



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute  
1993 Volume II: Folktales

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## **Folktale through African Art**

Curriculum Unit 93.02.04  
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In this unit I will bring together the study of African folktale and African art. As an art teacher, I look for opportunities to expose my students to original artwork. As part of this unit, students will visit the Yale Art Gallery's African collection, but they will first study folktales and other stories from West Africa. By hearing and reading these stories they will be introduced to many new cultural and religious beliefs, such as spirits inhabiting nature and possessing special powers. Once the students become familiar with these, they will go to the gallery with some knowledge and background of the culture that created the works of art. They may even be able to find some of the characters from the stories depicted in the sculpture. The type of sculpture we will be concentrating on are masks and statuettes. The masks were worn as part of elaborate costumes and used in ceremonies, rituals, and dances to dramatize the myths and tales of a certain tribes' history or cultural beliefs.

Africa is a very large continent, about four times the size of the United States. It contains over 21 countries and an estimated 2,000 different cultural or linguistic groups. Although many of the peoples of Africa still live as their ancestors did, in tribal communities pursuing agricultural and pastoral ways of life, there are many that have been influenced by industrialization and now live in large cities and modern communities like our own. Since most cultures did not have a written language they are largely without written histories. Instead these peoples have kept their cultural traditions and beliefs alive for thousands of years in their myths, legends, folktales, rituals, prayers, proverbs, and songs.

When Africans tell a tale, whether it be a myth, legend, or folktale, they do not simply recite it to their listeners, they use many dramatic techniques to bring it to life before their audience. The story becomes part of a performance wherein the storyteller uses different voices, clicks and other noises, dances, and elaborate costume to aid them in the dramatization. More often than not the audience is invited in to participate and become part of the drama. Many cultures, especially those from the forests and grasslands of West Africa, use various materials to sculpt images of their Gods and spirits to aid them in the storytelling and passing down of religious and cultural beliefs. It is not only the stories themselves but the costume, in the form of masks and statuettes, that we will be studying in this unit.

It is important to note here that masks were always seen in motion as part of ceremonial or ritualistic dances. The Africans did not create their art just for beauty or because they enjoy the creative process. African art always had a purpose or use and was kept sacred. Some masks were only used on certain days of the year or seen only by members of secret societies. It is only in recent times that African artists are beginning to use

new techniques and materials and creating “art for art’s sake”.

When I first visited the African collection at the Yale Art Gallery, I became curious to find out more about the meaning of the images depicted in the masks and other sculpture. There are masks that resemble animals, strange combinations of animals and deities, as well as realistic human faces. I felt it would be more interesting and meaningful for my students to learn that much of the sculpture is inspired by the myths, legends, and stories of the ancient Africans. “To gain the maximum appreciation, a knowledge, for example, of the background of the sculpture or where it came from, deepens one’s understanding and one’s enjoyment of the artwork. The greater the knowledge, the greater the enjoyment. <sup>1</sup> I Students respond well to stories, especially folktales, legends, and myths that might tell of the origins of things we know in this life. Explanatory tales, though purely fictional, can be amusing as well as educational. Students will often retain information and ideas better when they can remember them in story form.

## AFRICAN FOLKTALES

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In Africa the folktale was, and still is, a primary means people have of communicating to one another. Folktales can reflect and explain the hopes and fears of a culture as well as its spiritual and religious beliefs. They are devices we all use to explain our relationship with the natural world and why things are the way they are. The characters in folktales can be gods, spirits, animals, or even insects that take on human qualities, or humans that acquire godlike or animalistic qualities. As I gathered stories to read for the writing of this unit, I found that folktales can make you laugh and they can make you cry, they can make you think, and they can teach you about the world we live in, lending explanations that are sure to delight our imaginations.

