

**EXPLORING
THE WORLD
THROUGH
STORY**

**Curriculum
Samples**



DREW CAMPBELL

EXPLORING THE WORLD THROUGH STORY...

- teaches world literature for grades K-8
- includes literary analysis, writing, vocabulary, and (in grades K-2) geography
- provides carefully scaffolded writing activities
- includes memory work at all levels
- approaches literature from a secular perspective
- emphasizes cultural awareness and appreciation
- prepares students to study world literature in high school and beyond
- is engaging for kids and easy for parents to teach

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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EWS BOOKLISTS

PRIMARY LEVELS (K-2)

Level A: Fables and Pourquoi Tales

- Aesop's Fables for Children* - Milo Winter
[paperback](#) | [free online](#)
- How and Why Stories* - Martha Hamilton & Mitch Weiss
[paperback](#) | [hardcover](#) | [ebook](#) | [audiobook](#)
- DK Countries of the World: Our World in Pictures* - Andrea Mills
[hardcover](#) | [ebook](#)

Level B: Trickster Tales

- Trickster Tales: Forty Folk Stories from Around the World* - Josepha Sherman
[Paperback](#)
- The Adventures of Brer Rabbit and Friends* - Karima Amin
[Paperback](#)
- African-American Folktales for Young Readers* - Richard & Judy Dockery Young (eds.)
[Paperback](#)
- DK Countries of the World: Our World in Pictures* - Andrea Mills
[hardcover](#) | [ebook](#)

Level C: Wonder Tales

- Best-Loved Folktales of the World* - Joanna Cole (ed.)
[Paperback](#)
- Wonder Tales from Around the World* - Heather Forest
[Paperback](#) | [Audiobook](#)
- DK Countries of the World: Our World in Pictures* - Andrea Mills
[Hardcover](#) | [eBook](#)

ELEMENTARY LEVELS (3-5)

Level D: Wisdom Tales 1

- ❑ *Classic Tales from India* - Vatsala Sperling and Harish Johari
[Paperback](#) | [Kindle](#)
- ❑ *Treasury of Egyptian Mythology* - Donna Jo Napoli
[Hardcover](#) | [Kindle](#) | [Audible](#)
- ❑ *Treasury of Bible Stories* - Donna Jo Napoli
[Hardcover](#) | [Kindle](#)

Level E: Wisdom Tales 2

- ❑ *Buddha* - Demi
[Paperback](#)
- ❑ *Twenty Jataka Tales* - Noor Inayat Khan
[Paperback](#) | [Audible](#)
- ❑ *DK Illustrated Family Bible* (1997 edition)- Claude-Bernard Costecalde, ed.
[Hardcover](#)
- ❑ *DK Greek Myths* - Jean Menzies
[Hardcover](#) | [Kindle](#) | [Audible](#)

Level F: Wisdom Tales 3

- ❑ *Muhammad* - Demi
[Hardcover](#)
- ❑ *Tales from the Quran and Hadith* - Rana Safvi
[Paperback](#) | [Kindle](#)
- ❑ *DK Norse Myths* - Matt Ralphs
[Hardcover](#) | [Kindle](#) | [Audible](#)
- ❑ *Tales of a Chinese Grandmother* - Frances Carpenter
[Hardcover](#) | [Paperback](#) | [Kindle](#)
- ❑ *Chinese Myths and Legends* - Shelley Fu
[Hardcover](#) | [Kindle](#)

MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVELS (6-8)

Level G: Heroic Tales

Unit 1: Gilgamesh and Mwindo

- ☐ *Gilgamesh the Hero* - Geraldine McCaughrean
[Hardcover](#)
- ☐ *The Magic Flyswatter* - Aaron Shepard
[Hardcover](#) | [Paperback](#) | [Kindle](#) | [Online](#) (free)

Unit 2: Beowulf and Popol Vuh

- ☐ *Beowulf* - Michael Morpurgo
[Paperback](#) | [Kindle](#)
- ☐ *Popol Vuh: A Retelling* - Ilan Stavans
[Hardcover](#) | [Kindle](#)

