

Animal Tricksters
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Overview

This curriculum unit on African and African-American trickster folk tales is designed for middle school students. It is an extension of the Pittsburgh Public Schools Communications curriculum. It may be taught at any grade level. However, my target audience is sixth grade students. Students will recognize African trickster tales and then be able to see how they change as the storytellers were brought to America. The tales will be traced from Africa to America.

These stories were part of an oral tradition passed down through generations. Many tribes of Africa had their own trickster stories. These stories were used as a way of teaching morals to the people. In African tales, animals from that continent especially Hare, Turtle, and Anansi-spider took on human characteristics and were the main characters of the stories. The characters, as in the case of Anansi, could take on supernatural abilities. In some of the tales, it is the trickster who is tricked. Trickster tales were brought by enslaved Africans to the Caribbean and parts of the United States. In African American tales, the characters were animals indigenous to the United States. Anansi stories evolved into Brer Rabbit stories. Brer Rabbit, is the predecessor of Bugs Bunny, the modern day trickster. My students are sure to enjoy these stories and create a trickster story of their own.

Rationale

According to the book, *Elements of Literature*, 8th grade edition,

Although a tale reflects the culture of the group of people that created it, certain elements, called motifs, appear in stories from all over the world. Some motifs may reflect universal ideas or patterns of thought that every human being is born with-clever, mischievous trickster characters, for example, seem to appear in

every culture. Another explanation is that stories were shared when there was contact between cultures, such as through trade or migration. The tales may have spread in this way from one society to the next, with each new group of tellers adapting the tales to fit their own traditions and experiences.(461)

Throughout time, storytellers have been handing down stories in the oral tradition. The stories were used to teach people life's valuable lessons while entertaining them. They are a vehicle in which values are passed down from one generation to the next. The listener should either emulate or beware of the behavior of the characters when faced with a similar situation.

Audrey Arthur explains in the article, "Storytellers Share Black History", from the Atlanta Parent website,

The tradition of storytelling has long been central to African and African-American culture. Since the dawn of African civilization, Africans used the oral traditions to pass along intricate genealogical and historical facts. When Africans were shipped to American shores as slaves they brought with them family histories, as well as folk tales, about animal characters or tricksters who often outwitted their enemies. Because they were forbidden to read and write, slaves came to rely on storytelling as a way to share and retain their culture and histories. This oral tradition has continued through generations of families (Atlanta Parent).

In trickster tales, animals are used to show good and bad human qualities. The weaker, smaller animal is usually the character that tricks the stronger, more powerful animal. It is their cunning that outwits the larger animal. The smaller animals are characterized as being greedy, deceitful, and pretentious. Many African folk tales include the trickster, Anansi. For example, in the story Anansi and the Moss Covered Rock, Anansi uses magic to put animals in a trance like sleep in order to steal their food. He is tricked by a little bush deer and is placed into the trance himself. Anansi Goes Fishing, Anansi is tricked in this story by Turtle. Turtle tricks Anansi into making nets for fishing. He tricks him into catching the fish and then cooking them. Anansi learns how to make spider webs and teaches his friends how to make them. Anansi and the Talking Melon, in this story Anansi tricks the animals into thinking that melons can talk.

Christopher K. Starr states in his website, "Anansi The Spider-Man: A West African Trickster in the West Indies,"

The most salient shared feature of trickster figures is their small

size, relative to the large, strong animals that appear in the same folktales. Even the tortoise is depicted as helpless when faced with such other animals as the lion or python. Tricksters survived by their wits, but they do more than just survive. As the term implies, they are forever playing tricks on the large, fierce animals around them that not only get them out of difficulties but may actively dupe the others in the absence of any danger. Furthermore, tricksters delight in outwitting and mistreating their powerful neighbours even when these have done nothing to deserve it. It should be noted, however, that the trickster does not always come out on top. Occasionally he overreaches himself and finds that he has been too clever for his own good.

