

# ANANSI AND THE SKY KINGDOM

First Grade

## **Outcome:**

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the story through discussing, writing, predicting, drawing, and acting.

## **Overview:**

Students will read and explore a folktale from Africa while utilizing interdisciplinary connections in science, language arts, math, visual arts, dramatic arts, and character education.

## **Materials:**

Book, *Anansi and the Sky Kingdom*  
Blackboard or Whiteboard  
Chalk or dry erase markers  
Picture books about spiders and spider webs  
2 (1 lb) packages of spaghetti that has been cooked and cooled  
Spoon  
Large zip-lock bag for each student  
White glue  
Pencils  
Unlined paper  
Large bowl  
World map or globe  
Long sheet of paper or end roll of newsprint  
Crayons or markers  
20 blank index cards for every 2 students  
Lined paper  
Yardsticks  
Large sheets of unlined paper

## **Optional:**

Computer with Internet access  
Norfolk, Bobby and Sherry Norfolk. *Anansi and the Pot of Beans*. Atlanta: August House, 2006.  
Norfolk, Bobby and Sherry Norfolk. *Anansi Goes to Lunch*. Atlanta: August House, 2007.  
Norfolk, Bobby and Sherry Norfolk. *Anansi and the Tug o' War*. Atlanta: August House, 2007.  
Norfolk, Bobby and Sherry Norfolk. *Anansi and Turtle Go to Dinner*. Atlanta: August House, 2008.  
Other books with Anansi stories  
Norfolk, Bobby. *Anansi Time* CD. Little Rock: August House Audio, 1999.  
Cleveland, Rob. *The Archer and the Sun*. Atlanta: August House, 2008.  
CD player

## INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

### **Introduction:**

#### Materials:

Blackboard or Whiteboard

Chalk or dry erase markers

Picture books about spiders and spider webs

2 (1 lb) packages of spaghetti that has been cooked and cooled

Spoon

Large zip-lock bag for each student

White glue

Pencils or markers

Unlined paper

Large bowl

### **Directions:**

Teacher:

- Asks students what they know about spiders and spider webs.
- Shares the following information with students, as appropriate:
  - There are about 30,000 different kinds of spiders in the world.
  - Spiders come in many colors including black, brown, white, gray, red, yellow, green, and orange.
  - Spiders are not insects. They belong to a group called arachnids.
  - Each kind of spider builds a unique web. From the moment a spider hatches from its egg, it knows how to spin a certain pattern of web.
  - Spiders make silk in special glands called spinnerets. Spiders use this silk to make webs and traps for catching prey, for shelter, and for escaping enemies.
  - All spiders capture other animals for food. Spiders feed mainly on insects.
  - The silken threads in a spider web are strong enough to hold 4,000 times the spider's own weight.
  - Spiders make several different kinds of silk. Most spiders make a kind of silk known as a dragline which serves as their lifeline. Wherever the spider goes, it spins a dragline. If the spider falls, it can pull itself up again. A spider can escape from an enemy by using the dragline to drop to the ground.
  - A very recognizable spider in the United States is the orb-weaver, which spins large wheel-shaped webs. Orb-weavers spin at least seven different kinds of silk, some of which are sticky. These spiders try to stay on the parts of their webs that are not sticky. They wait there for insects to become trapped in their webs. These spiders have three claws on each leg. If it gets stuck in its web, one of the claws is used to cut itself loose.
  - Although they have many eyes, most spiders do not have great eye sight. A spider often knows that an insect is in its web because it can feel the vibrations and movement of the web.

