

COME AN' SEE ANANSI

Black History Month



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About Bigfoot

Introduction

We hope you are looking forward to the forthcoming Black History Month '**Come an' See Anansi'** workshop programme.

Within this resource pack you will find lots of information regarding the art of storytelling and the origins of Anansi stories, as well as several stories for you to tell and recreate with your class.

The pack also contains a variety of pre and post workshop activities; whilst it would be fantastic for the students to know a little about Anansi prior to the workshops, it is not fundamental.

We have also included lesson plans for the workshop which should give you an insight into the work our facilitator will be doing on the day. Please note, however, that the content of each workshop may vary slightly in practice due to differing ages of the group, available space and workshop length.

The workshop has been designed to include all types of learning as creatively as possible and in a safe learning environment. We try to encourage teacher involvement where appropriate so that you can become familiar with the techniques for future use in the classroom. All tasks/exercises can be adapted to suit the needs of your group. If you would like any suggestions as to how to do this then please approach us on the day. Also, if you feel there is any information about your class that you wish to impart to the drama facilitators that may be useful, please do so.

Prior to the day of the workshops, it would be extremely helpful if the following items could be made available:

1. Paper and pencils
2. CD player

Please note that these items are not essential but would, however, enrich certain elements of the work planned.

We always welcome you sharing the work you and your student's have created in preparation and celebration of our visit. Therefore, if you would like to send us copies of your students work, we would be delighted to receive their posters, pictures, and/or stories, and will endeavour to post a selection of work on our website.

If you would like us to clarify any of the activities and/or tasks included in the pack, or indeed, if you would like any further ideas for pre or post workshop activities, please do not hesitate to call us.

We look forward to working in your school!

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Teacher Information

Dear Teachers,

As the writer and director of this years (and past) Bigfoot Black History Month performances, I wanted to touch base with you.

My journey in becoming a storyteller has been via drama school, performing as a professional actress in theatres and working in education. Of course we are all storytellers and perhaps some of the greatest are you. Teachers story-tell naturally in the classroom, sometimes within a story or as part of a lesson or by sharing your own adventures. As a child I came across a few Anansi stories, not in school but from hearsay. I remember finding it funny that a spider was a popular hero and moreover a hero for doing ‘naughty’ things but of course that is exactly Anansi’s appeal. It was the spontaneous conversations after the stories that helped me to understand why Anansi was so important. What better way to explore the rights and wrongs of human nature than through stories. The little details about Anansi’s culture and my own similarities made me especially proud.

You’ll know that stories can be enchanting, educational and entertaining. The story experience you share with an audience is both humbling and powerful. Children instinctively understand stories in a way that most adults have forgotten. Enclosed is a workshop plan that will offer an example of how to do this. I have included the workshop in its script form for two reasons: to show you how I approach planning a session that is learnt as such and also to remind you how you might do this with your own class. If you don’t already I hope you’ll want to make storytelling and storyteller techniques commonplace in the classroom - to try, adapt, practice and embrace what you personally have to bring to storytelling. Below are a few quotes I have found useful and inspiring.

I hope that this project inspires you and your class to make up your own Anansi stories in and outside the classroom.

Sam Adams
Storyteller & Facilitator

Sam's inspirational Quotes:

Easy cynicism is no more truthful than easy optimism, though it often seems so to the young. In depicting characters who struggle to do good or be brave, and succeed, or who are tempted to be weak or greedy, but refrain, we the storytellers are providing our readers with friends whose own good behaviour, and whose high valuation of the courtesy or steadfastness or generosity of others, provides an image of how to behave well.

Philip Pullman

The definition of storytelling is the entire context of a moment when one person, before a live audience, performs oral narration of stories in verse and/or prose; the narration may be spoken, chanted or sung, with or without musical, pictorial and /or other accompaniment. It may be learned from oral, printed or mechanical sources and one of its purposes must be for entertainment or delight and it must have an element of spontaneity in the performance.

Anne Pellowski, The world of Storytelling

For a safe and successful storytelling performance the storyteller has to be alert, in the moment and ready for anything. She/he needs to be a wordsmith, a master magician, a swift editor, a sharp-eyed director and a great performer.

Jan Blake, Storyteller

Stories present simple, global truths that can be grasped by all ages and echoed in all cultures. Stories can invite the audience to contemplate profound or complex problems, issues and situations. Stories contain little nuggets of truth - coated with details and diversions, which tempt, fascinate and draw in the listener.

Inno Sorsy, Storyteller

‘A Storyteller’

One who is accustomed to tell stories or anecdotes in conversation, 1709

Euphemistically; a liar, 1748

One whose business is to recite legendary or romantic stories, 1777

Applied to a writer of stories, 1814

The teller of a particular story, 1851

Oxford English Dictionary

The Importance of Stories

'If storytelling is to become an integral part of the curriculum on a regular basis, it will be mainly through the willingness of teachers to take on the role of teller themselves and for the school to have serious commitment to developing the storytelling ability of their pupils.' (Society for Storytelling, Storytelling in Education, 2004)

In 2005 research was conducted with several primary schools in which the teachers were asked whether they could justify the use of stories in the classroom under the constraints of the current curriculum; many said they could not. One teacher commented on how 'the current National Curriculum is far too narrow- it needs to acknowledge free use of story.' It is surprising that this problem has not been addressed, considering how, within the last twenty five years, it has been proven that when using story as a teaching tool, both cognitive and creative elements of the brain are developed.

As is evident from a statement outlining the values, aims and purposes of the National Curriculum, 'The school curriculum should aim to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.' (DfES, The National Curriculum; Handbook for primary teachers in England, 1999) Therefore, any method of teaching that is uniquely structured to enable natural and unrestricted forms of expression, should be embraced by all in the education sector, as it is by this teacher following a storytelling session: "The best bit was when you experience children telling stories with confidence and pleasure and knowing you've had a part in that process." It is this element of intrinsic fulfilment that teachers often find impossible to teach without using creative expression and exploration as a basis.

When children are given the opportunity to participate in storytelling activities, they are no longer passive listeners, but active participants, drawing on their own experiences in the space to colour their interpretation of the tale itself. Children are, thus, more likely to relate to the characters, experiences and emotions felt when partaking in such activities. The concept of 'story truth' was explored by Margaret Meek (1988), who saw that as children begin to understand a made up story can still contain a lot of truth, they also start 'to engage with the complications and richness of the traditional tale in a way which will extend their understanding of language and the many meanings it can convey', not only in the conventions of the realistic tale but also in the more metaphorical instances in folktales and legends.

Each child needs to be given the freedom to interpret a story in his or her own way and, in doing so, make evident to everyone else in the room their experiences. This can be done primarily by sensory work, and then physical interpretations and representations of emotions evoked by the story. Although not a tangible development in the process of learning, the ability to use the power of imagination as a method through which to communicate is just as worthwhile. A forum in which to openly express the creations of a child's imagination is often absent in statutory environments.

