

## About the Book

Text Type: Fiction/Folktale Page Count: 16 Word Count: 876

### Book Summary

Anansi is a clever spider who often tricks his friends with his clever tongue. In this retelling, while Anansi is trapped inside a watermelon, he tricks Possum into believing that the watermelon can talk. Possum proceeds to bring the watermelon to King Bear, who is outraged and throws the fruit, which frees Anansi when it lands and cracks open. Illustrations support the text.

## About the Lesson

### Targeted Reading Strategy

- Make, revise, and confirm predictions

### Objectives

- Make, revise, and confirm predictions
- Analyze characters
- Identify vowel digraphs *ai*, *ay*, and *ey*
- Identify articles
- Identify and use synonyms

### Materials

Green text indicates resources available on the website

- Book—*Anansi and the Talking Watermelon* (copy for each student)
- Chalkboard or dry erase board
- [Make, revise, and confirm predictions, analyze character, articles, synonyms worksheets](#)
- [Discussion cards](#)



Indicates an opportunity for students to mark in the book. (All activities may be demonstrated by projecting book on interactive whiteboard or completed with paper and pencil if books are reused.)

### Vocabulary

\*Bold vocabulary words also appear in a pre-made lesson for this title on [VocabularyA-Z.com](#).

#### Content words:

Story critical: ***absurd*** (adj.), ***gorged*** (v.), ***oddity*** (n.), ***pondered*** (v.), ***salivated*** (v.), ***unison*** (n.)

Enrichment: *acres* (n.), *furiously* (adv.), *rejoiced* (v.), *treacherous* (adj.)

## Before Reading

### Build Background

- Discuss traditional folktales that students have read or heard of, such as other Anansi tales or *How Zebras Got Their Stripes*. Ask them to name some common elements of folktales (people questioning the elements of the world, animals talking, wise person helping to solve a problem, and so on).

### Preview the Book

#### Introduce the Book

- Explain to students that a fun way to read that will help them understand a story is to guess, or predict, what they think will happen in a book.
- Give students a copy of the book and have them preview the front and back covers and read the title. Have students discuss what they see on the covers and offer ideas as to what kind of book this is and what it might be about.

#### Introduce the Reading Strategy: **Make, revise, and confirm predictions**

- Model how to make a prediction as you preview the book.  
*Think-aloud: Let's look at the front cover. I see a spider and a watermelon. Since the title of the book is Anansi and the Talking Watermelon, I think this might be a story about a spider named Anansi who finds a watermelon that talks. I'll have to read the book to find out.*
- Encourage students to make predictions about what will happen to the spider in the book.
- Show students the title page. Talk about the information on the page (title of book, author's name, illustrator's name).
- As students read, encourage them to use other reading strategies in addition to the targeted strategy presented in this section.

#### Introduce the Vocabulary

- Remind students of the strategies they can use to work out words they don't know. For example, they can use what they know about letter and sound correspondence to figure out the word. They can look for base words, prefixes, and suffixes. They can use the context to work out meanings of unfamiliar words.
- Model how to apply word-attack strategies. Direct students to page 4. Have them find the word *gorged*. Model how they can use context clues to figure out the meaning of the word. Ask students to look for words in the sentences around the unfamiliar word that might provide clues to the word's meaning. (*Anansi found the ripest watermelon, Anansi gorged himself as the juices slid down his legs, Anansi had his fill.*) Ask students to look at the illustrations for clues as to the meaning of the unfamiliar word. (The picture shows Anansi opening a ripe watermelon.)
- Explain to students that, from the context clues, you have decided that *gorged* must mean *ate greedily until very full*. Have students follow along as you reread the sentence on the page to confirm the meaning of the word.

#### Set the Purpose

- As students read, have them make predictions about what will happen based on what the characters say, do, and think. Remind them to revise or confirm their predictions as they learn more about the characters.
- Introduce and explain the [make-revise-and-confirm-predictions worksheet](#) to fill out as they make, revise, and confirm their predictions. Guide them to fill in the first column, *What I predict will happen*, before they begin reading.

### **During Reading**

#### Student Reading

- **Guide the reading:** Have students read to the end of page 8. Encourage them to read to find out if the spider finds a watermelon that talks. Have them underline the words or phrases in the book that tell about what he finds. If they finish before everyone else, they can go back and reread.
- When they have finished reading, ask students to tell what they have learned so far about Anansi and the talking watermelon.

