

Ghanaian and African-American Trickster Folktales

Lesson Plan by Kim Freeman

Keywords Ghana African-American Trickster Folktales

Overview: This unit will compare and contrast Ghanaian and African American Trickster Folktales. These tales provide an important connection to Ghanaian culture and history. African-American Folktales creates a connection to past and current culture dealing with ties to Africa and America. These tales instill pride in the unique traits and languages throughout the African diaspora. Students will learn about fables and folktales from diverse cultures from Ghana and African-Americans in the United States.

Essential Questions: How do contributions from other cultures contribute to society? What are trickster folktales and how do they connect to Ghanaian and African-American Culture?

Intended Grade Level: 2-5

Intended Content Areas Music

Standard Alignment with NC Standards

Reading Standards:

RL.2.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

RL.2.4 - Describe how words and phrases supply rhythm and meaning in a story, poem, or song.

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

RL.2.7 Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

RL.2.9. Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story by different authors or from different cultures.

Social Studies Standards:

2.B.1.2 Explain how belief systems of various indigenous, religious, and racial groups have influenced or contributed to culture in America

2.H.1.1 Summarize contributions of various women, indigenous, religious, racial, and other minority groups that have impacted American history

Suggested Length of Time: 2-45 minute lessons. (may be adjusted by grade level and level of student engagement)

Prior Work to be Completed

Please review the background sections prior to teaching the lessons.

Ghanaian Trickster Folktales Background Information

In Ghana, folktales are a collection of a community's traditional beliefs and customs that an ethnic group or an unknown Ghanaian author may preserve. They include Adinkra symbols, Kente cloth, traditional festivals, music, and storytelling. Ananse, the spider god and trickster who inspired the Ghanaian storytelling tradition Anansesem, is one of Ghana's most well-known folk characters. Folklore contributes to a people's identity. For example, the Kpanlogo dance distinguishes the Gas from the Akans¹. It also serves as a revenue generator as local artists make money by incorporating folklore into their work¹. Folktales are often used as a tool for sharing and preserving collective experience. Folktales are essential in preserving the rich cultural heritage of Ghana. They serve as a means of socialization, education, entertainment, and economic benefit. They also foster a sense of community and shared identity among Ghanaians.

(Source-Nancy Akomaniwaa Andoh)

African-American Trickster Folktales Background Information

In the United States, African-American folktales connect people in a distant land through language, story-telling, cultural norms and observance of their unique values. These folktales are oral story-telling traditions passing down history, wisdom, religious beliefs, cultural practices and values. The stories are creation stories (explain unknown things in nature or life, moral lessons, and inspiration for hope. The folktales provide background information about the culture, connections, history, social and cultural norms to form the African-American identity.

Word	Definition
central message	the unifying concept within a text to which other elements and ideas relate; often referred to as theme in upper grades

fable	a short story, typically featuring animals as characters, that attempts to express life truth, usually through a moral
folktales	stories originating in popular culture, often passed on through the oral tradition

Materials needed:

[Google Slides](#)-Use slides #1-5 for the lesson

Chart paper for T-chart for modeling for students during the lesson-labeled one side Ghanaian Trickster Folktales and the other side African-American Trickster Folktales

Technology to display the Google Slides lesson

Pre-assigned student partners or groups

Student copies of the T-chart-graphic organizer

Day 1 Use slides 1-5

Label one side T-chart Ghanaian Trickster Folktales

Once the slides have been reviewed, students write what they learned about.

This introductory lesson provides the students with background information on Trickster Folktales in both countries.

T chart PDF <https://www.readwritethink.org/sites/default/files/T-Chart.pdf>

Introduction-this three-day lesson provides an overview of Ghanaian Trickster Folktales and the African-American Trickster Folktales.

Procedure:

Duration: 45 minutes for each lesson

Days 1 and 2 provide the background information about the Ghanaian and African-American Folktales. This is a whole-group lesson.

Brain-Break-Show the Slide 2 (This is a hook for the lesson to increase student engagement during the lesson.)

1. Ask the students what they know about Trickster Folktales.
2. Show Slide 3. Share the definition of Trickster Folktales: Anansi and their variants: in the US he is known as “Aunt Nancy”) are considered “trickster” folktales because the small spider uses his intelligence and trickiness to triumph over larger creatures. Stories such as these are told by elders to pass down knowledge and moral messages to the younger generations.