'One of the problems with stories, whether received or transmitted, is that they're so inherently enjoyable it's hard to believe they're doing us good. Isn't there something...well, dodgy about them?' (Powling, C. 1997, p.24) This attitude is shared by many who assume that stories should be confined to the last half hour of the school day when children can wind down and relax their minds. Contrary to this, children's minds should be activated by the mere mention of story, led to believe that here lay an opportunity for discovery and preparation of reality combined with invisible learning;

*...if you tell stories and then begin to get the children to tell stories
and write them...by trapping this fundamental characteristic, a way
of thinking, a way of feeling, a way of delivering values, you release
a quality of language that nothing else will release.*

(Howe, A. and Johnson, J. 1992, p.44)

With reference to this, it is easy to understand the role story has in supporting the national literacy programme. We are conditioned to believe that stories are a natural part of our existence and so find no difficulty in accessing this element of how we learn. As teachers, it is important that the ease at which stories can be accessed does not distract from its importance as an individual and supporting method of learning. A shy, dyslexic student wrote of storytelling that 'there's no writing to get in the way of your thinking' (James, D. F&F 2004, p.21), when using oral methods to develop language and communication skills. The most important aspect of story is that it can be written, spoken, read or performed and, 'as educators know, listening is the basis for all language skills: talking is learned by listening, reading is based on verbal language, writing is based on reading.' (Turner South, 2000, Reading and Writing; storytelling/brain.html) It is suggested then that story forms the basis for how we learn, and that the process of listening to and then relating our own stories is a natural concept which is then developed throughout time.

Come an' See Anansi Plan

Resources: A large clear space, masking tape, 1 chair, luggage labels with strings & pens, a small wooden box, some colourful spidery type wools, a square metre of African fabric, sheets of pre-printed sticky back labels to be placed on volunteers with character names on. A map marked with pins and string (web like design) showing where Anansi stories are around the world that is displayed in the space.

Note: Bold type indicates facilitation moments and/or pupil instructions. Brackets indicate stage directions. Everything else is storyteller script. Elements may be changed and/or adapted to suit a particular groups needs in terms of age and number.

African, Caribbean or Jazz music is playing. Pupils are invited into the space. Pupils are encouraged to soak up the atmosphere of the music. Movement from assembly could be repeated. Music ends. Storyteller has labels, fabric, wooden box and wool to hand.

Inside/Out Anansi: Hello again folks! Did you enjoy the assembly this morning? Let's find how much you remember about Anansi. I'm going to lay these sheets of paper out in the middle. Let's make a circle around them. I need 2 volunteers. One to lay down on the paper and the other to draw that person's outline. (Pupils do so) Let's write Anansi at the top of the page. What else can we draw to show Anansi is half human and half spider. (Pupils respond and do so) Good. Can I have a couple of scribes. (2 new volunteers) Inside the outline we are going to write everything we know about Anansi's personality and the facts we have learnt about him. On the outside we are going to write everything we know about the tricks he played on others and what the lessons might be.

Who can tell me what a storyteller is? (Pupils respond) That's right, it's that simple, it's a person who enjoys telling stories. Today is your opportunity to use your storytelling skills. Listening, speaking, imagining and acting skills are all skills that can help us tell a story. I'll need lots of volunteers so we can re visit Anansi stories. Not now but in a short while. Some of those people will be given labels to help us remember their characters but don't worry if you don't need one I'll still need your help, especially your memory and listening skills.

(Storytelling begins)

Anansi would swing around the world on his silky web strings. And those who glimpsed him could be heard to say "Look! Did you see that child swing by" or "What is that old man doing up there in the sky." But by far the most common thing to overhear was "Have you ever seen a spider like that?" You see, no one was ever sure what Anansi was and how he came to be. At times he would have the energy of a child but then he could surprise you with his ancient wisdom. Whatever Anansi was, he was certainly extraordinary.

Can I have my first volunteer please. Who would like to play Anansi? Let's put on your label and make you an African sash. (place on one shoulder) Stand at one end. Now strike a pose Anansi as if you are flying through the air. Freeze. Back to our story.

How Anansi became the keeper of stories & his small wooden box:

One day Anansi was so bored he slung a long, silky spider string up into the clouds and decided to see what the Gods were up to. There was Thunder, Sun, Rain and others.

Have a think about how what noises or sounds these Gods might make. I'd Like you all to make those sounds when we next meet them. It could be a sound we make with our voices or hands. Remember they each represent an aspect of Nature. How does thunder sound? What about rain? And sun, how does the sun make us feel? (Pupils respond) Keep those sound effects in your heads and be ready to make it when I give you the cue. For example if say "the beautiful sun was setting" and do this (hand to ear) what sound will you make. (Pupils respond)

The most powerful of the Gods was Nyame.
He was sometimes called the Creator.
It was his kingdom that Anansi decided to visit.

Who would like to play Nyame? (Place a chair at the opposite end to Anansi and put a label on pupil. Nyame sits on his throne)

Beside Nyame, who was sat on his throne, was a small wooden box.

I hope you can all see it. Remember stories are about using your imagination.

It wasn't covered in diamonds or sizzling with magic spells.

It was simply an old wooden box.

But when Anansi saw it, he had only one thought in his mind...

"I want that box." said Anansi. (**Indicate to Anansi to repeat**)

"I want, don't get!" said the wise voice in his head but by then it was too late.

Anansi represented everything about humans that was good and bad.

Plus being half spider, he had too much of one particular skill

The ability to weave clever tricks around others, he was what you call a trickster.

Nyame was very attached to the old wooden box at his side.

And Anansi knew Nyame wouldn't give it up for any old thing, it would have to be something really special.

But before Anansi enquired about the box Nyame suddenly said "You can have this box if you can capture four legendary creatures." (**Indicate to Nyame to repeat**)

The four creatures were Onini the python, Osebo the leopard, Mmoboro the hornet and finally Mmoatia.

"M m moatia!" said Anansi. (**Indicate for Anansi to repeat**)

How do you think Anansi felt? (Pupils respond)

Anansi was a little frightened but he agreed to the challenge and straight away set to work on how he would capture the four deadly creatures. In the distance all the Gods could be heard laughing. **What did that sound like? (Cue laughter sound effect with ear and hand)**

The next day in the forest Anansi pretended to be two people arguing but really he was talking to himself.

"He is!" "No he isn't!" (**Indicate for Anansi to repeat line whilst walk up and down the isle**)

He then threw down a long stick and stamped his feet on the ground (**Indicate for pupil Anansi to mime this action**)
Onini the python slid out of the bush just as Anansi had planned.

Can I have a volunteer to play Onini please. Here is your label. (Indicate for pupil Onini to move into the isle and take up a snake position. Sitting cross legged or lying on the ground and using their hand to show Onini's head or make their own creation.)

