Anansi: A Language Arts Twist to the Trickster

Grade Level or Special Area: 1st Grade Language Arts

Written by: Kelly Inman, Broadmoor Elem., Hobbs Municipal Schools, Hobbs, NM
Diana Salinas, Southern Heights Elem., Hobbs Municipal Schools, Hobbs, NM
Sherry Taylor, Tatum Elem., Tatum Municipal Schools, Tatum, NM

Length of Unit: 4 days, 30 to 45 minutes each day, 5th day Culminating activities

I. ABSTRACT
This unit allows students to analyze African folk tales about Anansi the spider. Students will use the tales as springboards to study story elements and writing techniques. Various skills, such as sequencing, identifying main idea, characterization and writing will be utilized to help students become “tricksters” in the classroom to improve their reading and writing skills, just as Anansi used his tricky personality and wit to accomplish his goals. Note: This unit is designed to be used in October or early fall, when students are new to first grade concepts.

II. OVERVIEW
A. Concept Objectives
1. Students will listen to and retell short stories. (NM Language Arts Benchmark I-A1)
2. Students will develop an appreciation for literature.
3. Students will apply strategies and skills to comprehend information that is read, heard and viewed. (NM Language Arts Benchmark Content Standard I)
4. Students will understand how to apply strategies and skills to comprehend information. (NM Language Arts Benchmark Content Standard I)
5. Students will acquire reading strategies. (NM Language Arts Benchmark I-D)
6. Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills to comprehend written, spoken and visual information. (NM Language Arts Benchmark I-C)

B. Content from the Core Knowledge Sequence
1. Predict what will happen next in stories, justify his or her predictions, and later discuss whether predictions were confirmed.
2. Discuss how, why, and what-if questions about both fiction and non-fiction texts.
3. Use complete and detailed sentences to respond to what, when, where and how questions oral and written.
4. Produce a variety of writings
5. Use capitalization for the first word of a sentence, for names of people, and for the pronoun I.
6. Use correct end punctuation: period, question mark, exclamation point.
7. Isolate the initial or final consonant sound, or the medial vowel sound, of a one-syllable word.
8. Orally substitute the initial or final consonant sound, or the medial vowel sound, in one-syllable words.
9. Demonstrate familiarity with a variety of fiction and non-fiction selections, including both read-aloud works and independent readings.
10. Fiction stories – Anansi stories

C. Skill Objectives
1. The student will utilize correct vocabulary.
2. The student will correct sentences with proper capitalization and punctuation.
3. Students will make predictions from context (NM Language Arts Benchmark I-C2)
4. The student will state items in sequence from content. (NM Language Arts Benchmark III-B2)
5. The students will recognize repetition and predict repeated phrases.
6. The students will blend the phonemes of one-syllable words.
7. The student will identify the main character, main idea and/or setting in literature orally and written.
8. The student will listen and respond to stories from various cultures read by an experienced reader.
9. The students will change the beginning sounds to produce new words.
10. The student will differentiate between realism and fantasy in fiction stories.
11. The student will describe the differences and similarities between stories and objects orally and written.

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE
A. For Teachers
B. For Students
1. Basic concepts of reading comprehension from kindergarten
2. General concepts of writing and spelling from kindergarten

IV. RESOURCES

V. LESSONS
Lesson One: All Stories Are Anasi’s (A tale from West Africa)
A. Daily Objectives
1. Concept Objective(s)
   a. Students will listen to and retell short stories (NM Language Arts Benchmark I-A1).
   b. Students will develop an appreciation for literature.
2. Lesson Content
   a. *All Stories are Anansi’s*
   b. Discuss how, why and what-if questions about both fiction and non-fiction texts.
   c. Use capitalization for the first word of each sentence, for names of people, and for the pronoun I.
3. Skill Objective(s)
   a. Students will identify characters, plot, setting, and main idea in stories.
   b. Students will correct sentences with proper capitalization and punctuation.
B. **Materials**
1. Large black rubber spider (note: will be used again in Lesson 4)
2. Spider Body (Appendix A) one for each student
3. Spider Legs (Appendix B) one for each student
4. Spider Body and Legs (Appendix A and B) made into a transparency for teacher use or drawn onto board or chart paper
5. Overhead machine to use transparency or chalkboard or chart paper for drawn cut-outs
6. Spider Body and Spider Legs Teacher Key (Appendix C)
7. Glue and scissors
8. Handwriting paper and pencil
9. Spider Correction Sentences for board, including Teacher Key (Appendix D)
10. World Globe or map
11. Chalk or markers for teacher’s use
12. Gourd - optional