The tortoise character is a trickster in many of the African folk tales. He sometimes, however, gets tricked by the larger animals and then has to bear their anger. For example in “Old Mister Turtle Gets a Whipping”, by Virginia Hamilton in A Ring of Tricksters.(91), the tortoise tries to trick a leopard into letting him ride him. The turtle visits the wife of the leopard and tells her that he is going to ride the leopard. She laughs and tells him that he never will ride the leopard. The turtle promises her that he will. When the leopard returns home, his wife tells him what the turtle told her. The leopard becomes very angry and runs to the home of the turtle. He confronts him with what his wife told him. The turtle denies it. The leopard says that they should go ask her. The turtle says he is too sick to go. The leopard says that he will carry the turtle. The turtle says that he has a fever and that he might fall off. He tells Leopard to get a rope so that he can tie it around him and hold on to it. So, the leopard gets him the rope. The turtle then asks for a stick so that he can keep the flies from bothering them. So, then, off they went to see the wife of the leopard. When she saw them she started laughing and said that it was true. The turtle was riding the leopard. The leopard jumps up and grabs the turtle. He takes a stick and flogs the turtle. The marks he makes on the turtle’s shell can still be seen today.

The African trickster tales include the animals of that continent. The tales in America include the animals that African-Americans were accustomed to in the area in which they lived such as Bruh Rabbit and Bruh Fox.

Black slaves told trickster tales. They identified with the small, defenseless animal that tricks the large, aggressive animal such as a plantation owner. When they arrived in the United States, they were forbidden to use their own languages. The Gullah language was a conglomeration of many tribes of Africa. It is in this language that many of the trickster tales are told. The lives of the slaves were unbearable. However, they had within themselves a spirit of hope. In the introduction of the book, The People Could Fly, by Virginia

Hamilton, she tells us that “the slaves created tales in which various animals,-such as the rabbit, fox, bear, wolf, turtle, or terrapin, snake, and possum-took on the characteristics of the people found in the new environment of the plantation. Bruh Rabbit was a favorite character of the storytellers. He was “small and apparently helpless compared to the powerful bear, the wily fox, and the ferocious wolf. But the slave teller made the rabbit smart, tricky, and clever, the winner over larger and stronger animals. Still, Bruh Rabbit sometimes got into trouble, just as the slaves did, which made him seem all the more human.”

These tales were a way for those people to express their hopes and fears to each other. They were created out of a sense of hopelessness. But these stories transcended their misery and turned unbearable days into ones of smiles and laughter. People all over the world, especially, adolescents enjoy the stories of an underdog getting the best of a bully.

Objectives

Students will be able to identify the elements of trickster tales. They will be able to recognize Anansi spider stories. They will be able to identify the narrative and thematic patterns of trickster tales from Africa and the United States. They will be able to compare and contrast themes of trickster tales from Africa and the United States. They will be able to differentiate between the lesson of the tale and the celebration of the underdog’s defeat of its adversary.

Students will be able to define the term slavery. They will be able to follow the course of enslaved Africans to the United States. They will be able to connect the stories of Brer Rabbit to the feelings of oppression and the hope for freedom from the slaves. They will be able to identify the Gullah language. They will be able to write a Response to Information on an article on the history of slavery in the United States.

Students will be able to write a Problem-Solution essay on problems that adolescents face in today’s world. They will be able to work in cooperative groups to discuss these problems and possible solutions to these problems. They will then write a Problem-Solution essay using a Criteria Checklist and Rubric.

Students will be able to write a Report on endangered animals. They will be able to read and take notes on the animal. They will be able to create an outline for their reports. They will write a Report using a Criteria Checklist and Rubric. They will accurately cite sources in the text of the Report. They will compile a bibliography using MLA format.

Students will be able to read a variety of animal trickster books. They will first read tales from Africa and share them with their classmates in small groups. They will be able to tell stories to the class. They will be able to read African American trickster stories and share them in small groups. They will be able to research trickster tales on the internet. They will interview family members for trickster tales that members of their family know. They will then retell these stories to the class. They will write a Response to Literature comparing and contrasting the trickster tales from these countries. They will listen to a storyteller tell the tales of a trickster.

The students will be able to write an animal trickster tale that includes the endangered animal that they researched. They will identify the trickster of the story and the main characters in the story. They will create an Anansi web for character analysis. They will determine setting and plot. They will explain if the accomplished outcome of the tale justified the means. They will share these stories through storytelling with their peers as they complete the writing process. They will write their tales in play version and perform them for the class.