"SSSome of usss like to work in sssilence when sssearching for our sssupper" he said. (**Indicate for Onini to repeat**)

"But Onini it is your reputation I am trying to save. The other animals of the forest refuse to believe you are longer than this long stick" replied Anansi. (**Indicate for pupil Anansi to repeat**)

And Onini replied "Let me sslide along sside and sssee, no forest creature will out-do me" (**Indicate for pupil Onini to repeat and mime measuring along side the stick.**)

Well, you know how spiders can move fast and faster?

While Onini was distracted measuring himself on the long, long stick

Anansi mixed up his silky web strings with some nearby rubber tree gum and spun and strapped the snake to that stick.

(**Indicate for pupil Anansi to move swiftly around pupil Onini as if spinning a web and cue when he is finished**)
Onini the python had been out-done.

The Gods didn't entirely approve of Anansi's trickery and Thunder really made his views clear.

(**Cue 'Thunder' sound effect from pupils with hand to ear**)

Even so Anansi took great pleasure in presenting Onini to Nyame.

And do you know since that time snakes tend to coil and wiggle and hardly ever make straight lines.

(Onini and Anansi return to their spaces)

A few days later as the beautiful sun was setting (**Cue 'Sun' sound effect from pupils with hand to ear**)

Anansi was at the lake.

He saw Osebo the leopard licking his lips. **Who would like to play Osebo? Sit here in the middle and show us Osebo licking his lips. Anansi watches from one end)**

Every day for a whole week Osebo caught his kill at the same spot.

So early one morning when Osebo had left (**Indicate for Osebo to return to his seat momentarily**)

Anansi dug a deep, deep hole. (**Indicate for Anansi to mime doing so in the middle along with the following actions**)

He lined it with dead animal skins he'd sewn together to make a strong sack.
He covered the pull string with grass and sand.
To disguise the deep hole he crawled back and forth, forth and back and covered it with his web.
And when the hole could no longer be seen from the surface Anansi sat in wait. (**Anansi returns to his end**)
At sunset Osebo came for his next kill. (**Osebo returns to his spot and enacts the following action**)
He took one step and "whap!"
He landed flat on his back.
In the sack-lined hole, his weight pulled it together and he was trapped.
Osebo the leopard had been out-done.
Anansi took great pleasure in presenting him to Nyame.
When the leopard was freed he was suffering with stress and covered in spots as are all leopards even now.

(Osebo and Anansi return to their spaces)

Late one night Anansi was caught out in the rain. (**Cue 'Rain' sound effect from pupils with hand to ear**)
He took shelter under a banana tree. (**Anansi does so at one end and enacts the following action**)
He quickly made an umbrella out of the huge banana leaves.
Above where he stood in the distance of a neighbouring tree was a huge hornets' nest rotting up high and soaking wet.
It was where Mmboro, the Queen Hornet lived. **Who'd like to play the Queen Hornet?**
Anansi spied on the Queen and her swarm. **Lets have a volunteer Queen at this end, here's your label, pretending to sleep and a few buzzing hornets around her. (Choose 2/3 pupils) Let's hear your bzzz's please.**
The banana umbrella kept Anansi dry and sheltered.
As he watched and plotted he then said to the hornets "Can I give you all some shelter, your nest has all but fallen?"
(Indicate for Anansi to repeat line)
"Bzzz! We're fine but could you shelter Mmboro!" the hornets said. (**Indicate for "/3 Hornets to repeat**)
Bzzz was bee language for thank you.
As the hornets tried to rebuild things Mmboro slept under the banana leaves. (**Anansi mimes sheltering Mmboro and enacts the following action**)
Anansi quietly weaved and spun the leaves into a basket which then became a cage.
Mmboro had been outdone.
Anansi took great pleasure in presenting her to Nyame.
Now hornets everywhere are twice the size of bees and their stings are much more fierce and unlike bees they hardly ever trust humans. (**Mmboro and Anansi return to their spaces**)

Several months passed before Anansi could pluck up the courage to face Mmotia.
Mmotia was what you might call a spirit or fairy. **Can I have a volunteer to play Mmotia please. Stay where you are for now.**

The only thing known about Mmotia was that she had a sweet tooth and she liked to play with dolls.
She'd be difficult to find because she was invisible.
Anansi occupied himself carving small bits of wood but he couldn't keep his mind off the small wooden box beside Nyame.
He was so depressed he decided to treat himself by making some homemade coconut ice.
Delicious dried, shredded coconut flesh, clumped together with a cold sugary syrup.
But just when Anansi was about to settle down and eat it at his favourite spot in the yard...
The coconut ice had gone.

He'd only turned his back for a second and he could see no-one else was around.
It must be Mmotia he thought.

"M m motia!" (**Indicate for Anansi to repeat**)
Anansi looked down and saw the clump of coconut ice just above the ground as though floating towards his veranda.

(Indicate for Mmotia to enact the following down the aisle)
He realised Mmotia was heading towards one of his carvings, which to a fairy could look like a doll.
So Anansi quickly swung overhead on his silky web strings and with some glue and smothered it all over the small wooden carving.

A moment later the coconut ice and so was the carving moving away from his porch.
As hard as Mmotia tried she couldn't separate herself from the carving.

And she was too heavy to fly or walk.
Mmotia had been outdone.

Anansi took great pleasure in presenting her to Nyame.
Ever since then fairies everywhere have been impossible to catch.
They still have a sweet tooth but they never play with dolls.

(Mmotia and Anansi return to their seat)

So after this adventure what did Nyame give to Anansi? Nyame put the old wooden box in a sack and gave it to Anansi. (**Indicate for Nyame to mime doing so**)

And remind me what sort of a creature is Anansi? (Pupils respond) That's right Anansi was half human and half spider. If you were an animal what sort of creature would you be? Think about what characteristics you already have. Are you always laughing? Or do you have a deep voice? Perhaps you can run really fast? Turn to your neighbour and quickly discuss what half animal half human creature you could be and what skill you might have.

(Pupils do so)

(Optional 2nd story) How Anansi became half human-half spider:

Now Anansi wasn't what you would call a good worker.

He could be quite lazy and would only work when he had too.

So when he had to join his bros in the field he wasn't too pleased and was greedy.

Bro is short for brothers or friends, some say Anansi invented the phrase.

His bros were shelling peas for a rich old farmer.

Let's have a new Anansi. Swap places our first Anansi and put the sash. Ok, be ready to jump into the story.

There was Monkey. **What do monkeys sound like?** (Cue Pupils to respond with sound effect)

There was Tortoise **Who can look like you have a heavy shell on your back?**

And there was also Hen. **Let's all make a clucking sound.**

Most of his friends shelled peas even slower than Anansi, all except Spider.

Spider could really work. **Who thinks they can play a small spider, ok you stand.**

But his other friends were pretty useless.

Monkey was always laughing and telling jokes. **Let's hear how monkey laughed.** Hoo hoo ha ha!

Tortoise was so slow he took a whole week to shell just one. (**Indicate to Tortoise to enact this action**)

Hen was always so hungry she pecked more than she shelled.

