

Folktales of Senegal

Lesson plan by Amy Barsanti

Overview: Students will explore traditional folklore of Senegal, and make connections to familiar traditional folktales and to Griots. They will also read aloud a Readers Theater adaptation of “The Hunter and the Crocodile.”

Essential Questions:

- How are folktales and music connected?
- What do folktales teach us about a culture?

Grade Levels: 2-4

Content Area: Language Arts/ Reading Literature

NC Standards:

Grade 2- RL.2.2 Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

Grade 3- RL.3.2 Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

Grade 4- RL.4.7 Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text. RL.4.9 Compare and contrast the use of similar themes and topics and patterns of events in stories, myths, and traditional literature from different cultures.

Materials:

- Slides: 🟡 L4- Folktales, Stories, and Griot
- Children’s picture books about Senegal and/or with Senegal as a setting
 - Recommendations:
 - Senegal: On the Way to School by Anna Obiols
 - Ballel: A Child of Senegal by Alain Gioanni
 - Sofie in the City by Karima Grant
 - Senegal (Enchantment of the World) by Ruth Bjorklund
- Chart paper for recording ideas
- Class copies of “The Hunter and the Crocodile” Readers Theater script (included below)

Suggested Length of Time: three, 40-45 minute sessions

Procedures:

Session 1 (40 minutes)

1. Explain to students that they will be exploring stories of Senegal and will work on their retelling skills at the same time.
2. Assign student pairs or small groups, and explain in the way that is most appropriate for your class, the task of taking turns retelling the story. Based on your grade level, determine whether students should focus on recounting main events, sequence, or including as many details as possible. (5 minutes for steps 1 and 2)
3. Read aloud any book from the list below or use [🌍 Senegal 📖 Books Read Aloud for ALL AGES](#) [📖 Read with Dixy](#) (10 minutes)
 - a. Recommendations:
 - i. [Senegal: On the Way to School](#) by Anna Obiols
 - ii. [Balle: A Child of Senegal](#) by Alain Gioanni
 - iii. [Sofie in the City](#) by Karima Grant
 - iv. [Senegal \(Enchantment of the World\)](#) by Ruth Bjorklund
4. Allow students time to retell the story in their partner pairs or small groups. Make sure students understand that they need to let all group members participate and to be respectful of any errors. Monitor and assist students while they retell the story. (20 minutes)
5. Ask students to share what worked well and what didn't, and generate a list of how to improve the experience in the future. Record their ideas on chart paper for reference in later lessons. (15 minutes)

Session 2 (40 minutes)

1. Begin by sharing the following information about griots:
 - Griots have been part of West African culture since the 13th century.
 - Historically, griots pass down information about traditions, births, deaths, marriages, important events, history, and stories.
 - Not just anyone could be a griot. You had to be part of a griot family to have the stories passed down to you.
 - Griots accompany their stories with singing and playing a musical instrument, such as a kora, which has 21 strings.
 - Griots today might be more traditional griots, or musicians (including praise singers and even rappers!), storytellers, and oral historians.

You may also wish to share and discuss with students sections of the site on slide 1.

2. Ask if they can think of examples of people in their cultures or communities that might be comparable to griots. (20 minutes)
3. Show students the image and video of the griot on
 - ▣ L4- Folktales, Stories, and Griot . They may need help understanding his accent. Work as a class to recall details and retell the story. (20 minutes)

Session 3 (45 minutes)

1. Revisit the lessons students learned from the last session on griots. What is a griot? Where are griots found? Why are griots important?
2. Tell students that they will be reading aloud a Readers Theater version of the story told by the griot in the video.
3. Distribute copies of the script and have students help you assign parts.
4. Read the script aloud together as a class. As you read, assist students with reading as needed.
5. Help students make connections between the scripted version and the griot's version.
6. Consider practicing and reading in front of an audience.

Product- Performance of “The Hunter and the Crocodile” (optional)

Extension Options:

1. Add percussion instruments to the performance.
2. Read aloud “The Hedgehog and the Dog” (included below). Note: it’s a little gory, and may be better suited for older students. That being said, it’s very appealing to reluctant readers. Help students summarize, sharing main events from the beginning, middle, and end.

THE HUNTER AND THE CROCODILE

(all characters can be any gender; the number of narrators can be adjusted and/or combined with other characters)

Narrator 1: One year, during flood-time...

