



#10105

WHO'S IN RABBIT'S HOUSE?

WESTON WOODS STUDIO, 1995

Grade Level: K-3

13 mins.

DESCRIPTION

Rabbit can't get into her house because the Long One is hiding inside and refuses to come out. Rabbit's friends want to help, but all their plans will damage her house. Finally, Frog gets to try her idea. A Masai folktale adapted by Verna Aardema. Narrated by James Earl Jones.

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.)

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: Arts—Theatre

- Standard: Understands how informal and formal theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions create and communicate meaning
 - ◆ Benchmark: Understands the visual, aural, oral, and kinetic elements of dramatic performances (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 2.)

Subject Area: Behavioral Studies

- Standard: Understands conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among individuals, groups, and institutions

C a p t i o n e d M e d i a P r o g r a m

- ◆ Benchmark: Understands that some ways of dealing with disagreements work better than others, and that people who are not involved in an argument may be helpful in solving it (See INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS 3.)

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

1. To explore African culture and folktales.
2. To learn about plays and elements of drama.
3. To explore problem-solving techniques.
4. To promote the reading of children's literature.

VOCABULARY

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------|--------------------|
| 1. caterpillar | 6. leopard | 11. rhinoceros |
| 2. elephant | 7. Long One | 12. spitting cobra |
| 3. frog | 8. Masai | 13. trample |
| 4. house | 9. poison | 14. voice |
| 5. jackal | 10. rabbit | |

BEFORE SHOWING

1. Read the book *Who's in Rabbit's House?* by Verna Aardema. Discuss and define folktales (stories passed down from one generation to the next).
2. Locate Africa on a map. Discuss the different terrains, climates, clothing, and customs. Compare these terrains, climate, and customs to our country.

DURING SHOWING

1. View the video more than once, with one showing uninterrupted.
2. Pause each time a character in the video uses a gesture that looks like sign language (i.e., small, flat, etc.). Note other gestures and the use of body language to communicate ideas.

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. Why were the Masai villagers waiting by the curtain? What were the players doing behind the curtain?
2. Describe where the rabbit lived. Why did the rabbit sit by her door each evening at dusk?
3. What did the rabbit discover at her house one evening? What did the voice say it would do to the rabbit?
4. Who offered to help the rabbit? What was the rabbit's response? Why? How did the frog feel? What did the frog do?
5. What did the jackal do when the Long One threatened to trample him? When the rabbit asked the jackal to help, what was the jackal's plan? How did the rabbit respond?

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6. Describe what happened when the leopard and the elephant stopped at the rabbit's house. What did the rabbit do each time? What was the frog's response?
7. What did the rhinoceros do? Why?
8. Who saved the rabbit from drowning in the lake? Why?
9. How did the frog plan to get the Long One out of the rabbit's house? Why did the frog curl up a leaf? Who did the frog say she was? Why was a spitting cobra scary?
10. What was the Long One's response to the frog's threat? Why?
11. How did the frog and the rabbit respond when they saw that the Long One was a caterpillar? How did all the other animals respond?
12. Why was the caterpillar in the rabbit's house? Who had the final joke in the story?
13. Do you think the rabbit and the frog will be friends from now on? Explain your answer.

Applications and Activities

1. Create an original folk story as a class.
 - a. Provide a story starter such as "The night the wind blew so hard that every leaf flew off every tree in the town . . ."
 - b. Each student should have the opportunity to contribute to the story.
 - c. Print the tale as the students told it.
 - d. Add illustrations to the story.
2. Dramatize the story from the video or book.
 - a. Use paper plates, yarn, and other art materials to create rabbit, frog, jackal, leopard, elephant, and rhinoceros masks.
 - b. Create scenic backdrops, and decorate a cardboard box to resemble Rabbit's house.
 - c. Use the masks in performing the drama.
3. Discuss the characters from the story. Imagine the characters are really people. Compare the characters' personality traits to that of the students' friends.
 - a. What kind of person do you think Rabbit would have been? Frog? Jackal?
 - b. Which of these people would you like best? Why?
 - c. Which would you like least? Why?
4. Explore problem-solving techniques. Provide a box with an object inside. Brainstorm ways to find out what is inside the box without opening it.
5. Discuss characteristics of folk tales. Read other African folktales. Compare and contrast situations, emotions, characters, problems, and solutions. Other titles include:
 - a. *The Tortoise and the Tree*, adapted and illustrated by Janina Domanska.
 - b. *The Village of Round and Square Houses*, written and illustrated by Ann Grifalconi.
 - c. *Why the Crab Has No Head*, retold and illustrated by Barbara Knutson.
 - d. *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears*, by Verna Aardema and illustrated by Leo and Diane Dillon.
 - e. *Oh, Koko! How Could You! An Ashanti Tale*, retold by Verna Aardema and illustrated by Marc Brown.

C a p t i o n e d M e d i a P r o g r a m

- f. *Rabbit Makes a Monkey of Lion*, a Swahili tale retold by Verna Aardema and illustrated by Jerry Pinkney.
6. Discuss things learned about African life and culture from the story. Research to learn more about the Masai. Share the information gathered.
7. Discuss the illustrations by Leo and Diane Dillon.
 - a. Illustrate a favorite scene from the story on Manila paper or card stock. Color the scenes very darkly with crayon.
 - b. Use black tempera paint that has been watered down, and “wash” over the colored scenes.
 - c. Write a short summary of the scene, tape to the bottom of the pictures, and display.
8. Write a story. Tell about a time you had to make a decision but you couldn’t make up your mind. The story can be real or make-believe. Share the stories.
9. Research and report on African masks.

SUMMARY

Who’s in Rabbit’s House? is an African folktale, presented as a play, about a rabbit whose home becomes inhabited by a mean creature called “The Long One.” Rabbit’s animal friends come by, one by one, and see Rabbit sitting outside her home. When they ask what is happening, Rabbit desperately explains that she cannot find a way to remove the awful creature from her home. Finally, desperate to move back in, Rabbit allows Frog to try out an ingenious plan to remove the scary creature from her home.

CMP RELATED RESOURCES

- [Mufaro’s Beautiful Daughters #10076](#)
- [A Story, A Story #10044](#)
- [Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People’s Ears #10106](#)

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.

- **VERNA AARDEMA PAPERS**

This Web site from the University of Southern Mississippi contains a large amount of biographical information about the author.



<http://avatar.lib.usm.edu/%7Edegrum/html/research/findaids/aardema.htm>

- **MEET AUTHORS AND ILLUSTRATORS**

http://www.childrenslit.com/f_dillons.html

Find out about the couple who illustrated this African folktale and many more like it. This site has a link to a page about Leo and Diane Dillon with images of their art posters and book cover collection.



- **AFRICA: IT'S NOT A COUNTRY**

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

This Web site hosts a wealth of lesson plans for 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 TALES**

<http://www.darsie.net/talesofwonder/africa.html>

Check out nine more African folktales. They are one to three page stories written at an upper-elementary reading level. The stories are from central and eastern Africa and are without illustrations.

- **AFRICAN FOLKTALES**

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.