The students will be able to illustrate their tales. They will be able to create power point presentations of their trickster tales.

Strategies

The unit will meet many of the Communication Standards of the Pittsburgh Public Schools. The Communications curriculum of the Pittsburgh Public Schools requires each student to keep a reading and writing portfolio. This portfolio is separated into three categories: Reading, Writing, and Speaking. The Reading part of the portfolio contains a Response to Literature, a Response to Informational texts, and a log of books that have been read to achieve the 25 book requirement. The Writing part of the portfolio contains a Personal Narrative, a Problem-Solution essay, a Narrative Procedure, a Report of Information, a Free Pick and a Reflective essay. The Speaking part of the portfolio contains oral reports that the student has given throughout the year.

The unit that I will write with the help of the seminar will include all three sections of the Communications Portfolio. My Curriculum Unit will help me to create a Response to Literature in the Reading Section. Students will write an essay on one of the animal trickster tales. A Response to Information will be written after they have read articles on the history of slavery in the United States. In the Writing section of the Portfolio, a Free Choice creative writing piece will be created. The Free Choice creative writing piece will be a trickster tale that the

students will have written independently. They will, also, complete a speaking accomplishment by telling their trickster tales to the class.

Our book, Elements of Literature, is broken down into collections. The collections, Justice for All and All Creatures Great and Small, will be the starting point of the curriculum unit. The Problem-Solution essay and the Report of Information will be the background of the theme of justice. They will make the writing of fables that much easier. Each story of each collection will be taught using the Directed Reading Model written by Rebecca Hamilton and used as part of the curriculum of the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

The first collection, Justice for All, is made up of stories about injustice. For example, the excerpt from the book, The Gold Cadillac, deals with racism. A brief history of slavery in the U.S. will be taught at this point. At the end of this collection, students will write a Problem-Solution essay on the problems that adolescents face today. The students will be able to engage the reader by establishing a context and creating a point of view and persuasive tone. They will be able to develop reader interest with a dynamic beginning that clearly identifies the problem and a powerful conclusion that pushes for their solutions. They will organize their writing in a way that considers the needs and interests of their audience. They will be able to support arguments with detailed evidence and be able to persuade the reader to think as they do.

Cooperative groups of students will compile a list of problems facing young people their age. The lists will be compiled into a class list. The groups will again work cooperatively on solutions to a problem they choose and address the people who would disagree with them. Students would then begin to write independently using a criteria checklist and rubric. The criteria checklist will help the students to include the necessary details of the essay. The rubric will explain how the essay will be graded. Students will share these written essays in their cooperating groups. These problems that the students write about will be used in context when students write their trickster tales.

The next collection, All Creatures Great and Small, will conclude with the writing of a Report of Information. This collection is made up of short stories of animals both domestic and wild. There are fictional stories and informative articles on endangered elephants. Students will research an endangered animal using both the library and the internet. The Report teaches the class to write a research paper. The research part of the project helps students to do research in a variety of informational texts, encyclopedias, and on-line. They will learn to write a bibliography, share their research with the class, write an outline, a rough

draft, conference with the teacher and peers when editing, and then to publish their report using the computer.

After the students have written their research reports on endangered animals, they will begin to explore the world of animal tricksters. A mini-lesson on personification will be taught before introducing the trickster tales. Trickster tales will be told by the teacher to the class. Cooperative groups will read the stories in class. Students will select a member of the group to tell the tale to the class. They will go to the computer lab and research other trickster stories on the internet. Students will be encouraged to tell these stories to the class. A comparison of the stories from Africa and the south of the U.S. will be done using a venn diagram.

Students will begin writing their trickster tales that include the endangered animal that they researched for their report. Animals taking on human traits may be difficult for the students. One activity of creating collages of different animals and labeling human traits that they think each animal may represent may help. They will start by creating webs of characters and their traits. They will determine setting, conflict, plot, and lesson taught. The problems that were used for the Problem-Solution essays will be used for the conflicts in the stories. They will follow a Criteria Checklist and Rubric to complete their writing. Students will share these stories with peers and teacher to edit and revise. These trickster tales will then be written by the author as a play. Cooperating groups will read the group members' plays and decide which play to perform for the class. Groups will be videotaped. These tales will be illustrated. Students will then create powerpoint presentations using their trickster tales.