Unit 3: Mulan and Antigone

- ☐ *Mulan: Five Versions of a Classic Chinese Legend with Related Texts* -
Shiamin Kwa & Wilt L. Idema, eds.
[Hardcover](#) | [Paperback](#) | [Kindle](#)
- ☐ *The Story of Antigone* - Ali Smith
[Paperback](#)

Level H: Classical Epics (forthcoming 2024)

Iliad/Mahabharata, Odyssey/Ramayana, Aeneid/Shakuntala

Level I: Rascalry & Romance (forthcoming 2025)

Robin Hood/Water Margin, Romeo & Juliet/Butterfly Lovers, King
Arthur/Don Quixote/Monkey King

EWS Level A Overview

Grade level: Kindergarten

Age range: 4-6 years

Genre: Fables and Pourquoi Tales

Writing focus: Answering comprehension questions orally

Schedule: One short lesson per week

Includes world geography with map and globe work

LESSON A-4

“How Tigers Got Their Stripes”

How and Why Stories, p. 18

Vietnam

Literature

Teaching Notes

Ask if the child remembers the Nigerian story you read two weeks ago about Lightning and Thunder. Remind them that such stories are called *pourquoi tales* and that they are creative explanations of why things are the way they are, or how they came to be that way.

Introduce today’s story:

“Today we are reading another *pourquoi* tale. This one is from Vietnam, a country in the southeastern part of the continent of Asia. The title of the story is ‘How Tigers Got Their Stripes.’”

Read the story aloud, and show the illustration so the child can visualize the trapped tiger.

Vocabulary

defeat: beat in a fight

terrified: very scared

Comprehension Questions

Q: In the beginning of the story, the tiger watches the water buffalo and is puzzled. Why?

A: The water buffalo is strong but works hard for the human farmer.

Q: What does the buffalo say the farmer has?

A: Wisdom.

Q: How does the farmer trick the tiger?

A: He ties him to a tree.

Q: Is the tiger wiser at the end of the story than he was at the beginning? What lesson did the tiger learn?

A: Yes. He learned not to trust humans!

Connections

The notes on page 20 of *How and Why Stories* explain how the tiger's stripes provide camouflage in tall grass.

There are many good nonfiction books for young children about tigers, such as [National Geographic Readers: Tigers](#). (One photo features a tiger biting a deer; if your child is sensitive to these types of images, you may want to skip that page or choose a different book.)

Due to extensive hunting, wild tigers are critically endangered in Vietnam, as they are throughout the world. You can learn more about tiger conservation efforts at the [World Wildlife Federation](#).

The water buffalo is an important domestic animal in much of Asia, including Vietnam. They are used both as farming animals and for their milk. Buffalo mozzarella is a delicious soft cheese from Italy, made from water buffalo milk, that you may be able to find in your local supermarket.

Geography

Map Work and Reading

Locate and mark **Vietnam** on your world map and read page 157 in the geography text.

Memory Work

Review the following memory work items:

Q: What is a world map?

A: A world map is a flat drawing of the Earth.

Q: What is a globe?

A: The Earth is shaped like a sphere (a ball), and the globe shows what the Earth looks like from outer space.

Q: What are the cardinal directions?

A: The cardinal directions are North, East, South, and West.

EWS Level B Overview

Grade level: 1

Age range: 5-7 years

Genre: Trickster Tales - African and African American focus

Writing focus: Oral narrations, with and without prompts

Schedule: One lesson per week

Includes world geography with map and globe work; copywork; memory work

LESSON B-1

“Why Anansi Owns Every Story”

Trickster Tales, p. 15

Ashanti (Ghana)

Literature

Teaching Notes

► **Printables Needed for this Lesson:** Story Summary Narration Copywork

Folktales are stories that originate in popular (“folk”) culture and were traditionally passed on by word of mouth. As part of an oral tradition, they do not have authors per se. Instead, we name the people or country that the story originated from, if known, with the understanding that there are as many variations of the tale as there are storytellers. The core literature texts for this program list that information, and I’ve provided it in the lesson plans for each tale.

