Standards-Based Literacy Lesson

NCTE/IRA Standards: 3, 4, 5, 6.9, 11, 12

Ananse’s Feast

Ananse’s Feast is an Ashanti tale, retold by Tololwa M. Mollel and illustrated by Andrew Glass (Clarion Books, 1997). It fits into a fourth-grade unit on literature genre.

Before Reading the Plan

1. Recall with a peer what you know about activating prior knowledge, vocabulary development, and modes of reading. These concepts are your prior knowledge for reading and evaluating this literacy lesson.
2. Read the text and study the art of Ananse’s Feast on the following pages.
3. Read the Teacher Preparation section which explains the decision-making process used in planning this lesson.

While Reading the Plan

1. Notice how prior knowledge is activated and how vocabulary is developed. Also note mode(s) of reading.
2. Think about changes you might make in the lesson, and be ready to discuss your ideas.

Teacher Preparation

This plan was developed for a fourth-grade class of twenty-eight students. The class includes some ELLs, some students who attend special classes for learning problems, some children who come from affluent families, and some others who are on free lunch. In other words, it is a typical class with a range of backgrounds. The entire class will read Ananse’s Feast as part of a larger unit of study in which they read other traditional tales independently. The following outlines the steps used to plan the lesson and gives a rationale for each.

Unit Activities Prior to Reading the Book Ananse’s Feast

1. The class has been studying various genres, including folk tales. Students are using a feature analysis to understand and compare the different genres.
2. The media specialist has provided many books and computer-supported media for independent use during the unit. Students have been encouraged to bring books from home for the duration of the unit. Students whose families are from other cultures have shared folk tales they know. Some families have come to the class to tell such tales.

Specific Outcomes Developed in This Lesson

1. Vocabulary: use context to determine meaning
2. Constructing meaning: predicting and drawing conclusions
3. Literature: recognizing characteristics of the folk tale genre
4. Attitudes and habits: increased knowledge about genre; increased knowledge of and interest in reading for pleasure; increased awareness of the contribution of art to text
The earth was hot and barren and no one had much to eat except Ananse the Spider. Before the drought, clever Ananse had stored away food from his farm, and now he decided to treat himself to a feast.
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But somehow the aroma of food escaped and reached Akye the Turtle, who was searching for something to eat on a dusty riverbank nearby. "Till drop in on my old friend Akye," thought hungry Akye. "I’m sure he’ll spare me a bite."

Ananse shut his door and windows, and sealed all the cracks in the walls of his old hut. "I don’t want the delicious smell of my cooking to bring hungry visitors," he muttered.
A mouse was setting the table when he heard a knock on the door. He stood still and listened.

"Whoever it is, it will soon go away," he thought hopefully.

The knocking didn’t stop, however, and Amaase...

“...had to open the door. He didn’t want to start his feast with anyone. Yet he couldn’t deny his friend. Akare.

“Ah, it is you, Akare,” said Amaase, smiling. “Come in and be my guest!”

continued
He was reaching for the rice when Aronze stopped him. "Your hands are dirty," he said. "In my house, it is only good manners to wash your hands before eating.

Abra stared at the mountain of food. He didn't know where to start. "I'll eat the golden-puffed rice first," he thought. "How delicious it looks! Oh, look at the steaming hot soy sauce and the sauteed peppers over the soup! No, I'll start on the spicy coconut rice and the creamy beans with ground peanuts..."
Alvy looked at his hands, dirty and sticky from his
manner of walking on all fours. “Can I have some
water to wash them?” he asked.
“I’m sorry, we need all the water,” replied
Amos. “You must go and wash your hands at the
river.”
But greedy Ananse had eaten up the rice and the beans.

“No matter,” thought Akye. “I’ll have the steaming hot soft yam and the pepper—”

“Look, your hands, you didn’t wash them,” Ananse said with a frown.

Akye looked at his dusty hands and shook his head. “Strange—I did wash them. Well, I’ll go and wash them again.”
At the river Akye rubbed, scrubbed, rinsed, and wiped his hands. Then up the riverbank he clambered,

\begin{quote}
a-kye-kye-die
a-kye-kye-die,
\end{quote}
his empty stomach groaning. Oye-ya-yaai oye-ya-yaai! as he thought of the steaming hot soft yam and the pepper soup.

He got back to find selfish Ananse finishing up the yam and the soup.
"Your hands are still dirty!" mumbled Ananse.
"But I just washed them!" protested Akye.
"You don't seem to have done a good job of it," replied Ananse, laughing. "Go back to the river!"
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Ak ye suddenly realized how Ananse had tricked him. He only smiled, however, and said to well-feel Ananse: "Thank you for inviting me to the feast. I hope one day I can repay you."

By the time Ak ye returned from the river, counting Ananse had eaten all the food and was wearing a big satisfied grin.
A few days later, the drought ended. Rain came down. The earth bloomed and food crops burst forth. Rivers flowed, teeming with fish and crabs. It rained so much that farms became swampy. The harvest was late, and Ananse, who was not a good farmer, had little to eat. So he was delighted to receive an invitation to a feast at the turtle's home under the river.
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Then Ananaw had an idea. “I know how I can get to the forest,” he exclaimed. He filled the enormous pockets of his robe with pebbles from the beach.

