



# Loup Garou

(Rougarou):

*The*

*Cajun Legend*



© 2017 MrE's History Emporium

# Teacher Info

First, have your students read the following text about Loup Garous, then write a story about their experience meeting one on a night swamp tour in the Atchafalaya with a boat full of family, friends, and others. The story should make great material for Halloween or any other time you would like them to scare others. My students loved these types of writing assignments and the word limits set by the assignment never slowed them down. Mine always asked if they "could write more" because they had great ideas and just could not stop.

I always allowed them to write more but suggested that they should edit it down to stay within the guidelines but I never counted words anyway. I just wanted them to have fun and tell vivid stories using the information they knew about the swamp, tour boats, people that might be on there with them – just tell me a tale. As I told them "it's not true because you are still here" so just enjoy yourself and tell a good tale.

I told them that when they finished, have a friend read it and initial the box up top so I know someone else has read it.





## Loup Garou (Rougarou): The Cajun Legend

A **loup garou** is a mythical creature in French, Canadian and American folklores which is believed to come into existence as a result of a curse. It is basically the same thing with a **rougarou/rugaru/roux-garoux/rugaroo**.

The word “loup-garou” is derived from French. In French language, the word *loup* means wolf while *garoul* means a man who can turn into a wolf – basically *werewolf* in English.

The belief in loup garous is especially strong among French Canadians, Cajun people and the people of Louisiana.

According to a Cajun legend, loup garous wander around in forests and swamps of Greater New Orleans and Acadiana. These creatures have a man’s body and a wolf’s head very similar to the legends regarding **werewolves/lycanthropes (read here)**.

Stories in Cajun folklore about the loup garou were mostly used to scare children in teaching them how to behave.

On a side note, loup-garous were believed to hunt and kill Catholic Christians not observing Lent and abide by its rules. Lent is a religious observance period of repentance, fasting and preparation for the Easter (that takes 40 days excluding Sundays).

### Loup Garou Curse – How Does One Become a Loup Garou?

There are different beliefs in different folklores regarding the loup garou curse.

One of these beliefs related to French Catholics suggests that a person will transform into a loup garou/rougarou if he breaks the rules of Lent for 7 consecutive years.

According to another belief, the transformation of a human being into a loup garou results from a spell. A person put under the loup garou curse will remain in that form for 101 days and the curse will be passed onto another human being when the loup garou draws that person's blood.



Another myth suggests that only a witch can put a loup garou curse on a person either by becoming a wolf herself or simply cursing people with lycanthropy.

An expert on Cajun folklore, Professor Barry Jean Ancelet of the University of Louisiana wrote in an article that loup garous were a result of a curse but sometimes a person voluntarily chose to become one.

Some stories suggest that, by means of therianthropy – the ability of metamorphosing into animals, a person can transform into a loup garou/rougarou.

The origin of the myth regarding loup garous dates back to medieval France. The myth changed with time and in the 16th century people started to believe the loup garou curse was genetic and not something that could be transferred from one person to another.

This myth also involved a trigger for the curse. According to the belief, some event in this person's life triggered his condition (although there is no specific information regarding the kind of event in question since this is an oral tradition passed on from generation to generation). His body enlarged and he got a craving for raw meat. The transformation process was completed when this person took a bite of human flesh.

## **Loup Garou in Native American Folklore**

Loup garou is mostly identified with wendigo in Native American folklore. These two creatures are defined to have same characteristics. That being said, one must become a cannibal to become a wendigo according to the belief.

## **Abilities and Weaknesses of Loup Garous**

According to the myths, loup garous become able to shapeshift after they eat a piece of human flesh. They have superman strength to the extent that they can easily break bones in addition to being super fast and agile creatures.

Some people believe that loup garous are weak against fire and fire is the only way to destroy these creatures. Others believe that decapitation will do the job and this is the way to kill a loup garou/rougarou. Mutilating the body and cutting it into small pieces is the only sure way to kill a loup garou according to another myth.

In conclusion, the loup garou legend changed greatly throughout history and it still keeps changing with today's popular culture references and/or additions to the story. Some people even suggest that the stories regarding

loup garou are derived from the myth regarding the Bigfoot. The loup garou/rougarou, in the end, is a mythical creature the existence of which is yet to be proven.

If you would like to learn more on the loup garou, you can read the articles and books written by Professor Barry Jean Ancelet who is one of the few experts on this specific part of Cajun folklore.

According to **Barry Jean Ancelet**, an academic expert on Cajun folklore and professor at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, the tale of the Loup Garou is a common legend across French Louisiana.

The Loup Garou legend has been spread for many generations, either directly from French settlers to Louisiana (New France) or via the French Canadian immigrants centuries ago.

In the Cajun legends, the creature is said to prowl the swamps around Acadiana and Greater New Orleans, and possibly the fields or forests of the regions. The Loup Garou most often is described as a creature with a human body and the head of a wolf or dog, similar to the werewolf legend.

Often the story-telling has been used to inspire fear and obedience. One such example is stories that have been told by elders to persuade Cajun children to behave. According to another variation, the wolf-like beast will hunt down and kill Catholics who do not follow the rules of Lent. This coincides with the French Catholic Loup Garou stories, according to which the method for turning into a werewolf is to break Lent seven years in a row.

A common blood sucking legend says that the Loup Garou is under the spell for 101 days. After that time, the curse is transferred from person to person when the Loup Garou draws another human's blood. During the day the creature returns to human form. Although acting sickly, the human refrains from telling others of the situation for fear of being killed.







# Mrs's HISTORY EMPORIUM

*Classroom items like you've never seen before*

This download (*free or purchased*) is for your personal use in your classroom or home. Please do not share my files with others without my consent. Instead, send them to my store.

[www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Mrs-History-Emporium](http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Mrs-History-Emporium)

I try to make sure all of my products are error free. However, if you find an error in my products, please email me. I'll correct the error and send you a new file immediately.

You may not share this product.

You may not alter the items in this download and claim them as your own.  
You may not resell or share the items in this download with anyone.  
You may not use the contents of this download to create anything for commercial purposes or for commercial use products.

Thank you for choosing one of my products.



© 2017 [Mrs's-History-Emporium](http://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Store/Mrs-History-Emporium)