There are many folktale genres, including fables, pourquoi (“how and why”) tales, wonder tales, wisdom tales, and so on. This year we will be focusing on trickster tales. **Tricksters are literary characters whose craftiness delights and edifies listeners.** Despite their sly ways and moral ambiguity, they often function as **culture heroes**, bringing gifts, skills, and knowledge to the people.

Anansi is one of the best-known trickster characters in the world. His tales are told in Africa and throughout the African diaspora, especially in North America and the Caribbean. We’ll be reading a number of his stories this year. This story usually has four tasks for Anansi to complete, but in this version, there are only three.

Introduce today’s story to your child with words like these:

Today we are reading a trickster tale from the Ashanti people of Ghana, in Africa. The title of the story is “Why Anansi Owns Every Story.” Tricksters are characters who like to play pranks on people.

Vocabulary

dejected: disappointed and sad

python: a large snake

gourd: a fruit with a hard skin

calabash: a kind of gourd often hollowed out, dried, and used as a container

perilous: dangerous

Narration

In Level A of this program, comprehension questions helped your child understand the content of stories and relate those stories to their own lives. In Level B, we will help them tell the story in their own words. This is called **oral narration**. The goal at this stage is to elicit a **brief summary of the story**, with all of the action in the correct order.

Some children will need little or no prompting to narrate at length and may echo the language of the story verbatim. In that case, simply **scribe (write down) your child's narration** on a copy of the sheet provided on page 11. If the narration is too long for you to write down, you can record it with your computer or phone. It isn't necessary to scribe or record every single narration, especially if they are long; record one every 6–8 lessons to track student progress.

Other children—perhaps the majority—will benefit from more explicit structure. The **Story Summary graphic organizer** on page 10 provides the student with helpful scaffolding to narrate the main points of a story. Here is how the parts of the graphic organizer correspond to the aspects of story structure.

Somebody	Character (usually the main character)
Wanted	Goal, orientation
But	Conflict, complication
So	Plot, action, episodes
Then	Resolution, conclusion, outcome

If your child needs help narrating today's story, ask them the following questions, and write down their answers on the Story Summary sheet as indicated.

Instructor: This story is about somebody. Who is it about?

Student: Anansi.

Instructor: Yes! Anansi is the *main character*. He's the person the story is about. Let's write his name in this box, next to the word *Somebody*. And what did Anansi want at the beginning of the story?

Student: To own all the stories in the world.

Instructor: That's right. That goes next to the word *Wanted*. Anansi wanted to own all the stories. But why wasn't he able to do that right away?

Student: He had to buy them from the Sky God, Nyame.

(Your child may not remember the name of the Sky God. That's fine; just supply it.)

Instructor: What did Anansi have to do to buy the stories from Nyame?

Student: He had to bring three animals to Nyame.

Again, you may need to supply the answer for your child. They may also give a partial answer or one that is out of order, such as "Anansi had to trap a snake." Encourage any correct answers the child provides and help fill in the blanks for them: "That's right! How many animals did Anansi have to catch altogether?"

Instructor: Correct. Let's write that in the box next to *But*: "he had to buy them from Nyame by bringing him three animals." How did Anansi go about catching these animals? They were pretty dangerous, weren't they?

Student: He tricked them.

Instructor: Yes. Let's write that here, next to the word *So*: "Anansi tricked the animals and brought them to Nyame." What happened at the end? Did Anansi get what he wanted?

Student: Yes, after Anansi brought him all the animals, Nyame gave him the stories.

Instructor: Great. We'll write that down here, after *Then*. Now we have a summary of the whole story. Let's use that to make an oral narration.

Here is how the graphic organizer will look when completed for today's story:

Somebody	Anansi
Wanted	To own all the stories
But	He had to buy the stories from Nyame, the Sky God, by bringing him three dangerous animals.
So	Anansi tricked the animals and brought them to Nyame.
Then	Nyame gave him the stories.

Now ask your child to tell the story back to you, using the information you've written on the graphic organizer and prompting them as necessary. Write down the narration on the sheet provided and date it for your records.