C. **Key Vocabulary**
1. Character – a person or animal in a story
2. Setting – where a story takes place
3. Plot – events in a story
4. Main Idea – what the whole story is about
5. Trickster – a character who fools others
6. Africa – one of the seven continents
7. Hornet – a stinging bee who builds paper-type nests
8. Python – a non poisonous snake found in Africa
9. Leopard – a large cat found in Africa
10. Calabash – a bowl made from a dry shell of a fruit like a pumpkin (gourd)

D. **Procedures/Activities**
1. The teacher will show students a rubber spider.
2. The students will share prior knowledge about spiders.
3. The teacher will show the students the continent of Africa on globe or map.
4. The teacher will introduce the vocabulary. Optional: bring in the gourd for the students to see
5. The teacher will read *All Stories are Anansi’s* from *What Your First Grader Needs to Know*, page 38-41.
6. The teacher will ask leading questions. For example – Who is the story about? Where does the story take place? What is the story about?
7. The students will create a story spider. The teacher will duplicate enough copies for each student to have a body and eight legs from Appendix A and B.
8. The teacher will fill in the blanks on Spider Body and Spider Leg pages from the overhead, board, or chart paper using students’ responses.
9. The teacher can use Spider Body and Spider Leg Teacher Key (Appendix C) if needed.
10. The students will complete sections on their spider legs labeled with: main character(s), main idea, setting and plot.
11. The students will cut out spider body and legs.
12. The students will glue legs to the spider body.
13. The teacher will write **uncorrected** Spider Correction Sentences (Appendix D) on board or chart paper.
14. The teacher will have students copy and correct four spider sentences from the board onto their handwriting paper. (Appendix D)

15. Optional: As students finish their sentences from the board, have them add details to their story spiders such as eyes and color.

E. **Assessment/Evaluation**
   1. Check students’ spider bodies for correct order and correct label with teacher key. (Appendix C)
   2. Check sentences for correct capitalization, punctuation and neatness with Spider Correction Sentences Teacher Key. (Appendix D)

---

**Lesson Two: Anansi Goes Fishing**

A. **Daily Objectives**
   1. Concept Objective(s)
      a. Students will apply strategies and skills to comprehend information that is read, heard, and viewed. (NM Language Arts Benchmark Content Standard I).
   2. Lesson Content
      a. *Anansi Goes Fishing* retold by Eric A. Kimmel
      b. Predict what will happen next in stories, justify his or her predictions, and later discuss whether predictions were confirmed.
   3. Skill Objective(s)
      a. Students will make predictions from context (NM Language Arts Benchmark I-C2).
      b. Students will state items in sequence from content (NM Language Arts Benchmark III-B2).

B. **Materials**
   1. *Anansi Goes Fishing* retold by Eric A. Kimmel
   2. Crayons and pencils
   3. Yarn – each student will need 3 different lengths of yarn (1-four inch, 1- six inch, 1- eight inch).
   4. Scissors
   5. Hole punch
   6. Spider Word Web - “What will happen next?”(Appendix E)
   7. Story Starter Handwriting paper “I think Anansi will__.”( Appendix F)
   8. Story Map - Beginning, Middle, End (Appendix G)
   9. Fish Cut-Outs (Appendix I) one per student
   10. Fishing Net Cut-Out (Appendix H) one per student

C. **Key Vocabulary**
   1. Prediction – what you think will happen next in a story
   2. Sequencing – putting things in order
   3. Weave – criss-crossing a kind of material to make a net or web
   4. Judge - a person who decides between right and wrong
   5. Quarrel – an argument between two or more people

