

ANANSI AND THE SKY KINGDOM

Second Grade

Outcome:

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the story through discussion, writing, predicting, drawing, role-playing, and pantomiming.

Overview:

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

Materials:

Book, *Anansi and the Sky Kingdom*
World map or globe
Lined paper
Pencils
Blackboard or Whiteboard
Chalk or dry erase markers
Large ball of yarn or string

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
CD player
Hamilton, Martha and Weiss, Mitch. *Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail*. Atlanta: August House, 2008.

INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

Introduction:

Materials:

World map or globe

Directions:

Teacher:

- Tells students that they are going to listen to story about a famous spider named Anansi (Ah-*nahn*-see), from Ghana, West Africa. (Show location on map or globe.)
- Asks students to share what they know about Ghana or West Africa.
- Tells students that the Ashanti people from Ghana are weavers of beautiful silk fabric. Much of this fabric tells the story of their culture through symbols such as the sun, the moon, and even Anansi the spider.
- Asks students if they have heard any other stories about Anansi.

ANANSI AND THE SKY KINGDOM

Second Grade

Introduction cont.

- Informs students:
 - Storytelling has been an important part of African culture for many generations. Through storytelling, parents and grandparents teach children lessons about what is important in their community and how they are supposed to act.
 - Anansi is a popular character in the stories of the Ashanti people from Ghana. He is a trickster character and often (but not always) behaves badly. In many stories, the lesson children learn is to **not** act like Anansi.
 - A trickster character is often smaller and weaker than the other characters. This character can overcome problems or obstacles by using intelligence and imagination.
 - Anansi may be depicted as wise, foolish, funny, lazy or greedy. There is always a lesson to learn from Anansi.
 - Just as a spider weaves a web, people weave stories. (Teacher asks students what this means.) In some cultures, the “keeper of the wisdom” is a weaver. Weavers understand the connections of cause and effect and the importance of beginnings and endings. This wisdom is reflected in the stories of those cultures.
 - When storytellers tell a story, they use many dramatic techniques to bring it to life. A story is not simply recited, it is performed. Audience participation is often encouraged. The storyteller uses different voices, noises, and dances to make the story dramatic and entertaining.
 - A storyteller may not always tell a story exactly the same way. Changes are made according to the storyteller’s mood at a particular time and to the audience hearing the story as well as to teach different lessons.

Reading the Story:

Materials:

Book, *Anansi and the Sky Kingdom*

Directions:

Teacher:

- Reminds students that they will be reading a folktale from Africa about a well-known spider named Anansi (Ah-*nahn*-see).
- Tells students that although Anansi is a spider, he does not always look like a spider.
- Distributes the books to students and asks students to volunteer to read aloud through Page 30.
- Reminds students to read with expression and emphasize sound effects.
- Asks students to close their books after reading Page 30 and predict how the story will end.
- Asks students to continue to take turns reading the remainder of the story aloud.

Questions for Assessing Students’ Comprehension:

- Who are the main characters in this story?
- Describe the main characters.
- What is this story about?
- Where does this story take place?

ANANSI AND THE SKY KINGDOM

Second Grade

Questions for Assessing Students' Comprehension cont.:

- 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?
- Who did King Lion tell the animals to ask for light?
- Why couldn't Eagle or Monkey ask the king of the sky for light?
- What was King Lion's reaction when Anansi said he would go talk to the king of the sky?
- How did Anansi and his friends travel to the sky?
- Which friends traveled with Anansi? Why did Anansi choose 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 that they would have to do to get light?
- 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?
- How did the king feel when he saw the empty fruit trees?
- What was the last task?
- Look at the illustrations on Pages 29 and 30. Which box did the king want 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 do you think they had expected?
- What did the rooster do when it came out of the box?
- What happened after the rooster crowed?
- Was the story ending similar or different than your prediction?
- How successful do you think Anansi would have been if he went up to the sky kingdom alone?
- What lessons does this story teach?
- Does Anansi behave badly in this story? Would parents want their children to act like Anansi?
- What is Anansi's personality like in this story? Is he wise, foolish, funny, lazy, or greedy?