A narration based on this outline might sound like this (keywords from the graphic organizer are underlined for emphasis):

Anansi wanted to own all the stories in the world, but he had to buy them from Nyame, the Sky God, by bringing him three dangerous animals. So Anansi tricked the animals and brought them to Nyame. Then Nyame gave Anansi all the stories.

If your child can answer the narration prompts but balks at giving a complete narration, you can also ask them to draw a picture of Anansi or of an episode from the story. Sometimes children will hesitate to narrate during lesson time but will happily retell the story to a family member or friend later. This is a perfectly acceptable way to ease into narration.

Copywork

Using **My Copywork sheet on page 12**, write the following sentence as a model at the top, including the quotation marks. **Highlight the features** of the sentence to your child: capital letters, punctuation, and any challenging spelling words. Then ask your child to copy the sentence in their best handwriting.

“From now on, all stories belong to you.”

Geography

Map Work and Reading

Locate and mark **Ghana** on your world map, and read page 56 of the geography text.

If you completed EWS Level A, some countries will already be marked on your map. Review the appropriate pages of the geography text.

Memory Work

At the beginning of this year, your student will review the geography memory work taught in Level A. This gives newcomers to the program a chance to establish a good foundation for Level B knowledge and reinforces the memory work for children who completed Level A.

➤ **Review** the following memory work items:

Q: What is a world map?

A: A world map is a flat drawing of the Earth.

Q: What is a globe?

A: The Earth is shaped like a sphere (a ball), and the globe shows what the Earth looks like from outer space.

Q: What are the cardinal directions?

A: The cardinal directions are North, East, South, and West.

If you are teaching this material to your child for the first time, use the following explanations and demonstrations. Then read the questions and answers above to your child and **ask them to repeat the answers to you three times.**

To teach the world map and globe definitions, show the child both, and explain the difference between them: the map is a drawing of the Earth's surface, while the globe shows it in space.

To teach the cardinal directions, explain to your child that **the sun rises in the eastern part of the sky every morning.** Show your child where that is in real

life. If possible, go outdoors and show them a stable physical landmark to the east; otherwise, show them which wall in your home is (roughly) in the east.

Show them that, if they stand with the east at their right hand, they will be facing north, south will be behind them, and west to their left.

Now look at your world map, and point out the **compass rose** to your child. Show them how the four cardinal directions are labeled (usually N, E, S, and W) and what those abbreviations stand for. Explain that, on most maps, **North is toward the top, East toward the right, South toward the bottom, and West toward the left.**

During the coming week, have your child **practice locating the cardinal directions** both indoors and outdoors. If your child has trouble remembering the clockwise order of the directions, you can teach them the mnemonic device “**Never Eat Slimy Worms.**”

EWS Level C Overview

Grade level: 2

Age range: 6-8 years

Genre: Wonder Tales - Fairy tales from around the globe

Writing focus: Transition from oral narrations to brief written summaries

Schedule: One longer or two shorter lessons per week

Includes world geography with map and globe work; copywork and dictation; memory work

LESSON C-11

“The Frog Prince”

Best-Loved Folktales, p. 95

Germany

Literature

Teaching Notes

► **Printables:** Story Summary Triples Three Acts Narration
Copywork

M-6

M-7

This story falls into the broad category of the “animal bridegroom” tale, the best known of which is the literary fairy tale “Beauty and the Beast.” Unlike Belle, the princess in “The Frog Prince” is not kind toward the enchanted bridegroom. Freudian interpretations of this story abound, but even young children will immediately recognize the valuable lessons it conveys: **Keep your promises and don’t judge a book by its cover.**

The short episode at the end, in which the prince’s servant Henry is released from three iron bands around his heart, feels tacked on, and it is possible that it was borrowed from another story altogether. The recombining of story elements is a common feature of oral storytelling. Be that as it may, the coda gives a nod to the virtue of loyalty.

Vocabulary

bemused: confused, puzzled, bewildered

betake himself: return

hastily: quickly

thy: your

Narration

This story fits the Three Acts structure. Use the graphic organizer to help your child narrate the tale, prompting them with the following questions. (Tell them that they can leave out the part at the end about Henry.)

1. What happened when the princess lost her ball?
2. What happened when the frog arrived at the palace?
3. What happened at the end of the story?

