

# **The Spider Trickster in African and Native American Folklore**

*Jerome E. Yancey Sr.  
Oliver High School*

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## **Overview**

I originally chose the title “Animal Use in Folktales within the African and Native American culture” for my curriculum unit. As I began to research this topic, I found that the information was enormous. Keeping my students in mind, I realized the theme of this unit had to be clear and concise. There is a wealth of information concerning the use of animal characters in folktales and their commonalities to all regions and tales. These commonalities are far too extensive to incorporate into a curriculum. This curriculum will focus on the aspects and common - place of the spider in African and Native American folklore. This unit will show the cross-cultural aspects of the spider in the folklore of these two noble cultures. It will also examine the roles that each culture assigned to the spider by way of oral tradition and folklore. The intent of this unit is to present to tenth and eleventh grade students a meeting place of cultures. Through folklore the students will be able to identify the similarities that exist in cross-cultural storytelling. It is also my intent that students will be able to identify with a small part of the multifaceted dynamics of commonalities of ethnic groups and cultures in our society.

## **Rationale**

Folklore has personified animals and assigned them a variety of characteristics since the first tale was ever told. They have been used to teach many lessons in mores, taboos and various cultural identity markers. There are commonalities that exist within the matrix of folklore’s use of animal characters that present a universal and multicultural phenomenon.

There are numerous animal-character references used in folklore within every culture, each having some symbolism attached to each animal. There are three animals that appear to have universal placement in folktales. These three are: the

hare/rabbit, the tortoise/turtle and the spider. These animals seem to have been given their characterization through natural selection. They are assigned roles according to their apparent natural characteristics and abilities.

It becomes apparent that the natural characteristics of each animal allowed the storyteller to instill and enhance the virtues needed for each character's role in a given tale. In the example of the turtle or tortoise: the turtle may have been chosen for his slow, time-consuming pace. In a number of tales, the turtle, though slow in pace, is quick in mind. A classic example is "The Hare and the Tortoise", where the Turtle wins the race through perseverance and wit.

Another example of this natural selection is the fox. The fox appears to be cunning and swift in almost every folktale. He is a very prominent character in Aesop's Tales. According to G.K. Chesterton, in V.S. Vernon Jones' translation of Aesop's fables, "The fox in a fable must move crooked, as the knight in chess must move crooked. (Introduction, ix)." He is seldom outwitted. In reality, the cunning survival skill of the fox has led to the famous foxhunt in a number of European countries. This typing of animals in folklore is an academic study within itself.

This is particularly true with the spider character. Folktales and myths have been woven around the spider in all cultures. The spider may be seen in genesis stories and Tall Tales. It changes roles with each culture. It may be viewed as trickster or hero. It is identified with a variety of names, genders, and titles in accordance with the culture.

In the United States, the spider has in some ways descended from a place of esteem and reverence in relation to ancestral viewpoints. In some cultures it has fallen to the place of being a bothersome pest that must be quickly eliminated. Today's society does not contemplate the beauty and intricacy that is evident in a spider's web. Nor does one consider the cunning and seemingly intelligent habit of this small creature. The presence of spiders in a sophisticated society such as the United States would in fact initiate a series of calls to various exterminators and create somewhat of a panic to those present. While it is true that the presence of real spiders may bring chilling thoughts, our society in many ways still finds a fascination with these creatures.

Though society is ill informed about the place and significance that this tiny creature holds in many cultures, the American culture does assign (whether aware or unaware) a significant role to the spider. We teach our children at an early age the words to the children's song "Itsy Bitsy Spider", while counting their infant toes or telling nursery rhythms that incorporate the spider character such as in "Little Miss Muffet".

Spiderman comic books have long found popularity in American culture. Recently the movie “Spiderman” brought record sales to the box office of theatres across the United States. Ironically the character of Spiderman existed before European-Americans came to these shores. Spider-man and Spider-woman have been revered as holy people among the Native American populace and tales surrounding the spider are ageless in their culture.

