Oral Tradition: Reliable or Unreliable Source?

In this short activity, you will be testing the reliability of oral tradition as a source of information. Remember, as historians, we are looking to collect as many facts and pieces of evidence as possible in order to make accurate judgments and conclusions. During this activity, you will be passing on a story to your classmates using only oral tradition or story telling. Once you have passed on the story to one of your classmates, answer the questions below:

1.) Which classmate told you the story? _______________________________

2.) Briefly summarize the story that was told to you by your classmate.

3.) Briefly summarize the story as told to you by your teacher.

4.) Was the story exactly the same?________________________________________

5.) Is oral tradition a reliable or unreliable source of information for historians? Explain why or why not? (Complete this answer on the back side of your paper)
**Story**

On a clear fall evening, 3 hunters were sitting around a campfire eating a meal and telling stories of their day’s hunt. The first hunter who was dressed in bear skins and was eating rabbit explained how he used a snare to catch his meal. The second hunter who was wearing buckskins and eating snake explained that his catch had almost bit him when he was walking by, and how he had used a rock to smash its head in. The third hunter who was dressed in buffalo skins was eating roasted vegetables and explained that he had spent the day relaxing by the nearby creek, and had pick his vegetable from the small garden he had planted earlier in the summer. The first two hunters then pondered the idea of how nice it would have been to have been able to sit and relax and not spend the day hunting for food.