# ANANSI AND THE SKY KINGDOM

First Grade

## **Introduction cont.:**

- The most difficult part of web construction may be the first thread. Many spiders spin this first thread and wait for the wind to carry it to a good surface where it will stick. The spider then goes back and forth over this first thread to strengthen it. The spider often makes a rectangle or a Y shape as the next step of construction. These shapes serve as the frame of the web. Next, from the center (or hub) of the web, the spider spins rays of sticky silk to the outside frame. (Teacher draws the web construction on the board and shows pictures in books.) The spider then spins sticky spiral threads around the rays of silk, working from the center of the web to the edges. The spider then spirals back to the center and waits for an insect to fly into the web.
- Gives students directions for making spaghetti spider webs:
  1. Draw a picture of a spider web on unlined paper. Students may find web pictures in books, draw from memory, or use their imaginations.
  2. Place a zip-lock bag over the drawing.
  3. Mix glue and spaghetti in a large bowl so that the spaghetti is coated in glue.
  4. Pull out individual strands of spaghetti and place on the plastic bag, over the pattern to create a web.
  5. Allow to dry and peel away from bag. Students may take webs home in bag.

## **Teacher Reads the Story:**

### Materials:

Book, *Anansi and the Sky Kingdom*

World map or globe

### **Directions:**

Teacher:

- Tells students that they will be reading a folktale from Africa about a well-known spider named Anansi (Ah-*nahn*-see).
- Asks students to locate Africa on a world map or globe.
- Tells students that although Anansi is a spider, he does not always look like a spider.
- Distributes the books to students and they follow along as teacher reads aloud.
- Asks students to close their books after Page 30 is read.
- Asks students to predict what is in the gray box.
- Reads the remainder of the story.
- Asks students to compare their predictions with the story.

## **Questions for Assessing Students' Comprehension:**

- Who is this story about?
- What is this story about?
- Where does this story take place?
- What problem did the animals have?
- What problems would you have if the world was dark?
- Have you ever been in a situation where it was dark and you had a difficult time?

# ANANSI AND THE SKY KINGDOM

First Grade

## **Questions for Assessing Students' Comprehension cont.:**

- Who did King Lion tell the animals to ask for light?
- Why couldn't Eagle ask the king of the sky for light?
- What did King Lion say when Anansi volunteered to talk to the king of the sky?
- How did Anansi and his friends travel to the sky?
- Which friends traveled with Anansi? Why do you think Anansi chose those friends? What do you think might have happened if Elephant had wanted to come along?
- What did the king of the sky tell Anansi, Ant, and Fly they would have to do?
- How did Fly know what the king and his wise men said when they were in the golden tent?
- What is a task?
- What was the first task the king of the sky gave Anansi, Ant, and Fly?
- How did Ant's family help with the first task?
- What was the second task?
- How did Fly's family help with the second task?
- What was the last task?
- Look at the illustrations on Pages 29 and 30. Which box do you think the king wanted Anansi to choose? Why?
- How did the king feel after Anansi chose the gray box? Why do you think he felt that way?
- What was in the gray box?
- What do you think was in the other box?
- Look at the illustration on Page 31. How do you think Anansi and King Lion felt when they lifted the top off the box and saw the rooster? What had they expected?
- What did the rooster do when it came out of the box?
- What happened after the rooster crowed?
- How successful do you think Anansi would have been if he went up to the sky kingdom alone?
- How is Anansi's web an important part of the story?
- What lessons does this story teach?

## **Language Arts:**

### • **Timeline**

#### Materials:

Book, *Anansi and the Sky Kingdom*

Long sheet of paper or end roll of newsprint

Crayons or markers

#### **Directions:**

Teacher:

- Reviews story events in chronological order with students.
- Works with students to create a timeline of story events including a sentence and illustration about each event.
- Posts the timeline in the classroom.

# ANANSI AND THE SKY KINGDOM

First Grade

## Language Arts cont.:

### • Synonyms

#### Materials:

Blackboard or Whiteboard

Chalk or dry erase markers

20 blank index cards for every 2 students

Markers

#### **Directions:**

Teacher:

- Asks students what a synonym is (a word having almost the same meaning as another word).
- Writes the following story words on the board and asks students to provide at least one synonym for each word.