In order to bring clarity to this research, the animals that held the most common thread between the African and Native American culture were examined. Of all the animals used in folklore there was one, the Spider, which was not only linked culturally but was also indigenous to both cultures. The spider commonly referred to, as Anansi in African folklore also appears as other characters such as Iktomi, the Spider Woman and Spider Man in the Native American culture.

### **The African Anansi**

In both African and Native American cultures the spider is given the personae of the trickster. There appears to be a pattern in the trickster tales that may attribute to the parallelism of the trickster tales in both Africa and the Native American cultures. The trickster, according to William Bascom, has a distinct pattern that can be seen in African and North American trickster tales. He states that the trickster seeks wisdom, cunning or power in African tales and North American (Bascom, 40). He also states that the tricksters in African and North American tales are usually given tasks to perform in order to attain a request. He elaborates on the similarities of the tasks in both cultural folktales. For example, he states, “In Africa the trickster also obtains the milk of the wild African buffalo or bush-cow, lion ...in the united States the milk of a deer” (41). In African culture Anansi is particularly portrayed as the trickster. The character is always scheming or into some type of dilemma brought on by trying to manipulate someone or some situation.

In the African culture “Anansi, the Spider” seems to touch on every area of African existence. Anansi, the trickster in African culture, tends always to be cunning and able to manipulate situations to his advantage. This ability to overcome diverse circumstances by using ones’ wit is looked on with high regard in the African culture. According to John J. Ollivier, in his Pulitzer Prize nominated book The Wisdom of African Mythology, “Africans had a deep appreciation of mental keenness. They had a sympathy and admiration for those who used their wits to extract themselves from difficult situations. They had neither patience nor pity for those who failed to use their brains to avoid or escape annoying predicaments. Cleverness was a trait much revered in African folktales”, (Ollivier, 65).

There are classic examples of this cultural mindset in all stories that center around Anansi. This intrigue for cleverness is clearly demonstrated in the Ashanti African tale adapted by Matt Evans called “Anansi Tries to Steal All the Wisdom From the World.”

Anansi the spider knew that he was not wise. He was very clever, and could outwit many different people, but he knew that he did not have very much wisdom. This bothered him a great deal, but he did not know what to do about it. Then one day he had a clever thought. “I know,” he said to no one in particular, “if I can get all of the wisdom in the village and put it in a hollow gourd I will be very wise indeed. In fact, I would be the wisest of all!”

So he set out to find a suitable gourd and then began his journey to collect the village’s wisdom. He went from door to door, asking everyone to give of their wisdom. The people chuckled at poor Anansi, for they knew that of all the creatures, it was he that needed some wisdom the most. So each put a bit in his gourd and wished him well on his search.

Soon Anansi’s gourd was overflowing with wisdom and he could hold no more. He now needed to find a place to store it. “I am certainly the wisest person in the world now, but if I don’t find a good hiding place for my wisdom I may surely lose it.” He looked around and spotted a tall, tall tree. “Ah,” he said to himself, “if I hide my wisdom high in that tree, I would never have to worry about someone stealing it from me!”

So Anansi set out to climb the towering tree. He first took a cloth band and tied it around his waist. Then he tied the heavy gourd to the front of his belly where it would be safe. As he began to climb, however, the gourd full of wisdom kept getting in the way. He tried and tried, but he could not make progress around it. Soon Anansi’s youngest son walked by. “What are you doing Father?” asked the little spider. “I am climbing this tree with my gourd full of wisdom,” Anansi replied. “But Father,” said the son, “wouldn’t it be easier if you tied the gourd behind you instead of in front?”

Anansi sat there quietly for a long time before saying, “Shouldn’t you be going home now?” The son skipped down the path and when he had disappeared, Anansi moved the gourd so that it was behind him and proceeded up the tree with no problem at all.