But Spider, she was different, she had so many feet.

Her technique was greatly admired and no one could work faster. (**Indicate to Spider to enact this action**)

For every pound of peas they shelled the rich old farmer would pay them with just a small handful.

If Anansi shelled enough today, he could make a nice pea soup for his supper but as usual Anansi was feeling lazy.

At the end of the day Anansi said to Monkey, Tortoise, Hen and Spider

"I bet I can hold more peas in one hand than you can with your whole body. Winner takes all!"

Monkey knew he had no chance and he laughed all the way home. (**Cue Pupils to respond with sound effect**)

Hoo hoo ha ha!

Tortoise hadn't shelled enough peas to be paid so he just kept on walking which wasn't very fast. Let's see that.

And Hen had already eaten her small handful so she had nothing to gamble but clucked as she left the farm. (**Cue Pupils to respond with sound effect**)

Only Spider had worked hard and fast all day and Anansi knew it.

Now Spider had 6 feet, so she saw no reason why she shouldn't beat Anansi.

Anansi laid out all of his peas and all of Spider's on a piece of cloth. (**Indicate to Anansi to use his cloth and mime doing so**)

He told Spider to take her turn first.

Spider used all of her feet to pick up as many as she could.

She even put some on her back and head. She had excellent balance. **Show us how Spider looked.**

"Are you sure you have as much as you can carry?" said Anansi. (**Indicating to Anansi to repeat**)

"Just worry about yourself Anansi!" Spider replied. (**Indicating to the pupil playing Spider to repeat**)

Anansi counted the peas and Spider agreed with his calculation and then it was Anansi's turn.

Anansi looked at the peas, walking up and down and rubbed his chin several times. (**Anansi does so**)

He was making a real show of it.

With one hand behind his back and the other flexing his arm and fingers, Anansi picked up one corner of the cloth, then another and another and the final one.

He lifted all of the peas from the ground. (**Anansi mimes doing so**)

"I said I could pick up more peas with one hand but I didn't say how!" said Anansi. (**Indicate to Anansi to repeat**)

Well, Spider was an honourable Spider so he didn't argue but she did give Anansi a dirty look. (**Indicating to Spider to do so**)

And she never trusted Anansi again ... but she did grow two extra legs. Since then all spiders have had eight. Let's give all of our volunteers a hand. (**They sit**)

Who can remember a story sentence from our Anansi journey? Practice that sentence in your head. Lock it in your memory so you don't forget it. Quickly make 2 lines facing each other. Everyone on this side you are going to go first. Starting with your sentence you are going to Anansi story tell. It doesn't matter if your story sentence is from the beginning or nearer the end. We won't have time to finish these but the idea is continue the story in your words and see how and where it takes you. It may become an entirely new story, who knows. Let's begin. (**Pupils do so and then the opposite line do so**) You can tell these stories again and again. You can make them yours. Thank you storytellers. That's the way to help stories live on.

Anansi Spider Web: Let's make Anansi's web. In groups of 4 or 5 I'd like you to sit with one hand and fingers spread out held up in front of you, like this. (Demonstrate) One person must carefully wrap some spider string around a few fingers until the strings begin to look like a web. The shape and design is up to you but keep it simple. When you have finished ask each person to carefully lay the web on the ground and remove their fingers. Each of you must now write or draw your own Anansi memory on a luggage label. It can be one word, one sentence or one image. Do this quite quickly, in the same way spiders make their web. Attach your labels to the web making sure you overlap at least two pieces of string so the web becomes fixed. Use some more wool cut in shorter lengths to secure any others. Display your web on a notice board or wall in the classroom.

Music/ Anansi dance to end

Additional Exercises

Stop, Go, Jump, Clap, Anansi!

Walking around the space follow my instructions without talking. "Stop!" "Go!" ETC When I shout Anansi I want to become a spider. At some point all of the instructions will come to mean the opposite so listen out for that. The only instruction to remain the same is Anansi. Off you go.

Let's play Anansi KSI: Let's go on an Anansi spider Journey? You say "Yes lets!" Let's grow eight legs? You say "Yes lets!" Let's crawl through the grass... Let's make a web... Let's eat some flies... Let's bask in the sun... etc

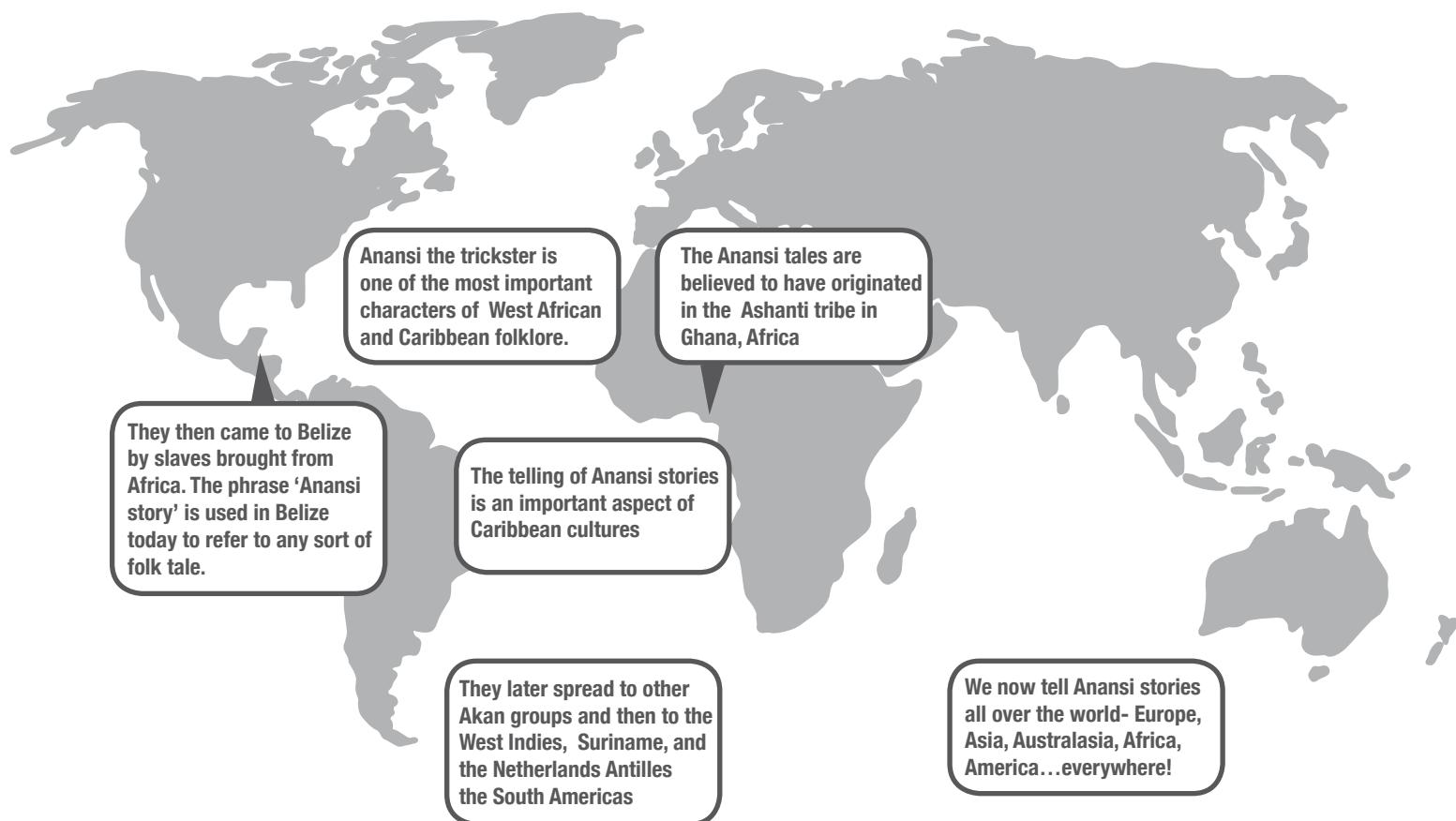
Speak Anansi: In your own space, tell your neighbour an Anansi story. It might be one you have heard today or a story you make up. There are 3 things your story should have. Adventure, trickery and a lesson to be learnt.

