

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Period \_\_\_\_\_

## A Round World

Directions: Read the story. As you read, highlight words or phrases that show examples of elements of culture. When you are finished, answer the questions below.

In a land far from contact with the outside world there is a large island named Obo which is perfectly round and set in the middle of a fresh water lake. The only trees are coconut palms which grow in abundance. There is one mountain which dominates the northern section of the island from whose round top on a clear day one can see the mainland

The people of the island, known as Obotes, are a very round people, like the Pillsbury Dough Man in the TV commercials. They built round houses with round roofs, round windows and even round doors. Their paths around the island were also circular. They run through the coconut groves and around the base of the round mountain. In the center of their village is a round marketplace where they can exchange coconuts for fresh water fish which had been caught by their fisherman from round boats fashioned from many coconut shells, lined with palm leaves.

The round coconuts are the principal resources of these islanders. Workers pick them, women drain the milk into empty shells, use the meat of the nut to feed their families and weave the coarse fibers into garments. The men use the strong outer shells for building shelters and boats.

Since the coconut is the staple of their lives, they worship the spirit of the trees which produce it. The high priest, the Obobo, selects the best coconuts for drums to be used in their festivals of worship. He also selects the roundest young men to be the drummers and dancers. The young women of the tribe make the elaborate, round masks for the dancers. They also carve designs on the doors of their houses and on containers of food.

When an Obote dies, the tribe builds a round mound over their remains and sings a dirge of musical rounds at the grave.

Altogether, we might say that the Obotes live a well-rounded life!

1. What elements of culture did you encounter in the description of the Obotes?

2. Think about the type of laws they might have. Create one law that reflects the culture.

3. Think about the type of language they might have. Since the culture focuses on roundness, their words are most likely 'round.' Full of open vowel sounds like: a, o, u ... and combinations of these. Create three words for the Obotes daily life needs and their meaning.

4. Did the Obotes control their culture or did the culture control them? Give reasons for your answer.

5. What do you think would happen to an Obote who would come along one day and notice the tall, perpendicular trunk of the palm trees and introduce a new way of building and thinking to their fellow islanders? How would these ideas be received by the rest of the culture? Why?