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Activity Guide

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Anansi and the Magic Stick

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ABOUT THE STORY

Anansi the spider wants his house and yard to look nice, but he does not want to work at it. He spies on Hyena, who has a lovely house and yard but never seems to work, and learns that Hyena has a magic stick that does his work for him. Anansi takes the stick and has it paint his house and plant and water his garden. But Anansi falls asleep, and the stick keeps watering...and keeps watering...and keeps watering, until the whole area is flooded. How will Anansi make it stop?

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Kimmel is a professor of education at Portland State University and the author of a number of picture books for children. Among them are other Anansi stories, *Anansi and the Talking Melon*, *Anansi and the Moss-Covered Rock*, and *Anansi Goes Fishing*, also available as Live Oak Readalongs. Dr. Kimmel is also a storyteller and for years has been telling Anansi stories to enthusiastic audiences.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Janet Stevens has illustrated and adapted *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse*, *The Tortoise and the Hare*, and several Hans Christian Andersen tales. She has also illustrated the other Anansi tales and other popular picture books. She lives in Boulder, Colorado, with her husband and two children.

INTRODUCING THE STORY

Ask children if they have ever read any Anansi stories before, or if they know any other trickster stories. Then tell them that the book they are about to read is the story of a tricky spider named Anansi, who gets in and out of trouble as quickly and easily as most people breathe.

READING ACTIVITIES

Comprehension/Thinking Skills

- “Why were Anansi’s neighbors making fun of him?”
- “What was Hyena’s secret?”
- “What did Anansi do with Hyena’s magic stick?”
- “What did Anansi have the magic stick do at his house?”
- “What trouble did the magic stick cause?”
- “Did Anansi learn a lesson from his experience with the magic stick? Explain.”

Vocabulary

Write these words on the chalkboard. Have volunteers draw lines matching the words to make compound words from the story. Then ask children to use each word in a sentence.

house pick
lake head
water boat
fore water
tooth fall
under shore

CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Science: *Animals of Africa*

Warthog, Lion, Zebra, and Hyena all appear in this story. Ask children to choose one of these African animals to research. They can find out where the animal lives, what it eats, and how it behaves. Have children give a report on their animal to the class.

Language Arts: *Comparing Folk Tales*

At the end of the book, the author points out that the story is similar to *The Magic Hoe* and *The Sorcerer’s Apprentice*. Have children read one or the other of these stories. Provide them with a two-column chart labeled Differences and Similarities. Ask them to write down the ways the stories are different and the ways they are similar.

INTERNET ACTIVITY

Before you send children to do research using any of the keywords listed below, you may wish to try them yourself to make sure the sites are suitable.

Another Anansi Tale

Ask children to use the keywords “Anansi stories” to find another tale featuring Anansi on the Internet. Children can print out the tale or take notes on it and retell it for the class