When he had reached the top, he cried out, “I walked over and collected so much wisdom that I am the wisest person ever, but still my baby son is wiser than me. Take back your wisdom!” He lifted the gourd high over his head and spilled its contents into the wind. The wisdom blew far and wide and settled across the land.

And this is how wisdom came into the world (Evans, <http://www.iusb.edu/-journal/1998/2Tale.html>)

While it may seem that Anansi turned out to be foolish, it is not the foolishness of assuming that one can collect all the wisdom of the village, but the paradox that from foolishness came profound wisdom. Within the paradox he came to an epiphany and through that epiphany the whole world benefited. It is this strange interweaving of cultural mores and storytelling that have continually given life to the Anansi tales. This combination of cleverness and wit being applied to given circumstances and the trickster coming out on top is a fundamental component of the African trickster tales. Generally these tales instill fundamental life lessons in the listener. The Anansi tales are common and widespread within the African continent. There are specific variations of the Anansi tales but they all follow the continuum of the character mode where Anansi uses wit and cunning to overcome circumstance. Anansi tales have a traditional place in African culture today having survived generation upon generation of oral tradition. Anansi stories not only survived in Africa; they found their way to the New World. Rodger D. Abrahams, the author of *African American Folktales*, states: "...in the West Indies, not only are tales told in his name but so are jokes, riddles and all other forms of nonsense that come up in wakes and are called *Anansi Stories* (180). Abrahams shares a tale from Jamaica that clearly demonstrates the Anansi motif: "Anansi climbs The Wall":

Back there a long time ago, Nansi and Brer Death decided to plant a provision field together. But Nansi and Death had a lot of quarrels. Nansi was always around smiling, playing around, making lots of nonsense. He would sit under the bamboo tree and make like he was some overseer. Anything but working in that field of provisions. So, of course, his yams and beans didn't grow. But Brer Death, he carried his hoe all day, while he was hoeing he was smacking his lips thinking of all the yams and beans he was going to eat.

Nansi, he started thinking too about all the yams and beans growing in the field. So he told his wife, Tookooma, that he was going to sneak over to the provision field with his basket to get a taste. He told her to stay at the gate with a basket, so that when he came back with a basket of yams, she could hand him one for the beans. Tookooma said, "Duppies [ghost] are going to catch you, husband." Nansi sucked his teeth: "Chuck! Duppies don't bother me. Tonight I'm a white man and Duppies won't go after me."

Now, Brer Death thought that his provisions were getting to look awfully nice, so he started to stand watch over the field at night, with his cutlass in his hand. Bye and bye, he heard a sound and snuck over and sure enough he saw Nansi with a basket, right there in the middle of his field. He said, "Howdy, Brer Nansi. What's happening with you?" And Nansi said, "Howdy, Brer Death, I'm just feeling so-so." "What brings you into my provisions field at this time of night?" "I like to watch your yams grow, Brer Death." "Your mouth is running away with you, Nansi. Why are you carrying a basket, then?" "I'm going to hunt for crayfish, Brer Death."

So he could see that Nansi was there to steal his yams, so he flew at him with his cutlass, and Nansi started running toward home. He called way down the road: "Open the back door, shut the front door, Tookooma; Death is coming after me." And Tookooma didn't hear him too well and asked, "Well, did you fill the basket?" Nansi, who was closer now, said, "You fool, you; open the back door, shut the front door." She still couldn't hear him well. "What did you say, my husband, did you bring the basket?" "Oh, you fool, you! Open the back door, shut the front door. Death is coming after me!"

Nansi ran in the front door, and Death almost caught him and hit him with his cutlass. Nansi ran out the back door and into an old shed, and ran up the wall like a big black spider, and he hid himself in a cranny so that Brer Death couldn't find him. And that's why you always find Nansi and all his webs sitting up in the rafters of old sheds and places like that (210-211).