## Lesson Plan *(continued)*

## Anansi and the Talking Watermelon

- Model making, confirming, and revising predictions.  
*Think-aloud: My prediction was that a spider named Anansi would find a watermelon that could talk. It looks as if the spider's name is Anansi, so that part of my prediction is correct. But the talking watermelon didn't talk on its own, so that part of my prediction is incorrect. From what I've read about Anansi, it sounds as if he is pretty clever. I think he will fool everyone who hears the watermelon talk. I'll have to keep reading to find out if my new prediction is correct.*
- Have students turn to page 6 in the book. Read the sentence *"I will trick Possum into thinking that his melon talks!"* Ask students what this tells them about how Anansi treats others. Ask them if they think he will learn how to treat others with more respect.
- Encourage students to continue to make, revise, and confirm their predictions as they read the remainder of the story. Have them fill out the middle column of their worksheet, *Changes in my prediction*.
- ✎ Have students make a question mark in their book beside any word they do not understand or cannot pronounce. Encourage them to use the strategies they have learned to read each word and figure out its meaning.

### After Reading

- Ask students what words, if any, they marked in their book. Use this opportunity to model how they can read these words using decoding strategies and context clues.

### Reflect on the Reading Strategy

- Discuss how making predictions about what will happen in the story keeps them actively involved in the reading process and helps them understand and remember what they read.
- *Think-aloud: I predicted that Anansi was so clever that he would fool everyone into thinking that the watermelon could talk. While he did fool most everyone, he didn't fool the king. The king got angry and threw the watermelon, so Anansi was able to escape after all.* Encourage students to fill in the last column of their worksheet, *What actually happened*.

### Teach the Comprehension Skill: **Analyze characters**


- **Discussion:** Ask students to identify the characters in the story (Anansi, Possum, Raccoon, Gopher, Rat, Squirrel, King Bear) and to say what they can tell about them from the illustrations. Ask students how they got to know the main character, Anansi (through the author's words). Ask how they think the story might sound if Anansi were telling the story.
- **Introduce and model:** Explain that there are many ways to learn about a character in a story. One way is to look at a character's words. Another way is to look for things the character does. Explain to students that a character's words, thoughts, and actions are how the author lets the reader get to know the character and form an opinion about him or her.
- Read pages 6 and 7. Ask students what Anansi's words tell about him. Remind students that Anansi thinks to himself, *"I know! I will trick Possum into thinking that his melon talks!"* and when Possum said that watermelons can't talk, Anansi says, *"Possum, you have never been a good listener."* (Anansi is clever, tricky, resourceful, and so on.)
- Read page 7 again. Ask students what the author's words tell about Possum. (He is gullible, trusting, and so on.)
- **Check for understanding:** Read pages 13 and 14. Ask students what the king's words and actions tell about him. (He is impatient, has a temper, and is full of himself.)
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the **analyze character worksheet**. If time allows, discuss their responses.

✎ **Extend the discussion:** Discuss the plot and whether or not students think it is believable and why. Instruct students to use the last page of the book to write which character they liked best and why. Have students read their responses to the group.

## Build Skills


### Phonics: Vowel digraphs *ai*, *ay*, and *ey*

- Write the word *wait* on the board and point to the letters *ai*. Explain to students that the letters *a* and *i* together stand for the long /a/ vowel sound they hear in the middle of the word *wait*.
- Explain that the *ai* letter combination is one of the letter combinations that stand for the long /a/ vowel sound. The other combinations are *ay* and *ey*. Explain to students that these combinations of letters together are called *long vowel digraphs*.
- Write the words *laid* and *lad* on the board and say them aloud. Ask students which word contains the same vowel sound as in *wait*. Make sure students can differentiate between the two vowel sounds. Give other examples if necessary.
- Ask students to name other words containing a digraph with the long /a/ vowel sound the same as in *wait*. Write each example on the board and invite volunteers to circle the vowel digraph in each word. Have students turn to page 13. Instruct them to find and circle the word *pay*. Write the word *away* on the board. Point out the letter combination that stands for the long /a/ vowel sound and ask students to blend the letters *a* and *y* together to make the same vowel sound as in *wait*. Explain that the long /a/ vowel sound comes from the digraph in the middle of this word. Next, run your finger under the letters as you blend the sounds in *pay*: /p/a/. Point out that even though there are three letters, only two sounds are blended together to form the word. Then have students blend the word aloud with you as you run your finger under the letters.
- Repeat the blending activity with the words *prey*, *spray*, and *pain*. Take one word at a time, pointing out the letter combinations that stand for the long /a/ vowel sound. When students have blended the words, ask volunteers to come to the board and circle the vowel digraph in each word. Have a student point to each vowel digraph as the rest of the group says the sound.