Act I: Orientation	The princess lost her ball, and the frog got it back for her. He made her promise to be his companion. The princess agreed but then ran away.
Act II: Complication	The frog came to the palace and asked to sit with her, eat from her plate, and sleep in her bed.
Act III: Resolution	The princess threw the frog against the wall, and he turned into a prince.

Today's copywork sums up the message of the story: **Always keep your word.** Discuss this lesson with your child.

- Why is it important to keep promises?
- Are there situations when it's all right *not* to keep a promise?
- What should you do if you realize you can't keep a promise?

Copywork

“That which you have promised in thy time of necessity, must you now perform.”

Geography

Map Work and Reading

None

Memory Work

> Introduce and review:

Refer to map M-6 and have your child color in the **region of West Africa** and put a sticker on **Nigeria** on map M-7 before teaching the oral recitation. Repeat the map work and oral recitation daily this week. Remember, the goal is for the

child to be able to call up a **visual image** of each region and to be able to **locate the key countries** in each on a map.

You will continue to add regions and countries in this manner for the rest of the year.

Q: What are the five regions of Africa and their key countries?

A: The five regions of Africa and their key countries are North Africa (Egypt), West Africa (Nigeria)...

EWS Level D Overview

Grade level: 3

Age range: 7-9 years

Genre: Wisdom Tales - Hindu/Egyptian/Jewish

Writing focus: Sentence variation

Schedule: Two longer or four shorter lessons per week

Includes copywork and dictation; memory work

LESSON D-26

Mahabharata (Part 6)

“Who Is the Greatest Archer in the World?”

Classic Tales from India, pp. 227-237

Reading

Teaching Notes

Today’s reading, which picks up near the top of page 227 and runs through page 237, brings the narrative to a close.

The events recounted on pages 226-227 form the core of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Although it is often read and studied as a separate text, the *Gita* is just one episode within the narrative of the *Mahabharata*. When Arjuna expresses his despair over fighting with and killing family members, Krishna expounds on the principle of *dharma* (destiny, duty, divine law) and eventually reveals his cosmic form.

The theme of destiny continues throughout the rest of the narrative, especially in an emotional scene in which Queen Kunti reveals herself to Karna as his birth mother. Unfortunately for both mother and son, the revelation comes too late, and Karna remains determined to fight against his half-brothers, even if it means choosing the wrong side. Still, he promises to show mercy to all of Kunti’s sons except his rival, Arjuna. The inevitable war proceeds to its inevitable conclusion, including the death of Karna, whom Arjuna declares “the greatest archer in the whole wide world.”

Vocabulary

inspect: look over carefully

instrument: tool

immense: huge

encompasses: holds, contains

heedless: not paying attention, ignoring

gaping: spread wide open

despot: cruel ruler

resolve: determination

sway him: change his mind

chasm: huge gap

enmity: hatred
valiantly: bravely
mortally: to death
impeccable: perfect, flawless
unscathed: unharmed

Writing Activities

➤ Student Worksheets: pp. 49-51

Sentence Completion

Direct your child to complete the following sentence stems. Your child's responses may differ somewhat from the answers suggested below. That is fine as long as the responses are grammatically correct and reflect the contents of the reading. Remind your child that the word *because* shows causality (reason why), *but* shows reversal or an alternative, and *so* shows a result.

Arjuna did not want to fight in the war because...[1]

Arjuna did not want to fight in the war, but...[2]

Arjuna did not want to fight in the war, so...[3]

Indra tricked Karna into giving away his golden earrings and chest shield because...[4]

Indra tricked Karna into giving away his golden earrings and chest shield, but...[5]

Indra tricked Karna into giving away his golden earrings and chest shield, so...[6]

The Pandavas won the war because...[7]

The Pandavas won the war, but...[8]

The Pandavas won the war, so...[9]

[1]...he didn't want to kill his relatives.

[2]...Krishna said it was his destiny.

[3]...he stopped his chariot and hesitated.

[4]...Indra favored his own son, Arjuna.

[5]...he gave Karna a divine weapon in return.

[6]...Karna was no longer protected.

