Jennifer Maloney

Literature Lesson: A Story A Story By Gail Haley

Book: A STORY A STORY

Grade Level: 2nd Grade

Time Estimate: 20 - 25 Minutes

**Learning Outcomes**

Students will watch and listen to an authentic African folktale and investigate the central message of the story: the ways determination and critical thinking can help someone reach their goal or goals.

Students will get to see a book brought to life as a movie, and discuss the differences when books are made into movies and vise versa.

**Rationale**

The purpose for this lesson is to explore African culture through authentic literature and describe details from the story (beginning, middle, end) through various modes of representation to show understanding.

**Common Core Standards**

* Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.
* Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.
* Describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action.
* Recount or describe key ideas or details from a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media.
* Create audio recordings of stories or poems; add drawings or other visual displays to stories or recounts of experiences when appropriate to clarify ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

**Materials**

* Projector
* YouTube Access
* Voice recorders
* Paper / coloring supplies

**Pre-Reading**

Explain to students that they are going to hear this story via YouTube and it is going to be played more like a movie. Ask them if they have ever heard of any books being made into movies. If students do not have prior knowledge in this area explain to them that sometimes when a book is made into a movie the story includes different parts, parts are changed, or parts are left out. Tell students that the clip they are going to watch is very similar to the story, but with animation and authentic voices (African accent). The story they are going to watch is an African Folktale. Tell students, like other folktales you have heard; this stories theme is about challenge and achievement. Let students know that they should be thinking about the message that the story is telling them, what are they learning from this folktale, what is the problem and resolution in the story.

Start the video clip and play until just before the narration starts. Ask students from what they have seen so far if they can make any predictions about this folktale and what it might be about. See if they notice the creatures, or have any guesses based on folktales they already have learned.

**During Reading**

Watch up until 1:38. Ask students what the world would be like if there were no stories. Why do we need stories, what do they do for us? See if students can recall basic information about who the characters are so far. The Sky God is? Who is the old man?

Watch up until 2:30. Ask students if they think Anansi will be able to get all three creatures. Why / why not? (Talk about being old, hint at determination and that most African Folktales are encouraging stories of wit and wisdom.)

Watch up until 4:45. Ask students what is happening so far in the story. Do they still have the same prediction as before about Anansi? If not how did their prediction change, what is Anansi doing? How is Anansi getting the creatures? See if students come up with the word trick – he is tricking them. If students come up with this at this point tell them there are many folktales that involve characters that trick other characters to achieve a goal and these are called “trickster” tales. (If students do not come up with this at this point save it for later.)

Stop at 7:00. Ask students how they think the Sky God will react when he sees that Anansi got what he requested. Will he give Anansi the stories?

**Post-Reading**

At the end of the story talk again about how Anansi gets the three creatures, he tricks them. Explain here again, or for the first time that these are called “trickster” tales.

Talk about the point of the story and what was learned. Students may discuss that just because the man was old doesn’t mean he could accomplish his goal. If you set your mind to something you can do it.

Play the video one more time with no interruptions. As students are watching have them think about how they could create their own audio retelling this story and create artwork to go with it.

After the video is done the second time split students up into small groups or pairs to discuss and map out the story. Use a beginning, middle, end diagram, or problem and solution graphic organizer for students to map out thoughts. Have students then record themselves talking about the story in their own words. Students can take turns recording. Students are also responsible for visuals that match their audio story.

**Extensions**

Read another Anansi version, Anansi does the Impossible, or Anansi the Spider, and compare / contrast the stories. This could be done with a graphic organize, a hot seat discussion with Anansi from one book and Anansi from the other, talking about what is the same, what makes them different. In one version Anansi is a man, in the others he is a spider. This aligns with the follow common core standard: Compare and contrast two or more versions of the same story (e.g., Cinderella stories) by different authors or from different cultures.

Talk about all the vocabulary from the story: flamboyant, defenseless, tatter, latex gum, yams, furious, descendants, vine creepers, calabash. Discuss what the words mean, use pictures to help students understand the meanings.

Science: Do further research about the hornets and what can happen if a hornet does sting you. Where do you find hornets, are they only in Africa, where in Africa are they? Have students present their information via various modes.

Art: Have students create a calabash.

*\*This would be a great lesson to do during a unit on traditional fairy tales, you could integrate trickster tales from African and other regions into the unit and allow students to compare and contrast the tales from various regions. I really enjoyed this story and I think it would be one that would hook the interest of kids at this age level!\**