Anansi Circle: In our circle let's retell how Anansi became the keeper of all stories. One by one lets each share a story sentence.

Anansi Origins; Map

Today Anansi stories are told all over the world by people from many different countries and cultures. But where do Anansi stories come from?

Take a look at the map below to see how Anansi stories became popular all over the world!



Anansi Profile

Given Name: Kweku Anansi

Father: Nyame, the Great Sky God

Mother: Asase Ya, Earth goddess / Goddess of Fertility

Alias(es): Anansi, from the Twi language for spider. AKA: Anansi / Annancy /Nancy / Mr. Nancy / Brother Anansi / Bro' Anancy/ The Spider / Spider-man

Gender: Male/Female

Ethnicity: Akan

Date of Birth: Unknown- about 500 years ago!

Day of Birth: Wednesday

Height: Little

Weight: Light.

Address(es): Kumasi in Ghana / Kingston and the counties of Jamaica and other Caribbean territories / USA / The island of Haiti / South America / Belize, Central America.

Country of Origin: Asanti, Ghana

Profession: Trickster

Personality: Trickery; Quick-change-artist; Uses his brains; Hustler; Outsmarts persons larger than himself; Often gets in trouble for a misdeemeanor.

Main Enemy: Osebo the Leopard, A.K.A: "Bre'r Tiger", "Bra Tiger", "Bro Tiger", Tiger

History:

Anansi is “the central character of numerous fables of West African origin. Anansi, the spider, pits his cunning (usually with success) against superior strength; he also symbolises greed and envy.”

Anansi is the son of Nyame the great sky god, who turned Anansi into a spider-man. Nyame used an antidote to combat death's venom, therefore, he has eternal life. Anansi's mother is Nyame's wife, Asase Ya, the goddess of the Earth and of fertility.

Nyame allows Anansi to bring rain, especially to quench forest fires. It is also Anansi who determines the borders of oceans and rivers when they flood. Anansi is so famous that he is credited with creating the sun, moon, stars, night, day and the first man in whom Nyame breathed life. He showed humans how to plough and sow grain. His Web of Life inspired humans by showing them how to weave and how to construct houses. The web also showed human beings how to link themselves together in order to form a society. The web is also a symbol of the life-giving sun.

However, Anansi's mischief had infuriated Nyame one time too many and for this final transgression Nyame permanently turned his son into a small spider-man. From that time forward, Anansi the spider-man had to use his mental skills to survive. Undaunted by his fate, Anansi rose to become the “Keeper Of All Stories”. He is the hero of children and the champion of the little guy and the powerless. Like them, he often gets in trouble and must use his intelligence to save himself.



Anansi's stories spread his fame among the Akan people of West Africa and their neighbours. In the Americas he was adopted by enslaved Africans from different ethnic groups.

The variations in the spelling and pronunciation of his name reflects this cross cultural change from Akan into English, French, Dutch, creole and patois. These cultural exchanges also occurred between Africans and Europeans in the Americas.

Anansi stories are both entertaining and instructional. Listeners are sometimes advised either to follow Anansi's example or beware of his folly. So as not to upset a listener whose actions or personality may mimic Asansi's, a storyteller sometimes issues a disclaimer in telling a tale.

Some stories include a proverb at the end or may incorporate a song. Anansi stories occur at various periods of his life. In one tale he may be a bachelor in search of a bride or the hand of the king's daughter. In another story he may have his wife Aso and his son Intikuma. Some Anansi tales may not include Anansi and others may be a "Why" or "How" story. For example, "Why Dogs Have Narrow Behinds", or "How John Crow (turkey vulture) Got a Peel (bald)

Bigfoot's Chosen Anansi Stories

Below are THREE Anansi stories that we have chosen to look at during our multi cultural storytelling workshops- we hope you enjoy them as much as we do!

Story I: Nyame's Old Wooden Box

One day Anansi was so bored he slung a long, silky spider string up into the clouds and decided to see what the Gods were up to. There was Thunder, Lightning, Rain, Sun and others but by far the most powerful was the Sky-God. His real name was Nyame, otherwise known as the Creator. It was his kingdom that Anansi decided to visit. Beside Nyame, who was sat on his throne, was an old wooden box. It wasn't covered in diamonds or sizzling with magic spells. It was simply an old wooden box. But when Anansi saw it, he had only one thought in his mind... "I want that box." said Anansi. "I want, don't get!" said the wise voice in his head but by then it was too late. Anansi represented everything about humans that was good and bad. Plus being half spider, that meant he had too much of one particular skill... The ability to weave clever tricks around others.

Nyame was very attached to the old wooden box at his side. He wouldn't give it up for any old thing it would have to be something really special. But he told Anansi he could have the box if he could capture four legendary creatures: Onini the python, Osebo the leopard, Mmoboro the hornet and finally Mmotia. "M m moatia!" Anansi was scared but he agreed to the challenge and set to work on how he would capture the four deadly creatures.

The next day in the forest Anansi pretended to be two people arguing. "He is!" "No he isn't!" He then threw down a long, long stick and stamped on the ground Onini the python slid out of the bush just as Anansi wanted him too. "SSSome of usss like to work in sssilence when sssearching for our sssupper" he said. "But Onini it is your reputation I am trying to save. The other animals of the forest refuse to believe you are longer than this long, long stick" replied Anansi.

"Let me sslide along ssside and sssee, no forest creature will out-do me" Well, you know how spiders can move fast and faster? While Onini was distracted measuring himself on the long, long stick Anansi mixed up his silky web strings with some rubber tree gum and spun and strapped the snake to that stick. Onini the python had been out-done. Anansi took great pleasure in presenting him to Nyame. Since that time snakes coil and wiggle and hardly ever do anything in a straight line.