[7]...they were on the side of good and had the support of the gods.

[8]...many people died.
[9]...they could now rule Hastinapur.

Dictation

“If you don’t give back the land you have stolen,” said Krishna, “war is inevitable.”

Memory Work

Review memory work items 1-22.

EWS Level E Overview

Grade level: 4

Age range: 8-10 years

Genre: Wisdom Tales - Buddhist/Greek/Christian

Writing focus: Paragraph formation

Schedule: Two longer or four shorter lessons per week

Includes dictation, memory work

LESSON E-50

“The Birth of Athena”

DK Greek Myths, pp. 32-33, 75

Reading

Teaching Notes

Today’s story introduces **Athena**, one of the best-known and -loved of the Olympians. She gives her name to the city of Athens, and her sacred owl appeared on the ancient city’s coins. In addition to being the goddess of wisdom and warfare (or, more accurately, strategy), she is also associated with weaving and the olive trees that still provide valuable oil to the Greeks today. (Students who have completed EWS-A may remember the *pourquoi* tale of Arachne, in which Athena punishes a prideful weaver by turning her into a spider. We will revisit this story in week 31 of the current level.) Like Artemis, Athena is a virgin goddess, but unlike her half-sister, who preferred the wilds, Athena is shown in the thick of things, mixing freely with humans and concerning herself with their lives.

The birth of Athena, who “sprang fully formed from her father’s head,” continues the intergenerational conflicts we have seen in previous stories. Here, Zeus attempts to circumvent a prophecy by swallowing the pregnant Metis.

We have previously met Athena’s mother, the goddess **Metis**, in the story of Zeus’s triumph over his father, Cronos. Metis’s name is variously translated as wisdom, skill, or craft. We might see it as practical wisdom—the discernment to handle real-life situations with aplomb. In fact, Metis’s brand of wisdom has an almost trickster-like aspect of cunning or craftiness. It is this quality that we see in the character of Odysseus, Athena’s favorite, whom we will meet in week 36 and again in EWS Level H.

The transformation chase motif that we see Metis using to avoid Zeus’s advances appears in other Greek stories, and, indeed, in world folklore generally. Proteus, the prophetic Old Man of the Sea, undergoes such transformations in Homer’s *Odyssey*, as do figures as varied as Gwion Bach in the Welsh tradition and the Chinese monkey king, Sun Wukong.

Vocabulary

Metis /MAY-tiss/: goddess of counsel (advice), planning, and wisdom

Prometheus /pro-MEE-thee-us/: lit. "Forethought," a Titan

Writing Activities

➤ Student Worksheet: p. 54

Paragraph Formation

Just as in the last lesson, your child will complete the graphic organizer and write a descriptive paragraph based on it. The subject is Athena, and information about her can be found on page 75 of our text. The completed paragraph should look like this:

Athena

Athena was the ancient Greek goddess of war and wisdom. Her parents were Zeus and Metis, and she had no children. Her sacred symbols were the owl, the olive tree, the distaff, and the spear. Athena was born fully grown from the forehead of her father, Zeus, after he swallowed her mother. She was the main goddess of the city of Athens.

Dictation

Without warning, Prometheus smacked Zeus across the forehead with the ax. Although the blow did not kill Zeus, for he was immortal, a crack opened in his head and out burst the goddess Athena. She was already grown and dressed in full armor.

Memory Work

Q: Who is Athena, and what is her Roman name?

A: Athena is the ancient Greek goddess of strategy and wisdom, and her Roman name is Minerva.

