

<p style="text-align: center;">Hot Seating</p> <p>Take on the role of the maskwa. Explain that the class, in their roles of the animals, can ask maskwa the questions that they generated in the last activity.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Art Extension</p> <p>Invite students to create a piece of art about how they feel about the maskwa. Does he scare them? Does he seem suspicious? How can they show their emotions towards the bear in a piece of art?</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Read the Book</p> <p>Complete the story. Highlight fact that maskwa was simply trying to help make bannock. Revisit the Role on Wall chart paper and update it with the positive things we now know about maskwa. Ask students if they were expecting this resolution.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Reflection</p> <p>Compare this story to Little Red Riding Hood. How is nature portrayed differently in the two stories? What could this say about the Indigenous relationship to nature versus the colonial relationship to nature?</p>	<p>You could use a Venn diagram to compare the two stories.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Extension - 7 Grandfather Teachings</p> <p>Use the resources below to learn about the 7 Grandfather Teachings. Discuss the role of the bear and the connection it has to bravery. How did the characters in this story show bravery? Did they show any other characteristics of the 7 Grandfather Teachings?</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Extension - Make Bannock</p> <p>The book includes a recipe to make bannock. If appropriate, work with your class to make bannock. If this is not feasible you can make bannock yourself to share with the class. Please be mindful of any allergies/food restrictions in your classroom.</p>	

Further information:

7 Sacred (or Grandfather) Teachings resources:

<https://empoweringthespirit.ca/cultures-of-belonging/seven-grandfathers-teachings/>

Please see [drewbeatty.com](http://drewbeatty.com) for more information and lesson plans.