

LESSON PLAN GUIDE

Your name: Leslie Compere

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Lesson Title: Arachne - Comparing two versions

Grade level: Grade 6

Length of lesson: Two class periods, one by Mrs. Gordon to introduce text book version, one by Mrs. Compere to introduce oral story version and conduct a compare and contrast venn diagram lesson with the class.

Purpose: This lesson focuses on exposing students to the importance of storytelling in creating cultural mythology (e.g., belief system to make sense of the world). The lesson will focus on a single myth, Arachne, told in two different ways; the textbook version and a first person version adapted from another print source. Hence, there will be similarities and differences in the two versions of the same story so students may draw comparisons and contrasts between them. Students will also compare and contrast experiencing a story "orally" with experiencing a story through text. This story comes from oral storytelling traditions so the versions found in print, vary. Students will be exposed to how the tellers and recorders of tales make them their "own".

Learning Outcome(s): Students will recognize that stories, such as folktales, legends, and myths, originating from oral traditions, often vary when recorded in print. Students will also recognize that details and vocabulary often differ dramatically between oral and print versions and that how a story is received (through analysis of print or by careful listening) can impact what is learned. At the end of the lesson the students will have an appreciation for why oral storytelling was a popular means of passing on traditions and customs and see how engaging stories in oral form can be.

Illinois Learning Standard(s) Addressed: (Late Elementary/Middle/Junior High)

1.C.2c: Compare and contrast the content and organization of selections.

2.A.3b: Describe how the development of theme, character, plot and setting contribute to the overall impact of a piece of literature.

2.A.3d: Identify ways that an author uses language structure, word choice and style to convey the author's viewpoint.

4.A.2a: Demonstrate understanding of the listening processes (e.g., sender, receiver, message) by summarizing and paraphrasing spoken messages orally and in writing in formal and informal situations.

4.A.2b: Ask and respond to questions related to oral presentations and messages in small and large group settings.

Common Core Standard(s) Addressed: (Grade 6)

Reading for literature 2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details: provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

Reading for literature 7: Compare and contrast the experience of reading a story, drama, or poem to listening to or viewing an audio, video or live version of the text, including contrasting what they "see" and "hear" when reading the text to what they perceive when they listen or watch.

Speaking & Listening 1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Speaking & Listening 2: Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. / Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally (grade 4/5 standard).

Standards for the 21st Century Learners:

1.1.6 - Read, view, and listen for information presented in any format (e.g., textual, visual, media, digital) in order to make inferences and gather meaning.

1.1.9 - Collaborate with others to broaden and deepen understanding.

Materials:

Needed by you:

- Practiced oral Arachne story adapted from "Arachne" found in *I am Arachne: Fifteen Greek and Roman Myths*.
- Textbook with other version of the Arachne myth.
- Compare & contrast matrix graphic organizers or Venn diagram

Needed by students:

- Listening ears "on", Attitudes at "good"
- Pencils
- Compare & contrast Venn diagram

Instructional procedures:

Focusing event:

Day 1 - Mrs. Gordon will introduce the textbook version of "Arachne".

Day 2 - I will remind the students that yesterday they were introduced to their textbook's version of the story, Arachne. Today, they will hear a different version of the myth and then they will compare and contrast the two versions of the myth. I will ask them if they can tell me what a myth is (will assume the answer is, "something that isn't true" or their text's definition, "stories of gods and goddesses". I will tell them that my understanding of the word myth/mythology is that it is a story that was told to help people understand their world and that mythology is the study of beliefs (usually in the form of stories) that helped people understand their world. For example, in Native American mythology, they told ghost and monster stories that were tied to specific places that were dangerous to children. By sharing these stories, they scared the children into staying away from these dangerous

places and then wouldn't have to worry about them accidentally hurting themselves while the adults were trying to get the work done necessary for survival. Many ancient cultures had myths for helping them understand their world, which supported their beliefs and helped their society function well.

Input from me:

Today we will revisit the mythical story of Arachne. This story is old; it is from the time period of the ancient Greeks but is not Greek. It is from the country of Lydia, which is today modern Turkey. The country of Lydia was at the center of many important trade routes between the ancient East and the Mediterranean, and the arts of spinning and weaving were one trade that the Lydians got from the Ancient East. By the time of the Ancient Greeks, Lydia was well known for its dyed yarns and weaving, so it makes sense that a story about pride in weaving would come from Lydia.

The story of Arachne is old, so it is one that has been told and retold over hundreds of years; today we will explore how the same story can vary by its teller and its recorder. We will begin with me, telling you the story of Arachne. When I ask you a question in the story, feel free to say the answer out loud.

Guided practice: *(application of knowledge by students)*

Day 2: The students in Mrs. Gordon's classes are used to pairing up into groups of 2-3 for small group work. Mrs. Gordon plans to be there to assist in moving the students into small groups if necessary. After the oral version of Arachne, I will tell the students they will now work in groups of 2-3 to compare (find what is similar or the same) and contrast (find what is dissimilar or different) in the two versions of the story. They will be using a Venn diagram graphic organizer. After they've worked a bit in their small groups, we will get together as a class and go over the organizer and discuss what was similar and what differed in the two versions of the story.

Closure *(how will you end the lesson?)*

Day 2:

The lesson will end with completion of the compare/contrast Venn diagram as a class and then they will be asked whether they liked reading and analyzing the textbook version of the story or hearing a story told to them best by show of hands. The lesson will conclude with me telling them that recent brain research has shown that people, in general, remember information told to them in the form of a story better and longer than information conveyed in other forms.