#### **Story Words**

little

laugh

friend

beautiful

wise

huge

yell

furious

sniff

rush

#### **Synonyms**

(small, tiny)

(giggle, chuckle)

(buddy, pal)

(lovely, attractive, handsome)

(smart, clever)

(large, enormous, vast, giant, gigantic)

(shout, roar, bellow)

(mad, angry, enraged)

(smell, inhale)

(hurry, run, dash, sprint)

- Asks students to find a sentence in the story that uses one of the original words listed on the board.
- Asks students to say the sentence aloud, replacing the original word with a synonym from the board.
- Asks students if the meaning of the sentence changed when one of the words was replaced with a synonym.
- Divides the class into pairs and gives each pair of students 20 index cards.
- Instructs one student in each pair to write the ten story words from the board on the index cards, one word on a card.
- Instructs the other student in each pair to write one of the synonyms for each story word from the board on the index cards, one word on a card.
- Demonstrates how to play “Synonym Memory” using the cards.
  1. Turn over all cards so the words are face down and spread them out evenly between the two players.
  2. Take turns flipping over two cards at a time to see if the cards match. A match consists of a story word and its synonym.
  3. If a match is found, remove the cards from play. The player’s turn is over.
  4. If a match is not found, turn the cards back over. The player’s turn is over.
  5. Continue playing until all matches have been found.
- Asks students to use the cards to play “Synonym Memory” in pairs.

# ANANSI AND THE SKY KINGDOM

First Grade

## **Language Arts cont.:**

### • **The Fourth Task**

An activity for differentiated learning

#### **Materials:**

Lined paper

Unlined paper

Pencils

Crayons or markers

#### **Directions:**

Teacher:

- Asks students to name the three tasks Anansi, Fly, and Ant were given.
- Asks students how the three friends worked together to solve each task.
- Asks students to imagine that there was a fourth task the king gave Anansi, Fly, and Ant.
- Instructs students to share what the fourth task would be and how the three friends might have solved it. Students may choose one of the following ways to share their ideas:
  - Write a few sentences.
  - Draw a picture.
  - Act out the task.

### • **Onomatopoeia**

#### **Materials:**

Book, *Anansi and the Sky Kingdom*

#### **Directions:**

Teacher:

- Asks students what the word “onomatopoeia” means (a word that sounds like its meaning).
- Tells students that “buzz,” “zoom,” and “pop” are examples of onomatopoeia.
- Asks students why an author would use onomatopoeic words in a story.
- Re-reads the story or students take turns each reading a page of the story aloud and identifying the onomatopoeic words.
- Reminds students to use good expression and emphasize the onomatopoeic words.
- Asks students to name onomatopoeic words that are not in the story.

## **Math:**

### • **Measuring Height Comparatively**

#### **Materials:**

Yardsticks

Large sheets of unlined paper

Crayons or markers

#### **Directions:**

Teacher:

- Reminds students that when Anansi volunteered to go to the king of the sky to ask for light, the animals laughed and said he was too small.

## Math cont.

### **Measuring Height Comparatively cont.**

- Explains that animals vary in size within their species. (Example: spiders range from 1mm to 90mm, or about 3.5 inches)
- Writes the following chart on the board, explaining that the height of the spider listed is for a large spider, but that the heights for the other animals are about average, or in the middle between tallest and shortest):
  - Spider = 3 inches tall
  - Monkey = 15 inches tall
  - Eagle = 30 inches tall
  - Lion = 45 inches tall
- Distributes yardsticks to the class and shows students the inches measurement as well as how to use a yardstick to measure height.
- Asks students to show the 3-inch mark on the yard stick.
- Instructs students to draw a line on their papers 3 inches long.
- Instructs students to draw a spider over the line so that the spider is 3 inches tall. Teacher should draw on the board to demonstrate height (front view) vs. leg span (overhead view) and instruct students to draw a front view.
- Asks students to cut out their 3-inch spiders.
- Divides the class into small groups.
- Encourages students to use their cut-out spiders to answer the following questions:
  - How many spiders stacked on top of one another would it take to equal the height of Monkey?
  - How many spiders stacked on top of one another would it take to equal the height of Eagle?
  - How many monkeys stacked on top of one another would it take to equal the height of Eagle?
  - **Challenge:** How many spiders would it take to equal the height of Lion?
  - **Challenge:** How many monkeys would it take to equal the height of Lion?
- Leads a discussion on the students' findings.