A few days later at sunset, Anansi was at the lake. He saw Osebo the leopard licking his lips. Every day for a whole week Osebo caught his kill at the same spot. So early one morning when Osebo had left, Anansi dug a deep, deep hole. And lined it with dead animal skins he'd sewn together to make a strong sack. He covered the pull string with grass and sand. To disguise the deep hole with his web he crawled back and forth, forth and back. And when it could not be seen from the surface Anansi sat in wait. At sunset Osebo came for his next kill. He took one step and "whap!" Landed flat on his back. In the sack-lined hole, his weight pulled it together and he was trapped. Osebo the leopard had been out-done. Anansi took great pleasure in presenting him to Nyame. When the leopard was freed he was covered in spots which he said were caused by stress.

Late one night Anansi was caught out in the rainy season. He quickly made an umbrella out of banana leaves. Above where he stood was a huge hornets' nest rotting up high in a tree. It was where Mmboro, the Queen Hornet lived. Anansi spied on the Queen and her swarm. The banana leaves kept him sheltered. As he watched and plotted, he said to the hornets "Can I give you and Mmboro some shelter, your nest has all but fallen?" "Bzzz! We're fine but could you shelter Mmboro!" the hornets said. Bzzz was bee language for thank you. As the hornets tried to rebuild things she slept under the banana leaves. Anansi quietly weaved and spun the leaves into a basket which then became a cage. Mmboro had been outdone. Anansi took great pleasure in presenting her to Nyame. Now hornets everywhere are twice the size of bees and their stings are much more fierce.

Several months passed before Anansi could pluck up the courage to face Mmotia. Mmotia was what you might call a spirit or fairy. The only thing known about Mmotia was that she had a sweet tooth and she liked dolls. She'd be difficult to find because she was invisible. Anansi occupied himself carving small bits of wood but still couldn't keep his mind off the box. He was so depressed he decided to treat himself to some homemade coconut ice. Delicious dried, shredded coconut flesh, clumped together with cold sugary syrup. But just when Anansi was about to settle down and eat it at his favourite spot in the yard... The coconut ice had gone. He'd only turned his back for a second so he knew no-one else was around. "M m motia!" Anansi looked down and saw the clump of coconut ice just above the ground as though floating towards his veranda. He realised Mmotia was heading towards one of his carvings, which to a fairy could look like a doll. So he swung overhead on his silky web strings and got some glue and smothered it all over the small wooden carving. A moment later the coconut ice... and so was the carving... was moving away from his porch. Mmotia had been outdone. Anansi took great pleasure in presenting her to Nyame. Ever since then fairies have been impossible to catch.

Story 2; Anansi and Spider shell peas

Now Anansi wasn't what you would call a good worker.

He could be quite lazy and would only work when he had too.

And he had to join his bros in the field. Bro is short for brothers. Some say Anansi invented the phrase.

His bros were shelling peas for a rich old farmer. There was Monkey. There was Tortoise

And there was also Hen.

Most of his friends shelled peas even slower than Anansi, all except Spider.

Spider could really work.

But the others were pretty useless.

Monkey was always laughing and telling jokes. Hoo hoo ha ha!

Tortoise was so slow he took a whole week to shell just one. Hen was always so hungry she pecked more than she shelled. But Spider, he was different, he had so many feet.

His technique was greatly admired and no one could work faster. For every pound of peas they shelled the rich old farmer would pay them with just a small handful.

If Anansi shelled enough today, he could make a nice pea soup for his supper but as usual Anansi was feeling lazy.

At the end of the day Anansi said to Monkey, Tortoise, Hen and Spider

"I bet I can hold more peas with one hand than any of you and you can use your whole body. Winner takes all!"

Monkey knew he had no chance and he laughed all the way home. Hoo hoo ha ha!

Tortoise hadn't shelled enough peas to be paid so he just kept on walking which wasn't very fast.

And Hen had already eaten her small handful so she had nothing to gamble but clucked as she left the farm.

Only Spider had worked hard and fast all day and Anansi knew it.

Now Spider had 6 feet, so he saw no reason why he shouldn't beat Anansi.

Anansi laid out all of his peas and all of Spider's on a piece of cloth.

He told Spider to take his turn first.

Spider used all of his feet to pick up as many as he could.

He even put some on his back and his tiny head. He had excellent balance.

"You sure you have as much as you can carry?" said Anansi.

"Just worry about yourself" Spider replied.

Anansi counted the peas and Spider agreed with his calculation and then it was now Anansi's turn.

Anansi looked at the peas, walked up and down and rubbed his chin several times.

With one hand behind his back and the other flexing his fingers, Anansi picked up one corner of the cloth, then another and another and the final one.

He lifted all of the peas from the ground.

"I said I would pick up more peas with one hand but I didn't say how!" said Anansi.

Well, Spider was an honourable Spider so he didn't argue but he did cut his eyes at Anansi - he gave him a dirty look. And he never trusted Anansi again... but he did grow two extra legs. Since then all spiders have had eight.

Story 3; Anansi and ‘Bro’ Dry Bone!

It was Market day.

I was on my way out of the door when I looked down and saw a basket full of my favourite foods.

There were yams, potatoes, green banana and plantain.

Also coconut, mangoes and pineapple.

Even rice, dried peas and corn on the cob.

I couldn't believe my luck, I had been given enough food for a week.

Several days later when I was about to go to the market again I found another basket of food.

I received a full basket every week for one month.

Then suddenly one Market Day after there was no basket at the door.

I didn't go out that day in case the delivery was late.

But by the end of that evening I wondered how anyone could be so cruel.

I was so hungry my stomach was really rumbling.

At midnight there was a knock at the door.

Bro Death was standing on the porch with a basket full of my favourite things.

Given our history, I couldn't help wondering why Bro Death had been helping me.

“Goodnight Anansi” said Bro Death. In the Caribbean this was how people said Good Evening.

“I’m sorry I’m late but I had to go to the next town as our market had no yams.”

“Oh... oh... oh! But can I ask why you’ve been leaving me all this food?” I replied.

“Well after all these years of anger between us, I thought it was time we moved on.”

“In that case you may as well come in because I am really hungry.”

I cooked up some rice and peas with sweet juicy fried plantain.

And gave a just a little to Bro death.

After eating Bro Death started laughing, he almost fell off the rocking chair he was sat on.

“What’s so funny?” I said.

“Don’t you know you should never invite Death to eat at your table? You’ve just eaten your last meal my old friend!”

Bro Death rocked back on the chair, opened his arms and made a leap for me.

But you know how spiders can move fast and faster? I quickly slung my silky web onto the ceiling and super fast made my way up.

Bro Death couldn’t climb or jump so he had to sit and wait for me to drop.

With all I’d eaten over the month, he was sure I would fall off.

But instead I started to weave and spin my spiders web.