It is only in this century that the folktales, or the oral literature of Africa, have begun to be collected and written down. They say that by writing these stories down we are ending a very long tradition that is rich and varied and has for the most part remained unique in that it is solely an oral tradition. “ Each person who tells a story molds the story to his mouth, and each listener molds the story to his ear. Thus, the same story, told over and over, is never quite the same. But when stories are written in books, people think that is the only way the story should be and that it cannot be changed. And that is the way a story as a living, growing, changing thing dies. Stories can be changed and should be, as the storyteller feels. The stories don’t live otherwise. <sup>2</sup> I personally feel that by writing these folktales down we are at least recording them and preserving them in this form. In this way they are sure to delight and entertain people from all over the world. Storytellers of any culture can surely retell the tales they read adapting them to their own tongue.

In this unit we will study two types of tales. First, we will hear two stories, one a myth and the other a folktale. We will study the cultures and see some sculpture that has a direct connection to these stories. While telling these two I will show the students slides from the Yale Art Gallery. Next, we will read and listen to many tales that belong to a category called explanatory tales, including some that feature Anansi, the wellknown spider character. Anansi is a clever trickster found in the folktales of the Ashanti culture of Ghana. This time the students will not be shown slides; they will be asked instead to create their own masks and images to illustrate some of the stories.

Stories with tricksters as the central character fall into a category all their own. Tricksters are common in the folktales of many African countries as well as Caribbean and American Folktales. A trickster is usually of inferior size and strength but superior in cleverness. Although sometimes treated as a culture hero, the

trickster is usually represented as the underdog, who lacks scruples when planning his ruthless antics on others. Many trickster tales give explanation to certain ways of nature like the common Anansi tales “ Why spider hides in dark corners” and “Why Anansi’ head so small while his hind quarters so big.” <sup>3</sup>

## **AFRICAN SCULPTURE: THE MASK**

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African sculpture and masks were always made with a specific purpose and function for the culture in which they were created. African masks represent ancestors, spiritual figures, animals, and mythological characters. They were used in ceremonies like initiations, hunting and agricultural festivals, and fertility and funeral rites. Masks were worn as an integral part of these ceremonies. The mask was used to conceal the identity of a participant or a dancer. It was either attached to a dancer’s head by a wickerwork cap or fringed with raffia in order to cover the body of the wearer. “Religion is an integral part of the traditional Africans’ lives, inseparable from the events of each day. Sculpture in the form of masks and figures was used to invoke the presence of ancestors and gods in the ceremonies and dances. These masks, figures and other ritual objects are not just temporary abodes for the spirits. The sculptures are links between man and the realm of the supernatural, possessing awesome powers of their own.” <sup>4</sup>

We know that masks were made to be seen in motion as part of a dance or ceremony, so when we introduce these artworks to our students we must explain this concept and try to help them imagine what the original observers of the ceremony may have been seeing.

Masks were made of many different materials. The most common was wood; that is why there are not many existing examples of masks that date back into ancient times. In addition to wood, African masks can include other materials like raffia and other fibers, ivory, bone, metalwork, hides, and cloth.

### Strategy for Teaching This Unit

By participating in this unit, students in grades three through five will be exposed to the sculpture and stories of three African cultures. They will read and listen to the stories and then participate in many different arts activities. The three cultures are from West Africa: the Bambara of Mali, the Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria, and the Ashanti of Ghana. I have limited my choice of cultures to West Africa because that is the source of most of the African sculpture at the Yale Art Gallery .

### **Unit Objectives:**

In addition to studying folktales and sculpture, students will be encouraged to express their *own* ideas through the use of visual arts, drama, dance, and creative writing. Students will:

- 1) Listen to *and* read folktales from many African cultures. They will look for similarities and differences among the stories.
- 2) At the museum, recognize a mask or other piece of sculpture that they have seen. They will talk about the piece by revealing some details in the form, craftsmanship, or origin. The student may choose to tell a story about the character portrayed in the piece.
- 3) Write their own folktale or create a new ending to a folktale they have heard.

- 4) Create their own artwork using techniques and images borrowed from African art.
- 5 ) Dramatize their folktale in front of their classmates. They may create a dance or play to tell their story, and either way will need to create masks, costumes, and other props to use in the production.