Check for understanding *(what questions will you ask and when to determine students' understanding?)*

Day 2:

I will walk around the various tables to see if the students are making progress on their compare and contrast matrix graphic organizers. I will offer prompts to students who appear to be

struggling, such as: Are all the characters the same? Is the beginning or the ending the same? What differences did you notice in vocabulary? What about differences in story structure? Was one more "formal"? Was one more "casual"? What about voice - who tells the story in your textbook? Who told the story today? (no, not Mrs. Compere, the story was being told by Arachne, herself). I will review the organizers after the Lesson Day to verify that the students understood the material and were able to complete the assessment and consider possible revisions to the entire lesson plan to improve understanding the next time it is taught.

Compare & Contrast Venn Diagram

(see last page)

What's next? (another related lesson, review, end of unit?) Mrs. Gordon will present *Why Monkeys Live in Trees*, from the text. A myth that deals with a similar theme, over confidence, as well as deceit.

Sources Consulted:

"Arachne." *Greek Myths*. By Ann Turnbull. Somerville, MA: Candlewick, 2010. 145-52. Print.

"Arachne." *I am Arachne: Fifteen Greek and Roman Myths*. By Elizabeth Spires. New York: Farrar, 2001. 2-5. Print. Greek myth retold in first person.

"The Story of Arachne (Greece)." *How & Why Stories: World Tales Kids can Read & Tell*. By Martha Hamilton and Mitch Weiss. Little Rock: August, 1999. 51-53. Print.

Oral Story of "Arachne" adapted by Leslie Compere from sources cited above:

I am just sitting here spinning and weaving and spinning and weaving...Oh my...where did you come from? I didn't see you there. Did you come to visit with me? Oh how lovely! Few people visit me, so many are afraid of spiders you see...with my eight delicate legs and my eight tiny eyes and of course my pincers...I am so glad you weren't scared!

Oh how rude of me, please allow me to introduce myself, I am Arachne. Have you heard of me? Really? I am not surprised. Let me spin and weave for you my story.

Once, long, long ago, I was just a simple girl from Lydia. I wasn't rich or beautiful but I was talented. Oh yes, I had been given a great gift from the gods, the ability to spin and weave and over the years I worked hard at improving my talent so it wasn't long before my work was so lovely that people began to come from near and far to see it. Well, all of this attention made me proud of my talent and how hard I worked to perfect it. But then my pride turned into hubris. Do you know what hubris is? Well hubris is when you think you can do something better than everyone else, even

better than the gods. I was so proud of my spinning and weaving that I started boasting that I could weave better than the goddess, Athena, herself. Yes, I said I could weave better than the goddess, Athena, herself. Now that's hubris!

So one day this haggard old woman came to visit and said, "I've heard you can spin and weave better than the goddess, Athena, herself...now think carefully before you answer, is what I heard true?"

But did I think carefully before I answered? Nope! I boasted! Yes, I said, that's right, I can spin and weave better than the goddess, Athena, herself. And do you know what happened next? Well, that creaky old woman transformed into guess who? Yep, you got it, the goddess, Athena, herself. And do you know what else? Well, the goddess, Athena, herself was angry, and not just a little angry, she was a lot angry, she was crazy angry, so angry she challenged me to a weaving contest.

Do you know what I did? Well, I'll tell you what I should have done. I should have gotten down on my knees and apologized to the goddess, Athena, herself for my hubris, but of course, that's not what I did. Nope, not me. Not prideful Arachne. I accepted the challenge to a weaving contest with the goddess, Athena, herself. Dumb right? You bet! But my hubris had gotten the best of me. I was an amazing spinner and weaver, it's true, and I had worked hard all my life perfecting my talent. I knew I was the best spinner and weaver in the mortal world so I figured I was probably the best spinner and weaver in the entire world, so why couldn't I be better at spinning and weaving than the goddess, Athena, herself? So I accepted the challenge and set up my loom while the goddess, Athena, herself did the same. Do you know what else I did? Well I decided that not only was I going to accept the challenge, I was going to really try to win the challenge, that's right I was going to try to outshine the gods, to outshine the goddess, Athena, herself.

The goddess, Athena, herself wove a lovely tapestry in golds and silvers depicting the glory of the gods in the heavens. So I wove a brilliant tapestry in every hue of the rainbow depicting the glory of the natural, mortal world on earth. My tapestry was so realistic a butterfly landed on it to sip from one of my woven flowers...so I did weave a lovely tapestry. Unfortunately for me, my tapestry gave the impression that I felt the mortal world was better and more beautiful than the gods in the heavens.

Guess what happened next? Do you think the goddess, Athena, herself was pleased with my beautiful work? Do you think the goddess, Athena, herself appreciated me elevating the world of mortals above that of the gods? You are right again! Nope! She did not appreciate my hubris at all. Instead, I made her so angry she decided to punish me and my children for all time. In acknowledgement of my talent at spinning and weaving; me and my children still spin and weave but now we have no colors for our weaving and now we must weave in dark corners and dirty windows away from adoring eyes and now we are tiny and rarely noticed and now we must spin and weave to survive. I am Arachne and I am now a spider, and I have eight delicate legs, and eight tiny eyes, and of course pincers and I must weave to survive. I am Arachne, I am a spider and I have learned the lesson of hubris and I am spinning and weaving and spinning and weaving and have spun you a story, I hope you liked it.