Activities

The Gold Cadillac-A Fancy New Car and an Unforgettable Drive by Mildred D. Taylor is part of the collection of Justice For All in the Elements of Literature textbook. This is a story about an African-American family living in the north of the United States. The father of the family decides to sell the family's car for a gold Cadillac. He feels that he earned it and has the right to own whatever car he wants. Everyone in the family is delighted to be riding in a new Cadillac, except for his wife. She had wanted to spend the money on a house of their own. The father decides to take the car on a trip south to visit his parents. His wife decides that she must accompany him on this trip. Their daughters are very happy about the excitement of the drive and the preparations. They are not aware that all the preparations and food for the drive must be made because there would not be any restaurants or hotels that would allow them to stop and refresh themselves. They have lived in the north all their lives and have not felt segregated from whites. During the drive south, they are stopped and the father is

arrested for driving the car. The man's wife decides that he deserves to own whatever car he chooses and that no one has the right to tell him otherwise. After this the family is aware of how important the family is to each other and how unimportant it is to own a gold Cadillac. Students will be asked to make a journal entry about a time when they have felt prejudged. Another pre-reading activity for this story will be a vocabulary presentation. The new vocabulary for this story is: evident, rural, heedful, ignorance. These words will be taught in context by using them in short stories.

evident: When I walked into the kitchen at dinnertime, the room was empty. The stove was cold. There weren't any pots or pans on the stove. The table wasn't set for dinner. There weren't any plates of food anywhere.

rural: We drove through a part of the country that had many farms. When we looked out of the window, we saw horses and cows.

heedful: The boy should have listened to his mother. He rode his bike down the city steps. Now he's in the hospital.

ignorance: *The boy wasn't able to read or write. He had been living with wolves since he was a baby.*

A discussion of students' knowledge of the history of African-Americans will help the teacher to know where to begin the history lesson of slavery in the southern U.S. and the subsequent racist treatment of African-Americans. The story is read aloud with students. The story is segmented and questions are asked so that the students may comprehend the author's purpose for writing.

When reading the selection with the students, teachers may vary the way in which it is read.(round robin, silently, page by page teacher-directed)

The selection should be re-read silently by students on the following day. The creation of a story map will help students to retell the story. The teacher will make connections to the rich vocabulary introduced at the beginning of the story. The vocabulary is reviewed and the words are separated into syllables for decoding-Syllasearch.

After the students have read the book, If You Traveled on the Underground Railroad by Ellen Levine, they will write a Response to Informational texts. The teacher and class will discuss the significance of the book. The students will summarize the information in the book and relate the

information to what they already know about slavery in the U.S. They will cite the book correctly in the essay. They will make connections to prior knowledge of slavery and make a statement about the information in the article. A rubric will be presented (see Rubric for Writing a Response to Informational Materials in the Appendix) so that students may see all the elements needed for a proficient piece of writing. The teacher will edit the paper and the student will revise it and type the final copy.

Students will then write a Problem-Solution Paper on the problems facing students in today's schools. Students will brainstorm in small groups the problems that adolescents face everyday. They will research on the internet the problems that they have listed. The groups will come together in the large group and list all of the group's findings. Students will go back to small groups again and decide on the problem that the group will discuss and try to brainstorm solutions. Each group will be given a large piece of chart paper. On this paper, they will write the problem and three solutions to the problem. Each group will present this paper to the class. The class may ask questions of the members of the group about the solutions. These papers will be hung in the classroom.

Students will then begin writing a Problem-Solution essay. A Criteria Checklist and Rubric will be presented to the class.(see appendix) The problem should be clearly stated. Good, plausible reasons are given to explain why it really is a problem. Students will cite their source correctly. A solution to the problem is given to the reader. People who may disagree with the solution will be addressed. The reader will be persuaded to think the way that the author of the paper does. The teacher will edit the paper and the student will type the final copy.