**Procedure:**

The unit will take eight weeks or longer to implement and will be broken down into sixty minute lessons as follows:

week 1—The study of sculpture from two West African cultures, the Yoruba and the Bambara, that was inspired by a myth or folktale. Students will listen to the tales and view slides of the artwork that they will be seeing at the Yale Art Gallery.

week 2—Students will listen to and read on their own some explanatory tales of West Africa. They will be introduced to Anansi, a trickster character from the Ashanti. They will be given the opportunity to illustrate some of these tales.

week 3—A trip to the Yale Art Gallery to view the African collection. Students will participate in a gallery search to find certain subjects or characteristics in the artwork.

weeks 4 and 5—Visual art lesson on mask making. Using many different art materials, students will create their own characters in mask form.

week 6—Students will write their own versions of African tales. They may create their own characters based on the masks they created or build upon some characters they have already encountered in West African tales.

week 7 and 8—Each student will read their individual stories to the class and then as a group choose three or four to bring to life in short plays or through movement and dance. Students will work in small groups to create the plays and dances and all the costumes and props needed to dramatize their stories.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CULTURES INCLUDED IN THIS UNIT

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### 1 . The Yoruba of southwestern Nigeria—

The Culture—The Yoruba people have a very elaborate mythology that includes numerous stories of gods and demigods. Their myths are meant to explain many natural forces or phenomena that occur in their world by using a hierarchy of characters which represent the different forms of nature. The highest god is Olorun, he is the owner of heaven. There are then other gods who represent the characters in the myths that tell of the beginning of humans on earth. Under these gods are numerous orishas, demigods such as Shanyo, which means lightning, Olokun, the sea, Olosa, the lagoon and Ogan for war, and Eshu, the orisha of chance or accidents. Also included as one of these demigods is Ibeji, the protector of twins. Ibi means “first born” and eji means “two”. The Yoruba believe that twins are sacred and powerful, bringing good luck, wealth, and prosperity to their families if they are treated with respect and kindness, but if mistreated or neglected they can cause poverty, illness and even death. Despite this latter risk, the birth of twins is welcomed amongst the Yoruba. The parents of twins overextend themselves and cater to these children so as not to upset their guardian orisha, who might then be forced to punish them. Twins are believed to be more intelligent and are sometimes treated very differently from other children of the same family. Amongst the Yoruba there is a myth which tells how the monkeys sent the ibejis to the humans.

#### The Myth

“How Twins Came Among the Yoruba” A long time ago in the kingdom of Ishokun, there was a farmer who was known by all as a hunter of monkeys. Monkeys used to come from all over to feed in his fields because his crops were so good. The monkeys came to be such a problem that he and his sons had to take turns guarding the fields day and night, but still, the monkeys came and went as they pleased.

The farmer became desperate and angry and went into the forests to kill all the monkeys he could. He went to kill in the fields and the bush but still the monkeys came to eat his crops. They even devised ways of tricking the farmers sons. A few monkeys would distract them while they kept watch while the rest of the monkeys would run to the field to eat the corn. When it rained the farmers sons thought the crops would be safe, but the monkeys still came.

After awhile the farmers wife became pregnant. A wise man from the village came to warn the farmer. He said, “You are in danger and much misfortune lies ahead because of your continual killing of the monkeys. The monkeys are wise and possess great powers. Instead of a child your wife carries an *abiku* ( a child that dies shortly after birth), he will be born, live a while and then die. Each time she becomes pregnant he will be born again and then die. In this way you will be tormented to the end. Therefore do not drive them away—you must stop hunting them. Let them come and eat in your fields.”

Meanwhile the monkeys discussed amongst themselves what they should do to the farmer to make him pay. They decided that two monkeys would transform themselves into *ibikus* and enter the womb of the farmers wife. There they waited until the proper time. Then they emerged one at a time. They were the original twins sent to the Yoruba. The villagers came from all around to see this great wonder. Some people said “What good fortune.” Others said “It’s a bad omen. Only monkeys give birth to twins.”

