

# Children's Literature Across the Curriculum Ideas

## Created by students at the University of North Carolina Charlotte

**Title:** *Anansi the Spider.*

**Author:** Gerald McDermott.

**Publisher/Copyright:** Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972.

**Grade Level:** 2-4

**Summary:** A trickster tale from the Ashanti culture of West Africa. This tale tells the story of how the moon was placed in the sky.

### Reading/Writing Connections

1. Read the story aloud beginning with the prologue.
2. Explain and discuss the unusual African words and names.
3. Think of a new son or daughter for Anansi. Write a short story explaining the special ability of the spider you invented.
4. Write a play based on the story.
5. Discuss the importance of the sons in the story. What would happen if one or two were left out? Which would you choose?

### Vocabulary/Spelling

Anansi	Anansi	artisan	Ashanti	cunning
cushion	game	Ghana	Kwaku	mischief
mysterious	mythology	Nyame	rogue	shrewd
skinner	swallowed	trickster		

### Media Center Connections

1. Proclaim the week as Africa Week. Display African artifacts and books.
2. Discuss the section of the Media Center in which mythology and folklore are housed.
3. Tell the story of Anansi using a flannel board story.
4. Display other Anansi stories: *The Adventures of Spider* by Joyce Arkhurst, *African Village Folktales* by Edna Kaula, *Anansi and the Talking Melon* by Eric Kimmel, *Anansi Goes Fishing* by Eric Kimmel, *The Cow-Tail Switch* by Harold Courlander, *The King's Drum* by Harold Courlander, *A Story, A Story* by Gail Haley and *Anansi Does the Impossible* by Verna Aardema.
5. Videotape the play that the students developed to be broadcast on the morning news for the entire school to see.
6. Encourage students to "story tell" their own stories about Anansi as storytelling is a major form of communication of the Ashanti.

### Communications Arts Connections

1. Compare and contrast other stories about Anansi.
2. Using the story written on index cards (one per page), distribute them to the students. Ask the class to put the story in the correct order. Variation: Draw pictures on the cards and as you read the story aloud, the pictures are placed in order.
3. Discuss trickster roles and list other tricksters that the students may be familiar with.

### **Social Studies Connections**

1. Make a large salt map of Africa, highlighting West Africa and Ghana.
2. Role play the parts of a travel agent and a zoological group wishing to visit Africa. Decide when is the best time to visit Africa and what are the appropriate clothes. Also, map out the travel route.
3. Show pictures of and discuss the types of housing in Africa and where each type might be found.

### **Science Connections**

1. The Anansi story takes place in a rainforest. Discuss the environmental issues associated with it.
2. Discuss the types of animals that might be found in a rainforest.
3. Cocoa is a main crop of the Ashanti. Research and report on the process of growing cocoa and the various products made from cocoa.
4. What part of the rainforest would Anansi live in?
5. Using the role-playing in the Social Studies Connections #2, list the animals that the group would see and the locations where these animals live.
6. Spiders are not insects. Research spiders and find out how they got their name and other unusual facts. Write and illustrate a class book on spiders.

### **Math Connections**

1. Measurement of ingredients used in Health Connections # 1.
2. Explain the different numbering systems used in Africa. Read aloud the book *Moja Means One* by Muriel Feeling. *Show the book How to Count Like a Martian* by Gloria St. John. Devise a new numbering system for the classroom.
3. Explain and discuss the time zones you would go through in order to reach Ghana, West Africa.
4. Look at the different designs on each animal in the book. What geometric shapes are represented?

### **Health Connections**

1. Research Africa food and find one of particular interest that is not too difficult to make in the classroom. (Favorites of the Ashanti are fufu and peanut stew.) Compare it to your favorite food. How are they alike? Different?

### **Art Connections**

2. Discuss "kente" cloth. Design your own pattern for the cloth.
3. Make masks or costumes for the play mentioned in the Reading/Writing Connection #4.

### **PE Connections**

1. Play soccer, the favorite game of African boys and girls.

### **Music Connections**

2. Construct and play simple African instruments.
3. Learn the song "Anansi" sung to the tune of "Eency Weency Spider". Make up new hand motions as you learn the song.

### **Drama Connections**

1. Role-playing as mentioned in Social Studies Connection #2.
2. Make masks or costumes for the play mentioned in the Reading/Writing Connection #4.