Students will then read "Rescue of a Newborn," from the book Battle for the Elephants by Olan and Oria Douglas Hamilton. A pre-writing activity will be to fill in a web on elephants. This will help the students to understand what they already know about elephants. The web should include types of elephants, intelligence, why they are hunted, etc. The vocabulary words for this story are: predators, desolation, reassurance, and silhouetted. These words will be taught in context.

predator: The lion waited in the high grass for the gazelles to run by him.

desolation: The mother elephant was left by the herd as she stroked the head of her dead calf.

reassurance: The girl felt better when her mom told her that her dad was on his way home.

silhouetted: The image of the thief was seen in the window of the house.

The story will be read with students using the Segmenting the Text method. An outline of the story will be made by students.

After reading the story, the students will write a research report on endangered animals. Students will be instructed to find at least four sources of information on the animal that they have chosen. They will take notes in their own words on the animal's appearance, habitat, food, raising of its young, factors causing its endangerment, and the efforts of people who are trying to increase its numbers. They will create an outline and write a rough draft of the report. Students will share rough drafts with their peers. The teacher will edit the reports. Students will publish their typed, final copy with pictures of the animal and a bibliography in MLA format. Students will give oral reports on the animal they researched. These oral reports will have a self, peer, and teacher evaluation.(see Appendix)

Students will read an excerpt from the book, All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten. This will give students a perspective on the life of a spider. I included this in this curriculum unit so that students could have a perspective on spiders before they read Anansi folk tales. This excerpt starts with a woman's encounter with a spider. Both points of view are given for the encounter. The woman's point of view tells the reader how a human feels walking into a spider web. She thinks the spider is the size of a lobster and had big rubber lips and poisonous fangs. The spider's point of view tells how a spider feels when a gigantic painted piece of meat destroys his web. After this humorous story, Robert Fulghum, the author, gives scientific information on the life of a spider. As a pre-writing activity, students will create a web about spiders. Facts, feelings, experiences, songs and rhymes will be included in the web. Students and teacher will read this story aloud. Segmenting the text activities will be used to help students comprehend the story. After the reading of the story, students will work in pairs on writing situations from the animal's point of view. For example, how would a fish feel about the sport of fishing, or what would a dog think about a dog show?

A mini-lesson on personification in folk tales will be given. Examples of personification will be given on an overhead and students will work in pairs on a worksheet. Students will then create collages of animals on poster board. They will label the possible human characteristics of each animal on the collage. For example, lion-strong and dominant, fox-wily, etc.

The teacher will then become a storyteller of "Old Mister Turtle Gets a Whipping", by Virginia Hamilton in A Ring of Tricksters.(91) The teacher

explains the definition of an animal trickster. Discuss the characters of the story. What was the trick and who was the trickster of the story? What was the lesson of the story? A lesson is given on the African trickster folk tales and the passing on of oral tradition. The tricksters-hare, Anansi, and turtle will be introduced to the class.

Books of trickster folk tales are given to students in small groups. The books they will read are: A Ring of Tricksters by Virginia Hamilton. This book is a compilation of trickster stories. Anansi and the Moss Covered Rock, in this story Anansi uses magic to put animals in a trance like sleep in order to steal their food. He is tricked by a little bush deer and is placed in the trance himself. Anansi Goes Fishing, Anansi is tricked in this story by Turtle. Turtle tricks Anansi into making nets for fishing. He tricks him into catching the fish and then cooking them. Anansi learns how to make spider webs and teaches his friends how to make them. Anansi and the Talking Melon, in this story Anansi tricks the animals into thinking that melons can talk. Nelson Mandela's Favorite African FolkTales is a compilation of African folk tales. Students will read only the folk tales containing tricksters.

Students are to take turn reading the stories and then to fill out a chart for each book. The chart includes the characters of the stories, the trickster, the setting, plot, and lesson to be learned from the story. The groups report back to the class on the books and take turns telling the stories to the class. The class will work in the computer lab researching on the internet African animal trickster stories. Students who are willing will tell these stories to the class.

A review is given on the history of slavery in the southern U.S. Students have studied this previously when they read the story from the novel, The Gold Cadillac. Students learn about the purpose that trickster folk tales play in the lives of the impoverished slaves. Discuss how the trickster stories were taken to the U.S. by the enslaved Africans. The characters in the books have changed to animals that live in North America instead of animals that live in Africa. The Gullah language will be introduced. Students will be given a short story written in the Gullah language and asked to translate it with a partner.