This tale clearly continues the African trickster motif of Anansi. It also incorporates elements of the Jamaican culture, by introducing the provisions field, which gives variation to the tale. The tale also evolved into a somewhat genesis tale, pointing out the reason spiders are found in rafters, while maintaining the trickster element of mischief. It is interesting to note the "Uncle Remus" element that was integrated into the tale with the usage of the "Brer" title applied to the characters. Thus giving the tale a new World flavor. It reflects a racial component that may identify the racial attitude at the time of the telling. This racial factor appears to be absent in the African Anansi tales. This tale reflects the intermingling of African culture and the Jamaican culture Whether in Africa or the New World Anansi maintains cultural placement and continued to evolve from generation to generation.

### **Native American Tales**

There are variations in the Native American culture of the spider motif from the African. In the African culture the spider is solely a Trickster. It is noteworthy to realize that the characterization of the trickster tends to be consistent with that of the African trickster (Anansi). The same attributes of cleverness and wit apply to the trickster spider tales in Native American culture as well. Within the Native American culture, however, the Spider persona is not only viewed from the perspective of the trickster, but takes on a multiplicity of roles. These roles may range from hero to teacher to deity. The identity and gender may change from tale to tale and tribe to tribe. The spider is given many names, however; he tends to be commonly recognized as Iktomi. He may take on a different persona than his African counter part yet maintains his identity as a spider.

Erdoes and Ortiz, in their book American Indian Trickster Tales, explain the role of the trickster, “Indian folklore also broadens the role of the Trickster character enormously. In European tales, the Trickster is a jokester and mischief-maker, and usually little else. By contrast, Iktomi, The Sioux Spider-man, and Rabbit boy are complicated cultural heroes. We certainly see them, in classic Trickster style, being clever and foolish at the same time, smart-asses who outsmart themselves. But they are much more than that. Iktomi is a supernatural character with broad powers. . . . Iktomi is powerful as well as powerless: he is a prophet, a lair who sometimes tricks by telling the truth. He is a spider but transforms himself into a man, bigger than life and smaller than a pea. He is a clown, often with a serious message. Like Coyote and Veeho, He has a strong amorous streak and at times seems completely driven by sex.” (Erdoes, xiv)

This character is placed in high esteem among the Native Americans. He is developed in a greater capacity than his counterpart in Africa. Iktomi also tends to reflect a side of society that has only recently been addressed in modern society. Sexual prowess of Iktomi is not only limited to heterosexual encounters but homosexual interludes as well. The issue of sexual behavior is constantly addressed in Indian folklore. According to Erdoes, Iktomi may choose the ‘Winkte way’ (meaning hermaphrodite or transvestite) in some tales. ”Such people are known as Beraches in Indian literature. He can change sometimes sexually just for the fun of a new experience (133). According to the Dictionary of Native American Mythology, “. . .Berache behavior occurs in varying degrees in most Native American cultures. . . .Some Yurok (California) men cross gender to become shaman, a lucrative position for women.” (Gill, 98-99)

An example of this Iktomi’s sexual ambivalence may be seen in the Omaha Indian tale, “The Winkte Way”. In this tale Iktinike convinces rabbit, both being notorious womanizers, to go the Winke way with him. They debate as to who is going to mount whom first. Finally, Iktinke agrees to allow rabbit to go first. When rabbit is finished he runs off and tells everybody that he mounted Iktinike. Of course Iktinike denies everything. Then he relieved himself and out came little rabbits. Upon his arrival home, his wife greets him in a loving mood. She asked him to make love with her. “Not tonight,” Iktinike replied, “ I have a headache.”(135)

This tale reflects the ambivalent nature of Iktomi. It also reflects the cultural attitude concerning sexual matters. In most tales the character’s primary initiative is sexual conquest. Iktomi though considered Waku, meaning he is holy or sacred, still appears as an extremely sexual being. It is amazing that this component of sexual behavior was openly discussed and integrated into folklore ages and ages ago by the Native Americans.