D. **Procedures/Activities**
   1. The students will share prior knowledge about fishing.
   2. The teacher will introduce the vocabulary.
   3. The teacher will read the first three pages of the book.
4. The teacher will ask students to predict what they think will happen next in the story.
5. The teacher will record student predictions on the Spider Word Web - “What will happen next?” (Appendix E).
6. After the word web is complete, the students will write and illustrate their prediction using the Story Starter Handwriting paper: I think Anansi will __________. (Appendix F)
7. The teacher will give each student 15 minutes to complete the assignment and then collect for assessment.
8. The teacher will finish reading the story to the class.
9. The class will compare individual predictions in a whole group with the actual events in the story.
10. The teacher will use Story Map – Beginning, Middle, End (Appendix G) to explain sequencing: beginning, middle, and the end. (Optional: Teacher may choose to make a transparency of the story map or make one on the board or chart paper.)
11. The teacher will use the story map to record student responses to what happened in the beginning, middle and end of the story. (Answers will vary)
12. The students will write or illustrate the beginning, middle, and end of the story on the appropriate fish Cut-Outs (Appendix I). For example: beginning – Turtle catching a fish, middle – Anansi working; end – Anansi weaves a web to catch food.
13. The students will complete a sequencing fishing net. Duplicate enough copies of Fishing Net Cut-Out (Appendix H) for each student. Optional: The fishing net may be copied onto card stock to make mobile sturdier.
14. As the students are coloring the fishing net, the teacher will punch three holes in the net and one hole at the top of each fish.
15. The teacher will pass out three different lengths of yarn to each student. The shortest length is for the “beginning” card. The medium length is for the “middle” card. The longest length is for the end card.
16. The students will tie yarn to each fish and then tie the other end of the yarn to the fishing net in the correct order. Teacher may need to help, as necessary.

E. Assessment/Evaluation
1. Examine each student’s story starter for creative predictions.
2. Check for correct picture and sequence order on each fish.

Lesson Three: Anansi and the Moss-Covered Rock
A. Daily Objectives
1. Concept Objective(s)
   a. Students will understand how to apply strategies and skills to comprehend information. (NM Language Arts Benchmark Content Standard I).
   b. Students will acquire reading strategies (NM Language Arts Benchmark I-D).
2. Lesson Content
   a. Anansi and the Moss-Covered Rock retold by Eric A. Kimmel
   b. Isolate the initial or final consonant sound, or the medial vowel sound, of a one-syllable word.
c. Orally substitute the initial or final consonant sound, or the medial vowel sound, in one-syllable words.

3. Skill Objective(s)
   a. Students will recognize repetition and predict repeated phrases.
   b. Students will blend the phonemes of one-syllable words.
   c. Students will change the beginning sounds to produce new words.

B. Materials
1. Anansi and the Moss-Covered Rock retold by Eric A. Kimmel
2. Small baggies (keep Appendix K and L rock cut-outs for culminating activities on Day 5)
3. Rhyming Word List (moss, rock) (Appendix J)
4. –oss Rocks (Appendix K) one per student (Optional: may be copied on card stock)
5. –ock Rocks (Appendix L) one per student (Optional: may be copied on card stock)
6. Chalkboard, or chart paper
7. Chalk or markers for teacher ‘s use
8. Yams - optional

C. Key Vocabulary
1. Moss – green small plants that grow on other plants or rocks
2. Strange – not known or different
3. Yams – sweet potatoes, a root that is considered a vegetable

D. Procedures/Activities
1. The student will share prior knowledge about moss and rocks.
2. The teacher will review the short /ɔ/ sound from kindergarten.
3. The teacher will review the rule that every word must have a vowel.
4. The teacher will introduce the vocabulary. Optional: bring in yams for students to see
5. While the teacher is reading Anansi and the Moss-Covered Rock, the students will listen for short /ɔ/ sound words. When students hear the short /ɔ/ sound in a word, they will clap.
6. The teacher will review main characters, main idea, plot and setting using leading questions. For example: Who is the story about? Where does the story take place? What is the story about?
7. After the story is read, the teacher will add to the Rhyming Word List rows: moss and rock (Appendix J) on the board or chart paper.
8. The teacher will give each student a copy of the –oss Rock page (Appendix K), and a copy of the –ock Rock page (Appendix L),
9. The students will make new words using the –oss and –ock word families.
10. The students will cut out the rocks.
11. Save the cut-outs in a small baggie for use in culminating activity on Day 5.