3. Show Slide 4 as an example. Display the T-chart anchor chart, tell the students they learn about the Anansi Trickster Folktale in Ghana called the European Union. The students will view the video clip on Slide 4.
4. Show slides 5 next. The students will write about the Ghanaian Folktale.

Once the slides finish, ask the students in assigned partnerships or groups what they learned in the video. The teacher will give the discussion prompts: **One important fact is Anansi _____. I learned the moral was _____. The teacher will model for the students on how to complete the assignment.** Set the timer for 5 minutes.

5. Once the timer stops, ask for student volunteers to share what they learned. Write their answers on the displayed T -chart graphic organizer.
 6. Give out copies to the students of the T -chart graphic organizer. The teacher will model for students to be labeled Ghanaian Trickster Folktales on the left side and the African-American Trickster Folktales on the right side.
 7. Write the discussion prompts sentences on the board for students. **One important fact is Anansi _____. I learned the moral was _____. The teacher will model for the students on how to complete the assignment.** The students will use these sentences to write what they learned about the EU.
 8. Set the timer for 5 minutes for the students to complete the assignment as their exit ticket for the lesson.
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1. Set the timer for 20 minutes for the students to complete the assignment as their exit ticket for the lesson.

Procedure:

Duration: 45 minutes

This is a whole-group lesson.

Brain-Break-Show the Slide 6 (This is a hook for the lesson to increase student engagement during the lesson.)

1. Ask the students what they know about Trickster Folktales. Show Slide 7. Share the information about Brer Rabbit- The origins of Brer Rabbit can be traced to the folk stories of western, central and southern Africa, where similar tales of trickster heroes continue to be part of the folk tradition. Amongst the Akan traditions of southern Ghana and the Ivory Coast, the trickster is usually the spider, Anansi; his stories are very similar in plot to the Brer Rabbit tales.
2. Ask the students if they know examples of trickster folktales. Students will view the Brer Rabbit video on Slide 8.
 - a. Show slides 7-9 next. The students will write about the Brer Rabbit.

Once the slides finish, ask the students in assigned partnerships or groups what they learned in the video. The teacher will give the discussion prompts: **One important fact**

is Brer Rabbit _____. I learned the moral was _____. The teacher will model for the students on how to complete the assignment. Set the timer for 5 minutes.

3. Once the timer stops, ask for student volunteers to share what they learned. Write their answers on the displayed T-chart graphic organizer.
4. Give out copies to the students of the T-chart graphic organizer. The teacher will model for students to be labeled Ghanaian Trickster Folktales on the left side and the African-American Trickster Folktales on the right side.
5. Write the discussion prompts sentences on the board for students. **One important fact is Brer Rabbit _____. I learned the moral was _____. The teacher will model for the students on how to complete the assignment.** The students will use these sentences to write what they learned about the EU.
6. Set the timer for 5 minutes for the students to complete the assignment as their exit ticket for the lesson.

Materials needed:

[Google Slides](#)-Use slides #1-9 for the lesson

Chart paper for Venn-Diagram for modeling for students during the lesson-labeled one side European and the other side United States

Technology to display the Google Slides lesson

Copies of Venn-Diagrams for the students

Venn Diagram to compare

<https://celt.cuw.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Venn-Diagrams-with-Lines-1.pdf>

Procedure:

Duration: 45-60 minutes. This is a whole-group summative assessment

1. The teacher will model to the students on how to label the Venn-Diagram on the left circle write Ghanaian Trickster Folktales, in the middle circle write the same, and the right circle write the African-American Trickster Folktales. Students will compare the two folktales.
2. Put the completed T-chart anchor chart about the Ghanaian and African American Trickster Folktales to be displayed for students to refer to during the assessment.
3. Display the slides for the United States and Ghana for a quick review with students. #1-9.
4. Tell the students they will complete the Venn Diagram. Use the sentence frames put on the board.
5. Write the discussion prompts sentences on the board for students. **One important fact is _____. I learned something new _____. The teacher will model for the students on how to complete the assignment.** The students will use these sentences to write what they learned about the folktales.
6. Give out Venn-Diagram paper to the students.
7. Set the timer for 20 minutes for the students to complete the assignment as their exit ticket for the lesson.