There is a distinct difference in the character of the Spider woman in Native American folklore. She has a strong place among the women of the culture. It was the Spider woman, who taught the women to weave according to oral tradition within the Native American nations. Weaving in this culture was strongly linked with the spider. According to the Dictionary of Native American Mythology, “ The Pawnee identify her as *Red-Spider-Woman* in their account of the origin of Squash medicine, in which she becomes the root. They also know her as *Witch Woman*. ...She is responsible for teaching weaving to human beings. (282) This link between weaving and the spider is also seen in Greek mythology in the person of Arachne. In the Who’s Who In Classical Mythology, Arachne is identified as “daughter of Idmon of Colophan, who was a famous dyer of purple. Arachne herself was an expert weaver, and even challenged Athena [goddess of crafts] to compete with her. Arachne’s work was so perfect that Athena tore it to pieces and in despair Arachne hanged herself. Athena thereupon changed the rope into a cobweb and Arachne herself into a spider. (61) It becomes evident that the connection of the spider with weaving is not indigenous just to the Native American culture, but has ties universally.

The dream catcher is also attributed to the Spider-Woman. This is a common legend among many Indian tribes. According to an article written by Asuraya, “One of the legends by the Anishnabe, (a people known as the Ijibwe or the Chippewa), says that Spider Woman would go to each baby’s cradleboard and spin a silken dream catcher above it. When the Anishnabe nation scattered Spider Woman had a hard time traveling to all the different cradleboards. To assist her, the women of the tribe took up the weaving of dream catchers using willows and sinew. (Asuraya, [Http://www.widdershins.org/vol2iss4/m9605.htm](http://www.widdershins.org/vol2iss4/m9605.htm)) Native Americans today still weave dream catchers and the tale has survived.

The Spider woman is different from the Spider Man in that she is constant in her position of Waku (Holy One). Spiderman is referred to as her husband in numerous tales of the culture and occur together in some tales. These two characters have significant roles in explaining (through folklore) how the Native Americans viewed life, culture and religion. The presence of the spider in Native American folklore is clearly defined. While not all folktales portray the spider personae as the trickster: there is the constant adherence to the trickster motif when the trickster is used in this wonderful culture of Native Americans.

### **Summary**

Whether in the African or Native American cultures the Spider trickster gains a place of continuous respect. Both cultures retain and pass on the Spider trickster motif through oral tradition and folklore. It has been shown that in both cultures the Spider has found role in the interweaving and the molding of these cultures.

The mores and socialization of these cultures display strands of the spider web integrated and woven within.

## **Objectives**

The objective of this curriculum unit is to instill in each student a desire to examine folktales and oral tradition in their own ethnic group by creating an interest and insight into the African And Native American culture through the folklore of the people. It will also broaden the students' literary horizons by creating a connection to multicultural literature.

The present tenth and eleventh grade curriculum touch on some folklore and include a brief mythology unit. This unit will enhance the present curriculum by bringing more detailed accounts of various folktales in conjunction with the cultures from which they derived. It will also bring clarity to the cultural appreciation of nature and animals that have been expressed through the stories handed down within each ethnic setting.

This unit will show the rich cultural values that are expressed in these two cultures. The African culture is explored in the present curriculum somewhat briefly and the Native American culture is approached collectively. However in both cultures there is a diversity of tribes and people who express the tales of the spider in different ways, setting and purposes. The students using critical thinking skills will be able to distinguish, the differences and similarity in these two cultural folklore genre.

This unit will create a springboard on which:

- Students will explore African and Native American folktales with a specific focus on the Spider personae in each culture during the course of this unit
- Students will research and read a variety of Folktales from the two given cultures.
- Students will apply prior knowledge to new subject matter thus building a stronger knowledge base in regard to specific information
- Students utilize research skills by examining tales and folklore that employ the spider as a vehicle in weaving a tale. They will explore the names and characters each culture assigned to the spider character. This information will be gathered through library sources, online link websites, folktales from Africa and Native America and text used in the current English curriculum.