Because the twins were *ibikus* they died soon after birth and went to reside with the unborn. Time passed and the woman became pregnant again. Again two children were born instead of one. They lived only a short time

and then departed. This is the way it continued. Each time the woman gave birth they were ibejis, that is to say twins. And they were also *ibikus* who only lived a short while.

The farmer was very upset and traveled to get advice from a fortune teller. The man cast his pine nuts and read them. He said “Your troubles come from monkeys whom you have been harassing in the field and bush. It is they who have sent the *ibikus* into the womb of your wife. Stop killing the monkeys and let them eat from your fields and perhaps they will back off from this torment.”

The farmer returned to his home. He no longer drove the monkeys away, he allowed them to come and go as they pleased. He no longer went out to hunt them. After some time his wife became pregnant and gave birth to twins. This time they did not die. They lived on. But the farmer was not certain that things had changed so he went again to the fortune teller seeking knowledge. The man cast the pine nuts to give him a reading. He said “This time the twins are not *ibikus* . The monkeys have relented. The twins will not die and return, die and return. But , I warn you , twins are not ordinary people. They have the power to reward or punish humans. Their protector is the orisha Ibeji. If a person abuses or neglects a twin, the orisha Ibeji will strike the person with disease or poverty. Those who treat the twins well will be rewarded with good fortune.” The fortune teller once again read the pine nuts and continued. He said, “If the twins are pleased with life, good luck and prosperity will come to their parents. Therefore you must do everything to make them happy in this world. Give them everything they ask for, what ever they say to do, do it. Make sacrifices to the orisha ibeji. Twins were sent to this world by monkeys so monkeys are sacred to them. Neither twins nor their families may eat the flesh of monkeys. Remember this, for this is what the pine nuts tell us.”

When the farmer returned to his home he told all this to his wife. Whatever the twins asked for they received. If they wanted sweets, they were given sweets. If they said “go into the marketplace and beg for alms for us,” The mother would carry them to the marketplace and beg. If they wanted her to dance she would carry them in her arms and dance. They all lived on. Prosperity came to the farmer and his family, he was fortunate in every way.

It is in this way that the first twins came to the Yoruba. I have adapted this story from a story in Harould Courlander’s *A Treasury of African Folklore* ; Pgs. 236 to 238.

“ibeji”—The Artwork—Twins are believed to share one soul. If one twin should die, the Yoruba carve a statue to hold the deceased soul, this is carried and cared for by the remaining twin so they may always be united. Sometimes these statuettes are commissioned upon the birth of twins in a family. The statues are called ibejis, and are usually small wooden figures, about 10 inches tall. The head is proportionally larger than the body with bulging eyes and scar lines on the cheeks. The head may include details like carved braided hair designs and rows of colored beads around the neck area. It is the way in which the ibejis are cared for that makes the statues so unusual. They are wrapped, fed, and carried like babies right along with the remaining twin. Although they are treated like children they are made to look like adults. They are not carved in the exact likeness of the child but do have genitalia to distinguish male from female.

The ibeji at the Yale Art Gallery ( slide #2) is made of wood and decorated with glass beads. It represents a female and was made in the 19th century.

## **2. The Bambara of Mali—**

The culture—The Bambara culture of Mali is primarily an agricultural society and is known to have many ceremonies and festivities surrounding the planting and preparing of the fields as well as the harvesting of

their crops. One such ceremony is performed to insure a good growing season and to increase the fertility of the fields. During this ceremony, dancers perform in pairs wearing headdresses carved to look like antelopes, one male and one female. The male is thought to represent the sun, and the female is seen to represent the earth. To the Bambara, the antelope is seen as a worldly intermediary between sky and earth and a symbol of fertility. The headdresses are called *tyi wara*. This headdress is their best known art form. There are a few different variations, some more abstract and symbolic, but each holds distinct characteristics associated with the different regions that the Bambara inhabit. In researching its origin I have seen it referred to as *chi wara* and *tji wara*. The word *tji* means “work” and *wara* means “animal”. The *twi wara*’s roots lie in mythology. The antelope is commemorated in a dance as a tribute to a creature from an ancient myth who is believed to have first taught the Bambara the art of farming.