EWS Level F Overview

Grade level: 5

Age range: 9-11 years

Genre: Wisdom Tales - Islamic/Norse/Chinese

Writing focus: Paragraph expansion

Schedule: Two longer or four shorter lessons per week

Includes dictation, memory work

LESSON F-18

“The Sun and the Moon”

DK Norse Myths, pp. 16-17

Reading

Teaching Notes

Today’s reading contains a number of *pourquoi* tales or origin stories for the features of the natural world. **Sol** (also called **Sunna**) and **Mani** drive chariots across the sky, a common theme in Indo-European myth; students may remember the story of Phaëthon, son of Helios, and his disastrous chariot ride (see EWS-E, Lesson 48). In some versions of the Norse tales, Sol/Sunna is simply the Sun goddess, while Mani is the Moon god. (Note that their genders correspond to the grammatical genders of their names in Old Norse.) In this version, however, the charioteers are human children who are tasked with driving the celestial chariots in recompense for their father’s arrogance. Our story also explains the marks on the face of the moon, here seen as children who assist Mani. Finally, the story makes mention of an important feature of Norse religious belief: **Ragnarök**, the battle that ends the current cycle of time and kills most of the gods. Unlike the immortals of Olympus, who are assumed to live eternally, the gods of the Norse, while wielding cosmic powers, are not invincible.

Vocabulary

Yggdrasil /IG-drah-s’l/: the World Tree

Arvak, Alsvinn /AR-vak, AHLs-vin/: horses that pull the chariot of the Sun

Mundilfari /MUN-dil-fahr-ee/: human who named his children after the Sun and Moon

Sol /SOUL/: Sun (also known as **Sunna**)

Mani /MAH-nee/: Moon

Sköll, Hati /SKOLL, HAH-ti/: wolves who chase the Sun and Moon

Ragnarök /RAG-nah-rok/: battle at the end of the world

arrogance: prideful attitude, superior attitude that offends others

Writing Activities

➤ Student Worksheets: pp. 23–24

Paragraph Expansion with Examples

Today's writing activity provides your child with a simple comparison paragraph and asks them to expand it by providing **two** examples for each general statement. (The sample paragraph below gives more than two examples.) Using their notes from the last lesson, the student should pair an example from the Norse story with one from another culture.

This exercise provides scaffolding to help students understand both the structure of this type of paragraph and the definition of an example in writing. The body sentences are general statements that the student supports with specific instances: examples. Examples typically follow the general statement.

For your reference, here are several different sentence structures that lend themselves to this sort of comparison:

- Two sentences in sequence: A. B.
- Both/and: Both A and B...
- Compound sentence: A, and B.
- Complex sentence: While/Because/Since A, B.
- Semi-colon: A; B.

[Topic sentence:] Creation stories from different cultures often share important elements.

[Supporting (Body) Sentences:]

In some stories, creation emerges from emptiness or from matter without order. *In the Greek creation story, creation comes out of Chaos. In the Egyptian creation story, creation starts with the waters of Nun. The Hebrew story also begins with God hovering over the waters. In the Norse story, creation comes from a void called Ginnungagap.*

In other stories, the earth is created from the body of a god or other divine being. *The body of the Greek goddess Gaia forms the earth. In Egyptian stories, the god Geb's body becomes the earth. A Chinese story shows the parts of Pan Gu's body becoming the landscape. In the Norse tale, Ymir's body also forms the earth.*

Stories from around the world feature a flood survived by one couple who repopulate the earth. *Ancient Mesopotamian tales tell of a flood, and the story of Noah's ark from the Hebrew scriptures is a famous version of the same story. The ancient Greeks told the story of Deucalion. In the Norse creation story, all the giants but one couple, Bergelmir and his wife, were wiped out by a great flood.*

[Concluding sentence:] Though widely separated in time and space, different cultures developed similar stories to explain how the world came to be.

Dictation

Mani found his work tiring, so he lifted two children up to the heavens to help. They'd been returning from a well with a pail of water on a pole. Some say they can still be seen on the surface of the moon even today.

Memory Work

Q: Who are Sol, or Sunna, and Mani?

A: Sol, or Sunna, is the Norse goddess of the Sun, and Mani is the Norse god of the Moon.

Q: What is an example?

A: An example is a specific instance that supports a general statement.

EWS Level G Overview

Grade level: 6

Age range: 10-12 years

Genre: Heroic Tales

Writing focus: Three-paragraph essay

Schedule: Three lessons per week (30-45 minutes each)

Includes memory work

Three 10-week units per grade level

Student works independently with instructor supervision

Lesson 22
Week 8, Day 1

Text: *Popol Vuh* by Ilan Stavans

Checklist

- Read the Study Notes for this lesson.
- Read pages 65-73.
- Add any new vocabulary words and their definitions to the list below.
- Complete the writing assignment.
- Make cards for the new memory work and review the previous cards.