- Students will achieve a sense of identity with others
- Students will perceive the unique similarities that exist between cultures. Once these similarities are identified the student may begin to examine and focus on the dynamics of similarities as well as the unique differences that exist between cultural divides.
- Students will apply creative skills to create a dream catcher

The objectives of this unit will match the expected outcomes of all students to achieve proficiency level. Standards used in this unit may be viewed in the appendix.

### **Strategies**

Week One:

Students will read a variety of African and African American folktales such as “Why They Named the Stories for Anansi”, “ Buh Nansi scares Buh Lion” and “A Tale of Anansi’s Trails in the Bush” The stories may vary. The object in this portion of the unit is to help the students identify the connection between African and African American folktales. This will require students to utilize the resources in the library. Students will also learn to appreciate the oral tradition by listening to a Storyteller who has been invited to class.

Week two: Students will read three Native American Spider tales and discuss the connection between the tales read the previous week and the current tales. This discussion will be the foundation for essay writing on the subject.

Week Three: students will conduct research using the library and the Internet to find additional material concerning dream catchers Students will share their research with the class. Students will conclude this unit by creating a dream catcher.

### **Classroom Activities**

- Engage in journal writing that will include reflections, comments, and evaluations of materials presented.
- Participate in discussion groups that will focus on the cultural differences and similarities of folktales read in class.

- Listen to a storyteller and generate questions to clarify understanding.
- Go to library to research and find folktales.
- Write a short folktale using prior knowledge.
- Design and create a dream catcher.

***Lesson One:***

**Objectives: TSWBAT:**

- Understand and appreciate the art of storytelling.
- Utilize listening skills to understand oral tradition
- Make connections between traditional storytelling and current storytelling

**Procedures:**

- This lesson will require the students to be seated in a circle.
  - Introduction: Explain to the class the meaning of storytelling and how it has played a part in many different cultures. In the African culture and the Native American culture.
  - Ask students to think about a time when they were seated in a circle and someone told stories. Allow the students to reflect, then have them write a short summary of the event in their journals (Allow approximately five minute)
  - Allow students to share journal entries with the class.
  - Students are to tell about he event in a dramatic storytelling form.

Materials needed:

Journals  
Pencils

Content Standards:

Communication 4,6,7

*Lesson two:*

**Objectives:** TSWABT:

- Listen to a Storyteller
- Use analytical thinking skills to ask relevant questions pertaining to the stories and the art of storytelling

**Procedures:**

- In this lesson a professional storyteller will tell stories to the class.
- The students remain in the story circle for the telling.
- Allow students to ask questions and make comments relevant to the activity.

Materials needed:

Paper to write questions down

Pencils

Journals to write reflects on the storytelling experience

Content standards:

Communications 5,7

*Lesson Three:*

**Objectives:** TSWBAT:

- Understand the definition of the trickster character
- Read a trickster Folktale
- Identify the character traits of the trickster

**Procedure:**

- Open this lesson with reference questions related to the previous activities.
- Explain the character of the trickster. Resources for trickster motif can be found in the Annotation for teachers.
- Have students read aloud the tale “ Why They Name The Stories For Anansi.” from the book, African American Folktales by Roger D. Abrahams.
- Give this story as a handout.
- Discuss the traits that define this tale as a trickster tale.
- Make a journal entry reflecting on the material presented.

Materials needed:

Handout of the tales “Why They Named the Stories For Anansi”  
Journals

Contents Standards:

Communications 5, 2

*Lesson four:*

**Objectives:** TSWBAT:

- Research subject matter using library sources
- Take notes on research material
- Analyze material to determine if it is subject appropriate

**Procedure:**

This section of the unit will take approximately a week. More time may be allotted if needed. It will require the assistance of the school Librarian. A brief explanation of the use of the library may be needed. This section will entail using book resources only.

