

A STORY, A STORY

A Story, A Story

by Gail E. Haley (Atheneum)

Themes: Multicultural

Grade Level: PreK-1

Running Time: 2 minutes, animated

Summary

This is the story of how African stories, called "Spider Stories" came to be. Spider Stories are stories about how small, defenseless men and animals come to be heroes.

As the story goes, a man called Ananse, the Spider Man, wanted to buy all the stories, which were in the hands of the Sky God. The Sky God tells Ananse that he must capture a leopard, a group of stinging hornets, and a fairy and send them up to him if he is to be granted his wish. Ananse, not big and strong, but clever, delivers the leopard, hornets, and fairy and is given the stories to scatter about the land.

Objectives

- Children will explore African Culture
- Children will enjoy a tale about how African folktales came to be.
- Children will investigate the ways determination and critical thinking help people achieve their goals

Before Viewing Activities

Share the book *A Story A Story* with children.

Then ask:

What kind of person was Ananse? How did he use his mind to help him get what he wanted?

Explore African culture with children. Provide photographs and illustrations of Africa and its people for children to investigate. If possible, plan a trip to a library or museum with an African culture exhibit. Invite African Americans to visit your classroom and share their knowledge of their homeland and customs with students. Locate Africa on a map.

Have children think of their favorite stories. Give each child in the group an opportunity to tell a story to their classmates. As children tell their stories, encourage others in the group to ask questions of the storyteller. Later, ask those telling the stories: How did you hear of this story? What about the story makes it special to you? What do you think others enjoy most about the story?

After Viewing Activities

Talk with children about the repeated words and phrases in the story. Ask: Why do you think these words and phrases were repeated? What other words and phrases seemed unusual to you? Why do you think the fairy called the doll "gum baby"? Where do you think the doll's "crying place" was? If you could think of another name for the doll's foot, what might it be? (After hearing children's suggestions, you might offer "walking place" as a possible alternative.) Provide children with a list of words such as eyes, arms, fingers, teeth. See if children can think of other words or phrases that might have been substituted for these words if they were included in the story.

Have children imagine that the Sky God left one of the stories from his golden box on their desks. Help children write their stories. Encourage children to accompany their stories with illustrations and share them with their classmates. Display the stories on a classroom wall or bulletin board.

Have an "African Culture Day." Prepare traditional African foods. Teach children some simple African dances. Play some traditional African music on your tape recorder. Assign each child in the class an African name. Print children's new names on name tags. Encourage students to refer to their classmates by their African names throughout the day.

Other book based films and videos about African culture are available from Weston Woods: These include:

HOT HIPPO by Mwenye Hadithi and illustrated by Adrienne Kennaway
MUFARO'S BEAUTIFUL DAUGHTERS by John Steptoe
THE VILLAGE OF ROUND AND SQUARE HOUSES by Ann Grifalconi
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