### **The ancient myth of the Twi wara—**

In the earliest days of creation, Pemba (God) and his consort Moussa Koroni had a disagreement and became estranged. Moussa was convinced she would have to punish Pemba for his infidelity. She began roaming the world, wreaking havoc and destruction. She was very bitter, but was able to show great concern for the men and women of the earth, who at that time, did not cultivate the land. They depended on gathering roots and grasses for their survival. Moussa mated with the hooded snake and from this union a male creature, part antelope and part human, was born, known as Twi wara, “the beast who labors.” This beast’s head and neck grew into a hoe to till the soil. His spittle fertilized the soil, which in time gave rise to wondrous crops. He then taught the humans how to rear these crops. As food became plentiful, his students became forgetful and wasteful. Tyi wara was disgusted and left the humans, never to be seen again.

The artwork—The *tyi wara* headdress at the Yale Art Gallery is made of wood, fiber and cowrie shells and was made in the 19th or 20th century. The antelope type of headdress is common and widespread in the Bambara culture, along with other masks and statues. When the *tyi wara* is worn it is attached to a wicker cap and worn on top of the dancers head. The dancers are covered to their ankles with raffia and hold two sticks in their hands so that when they skip and jump around it resembles the leaping of an antelope with four legs. There are three style types of *tyi wara* headdresses; horizontal, vertical, and abstract. They are not carved from a single block of wood, but are made of two pieces joined together at the neck by an iron hinge. Another common feature of this particular antelope is the human figure sitting on its back.

## **Sample Lesson Plans:**

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### **Lesson # 1**

**Learning Objective:** 1. Students will view and discuss artwork from the Bambara and Yoruba cultures of West Africa. 2. They will learn a myth or legend that may have inspired these artworks. 3. They will learn some background information on the culture.

**Performance Objective:** After viewing and discussing the artwork and cultures of the Bambara and Yoruba, students will be able to retell a myth or legend about the artwork.

**Materials:** Slides, projector, screen, African art books.

**Time Period:** 1 sixty minute period.

**Learning Sequence:**

- a. Opener—Begin by introducing the students to the culture of the Bambara. Tell the legend of the Tyi wara and its importance to the culture ( see background information above). Then show the slide of the Tyi wara headpiece from the Yale Art Gallery’s collection (slide #1). Move on to discuss the Yoruba culture. As the “ibeji” slide is shown (slide #2), tell the Folktale of “ How the twins came to the Yoruba”. Discuss the beliefs of the Yoruba in Twins and why they are worshipped. A slide of West Africa should be shown so students can locate where these cultures are from (slide #3).
- b. Student participation—As the slides are shown, students should be asked to describe what they see and answer some questions about the artwork. Ask students to locate the countries that the Bambara and the Yoruba come from on the map of West Africa.
- c. Closure:—After reviewing the above slides, other slides from the Yale collection should be shown. Discuss the role of the mask in African dance and religious beliefs.

**Evaluation:** —Can the students identify a sculpture from the Bambara and Yoruba and relate it to a myth or legend from that culture?

**Lesson #2**

**Learning Objective:** —Students will learn that folktales come in many styles and can tell us much about a culture’s spiritual beliefs in their gods and the natural world. They will learn about the beliefs of the Ashanti culture of Ghana by listening to many stories from this culture and will be introduced to “Anansi the spider”, a frequent character in Ashanti folktales.

**Performance Objective :**—Students will listen to and discuss many Ashanti folktales. They will be asked to read one of the Anansi stories and will be given the opportunity to illustrate these stories in their own way.

**Materials :**—African folktale books which include tales that explain the origins of things many are cited in the student and teacher bibliographies), white drawing paper, crayons, markers or colored pencils.