- Students will research trickster tales with a specific emphasis on Anansi the African trickster.
- Students will select tales of their liking and write note cards with summaries and bibliographical information

Materials needed:

Index cards  
Pencils  
Paper (optional)

Content Standards:

Communications 1, 5

## **Appendix-Content Standards**

### **APPENDIX A**

### **STANDARDS**

#### **Communications (CO)**

1. All students use effective research and information management skills, including locating primary and secondary sources of information with traditional and emerging library technologies.
2. All students read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of texts.
3. All students respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational texts and use the information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems.
4. All students write for a variety of purposes, including narrating, informing, and persuading in all subject areas.
5. All students analyze and make critical judgments about all forms of communications, separating fact from opinion, recognizing propaganda, stereotypes and statements of bias, recognizing inconsistencies and judging the validity of evidence.
6. All students exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately, and promoting effective group communications.
7. All students listen to and understand complex oral messages and identify the purpose, structure and use.
8. All students compose and make oral presentations for each academic area of studies that are designed to persuade, inform or describe.
9. All students communicate appropriately in business, work and other applied situations

### **APPENDIX B**

#### **Dream Catcher Project**

This assignment will be an excellent conclusion to the lesson. The following website called TeachersFirst.com is an excellent resource for the teacher or students to use in creating the Dream Catcher.

<http://www.teachersfirst.com/summer/dreamcatcher.htm>

APPENDIX B  
The Native American Trickster Teacher Resource

The following site has a wealth of information and links to assist in preparing the teacher for instruction. Native American Trickster Tales:

<http://members.cox.net/academia/coyote.html>

**Annotated Bibliography/Resources/Works Cited**

Abrahams, Rodger D. African American Folktales: Stories from Black Traditions in the New World. New York: Pantheon Books, 1985.  
This book is a collection of folktales collected within the African American populace. It is an excellent resource for teachers and students.

Asuraya. Article, "Spider Woman's Legs." 2004  
<http://www.widdershins.org/vol2iss4/m9605.htm>, 5/31/04  
This article is a wonder resource on the Dream Catcher.

Bascom, William. African Folktales in the New World. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1992.  
This is collection of folktales found in the new World. It is a good source for research.

Erdoes, Richard and Alfonso Ortiz. American Indian Trickster Tales. Viking, New York, New York (1998) Introduction xiv, 133  
This is a collection of Native American Trickster tales.  
This collection examines Iktomi the Native American trickster.

Evans, Matt. "Anansi's Tale" in IUSB Undergraduate Research Journal.  
<http://www.iusb.edu/-journal/1998/2Tale.html>, 5/2/04  
This tale is an excellent introductory piece when teaching folktales. It is an adapted tale from the Ashanti Tribe in Africa.

Gill, Sam D. and Irene F. Sullivan. Dictionary of Native American Mythology. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994

Jones, V.S. Vernon. Aesop's Fables. New York: Avenel Books, 1975. Introduction, ix  
This is a translation of the 1912 fables. A great resource for all grade levels

Olliver, John J, The Wisdom of African Mythology Top of the Mountain Publishing, Largo, Florida, (1994)  
This is a collection of African folktales adapted and presented in Poetic form by the author.

Room, Adrian. Who's Who In Classical Mythology. New York Grammy Books, 2003

#### Internet Resources

The following sites are useful for teacher and student research.

<http://geocities.com/Heartland/valley/8116/story.html>

This site provides information on the Spider Woman and materials that may be used in other areas of folk tale study.

<Http://www.members.tripod.com/~bbowles/spiderw.html>

This site provides additional information for spider related searches.

<http://web.ytkedu/~gwhitney/tales/inktomi/Coyote.html>

This is the site for Old Indian Legends

<http://www.cityoftakomapark.org/library/children/subject/trickse.html>

This is a Children's trickster tales library site. This site will help generate reading material for children of the subject of the trickster. This site includes reading references for Anansi and Iktomi.

[http://www.childrenslit.comlit.com/th\\_af\\_tales.html](http://www.childrenslit.comlit.com/th_af_tales.html)

This is the "African and African-American Folk Tales" site. It provides a wide range of books available for reading on the Anansi topic.