To my surprise I made a beautiful pattern on the ceiling.

I began to realise how little of his life I’d spent doing beautiful things.

“Look, Bro Death, I apologise for what I did. Can you ever forgive me. Please?” I said.

“I’m afraid that won’t do. You and I cannot live on this earth together and both have a happy existence. I’m not sure I can forgive you. But suppose I do let you live, will you promise to stop all of your tricks?”

“Yes! I promise!” I said.

To my surprise Bro Death decided to let me live that night and for many nights after.

Since then Bro Death has lived in a different dimension.

Quick Quiz

Now you've learnt a bit more about who Anansi is, as well as heard some of his stories, try this quick quiz to test how much you can remember- you may need some help!

- What is Anansi's full name?
- Anansi is half human and half S _____
- Where is Anansi originally from?
- How many years ago was Anansi born?
- Who is Anansi's father?
- Who is Anansi's mother?
- How did Anansi stories begin to spread across the world?
- Anansi is referred to as a T_____
- At the end of every Anansi story there is a M _____
- Name THREE other characters used in some of Anansi's stories:
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3
- Can you name one Anansi story?
- Why can you spell Anansi in so many different ways?

Tricks & Morals

Anansi stories are very similar to other stories we hear and read in that they follow the same simple story formula. However, Anansi stories also include trickery and a moral.

Below is a chat that asks you to recall **THREE** Anansi stories that you have either seen performed, had read to you, or that you have read. For each story answer the following:

- Characters - who is involved in the story?
- Setting - where does it take place?
- Problem - what problem do the characters encounter?
- Trick - does Anansi or another character play a trick?
- Solution - how does it all end?
- Moral - what does the story teach us?

	STORY ONE:	STORY TWO:	STORY THREE:
Characters			
Setting			
Problem			
Solution			
Moral			

My Anansi Story

Lots of Anansi tales have been around for many many years. But what kind of adventures would the trickster get up to in 2009?

Try to weave an exciting new Anansi story of your very own. You can make a start by answering the questions below:

Below is a chat that asks you to recall **THREE** Anansi stories that you have either seen performed, had read to you, or that you have read. For each story answer the following:

- Characters - who is involved in the story?
- Setting - where does it take place?
- Problem - what problem do the characters encounter?
- Trick - does Anansi or another character play a trick?
- Solution - how does it all end?
- Moral - what does the story teach us?

CHARACTERS:

SETTING:

PROBLEM:

THE TRICK:

SOLUTION:

MORAL;

Half Human, Half Spider

You may be wondering what Anansi looks like..... well no-one knows!!

Some say he is male, whilst others say Anansi is female. Some say he has a spider's body and human head, others insist he is entirely spider just with human qualities, and others say he is a human, but with 'spider like' qualities!!



The truth is, Anansi is whoever you imagine him to be!

Using what you've already learned about Anansi from the stories you have heard and the pictures above, draw a picture of Anansi as you think he might look if he were to visit your school today!

Anansi Art

Below are some fun and simple art activities that you can do with your class in order to create colourful wall and table displays.

Spider head bands

Draw the outline of a spiders head and colour it in using black, brown and purple pencils and pens. Tape the spiders head to a strip of fabric or elastic fit to each child's size head. Fold eight black strips for the legs using the 'accordion' folding technique and staple them inside the headbands.

Handprint Spiders

Paint the palms and four fingers of each child's hand with black paint. Put each hand down on white or coloured paper with fingers spread to make 4 spider legs. Paint again and turn paper around to put palm over same area so that there is one big body (made from the palm) and eight long legs (fingers). You can decorate the spiders with glitter and pens to add detail such as eyes and fine fur, as well as add wool around the spider to create a web for him to sit on.

Anansi spider webs

You will need a paper plate and yarn

Give each child a small black paper plate and some white yarn. Instruct your students to snip the outside edge of the paper plate with 1/2 inch slots. Now encourage them to wind the white yarn across the paper plate and back, inserting the strand into the scissor cuts to create their own spider web.

Attach an Anansi spider ring or toy to the centre of the web- or create your own from wool, clay or card!

Anansi the trickster; Jokes!

As we all know, Anansi's a trickster. Try the jokes below and see if you can trick anyone you know with these funny answers!!

What does a spider do when he gets angry?

He goes up the wall!

What did the spider say to the fly?

We're getting married do you want to come to the webbing?

What do you get if you cross a spider and an elephant?

I'm not sure, but if you see one walking across the ceiling then run before it collapses!

Why are spiders good swimmers?

They have webbed feet!

How do you spot a modern spider?

He doesn't have a web he had a website!

Why did the spider buy a car?

So he could take it out for a spin!

Anansi Story I

Why Anansi Has Eight Thin Legs

Once upon a time, a long time ago, there lived a spider named Anansi. Anansi's wife was a very good cook. But always, Anansi loved to taste the food that others in the village made for themselves and for their families.

One day, he stopped by Rabbit's house. Rabbit was his good friend.

"There are greens in your pot," cried Anansi excitedly. Anansi loved greens.

"They are not quite done," said Rabbit. "But they will be soon. Stay and eat with me."

"I would love to, Rabbit, but I have some things to do," Anansi said hurriedly. If he waited at Rabbit's house, Rabbit would certainly give him jobs to do. "I know," said Anansi. "I'll spin a web. I'll tie one end around my leg and one end to your pot. When the greens are done, tug on the web, and I'll come running!"

Rabbit thought that was a great idea. And so it was done.

"I smell beans," Anansi sniffed excitedly as he ambled along. "Delicious beans, cooking in a pot."

"Come eat our beans with us," cried the monkeys. "They are almost done."

"I would love to Father Monkey," said Anansi. And again, Anise suggested he spin a web, with one end tied around his leg, and one end tied to the big bean pot.

Father Monkey thought that was a great idea. All his children thought so, too. And so it was done.

"I smell sweet potatoes," Anansi sniffed happily as he ambled along. "Sweet potatoes and honey, I do believe!"

"Anansi," called his friend Hog. "My pot is full of sweet potatoes and honey! Come share my food with me."

"I would love to," said Anansi. And again, Anansi suggested he spin a web, with one end tied around his leg, and one end tied to the sweet potato pot.

His friend Hog thought that was a great idea. And so it was done.

By the time Anansi arrived at the river, he had one web tied to each of his eight legs.

"This was a wonderful idea," Anansi told himself proudly. "I wonder whose pot will be ready first?"

Just then, Anansi felt a tug at his leg. "Ah," said Anansi. "That is the web string tied to Rabbit's greens." He felt another. And another. Anansi was pulled three ways at once.

"Oh dear," said Anansi as he felt the fourth web string pull.

Just then, he felt the fifth web string tug. And the sixth. And the seventh. And the eighth. Anansi was pulled this way and that way, as everyone pulled on the web strings at once. His legs were pulled thinner and thinner. Anansi rolled quickly into the river. When all the webs had washed away, Anansi pulled himself painfully up on shore.