I will tell the story, "Brer Rabbit and Lion", by Julius Lester, in the Elements of Literature book, 8th grade edition, to the class. This story is about how Brer Rabbit tricks lion by telling him that a hurricane is coming and that Lion would be safe if Brer Rabbit ties him to a tree. The other animals are in awe of rabbit and never mess with him again.(467)

Students will be given books about African-American trickster folk tales. The first book read will be Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby Girl. This book is about

Bruh Rabbit trying to help himself to the garden of Bruh Wolf. Bruh Wolf sets a trap for him by making a sticky, tar baby girl. They will read these tales in small groups and complete a venn diagram as they compare and contrast the folk tales from Africa and the U.S. The students take turn telling these stories in class. The children will work in the computer lab again researching African-American animal trickster stories. Students who are willing will tell these tales to the class. The video, "The Hare and the Lion", read by Danny Glover, will be viewed at this time.

Students will then write an animal trickster story. They will be reminded of the trickster stories that they have just read and of the problems facing adolescents today. Students will create "Anansi" webs to plan the animals' and the trickster's characteristics in their stories. The setting, plot, conflict, and lesson that will be learned from the story will be filled in on a Criteria Checklist. Students will fill out a story map for Anansi and the Moss Covered Rock for practice in filling out a story map. The students will write the trickster tale and share and edit it with a classmate. They will type a final copy and illustrate it. A cartoon strip can be made of the tale. Students will then tell their stories to the class.

This is a trickster story by a sixth grade student at Pittsburgh Classical Academy.

Magic Anansi and the Ugly House

Deep in the African jungle, Magic Anansi is doing work.

Crash, Bang, Boom. Magic Anansi is trying to make everything in his house come to life.

"I've done it. I've done it," says Anansi.

"I'm the first spider that lives in a magic house," screams Anansi.

All of a sudden, the TV. jumps and lands on Anansi's leg.

"Ow, Ow, Ouch, Ouch, Get off my leg," screams Anansi.

Then all of his belongings go wild and within 2 hours a perfectly clean house is a total mess.

Down by the river Baby Elephant and Giraffe play a game of chess. Every once in a while they go for a swim. While playing, they see Anansi. Then Anansi, Baby Elephant and Giraffe take a swim. About 2 hours later baby Elephant's mother calls,

"Come here honey it's dinner time," in a strong proud voice. Then Baby Elephant calls to Anansi and Giraffe, "See ya later dude. Gotta go."

When Anansi thinks Baby Elephant is far away he says to Giraffe,

"Why don't you come to my house for dinner?"

Giraffe says, "Okay."

At Anansi's house, Anansi orders his belongings to charge Giraffe. All his belongings start yelling,

"Get him, Get him, Charge!" They take him down in 15 minutes.

Then Anansi says, "Now Giraffe you will live in my house forever, and I will live in your house." While this was happening the shovel was digging in the kitchen and the recorder was watching TV.

When Anansi left, the lights screamed, "Anansi has left the building!" Within 20 minutes a shovel dug a huge hole so that Giraffe climbed out of the house. Then he found Baby Elephant outside the house and said,

"Quick, Anansi trapped me in his messy house and is going to live in my house."

Giraffe and Baby Elephant have a perfect idea. They have decided that they will trap Anansi. They take the rope and shovel.

Once they get to Giraffe's house they go through the back door. Once in the house, the rope and shovel switch places with Giraffes "non Magical things".

They find Anansi sitting and watching TV. Then the shovel goes and bashes Anansi on the head. Anansi screams.

"Ow, Ow, Ouch, Ouch." Then the rope flew around him. Within 30 seconds he was on the ground.

"What is this all about?" says Anansi.

Then he hears Giraffe say

"Ha, we got him. Now he'll pay for his unkindness."

He and Baby Elephant walk into the room to see Anansi. They carry him to his very messy house now and put him inside. They untie him and hurry to leave, and Anansi hasn't come out since.

Students will then write their trickster stories in the form of a play. The class will read trickster plays in parts for examples on how to write a play. The teacher and class will review play terms and directions to characters. Groups of students will decide which group member's play they will perform for the class. Class time will be given to the groups so that they may rehearse. Each group will give the class a performance of the trickster tale.