Language Arts:

• Point of View

Teacher:

- Asks students how Anansi would tell the story if he was the narrator.
- Asks students how the king of the sky would tell the story if he was the narrator.
- Divides the class into pairs.

ANANSI AND THE SKY KINGDOM

Second Grade

Language Arts cont.:

Point of View cont.

- Instructs students to retell the story to their partners. One student in each pair should retell the story from the point of view of Anansi and the other student should retell the story from the king's point of view.
- Leads a discussion about how and why the two versions of the story differed.

• **Story Re-Write**

An activity for differentiated learning

Materials:

Lined paper

Pencils

Directions:

Teacher:

- Asks students to think about what might have happened if Anansi chose the wrong box or if the king of the sky did not give Anansi, Ant, and Fly a chance to get light.
- Reminds students that storytellers often change their stories according to their mood and to teach different lessons.
- Tells students they will choose a way to change the story and then re-write the story.
- Tells students to keep in mind that Anansi is a trickster.
- Asks students to choose one of the following ways to change the story or to think of another way to change the story:
 - The king of the sky gives different tasks.
 - Anansi chooses the yellow box.
 - Anansi, Ant, and Fly couldn't complete one of the tasks.
- Asks students to illustrate their versions of the story.
- Asks students for volunteers to share their stories with the class.

• **Collective Nouns**

Materials:

Blackboard or Whiteboard

Chalk or dry erase markers

Directions:

Teacher:

- Writes the following animal names in a column(s) on one side of the board:
flies, ants, spiders, rhinos, elephants, bees, penguins, leopards, lions, fish, wolves, buffalo, deer, puppies
- Writes the following collective nouns in a column(s) on the other side of the board:
army, colony, clutter, school, swarm, pride, litter, crash, leap, pack, herd
- Reminds students that a noun is a person, place, or thing. A collective noun describes a particular group of nouns, such as a bunch of bananas.

ANANSI AND THE SKY KINGDOM

Second Grade

Language Arts cont.:

Collective Nouns cont.

- Tells students that when describing groups of animals, collective nouns may be used. Sometimes one collective noun can describe several different groups and sometimes one group can be described by more than one collective noun. (Example: whales may be described as a pod, gam, herd, or school. Flock can be used to describe geese, sheep, and chickens.)
- Reads the all the animal names and collective nouns on the board and asks students to guess which collective noun(s) describes each animal. Teacher or students write the collective noun(s) next to the animal names on the board:
 1. flies / swarm
 2. ants / army, colony, swarm
 3. spiders / clutter
 4. rhinos / crash
 5. elephants / herd
 6. bees / swarm
 7. penguins / colony
 8. leopards / leap
 9. lions/ pride
 10. fish / school
 11. wolves / pack
 12. buffalo / herd
 13. deer / herd
 14. puppies / litter
- Teacher asks students to complete the following sentences:
 - For the first task, a/an _____ of ants cut down every blade of grass.
 - For the second task, a _____ of flies ate all of the fruit in the orchard.
 - If Anansi called his relatives, a _____ of spiders could have spun webs up to the sky.

• **Authors' Insight**

Materials:

Book, *Anansi and the Sky Kingdom*

Directions:

Teacher:

- Tells students that the authors of the story, Bobby and Sherry Norfolk, are well-known storytellers. The stories they write are meant to be read aloud and performed. In their retelling of this story, the authors used sound effects to enliven the action and help readers imagine the events. By doing this, the authors created a “sound track” to go along with the illustrations. They used many onomatopoeic words (words that imitate a sound, such as “splash”) in the story.
- Reviews the story with students, looking for the onomatopoeic words.
- Tells students that when the authors tell the story to an audience, the authors use clear character voices: a deep voice for the king of the sky, a small voice for Anansi, a buzzing voice for Fly, and a nasally voice for ant.
- Tells students that the authors build suspense in the story by pausing on Page 31, right after the rooster comes out of the box. They give their listeners time to be surprised and disappointed. They advise others telling the story not to rush through this part.
- Tells students to reread the story aloud to a partner, keeping the authors' insight in mind.