## Art:

### • **Drawing in the Dark**

#### Materials:

Unlined paper

Crayons

#### **Directions:**

Teacher:

- Asks students to look at pages one through eleven and describe the dark world.
- Asks students how they would accomplish everyday tasks (eating, brushing their teeth, writing, drawing...) in the dark.
- Tells students to close their eyes while they draw part of the story.

# ANANSI AND THE SKY KINGDOM

First Grade

## Art cont.:

### **Drawing in the Dark cont.**

- Tells students to open their eyes and look at the pictures they drew in the dark.
- Asks students to analyze how the pictures look different than they expected and intended.

## Character Education:

### • **Cooperation**

#### Materials:

Eleven pieces of unlined paper

Marker

#### **Directions:**

\*In preparation for the activity, the teacher should write the following sentences as large as possible on eleven pieces of paper, one sentence per page. The letter in parentheses at the end of each sentence should be written on the back of that page.

1. The world was dark. (C)
2. King Lion asked, “Who will ask the king of the sky to share light?” (O)
3. Eagle and Monkey could not reach the sky. (O)
4. Anansi spun a web from the earth to the sky. (P)
5. Anansi, Ant, and Fly crawled into the sky kingdom. (E)
6. The king of the sky said they must pass three tests. (R)
7. Ant’s family cut down every blade of grass in the field. (A)
8. Fly’s family ate all the fruit on the trees. (T)
9. Anansi chose the gray box. (I)
10. A rooster came out of the gray box and crowed. (O)
11. The sun rose brightly in the sky. (N)

Teacher:

- Asks students what “cooperation” means.
- Asks students to share experiences involving cooperation.
- Gives eleven students one piece of paper each, so that the sentence is face up. (Teacher will want to mix up the order of the pages so the sentences are not handed out in order.)
- Asks students to read aloud the sentence on their paper.
- Informs the students that they will work together to retell the story and put the pieces of paper in the correct order.
- Guides students in thinking through the events in the story and putting the eleven sentences in order. Students may use the timeline created in a previous activity for help.
- Instructs the students holding the pieces of paper to stand in order in front of the class as the order of the sentences is determined.
- Reads the sentences in order once all the students with pieces of paper are standing and discusses any adjustments that need to be made.
- Asks students to turn their papers over so the letter is showing.
- Asks students if anyone knows what word is spelled. (cooperation)
- Discusses with students how cooperation was important in the story.
- Asks students how cooperation was important in the activity.

# ANANSI AND THE SKY KINGDOM

First Grade

## **Extension Activities:**

### • **Technology Connection**

#### Materials:

Computer with Internet access

#### **Directions:**

- Teacher helps students access [www.storycove.com](http://www.storycove.com).
- Students view the animation of *Anansi and the Sky Kingdom*, narrated by one of the authors, Bobby Norfolk.
- Students think about how the narrator's voice and expression are an important part of telling the story.
- Teacher points out the onomatopoeic words in the story.
- Students explore the animations and activities for other stories on [www.storycove.com](http://www.storycove.com).

### • **Anansi Time**

#### Materials:

Book, *Anansi and the Sky Kingdom*

Other Anansi stories

*Anansi Time* CD

CD player

#### **Directions:**

- Teacher reads the Author's Note on the inside back cover of *Anansi and the Sky Kingdom*.
- Teacher and students establish their own "Anansi Time" when the teacher reads an Anansi tale every day for a week at a predetermined time each day. Anansi tales from August House include *Anansi and the Pot of Beans*, *Anansi and the Tug o' War*, *Anansi and Turtle Go to Dinner*, and *Anansi Goes to Lunch*.
- Students listen to the CD, *Anansi Time* by Bobby Norfolk.

### • **Compare and Contrast**

#### Materials:

Book, *The Archer and the Sun*

#### **Directions:**

- Teacher reads *The Archer and the Sun* by Rob Cleveland. This tale from China tells of a world with too many suns.
- Students compare and contrast the problems of darkness and too many suns as well as the solutions to these problems.