E. Assessment/Evaluation
1. While teacher is reading the story, he or she will listen for correct student response to short /ɔ/ words.
2. The students will read word family words from rock cut outs to the teacher.
Lesson Four: *Anansi and the Talking Melon*

A. **Daily Objectives**
   1. **Concept Objective(s)**
      a. Students will demonstrate critical thinking skills to comprehend written, spoken, and visual information (NM Language Arts Benchmark I-C).
   2. **Lesson Content**
      a. *Anansi and the Talking Melon* retold by Eric A. Kimmel
      b. Demonstrate familiarity with a variety of fiction and non-fiction selections, including both read-aloud works and independent readings.
   3. **Skill Objective(s)**
      a. Students will describe the differences and similarities between different stories and objects orally and written.
      b. Students will differentiate between realism and fantasy in fiction stories.

B. **Materials**
   1. *Anansi and the Talking Melon* retold by Eric A. Kimmel
   2. Large plastic spider from Lesson 1
   3. Smaller different plastic spider
   4. Melon- optional
   5. 8 ½ x 11 sheets of construction paper - optional (one for each student to be used as a cover for real and fantasy illustrations)
   6. stapler – optional
   7. Real/Fantasy (Appendix M)
   8. Compare and Contrast (Appendix N)

C. **Key Vocabulary**
   1. Real – things that can happen
   2. Fantasy – things that are imagined or cannot really happen
   3. Compare – a way of describing how things that are alike
   4. Contrast – a way of describing how things that are different
   5. Melon – a fruit with a sweet inside and hard outside
   6. Hoe – tool with a flat blade attached to a long handle, used for weeding or gardening
   7. Thorn – a sharp piece of a branch found on rose bushes or woody plants

D. **Procedures/Activities**
   1. The students will share prior knowledge about farming. Optional: bring in a cantaloupe or a melon for students to see
   2. The teacher will introduce vocabulary.
   3. The teacher will introduce the concept of compare and contrast by doing a book walk (flip through pages of a book without reading).
   4. The teacher will ask leading questions about compare and contrast realism and fantasy. For example: How are the animals different/alike in *Anansi and the Talking Melon*? Now that we have read several stories about Anansi, are the characters real or fantasy? Is Africa real or fantasy?
   5. The teacher will read *Anansi and the Talking Melon* retold by Eric A. Kimmel.
   6. The teacher will ask leading questions about what happened, where it happened, when it happened, and how it happened.
   7. The students will illustrate one real and one fantasy picture about any Anansi story (Appendix M). The teacher will duplicate enough copies for each student. Fold paper in half when student finishes illustrations. Optional: Students can
make a cover for the folded page with the 8/12 x 11 sheet of construction paper and decorate or illustrate the cover. Staple cover of booklet in the center.

8. The teacher will show the students both spiders for compare and contrast concept. Have a group discussion about how the plastic spiders are the same and how they are different. The teacher may want to write some of the responses on the board or chart paper for students to copy or write independently, depending on the students’ ability.

9. The Students will write two sentences in each section (Compare, Contrast) on (Appendix N) Remind students that all sentences start with a capital letter and end in a period or question mark.

E. Assessment/Evaluation

1. The teacher will observe illustrations for understanding of Realism and Fantasy.

2. The teacher will check for two sentences in the correct section Compare and Contrast Page (Appendix N) for proper capitalization and punctuation.

VI. CULMINATING ACTIVITY

Teacher Note: On day five choose activities from the following to bring closure to the weeks study. All activities are about spiders and can be connected to Anansi stories.

A. Story Time Spider Web. Students will make a spider web during story time. The first student will have a ball of yarn. After each student shares a favorite part of an Anansi story, he or she will hand the ball of yarn to another student and have them share and they toss the ball of yarn to another child. Repeat until everyone has had a turn to share a favorite part of a story. Be sure to take pictures of your great spider web.

B. Spider Marshmallow Treats (Sequencing). First, use 1 large marshmallow for the body and 1 small marshmallow for the head (attach with a piece of toothpick). Next, press 2 or more (up to 8) mini M&Ms on the small marshmallow head for eyes and stick 4 pretzel sticks on each side of the large marshmallow for legs. Last, cover with chocolate sauce and enjoy.

