



#10044

A STORY, A STORY

WESTON WOODS STUDIOS, 1973

Grade Level: K-4

10 mins.

DESCRIPTION

Ananse, the Spider Man, wants to buy all the stories of the Sky God. He agrees to swap a leopard, some hornets, and a fairy for the golden story box. Though not strong, Ananse is clever, and he successfully brings the Spider Stories to African culture. Slightly animated version of the Caldecott Medal-winning book by Gail Haley.

ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Subject Area: Grades K-4 History—The History of Peoples of Many Cultures Around the World

- Standard: Understands selected attributes and historical developments of societies in Africa, the Americas, Asia, and Europe
 - ◆ Benchmark: Understands the main ideas found in folktales, stories of great heroism, fables, legends, and myths from around the world that reflect the beliefs and ways of living of various cultures in times past (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 1 and 2.)

Subject Area: Language Arts—Reading

- Standard: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts
 - ◆ Benchmark: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand a variety of familiar literary passages and texts (e.g., fairy tales, folktales, fiction, nonfiction, legends, fables, myths, poems, nursery rhymes, picture books, predictable books) (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 4.)

Subject Area: Life Work—Self-Regulation

- Standard: Demonstrates perseverance
 - ◆ Benchmark: Demonstrates perseverance relative to personal goals (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 3.)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To explore African culture and folktales.
2. To enjoy a folktale about how African folktales came to be.
3. To investigate the ways determination and critical thinking help people achieve their goals.
4. To promote the reading of children's literature.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This is a story of how African stories, called “Spider Stories” came to be. *Spider Stories* are stories about how small, defenseless men and animals come to be heroes.

VOCABULARY

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. Ananse, the spider man | 6. hornets | 12. spun |
| 2. bowed | 7. latex gum | 13. story/stories |
| 3. fairy | 8. leopard | 14. vine creepers |
| 4. filled | 9. pay | 15. web |
| 5. golden box | 10. price | |
| | 11. Sky God | |

BEFORE SHOWING

1. Read the book *A Story, A Story* by Gail E. Haley. Discuss what kind of a person Ananse is. Review how he used his mind to help him get what he wanted.
2. Locate Africa on a map. Explore African culture by looking at photographs and illustrations of Africa and its people. Discuss their observations.

DURING SHOWING

1. View the video more than once, with one showing uninterrupted.
2. Pause the video when Ananse gets a banana tree frond and fills a calabash with water. Predict what he might be planning to do with these items.
3. Pause the video when Ananse carves a wooden doll, covers it with gum, and puts yams in the bowl. Predict how the doll might help him catch the fairy.

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. Before there were stories to hear on earth, who owned all of the stories? Where did he keep them?
2. Why did Ananse spin a web that went up to the sky?
3. What was the Sky God’s price for the stories? Why did the Sky God laugh when Ananse said he would pay the price?
4. Describe how Ananse tricked the leopard.
5. What did Ananse do before he went looking for the hornet? Why? How did he trick the hornets?
6. Describe how Ananse caught Mmotia, the fairy. Why did the fairy call the doll “gum baby”?
7. What did Ananse do with the leopard, the hornets, and the fairy? What was the Sky God’s response when Ananse paid the price for the stories? What did he call the stories?
8. Where did Ananse take the golden box with the stories? What happened to the stories when he opened the box?

9. What did the storyteller mean when he said “. . . take some elsewhere, and let some come back to me”?

Applications and Activities

1. Imagine the Sky God left a story from his golden box on your desk. Write the story. Illustrate the story and share it with the class. Display the stories on a bulletin board.
2. Have an African Culture Day. Prepare traditional African foods. Learn some simple African dances. Assign African names, and call each other by those names for the day.
3. Visit a library or museum with an African culture exhibit.
4. Take turns telling favorite stories. Encourage the listeners to ask questions of the storytellers. After telling the stories ask:
 - a. How did you hear of this story?
 - b. What about the story made it special to you?
 - c. What did you think others enjoyed most about the story?
1. Invite people who are native to Africa to visit the classroom and share their knowledge of their homeland and customs.
2. Discuss the repeated words and phrases in the story. View the video again to locate the repetitions. Share ideas about why these words and phrases were repeated.
3. Discuss the meaning of the phrase the “crying place” (where the fairy said it would slap the doll). Create words or phrases to describe other places such as arms, fingers, or teeth.

SUMMARY

As the story goes, a man called Ananse, the Spider Man, wanted to buy all the stories which were in the hands of the Sky God. The Sky God tells Ananse that he must capture a leopard, a group of stinging hornets and a fairy, and send them up to him if he is to be granted his wish. Ananse, not big and strong but clever, delivers the leopard, hornets, and fairy, and is given the stories to scatter about the land.

CMP RELATED RESOURCES

- [Hot Hippo #10065](#)
- [Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters #10076](#)
- [Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears #10106](#)
- [Who's in Rabbit's House? #10105](#)



World Wide Web



The following Web sites complement the contents of this guide; they were selected by professionals who have experience in teaching deaf and hard of hearing students. Every effort was made to select accurate, educationally relevant, and “kid safe” sites. However, teachers should preview them before use. The U.S. Department of Education, the National Association of the Deaf, and the Captioned Media Program do not endorse the sites and are not responsible for their content.

- **THE SPIDER AND THE SKY GOD**

<http://www.eduplace.com/tview/pages/s/>

Go to this Teacherviews Web site and click on “The Spider and the Sky God.” Here are links to cultural activities related to the story, such as recipes, African words, kente cloth, and more.

- **AFRICA: IT’S NOT A COUNTRY**

<http://teacherlink.ed.usu.edu/tresources/units/byrnes-africa/aindex.htm>

This Web site contains lesson plans that aid in teaching about Africa to early elementary age students. It includes lesson plans for daily life, wildlife, folktales, geography and environment, languages, toys and games, and many other topics. Many of the lesson plans include links to other sites on Africa.

- **AFRICAN FOLK TALES / ELEMENTARY PLAYS**

http://www.phillipmartin.info/liberia/text_folktales_intro.htm

Three West African tales are presented here. Each is presented as a story and in play format. Coloring pages accompany each story.

- **MOTHERLAND NIGERIA STORIES**

<http://www.motherlandnigeria.com/stories.html>

This site contains about fifty African tales grouped according to the lessons they teach: forgiveness, friendship, greed, lying, wisdom, kindness, obedience, and more. Most stories are from the same region as the Ananse stories.

- **NIGERIA LESSON PLANS**

<http://fga.freac.fsu.edu/academy/k1niger.htm>

Twenty-four lessons for elementary classrooms, including “Where is Africa?,” “Puppet-Making and Drama,” and “Making Maps with Play Dough.”