

Storytelling

Storytelling is an important part of many cultures around the world. You have probably read a lot of stories. Some stories are true and others are fiction. What kind of stories do you like to read?

In this section, you are going to learn a lot about folktales (stories) that have moved from one place of the world to another.

Here is a list of activities you will work on:

- KWL Chart
- Reading
- Listening

Look at the KWL Chart below. What do you already know about African folktales? Write it down in the "K" column. What do you want to know about African folktales? Write it down in the "W" column.

KWL chart

K	W	L
What I know about African folktales	What I want to know about African folktales	What I learned about African folktales

Reading Activity

Have you heard the story about Cinderella? What about the stories Jack and the Beanstalk or Hansel and Gretel? You probably know these stories pretty well.

How about Anansi the spider? Kalulu the hare? Gudo the baboon? If this is the first time you have heard about these stories, then you are in for a great adventure! Welcome to the world of African folktales! For centuries, Africans and their descendants have been telling stories about faraway lands and places. The stories always have animals that can talk.

These stories are fascinating because they have travelled from Africa to many parts of the world where Africans and descendants of Africans now live, including Canada, the United States, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Brazil, England, Portugal and beyond. The stories may have changed slightly, but the characters and the messages and the way the stories are told are still the same.

What is special about these folktales?

1. the stories are told orally and the people listening have to sing songs
2. the stories always include animals and nature
3. the stories teach a lesson about life
4. the stories do not always have a "happily ever after" ending

You are now going to read about a famous character in African folklore. You are going to learn about Anansi the spider. Yes, Anansi is a spider that talks and walks and eats and behaves just like people do!

Fun fact: Some people say the idea of Spiderman came from stories about Anansi the spider!

Anansi the Spider

Who is Anansi?

Anansi often takes the shape of a spider and is considered to be the spirit of all knowledge of stories. He is also one of the most important characters of West African and Caribbean folklore.

The name **Anansi** comes from a word that means "spider." **Anansi** is also known as **Ananse**, **Kwaku Ananse**, and **Anancy**, and in the southern United States he has evolved into **Aunt Nancy**. He is a spider but often acts and appears as a man in stories.

The **Anansi** tales originated from the Ashanti people of Ghana. Ghana is a country in West Africa.

Other Names For **Anansi** around the world are :

Bru Nansi (Virgin Islands)

Anansi (Trinidad and Tobago)

Anansi Drew (The Bahamas)

Cha Nanzi (Aruba)

What does Anansi look like?

Anansi is shown in many different ways. Sometimes he looks like an ordinary spider. Other times he is a spider wearing human clothes or a human face. Sometimes he looks much like a human with spider features, such as eight legs.



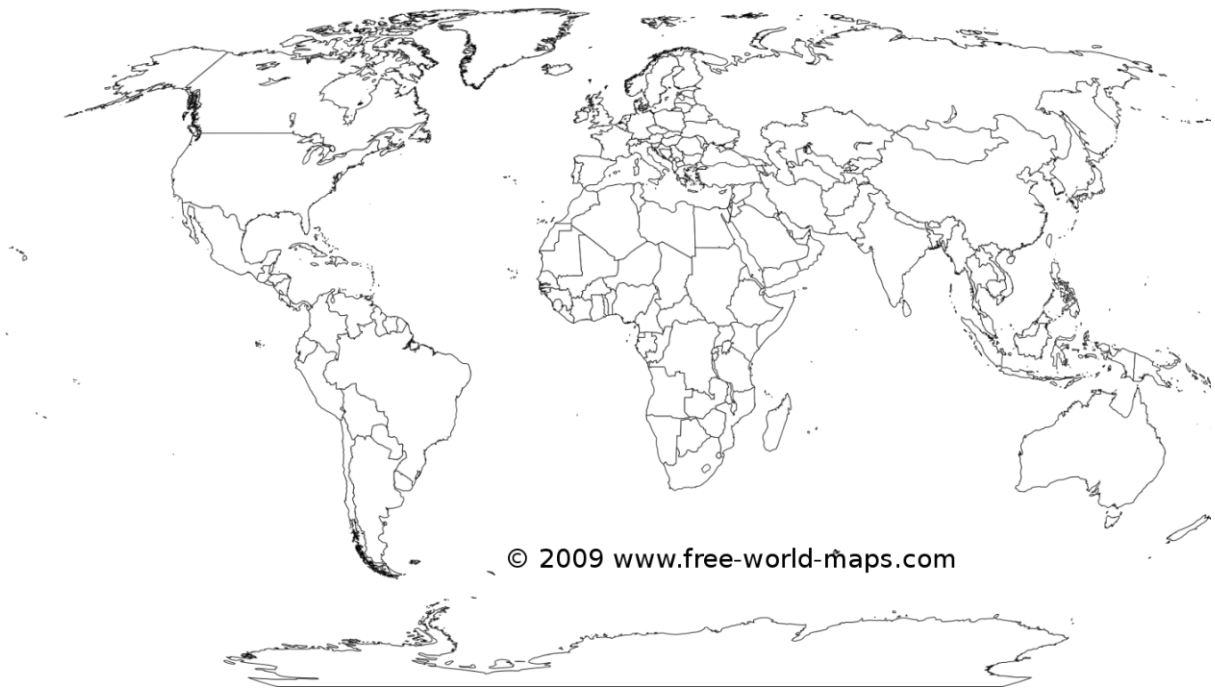
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<https://sunnysidestories.files.wordpress.com/2008/09/anansi-spider.jpg>

Map Anansi:

Anansi the Spider is originally from West Africa but is found in folktales in the USA and in the Caribbean as well.

Here is a map of the world. Circle West Africa, the USA and the Caribbean. These are three regions where people tell the story of Anansi.



Listening Activity: Watch an Anansi film

Do you know about the National Film Board of Canada? They make a lot of really cool short films and documentaries about things that matter to different Canadians and the different cultures they all come from. They even made a short film about Anansi as part of their Talespinners Collection, a collection of folktales from all over the world.

Watch **The Magic of Anansi** at the following link:

https://www.nfb.ca/film/magic_of_anansi

Complete the KWL Chart

Complete the L portion of the KWL chart on Page 1. What did you learn about African folktales?