C. Alphabetical Order. Choose 5 or more of the -oss, -ock Rock Cut-outs in the baggie from Lesson 3 and have students put them in Alphabetical order. Students can check each others work.

D. Glittery Spider Webs. Draw thick lines of white glue on sheets of wax paper to resemble a web. Make sure all lines are connected with glue. Sprinkle the lines with glitter. When the spider web dries, peel off the wax paper. Hang on a string to decorate room for fall. Attach a plastic spider to each one. Optional: Display on a bulletin board with corrected sentences from Appendix D.

E. Anansi: A Language Arts Twist to the Trickster – Word Search (Appendix O) Find the vocabulary words in the worksheet. Good Luck!

F. Spider Fact Song by Diana Salinas (Tune: The Farmer in the Dell)

Spiders are Arachnids
Spiders are not insects
Spiders have two fangs, two parts
And eight long legs

Spiders have six eyes
Sometimes they have eight
Spinnerets spin their webs
And spiders hatch from eggs
VII. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS
A. Appendix A: Spider Body
B. Appendix B: Spider Legs
C. Appendix C: Spider Body and Spider Legs Teacher Key
D. Appendix D: Spider Correction Sentences
E. Appendix E: Spider Word Web
F. Appendix F: Story Starter Handwriting Paper
G. Appendix G: Story Map
H. Appendix H: Fishing Net Cut-Out
I. Appendix I: Fish Cut-Outs
J. Appendix J: Rhyming Word List (moss, rock)
K. Appendix K: -oss Rocks
L. Appendix L: -ock Rocks
M. Appendix M: Real/Fantasy
N. Appendix N: Compare and Contrast
O. Appendix O: Word Search (Culminating activity)

VIII. BIBLIOGRAPHY
Title: Teacher have students write this title on the body part of the spider (Appendix A)
All Stories are Anansi’s

Characters:
Kwaku or Anansi
Nyame or The Sky God
Mmoboro, hornets or bees
Onini, python or snake
Osebo, leopard or big cat

Main Idea
Anansi tricks The Sky God to get all stories.

Setting
Africa

Plot (tricks to get the stories)
Anansi pretended there was a storm to trick the hornets.
Anansi ties the python’s head to a pole.
Anansi tricks the leopard by making him fall in the pit and hang from the tree.
Student sentences for boardwork

1. anansi is a trickster
2. he lives in africa
3. anansi tricked a hornet, python and leopard
4. anansi wins the stories

Corrections for teacher reference

1. Anansi is a trickster.
2. He lives in Africa.
3. Anansi tricked a hornet, python and leopard.
4. Anansi wins the stories.
What will happen next?
Name_____________________________________

I think Anansi will___________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

Draw a picture of what you think will happen next to match your sentence.
### Appendix G: Story Map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning</th>
<th>Middle</th>
<th>End</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Anansi
Anansi: A Language Arts Twist on the Trickster
Appendix H: Fishing Net Cut-Out
Anansi: A Language Arts Twist on the Trickster
Appendix I: Fish Cut-Outs

Beginning

Middle

End
Anansi: A Language Arts Twist to the Trickster
Appendix J: Rhyming Word List (moss, rock)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>moss</th>
<th>rock</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Anansi: A Language Arts Twist to the Trickster
Appendix K: _oss Rocks

_____ OSS

_____ OSS

_____ OSS

_____ OSS

_____ OSS

_____ OSS

_____ OSS
Anansi: A Language Arts Twist to the Trickster
Appendix L: _ock Rocks

___ock

___ock

___ock

___ock

___ock

___ock
Real

Fantasy
Anansi: A Language Arts Twist to the Trickster
Appendix N: Compare and Contrast

Name________________________

Look at the spiders and write two sentences for each spider to tell how they are the same and different.

Compare (same)

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

Contrast (different)

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________
Anansi: A Language Arts Twist to the Trickster

Appendix O: Word Search

AFRICA  ANANSI  CHARACTER
COMPARE  CONTRAST  FANTASY
HOE  IDEA  JUDGE
MAIN  MELON  MOSS
PLOT  PREDICTION  QUARREL
REAL  SEQUENCE  SETTING
STRANGE  THORN  TRICKSTER
WEAVE  YAMS