Students will go back to the computer lab to create power point presentations of their trickster tales. They will incorporate the text of their stories with pictures they have drawn themselves, or they may use clipart. The culminating activity will be sharing these stories with other classes in the school. Students will also go to the Headstart classroom and share their stories with the children.

Annotated Bibliography

Abrahams, Roger D. African American Folktales: Stories from Black Traditions In the New World. New York: Pantheon, 1999.

In this book, Mr. Abrahams includes African folk tales in the Gullah language.

Elements of Literature, Austin: Holt Rinehart, and Winston, 1997

Levine, Ellen. If You Traveled on the Underground Railroad. New York: Scholastic, 1993.

Warner, Marina. From the Beast to the Blond: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers. New York: York, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1996.

Ms. Warner explains the evolution of the Sybil character in folk tales into the heroine of the later day folk tales.

Yolen, Jane, ed. Favorite Folktales from Around the World. New York: Pantheon, 1986.

Ms. Yolen has compiled in her book a collection of folk tales that are placed in the various categories of folk tales.

Zipes, Jack. Happily Ever After: Fairy Tales, Children and the Culture Industry. New York: Routledge, 1997.

In this book, Mr. Zipes connects the traditional folk tale to the way the media represents it today.

Arthur, Audrey. "Storytellers Share Black History". Atlanta Parent www.altlantaparent.com/feb2003art3.html

Ms. Arthur explains the importance of the role of the storyteller in the passing on of folk tales.

The Lucretius Plan. "Mus Be Some Udder Rabbit"
www.homepage.mac.com/dommiz/iblog/C1153158841/E1586937733/

This website contains information about the Brer Rabbit stories and the controversy of how these folk tales were cleaned up and absorbed into the white culture.

Starr, Christopher K. "Anansi the Spider-Man: A West African Trickster in the West Indies"

www2.carib-link.net/~rfbarnes/anansi.htm

This article is from a website and is a presentation from the Acarology Conference in St. Augustine, August, 1999. Mr. Starr describes the characteristics of the trickster character.

Student Reading List

Mandela, Nelson. Nelson Mandela's Favorite African Folktales. New York: W.W. Norton and Co. 2002.

Mr. Mandela has created a compilation of his favorite African folk tales.

Hamilton, Virginia. The People Could Fly. New York: The Blue Sky Press. 1985.

Ms. Hamilton has compiled a collection of African American folk tales.

Hamilton, Virginia. A Ring of Tricksters. New York: The Blue Sky Press. 1997

This book follows the ring of tricksters from Africa to America and then back to Africa. This is a collection of trickster tales that follows the circle from Anansi to Brer Rabbit to Cunnie Rabbit.

Hamilton, Virginia. Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby Girl. New York: The Blue Sky Press. 2003.

Ms. Hamilton retells this story of how Brer Rabbit steals the vegetables from the fox's garden. The fox tricks him into becoming glued to the tar baby girl.

Kimmel, Eric A. Anansi Goes Fishing. New York: Holiday House. 1992.

Anansi is tricked in this story by Turtle. Turtle tricks Anansi into making nets for fishing.

Kimmel, Eric A. Anansi and the Moss Covered Rock. New York: Holiday House. 1988.

In this story, Anansi uses magic to put animals in a trance like sleep in order to steal their food. He is tricked by a little bush deer and is placed in the trance himself.

Kimmel, Eric A. Anansi and the Talking Melon. New York: Holiday House. 1994.

Anansi tricks the animals into thinking that melons can talk.

Communications Standards

PSSA Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening

1. Learning to Read Independently, including purposes for reading, word recognition skills, vocabulary development, comprehension and interpretation and fluency
2. Reading Critically In All Content Areas, including detail, inferences, fact from opinion, comparison, analysis and evaluation
3. Reading, Analyzing and Interpreting Literature, including literary elements, literary devices, poetry and drama
4. Types of Writing, including narrative, informational and persuasive
5. Quality of Writing, including focus, content, organization, style and conventions
6. Speaking and Listening, including listening skills, speaking skills, discussion and presentation
7. Characteristics and Functions of the English Language, including word origins, variations and application
8. Research, including selection, location of information and organization.