**Time period:** 1 sixty minute class.

**Learning—Sequence:**

- a. Opener—Begin the lesson with a brief discussion of Anansi, who is a main character in many Ashanti tales. Then read and discuss a sampling of other tales that explain phenomena or occurrences in nature or peculiar habits of animals.
- b. Student Performance—1. Choose an Anansi story to read to the class or give the students the



opportunity to choose one from a predetermined list of Anansi stories. 2. Pass out drawing paper and crayons so the students may draw a character from the story or illustrate a scene from the plot. 3. Students should be given the chance to retell the tale in their own words.

c. Closure—Students will share their drawings with the class and tell why they chose to draw that character or scene.

**Evaluation** —Was the student able to retell the folktale that they illustrated to their classmates. Does their drawing tell more about the character or story?

### **Lesson #3**

Field trip to the Yale Art Gallery. Be sure to make arrangements ahead of time for a Docent to show you to the African collection. Remember to inform them that your class has been studying African folktales especially tales about the “tyi wara” and “the ibeji”. See if the students can find these two types of sculpture in the collection on their own. Allow extra time to view the rest of the collection.

See Gallery Search worksheet to be completed at the museum (below) (worksheet available in print form)

### **Lesson #4 and #5**

**Learning Objective** —Students will learn the significance of the mask to African cultures and how it is used in rituals and ceremonies. They will learn how to make a mask using plaster of paris strips on a form.

**Performance Objective** —Students will review and discuss slides shown of other masks in the African collection. Each student will develop their own mask taking care to accentuate certain facial features or base their mask on a certain animal. Each student will decorate their mask in a unique way

**Materials** —Slides of masks in the collection, newspaper, water bowls, plaster of paris strips, scissors, black acrylic paint, cowrie shells and beads for decoration. (worksheet available in print form)

**Time Period** —2 sixty minute classes

### **Learning Sequence—**

a. Opener—Review and discussion of slides.

b. Student Participation—1. Students will create their own character masks. They may use pencil and paper to sketch ideas. 2. A form must be made out of balled up newspaper that is taped secure with masking tape in the shape of an oval, circle or any other shape (around the size of a football). 3. Everyone must cut about 2 dozen plaster strips approximately 8 inches long. 4. Begin procedure by dipping one strip at a time as needed into a bowl of water to moisten, apply horizontally across the form. Continue until front of form is covered by one layer of plaster. 5. Next repeat step 4 , but apply strips vertically to the form (cut new strips as needed). At this point there should be no newspaper showing through the front of the form. 6. Now cut smaller strips , roll or squish these and apply to form to make features like hair, eyes, eyebrows, nose, ears, mouth, cheeks, and chin. At this point, stop lesson , clean up work area and let form dry

thoroughly till next lesson.

(Continue next lesson)

- a. Opener—Discuss how masks were decorated with paint, beads and shells. Refer back to examples observed at the museum.
- b. Student Participation

Plaster should be completely dry before applying any paint and eye slits should be cut with scissors or a knife

1. Using black paint, cover the entire mask so no white plaster is showing.
2. When dry, decorate with shells, beads, and yarn. Other colors of paint may be used to bring out certain features (this should be kept to a minimum). Most African masks are primarily black due to the use of wood or stain.
3. When all decoration is complete, the ball of newspaper may be removed from the back of the mask and the edges can be cut with a scissors to form an even contour shape.
  - c. Closure—Students should look over their masks carefully for any missing details. They should check to see if their masks are symmetrical and balanced in design.

**Evaluation** —Does the mask show an understanding of the technique used to make it? Was the student able to follow directions? Is the student able to talk about their mask and tell about its characteristics?

## **Lesson #6**

**Learning Objective** —Students will learn what an explanatory tale is. They will learn how to take an idea (explaining some natural occurrence or phenomenon or animal habit) and bring it to life as a story by creating characters and scenes and a story.

**Performance Objective** —Each student will write their own folktale that explains some natural occurrence or phenomena or habit in animal or humans. They will invent new characters or may choose to borrow some from tales they may already have heard. They will be involved in every aspect of producing a few of the tales into skits.