 **Check for understanding:** Have students turn to page 13 and reread it. Have them underline any words that contains the long /a/ vowel sound. Ask students to tell the words they underlined (*pay*, *day*, *remained*). Have students circle the vowel digraph in each word.

### Grammar and Mechanics: Articles

- Write the following sentence on the board: *He picked up a small, sharp stone to chip away the melon's rind*. Circle the articles *a* and *the* in the sentence. Explain to students that these two small words are called *articles* and that they are used to tell about nouns in general, such as *the dog* or *an apple*. Explain to students that the word *a* is another article and that it is used to tell about one specific noun, such as *a dog* or *a camera*.
- Write the following sentence on the board: *When I was at the zoo, I saw an elephant*. Underline the phrase *an elephant*. Explain that when a noun starts with a vowel (*elephant*), the article *an* is used instead of *a*.

 **Check for understanding:** Have students turn to page 4 and circle all of the articles. Ask volunteers to explain the use of each article.

- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [articles worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

### Word Work: Synonyms

- Review or explain that *synonyms* are words that have *similar meanings*. Provide an example by writing the word *small* on the board. Read it aloud and ask a volunteer to name a word with nearly the same meaning (*tiny*, *mini*, and so on).
- Explain that authors often vary the words they use to make the text more interesting. Explain to students that when using synonyms in writing, it is important to choose the correct word as a synonym to keep the meaning consistent and clear.

## Lesson Plan *(continued)*

## Anansi and the Talking Watermelon

- Have students turn to page 3. Say the word *peered* and have them locate it on the page. Ask volunteers to offer synonyms for *peered* (*stare, glare, gaze*, and so on) and list them on the board. Remind students that they can find synonyms for words in a thesaurus. Read the sentence on page 3, substituting *peered* with a new word. Have students check for accuracy of sentence meaning with the use of each synonym.
- **Check for understanding:** Repeat the process with the word *pondered* on page 6. Brainstorm synonyms and read the sentence on the page substituting *pondered* with a synonym from the list. Have students check each sentence's meaning.
- **Independent practice:** Introduce, explain, and have students complete the [synonyms worksheet](#). If time allows, discuss their answers.

### Build Fluency

#### Independent Reading

- Allow students to read their book independently. Additionally, partners can take turns reading parts of the book to each other.

#### Home Connection

- Give students their book to take home to read with parents, caregivers, siblings, or friends.

### Extend the Reading

#### Writing Connection

Show students how to make a web that will help them write character descriptions. Elicit headings, such as physical characteristics, family, age, friends, hobbies, pets, and so on. Instruct students to first choose a character and write his or her name in the center circle of the web. Then have students fill in the web. When students have completed their webs, have them write short descriptive paragraphs using the information they have written and draw pictures of the characters. Post on a bulletin board titled "What a Character!"

#### Social Studies Connection

Discuss with students the impact one's actions might have on others. Talk about how Anansi's decision to trick Possum impacted not only their day, but also that of Raccoon, Gopher, Rat, Squirrel, and King Bear. Relate this to student interaction and ask if they have ever had an experience where their actions affected others in a positive or negative way.

#### Skill Review

[Discussion cards](#) covering comprehension skills and strategies not explicitly taught with the book are provided as an extension activity. The following is a list of some ways these cards can be used with students:

- Use as discussion starters for literature circles.
- Have students choose one or more cards and write a response, either as an essay or as a journal entry.
- Distribute before reading the book and have students use one of the questions as a purpose for reading.
- Cut apart and use the cards as game cards with a board game.
- Conduct a class discussion as a review before the book quiz.

**Assessment****Monitor students to determine if they can:**

- consistently make logical predictions based on available pictures and text; revise and/or confirm predictions as they preview and read the book
- accurately analyze the thoughts, feelings, and actions of the book's characters during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly read vowel digraphs *ai*, *ay*, and *ey* during discussion
- correctly identify articles during discussion and on a worksheet
- correctly identify and create synonyms during discussion and on a worksheet

**Comprehension Checks**

- [Book Quiz](#)
- [Retelling Rubric](#)