ANANSI AND THE SKY KINGDOM

Second Grade

Language Arts cont.:

• **Writing a Thank You Note**

Materials:

Lined paper

Pencils

Directions:

Teacher:

- Asks students what a thank you note is and when one should be written.
- Reviews the parts of a thank you note such as the greeting, body, and closing.
- Leads the class in creating a thank you note for someone important to the class.
- Asks students to pretend they are Anansi and to write a letter to the king of the sky to thank him for sharing light.
- Asks for students to volunteer to share their letters with the class.

Drama:

• **Persuasive Speeches**

Materials:

Lined paper

Pencils

Directions:

Teacher:

- Tells students that there are different kinds of speeches and they serve different purposes. A persuasive speech is intended to persuade or convince an audience of something that you believe or want.
- Divides the class into small groups.
- Tells students that each group should create a persuasive speech to convince the king of the sky to share light.
- Tells students to write down their ideas about why the king should share light and things they could say to make him want to share light.
- Asks the groups to share their speeches with the class.

• **Pantomime the Story**

Materials:

Book, *Anansi and the Sky Kingdom*

Directions:

Teacher:

- Reviews the sequence of story events.
- Discusses with students how characters in the story show how they feel with body language and facial expressions.
- Asks students to review expressions on the following pages: 4, 6, 7, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24, and 30.
- Divides the class into groups with eight to ten students in each group.
- Tells students to each choose a character from the story to portray.

ANANSI AND THE SKY KINGDOM

Second Grade

Drama cont.:

Pantomime the Story cont.

- Tells each group to pantomime the story.
- Reminds students that body language and facial expressions are important since they cannot speak during the pantomime.

Character Education:

• Community Web

Materials:

Large ball of yarn or string

Directions:

Teacher:

- Tells students that the story teaches about the character traits of cooperation, citizenship, courage and resourcefulness.
- Defines the character traits.
- Asks students to share how the story teaches the character traits.
- Asks students to share examples of those character traits in other stories.
- Tells students to sit in a large circle.
- Tells students that they will create a community web that is similar to a spider web.
- Tells students that he or she will name a particular student who is sitting across the circle and tell how that student demonstrates one of the character traits. Then he or she will hold onto the end of the string with one hand and throw the ball of string to that student with his or her other hand. The student who receives the string will repeat the activity by naming another student. The activity continues until each student has had a chance to receive the string and throw it to another student.
- Asks students to look at the design they have created with the string and if it resembles anything. The design should resemble a spider web.
- Asks students which character trait taught in the story each student exhibited to make the activity work. (cooperation)
- Reminds students that everyone must work together and cooperate to make the classroom run smoothly.
- Asks several students to drop the string they are holding to represent what happens when several students do not cooperate with the class.
- Asks students what happened to the web design when several students dropped the string (and no longer cooperated).
- Leads a discussion on the importance of cooperation and working together as a class as well as the importance of the other character traits from the story, including how they might exhibit the character traits in the future.

ANANSI AND THE SKY KINGDOM

Second Grade

Extension Activities:

• **Technology Connection**

Materials:

Computer with Internet access

Directions:

- Teacher helps students access 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 onomatopoeic words.
- Students explore the animations and activities for other stories on 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 of the 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*.
- Teacher reminds students of the information in the introductory activity:
 - A trickster character is often smaller and weaker than the other characters. This character can overcome problems or obstacles by using intelligence and imagination.
 - Anansi may be depicted as wise, foolish, funny, lazy, or greedy. There is always a lesson to learn from Anansi.
- Teacher asks students to analyze each tale in terms of Anansi’s character, how problems are solved, and what lesson is exemplified.
- Students listen to the CD, *Anansi Time* by Bobby Norfolk.

• **Compare and Contrast**

Materials:

Book, *Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail*

Directions:

- Teacher reads *Why Koala Has a Stumpy Tail* by Martha Hamilton and Mitch Weiss. This folktale from Australia is a tale of the consequences when Koala does not cooperate with his friend Tree Kangaroo to dig for water in a time of drought.
- Students compare and contrast the theme of cooperation with *Anansi and the Sky Kingdom*.