Narrator 2: ... when all the rivers overflowed their banks,

Narrator 3: ... a Crocodile was carried a long way from his own river,

Narrator 4: ... and landed so deep in the jungle that he could not find his way back to water.

Narrator 5: For many days he had nothing to drink or to eat, and so grew very thin.

Narrator 6: At last a hunter, looking for deer, met the Crocodile.

Hunter: What are you doing here?

Narrator 7: The crocodile told her story.

Hunter: If you will promise not to hurt me, I will carry you back to your river.

Narrator 8: The crocodile promised,

Narrator 9: and the hunter bound her with cord,

Narrator 10: put her on his head,

Narrator 1: and carried him back to the bank of the river.

Crocodile: Since you have brought me as far as this, you may as well carry me down into the water.

Narrator 2: So the Hunter, still carrying the Crocodile, waded into the river up to his knees.

Crocodile: As a favor, go a little further.

Narrator 3: So the Hunter went further, until the water was up to his chest.

Crocodile: A little further still...

Narrator 4: And he went on until the water was up to his neck.

Narrator 5: Then he unbound the cords and placed the Crocodile in the water.

Hunter: There now, are you satisfied?

Crocodile: Not yet. Not until I have eaten you!

Narrator 6: She seized the unhappy hunter, and held him tight.

Hunter: Is this my reward for bringing you so far, and saving your life?

Crocodile: Hmm... I shall not eat you until we find someone who shall judge between us.

Narrator 7: Presently a Horse came down to the river to drink.

Crocodile: Don't drink until you have judged between us.

Narrator 8: She then told the Horse the facts of the case.

Horse: You should eat him, for a man is a wicked creature. Ever since I was a colt, men have driven me, traveled on my back and maltreated me. Now that I am old, they no longer take the trouble to feed me.

Crocodile: Let us find a second judge.

Narrator 9: Next came a Cow: the case was stated to her.

Cow: Eat the Man! Men milk me, drink my milk, and then neglect me because I am old!

Narrator 10: A Donkey next passed by.

Donkey: Eat the man, and quickly! Men have always worked me hard, abused and half starved me! Now they desert me because I am old.

Narrator 1: Last of all came a Rabbit.

Rabbit: How could a man bring you here, a big creature like you?

Crocodile: All the same, he did it.

Rabbit: How did he do it?

Crocodile: By binding me with cord, and carrying me through the jungle on his head.

Narrator 2: The Rabbit told the Hunter to take the cord and show how he had bound the Crocodile.

Narrator 3: When this was done,

Narrator 4: the Hunter took the Crocodile once more on his head,

Narrator 5: and carried her back to the jungle where he had first found her.

Rabbit (to Hunter): Do you eat Crocodiles?

Hunter: Yes.

Rabbit: Then eat her, and quickly, since the crocodile intended to do you harm.

(Senegal Fable. From Collection de Contes et de Chansons Populaires.)

Adapted by Amy Barsanti

THE HEDGEHOG AND THE DOG

Optional text for older or reluctant readers

Narrator 1: The Hedgehog and the Dog were formerly good friends, and cultivated bananas together.

Narrator 2: When the bananas were full-grown, the Hedgehog used to go to look at them every day, and when they were ripe...

Hedgehog: Would you like to go with me to eat the ripe bananas?

Dog: Oh, yes!

Narrator 3: When the two friends reached the foot of the banana tree, the Hedgehog tried in vain to reach the bunches of bananas.

Narrator 4: The Dog, meanwhile, standing on his hind legs, could easily reach up and pluck the fruit.

Narrator 5: He found them so good that he did not stop until he had eaten all the bananas,

Narrator 6: ...without giving a single one to the Hedgehog, regardless of his entreaties.

Hedgehog: Now let us play a game that I often play with my brothers. You must take a bamboo and sharpen it at both ends; and when it is sharp you must stick it into the ground at the foot of the tree, and then climb the tree and jump down on the stick.

Narrator 7: The Dog was willing to play this game, and when all was ready he invited the Hedgehog to jump first,

Narrator 8: and even helped him up the tree, since his friend could not climb alone.

Narrator 9: The Hedgehog jumped first, straight down onto the bamboo stick,—but thanks to his stiff quills, he was not hurt.

Narrator 10: Then came the turn of the Dog, and he jumped, and was transfixed by the sharp bamboo.

Hedgehog: Ask your banana skins to help you!

(Senegal Folk-Tale, from Collection de Contes et Chansons Populaires, Vol. 40.)