Then he climbed to the very top of the tree and came streaking down. But bul bul bul bul, he sank.

Down to the forest!

He was too light to stay underwater, though.

And bul bul bul bul, he rose, floating back to the surface.

He climbed higher on the tree and dived again.

But bul bul bul bul, he sank.
“What!” cried Ananse.

“I put this necklace on the table. It’s one of kind. And you broke it!”

Ananse was seated at a table laden with plump mounds of juice, tender crabs, and the most succulent fish of the sea. With his heavy breathing, he had no trouble swallowing down a huge bite. The turtle nodded his bony head. “No problem.”

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And although he tried hard to cling to the table...
Unable to return to the feast without his heavy robe, Anansi sat shivering on the bank, his empty stomach wrailing. "Oui! oui! oui-pou-pou-pou!" he cried. "Oui! oui! oui-pou-pou-pou!"

As he thought of the plump mounds of juicy, tender crabs...
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continued

Some time later, well-fed Akye walked out of the river.

With a big satisfied grin he came to squat alongside his old fire. Akye muttering, "What a delicious feast that was!" said Akye, rubbing his full belly with pleasure. "Thank you so much for cooking. We would not have been the same without you. Let's make sure we have another feast soon!"

Akye sat down to enjoy his meal, feeling content and grateful. His friends around him chuckled as they shared stories of their own adventures in the great beyond. The night was warm, the stars shone brightly, and Akye knew he was exactly where he belonged.

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Chapter 6 • Beyond Beginning Literacy: Decoding, Vocabulary, and Meaning
**About This Lesson**

1. Prior knowledge (including some vocabulary) will be activated by reviewing the ongoing semantic feature analysis about genre.
2. As a whole class, we will use the preview-and-predict strategy for the book, discussing the title and the art.
3. Two words—barren and drought—occur on the first page and are critical to understanding the story. These will be taught using the preview-in-context strategy. Although several other words may be unfamiliar to students, students should be able to use independent strategies to infer meaning from context.
4. Students will choose words for the self-collection strategy as they read.
5. Students will choose which mode they prefer for reading: cooperative or independent. They will also be encouraged to reread the book in preparation for reading it aloud to students in a lower grade.

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**Introducing Ananse’s Feast**

**Activity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procedures and Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Display ongoing semantic feature analysis chart that compares various genres and reviews what students know so far about the characteristics of folk tales.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Note: Students are reading this book as part of a unit on genre, so the appropriate prior knowledge to activate for this story is as much related to the genre as it is to the story itself.</td>
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1. Distribute books to students. Read the title aloud, and then allow a few minutes for students to leaf through the book and look at the art.
2. Lead students to make predictions about the story based on the art, the title, and what they know about folk tales. Record the predictions for later discussion.

**Vocabulary strategy: preview in context**

Have students follow as you read aloud the first page of the story, which contains the key words barren and drought. Use the steps of the preview-in-context strategy (page 265) to help students determine the meaning of these two key words. 

Note: Students should consider the art as part of the context for these two words.
### Reading and Responding to Ananse’s Feast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revise predictions</td>
<td>Have students read the second page of the story to themselves and think about whether they want to add to or change earlier predictions.</td>
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<td>Note: This activity reinforces for students that with additional information about a text, one’s predictions about “what’s going to happen” will change. Predictions should therefore be continuously revised as one reads.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Read the story</td>
<td>1. Review modes of reading from which students may choose.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Allow students to choose their preferred mode.</td>
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<td>3. Have students read the rest of the story.</td>
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<td>Note: Partner or independent reading are likely choices for most students. Of course, if there is a need in your class, you could do a guided reading with some or all of the students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Return to predictions</td>
<td>Revisit predictions made prior to reading. Discuss.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genre study</td>
<td>1. Add to the chart with characteristics of folk tales. Discuss how Ananse’s Feast conformed to the characteristics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Some students may want to compare Ananse’s Feast to other folk tales in terms of theme or moral (for example: Aesop’s fable about the ant and the grasshopper).</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary; self-collection strategy</td>
<td>Complete the self-collection strategy steps (page 268).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note: When revisiting vocabulary in a selection, you have opportunities to reinforce whatever other strategies students have been learning. For example, if you had been teaching about inflected endings or suffixes, you might direct attention to examples of these in the story.</td>
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### Extending Ananse’s Feast

1. Students may add vocabulary words to their individual word banks.
2. Students may “rehearse” reading Ananse’s Feast aloud for a “reading buddy” program with a lower grade.
3. Students may compare the structure of this folk tale with that of other folk tales they have read.
4. Students may write an adaptation of this story using another setting and other characters.
Standards continue to be important at the upper elementary and middle school levels. The main focus of students in terms of decoding is the application and expansion of the basic skills and strategies they have learned. Students develop two reading vocabularies: recognition and meaning. This chapter focused on meaning vocabulary and what we know about how it grows and how it is learned.

Effective vocabulary development includes helping students become aware of words, wide reading and extensive writing, and the use of strategies. The ultimate goal of all vocabulary development is for students to become independent word learners.

This chapter presented suggestions and guidelines for supporting effective vocabulary growth as well as expanding students' decoding skills and strategies. It suggested several strategies for direct teaching of vocabulary. The chapter emphasizes, however, that students learn vocabulary primarily through wide reading and extensive writing.

For Additional Reading