"Oh my, oh my," sighed Anansi. "Perhaps that was not such a good idea after all."

To this day, Anansi the Spider has eight very thin legs. And he never got any food that day at all.

Questions:

- Why did Anansi decide not to wait at Rabbit's house until the greens were done cooking?
- How did Anansi save himself from being pulled into pieces?
- What is the moral of this story?

Anansi Story 2

Anansi and Turtle's Feast

One day, Anansi the spider picked some yams from his garden. They were extra beautiful delicious yams, so he baked them carefully in the fire. Then he sat down to eat them up.

Just as Anansi was about to put the first bite in his mouth, he heard a knock on his door. "Oh, no!" thought Anansi. "Who can that be?" But he opened the door. There was Turtle, who looked very tired. Turtle said, "Anansi, please let me in. I've walked so far today, and I'm so tired and hungry." So what could Anansi do but let him in?

But Anansi was too selfish to share his beautiful delicious yams with anybody else, even a guest. So he came up with a nasty plan. Just as Turtle sat down at the table and began to reach for some yams, Anansi yelled at him, "Turtle, your hands are all dirty! You can't eat with your hands all dirty! Go wash them." Turtle's hands really were dirty, from walking on them all day. So Turtle slowly crawled to the river and washed his hands, and then slowly crawled back to the table.

But meanwhile Anansi started gobbling up the yams. By the time Turtle got back, the yams were half gone. And just as Turtle sat down and reached for the yams again, Anansi started yelling again, "Turtle, your hands are still dirty! Go wash them again!" And they were dirty, because Turtle used them to crawl back from the river. Sadly, Turtle got up and went to wash his hands again.

By the time Turtle had crawled all the way back, he saw that greedy Anansi had eaten up the other half of the yams, and the yams were all gone. Turtle looked at Anansi and said, "Thank you for inviting me to dinner. If you're ever near my house, please come by and let me return the favour." And Turtle began crawling slowly away to his house.

A few days later, Anansi awoke feeling hungry, so he decided to go to Turtle's house at mealtime. Turtle lived at the bottom of the river, but when Anansi arrived, Turtle was sitting on the bank.

"Welcome Anansi," Turtle said. "Did you come for a meal?"

"Yes, I did," Anansi said. "How kind of you to offer."

"Follow me," said Turtle. "The table is all set." And he dived under the water.

Anansi jumped into the water right behind Turtle, but instead of sinking, he popped to the surface and floated there. No matter how he tried to dive, he always popped up to the top. He jumped from rocks. He tried to swim with all his legs. Still, he could not reach Turtle's table.

Then Anansi had an idea. He gathered pebbles on the shore and put them in the pockets of his handsome dinner jacket, the one he had worn especially for this meal. Soon his pockets bulged with pebbles. This time when Anansi dived, he sank right down to the bottom of the creek and swam to Turtle's table.

Anansi's eyes popped wide open at the table full of shrimp and clams and crabs. He eagerly reached to fill his plate when Turtle said, "But Anansi, in my home, we always remove our dinner jackets before sitting down at the table."

Anansi slipped off his jacket, and as he did, the jacket sank to the bottom of the river and Anansi popped right to the top. There he floated, frustrated and hungry as he watched Turtle, down below, chomping happily on a juicy crab.

"I've been tricked," Anansi cried as he lay upon the shore

Questions:

- Why did Anansi decide not to wait at Rabbit's house until the greens were done cooking?
- How did Anansi save himself from being pulled into pieces?
- What is the moral of this story?

Anansi Story 3

Why is Wisdom Everywhere?

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 some 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 could 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 much easier if you tied the gourd behind you instead of in front?"

Anansi sat there quietly for a very 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 problems at all.

When he had reached the top, he cried out, "I walked all 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 to the world.

Questions:

- Why did everyone laugh when Anansi asked for their wisdom?
- What advice did Anansi's son give to him?
- What is the moral of this story?

About Bigfoot

Bigfoot is a thriving independent arts education company that delivers nationwide. We dedicate ourselves to providing schools and organisations with unique programmes that creatively enrich and extend the national curriculum. We believe that children and teachers become more inspired and motivated through creative expression which consequently helps to raise standards of learning and teaching within schools.

Our programmes are designed to help children and teachers learn in a fun and expressive way. We aim to develop speaking and listening skills, teamwork, cooperation and communication whilst giving young people confidence in their own ideas and abilities. We have developed schemes of work for most areas of the key stage one and two curriculum, whilst our secondary programmes help raise standards in GCSE & A Level Drama, Gifted and Talented provision, key skills development and enriching schools citizenship programmes. Equally important is our ability to listen to schools and organisations specific needs in order to tailor-make bespoke programmes.

In addition to work within schools, Bigfoot boasts exciting performing arts summer schools, part time performing arts courses and specialist programmes. These projects help children realise their full potential as individuals, developing key life skills and performance skills through the use of 'devising' techniques, where participants contribute their own creative ideas and experiences to their work giving them ownership and helping them to focus on team work and problem solving.

Some of Bigfoot's core programmes include:

- **Bigfoot Drama Academy**

Out-of-school hours learning programme, including out of school drama clubs, weekend drama academies, Bigfoot Parties and Creative Achievers performing arts courses which operate during the school holidays.

- **Bigfoot Supply & PPA Cover**

Using specially trained drama practitioners to provide cover for teachers. Drama techniques such as improvisation, storytelling, theatre exercises and devising techniques to enrich the national curriculum.

- **PSHE & Citizenship Programmes**

Providing young people with a creative forum where they can confront sensitive and controversial issues allowing them to develop a greater understanding of the world and community in which we live. Programmes include Big Steps (transition), Anti Bullying and Promoting Positive Relationships, Healthy Living and Forum Presentations.

- **Curriculum Enrichment Programmes**

A range of school programmes which explore the curriculum imaginatively are available throughout the year. Programmes include Creative Literacy, Black History Month, Rapspeare, Living History (Tudors, WWII, Romans, Egyptians, Greeks and Victorians).

- **Creative Approach**

Creative INSET programme for schools. Teachers learn new ways to engage with their students, by developing a 'creative approach' to teaching and learning inspired through drama.

- **London Talent**

A unique, inspirational and challenging performing arts course for London's most talented youth.

- **Bespoke Projects**

Bigfoot also devises bespoke projects to meet schools and other organisations specific requirements. Projects range from day long projects with one class group to week long projects involving hundred's of students to specialised events with organisations such as the British Museum to the London Zoo. Anything is possible!

Our facilitators

Bigfoot trains professional theatre practitioners as 'educators' who work with young people in a variety of different settings. We work with actors, directors, designers, dancers, choreographers, musicians, circus specialists, physical theatre practitioners, designers, and poets! All Bigfoot facilitators attend our compulsory two day training course once fully vetted and CRB checked. We monitor and assess our facilitators and evaluate all of our programmes thoroughly to ensure the highest quality of provision.