Study Notes

Today's reading covers two episodes relating to the Hero Twins, their mother, their grandmother, and their half-siblings. Both episodes read like folktales in which the grandmother takes the role of the antagonist, rather like the stereotypical wicked stepmother in European stories like "Cinderella" and "Snow White."

The competition between the Hero Twins and their jealous half-siblings in chapter 5 is similar to tales in which older sons are bested by younger ones. This motif appears everywhere in world literature, from the Hebrew scriptures to European fairy tales. Here, Jun B'atz' and Jun Ch'owen are punished by being turned into animals, but the story ends with the assurance that they will still be honored for their skill and that they will be remembered whenever their story is told.

The story in chapter 6 mirrors the task set for Ixxik' by her mother-in-law before the birth of the Hero Twins. Just as the owl messengers helped Ixxik', here a dove named Ixmukur acts as a sentinel to warn the boys of their grandmother's approach. Magical farm tools complete their work while the boys hunt. However, in a variation on their mother's story, the animals don't assist the boys, but undo the previous day's work. With the help of an ally, a rat, the boys are able not only to escape from the farm work but to claim their inheritance from their father: the gear for the ball game.

In *Beowulf*, we saw that outstanding courage, strength, and loyalty were expected of a warrior hero. Here we see something quite different: the Hero

Twins are more likely to outsmart people than to fight with them. They are **tricksters** who outwit those who stand in their way. Tricksters are literary characters whose craftiness delights readers or listeners, and they appear in literature from all over the world. Despite their sly ways, they can function as **culture heroes**, bringing gifts, skills, and knowledge to their people. They are often underdogs who, lacking strength or prestige, must rely on their intelligence to survive and thrive. Tricksters don't always come out on top, but they are usually presented as admirable figures; you can't help but give them credit for their audacity and inventiveness.

Finally, note that several episodes in the stories are offered as explanations for religious or cultural traditions, such as the Palo Volador dance or the worship of the K'iche' goddess of childbirth, Ixchel, and for natural phenomena, like the short tails of rabbits and deer or the tendency of rats to eat stored food. These how-and-why stories show how the *Popol Vuh* conveys the scientific observations and cultural history of the K'iche' people.

Vocabulary

Names

Ixmukur /shmoo-KOOR/: a dove that assists the Hero Twins
Ixchel /SH'CHEL/: goddess of childbirth

Other Words

stoically: without complaining
nurtured: considered
berated: scolded
can'te: a type of cacao tree
traversing: traveling across
pretense: act, false show
[peccary](#): a pig-like animal
[coati](#): a small mammal, related to the raccoon
adversaries: opponents, enemies
camouflaged: concealed, disguised
trade: job, occupation
pataxte: a tree that bears fruit similar to cacao
perforate: pierce, make holes in
venerate: honor, worship

Writing Assignment

➤ Briefly retell the stories from today's reading and remember to file it in your binder. Make sure you include the following information:

- How did the Hero Twins' grandmother feel about them? What about their older half-siblings?
- How did the Hero Twins trick their older siblings? What was the result?
- How did the Twins get their father's ball gear?

Memory Work

Q: What is a trickster in literature?

A: A trickster is a character who uses their intelligence to outwit others.

Q: What is a culture hero?

A: A culture hero is a figure who brings gifts, skills, and knowledge to their people.

EWS Level H Overview (Forthcoming 2024)

Grade: 7

Age range: 11-13 years

Genre: Classical Epics

Writing focus: Four-paragraph essay

Schedule: Three lessons per week (30-45 minutes each)

Includes memory work

Three 10-week units per grade level

Student works independently with instructor supervision

EWS Level I Overview (Forthcoming 2025)

Grade: 8

Age range: 12-14 years

Genre: Rascalry & Romance

Writing focus: Five-paragraph essay

Schedule: Three lessons per week (30-45 minutes)

Includes memory work

Three 10-week units per grade level

Student works independently with instructor supervision