**Materials** —Paper, pencils, their masks should be available to refer to.

**Time Period** —1 sixty minute class

### **Learning Sequence—**

- a. Opener—Review the concept of an explanatory tale. Tell the students that they are to create their own folktale which explains why or how something came to be. They may use more modern examples of how nature has changed, giving the change a fictional cause.
- b. Student Participation—Students may work on their own or in pairs to write a clear story based on their ideas.
- c. Closure—Each student or group of students will read or tell their folktale. They will give their tale a title.

**Evaluation** —Does the folktale clearly explain some occurrence or phenomena within the natural world.

### **Lesson #7 and 8**

**Learning Objective** —Students will learn to work as a group as they take a few of the stories written from lesson #6 and bring them to life in play form. They will learn to respect the ideas and creativity of others by cooperating in the production of these tales.

**Performance Objective** —Students will listen to all the tales and then as a group decide on which few to bring to life. This decision should be reached by taking a vote with consideration given to ease of converting the written version into play form. For example; what props and or scenery would need to be made? How many characters are needed? Is the plot and meaning of the tale simple enough for all to understand? What amount of time is needed to rehearse and perform skit?

**Materials** —Masks created in lesson #4 and #5, various art materials (paints, large mural paper, cardboard, scissors, tape, glue, old clothing for costumes)

**Time Period** —2 sixty minute classes.

### **Learning Sequence—**

- a. Opener—Deciding on which tale or tales to bring into play form (should be limited to no more than three or four if they are short). Each written tale should be reread clearly to the class.
- b. Student Participation—1. After listening to the tales, the class should be divided into smaller groups with each group assigned a certain tale. 2. These small groups will be given time to assign roles, to create simple and minimal props (no backdrops needed), and to rehearse at least twice. Remind students that these tales are not polished performances but merely simple skits used to dramatize an idea. 3. Many of the masks created in the previous art lesson should be used for some of the characters.
- c. Closure—Dramatizing the skits to fellow classmates. Invite another class to come and see the performance.

**Evaluation** —Was the occurrence, phenomenon, or habit of nature clear to the audience? Did the students work cooperatively in their groups? Was everyone involved?

(worksheet available in print form)

## Notes

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1. Frank Willet, *African Art* , Praeger Pub.Co., New York,1975, Pg. 143.
2. Julius Lester, *Black Folktales* , New York, 1969, Pg. 8.
3. Susan Feldman, *African Myths and Tales* , Dell Pub. Co., New York, 1963. Tale #
4. Penelope Naylor, *Black Images, The Art of West Africa* , Double Day and Co., Pg. 1.

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+Aardema, Vema. *Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* . New York: Dial Books for Young Readers, 1975 Mosquito tells iguana a lie and it starts a chain reaction of panic throughout the jungle.

+Dayrell, Elphinstone. *Why the Sun and Moon Live in the Sky* . Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1968. An explanation tale that tells of the beginning of time and the events that lead up to the sun and Moon taking their place in the sky.

+Greaves,Nick. *When Hippo was Hairy* , Bok Books International,1988. This book is filled with animal tales, many of which explain how the animals got their certain characteristics. It gives the origin of the tale and where these animals are found in Africa as well as statistical information on the species.

Haley, Gail E. *A Story, A Story* . New York, 1970. One African folktale from the Ashanti culture. This is the story of how Anansi first tricked the sky God into giving him all the stories.

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Musgrove, Margaret. *Ashanti to Zulu, African Traditions* . New York: Dial Press, 1976. An innovative alphabet book that introduces us to 26 different African cultures by explaining a particular custom. Beautifully illustrated.

+ Books containing explanatory tales.

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+Feldman, Susan, ed. *African Myths and Tales* , New York: Dell Pub. Co., 1963. Filled with over one hundred folktales from all of Africa. Tales are divided into categories such as Myths, Tales, Stories and moral tales. Includes a whole chapter of explanatory tales.

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\* Parenger, Geoffrey. *African Mythology*. London, The Hamlyn Publishing Group Ltd. 1967 A very informative book containing myths, legends, folktales and other stories of Africa. Filled with artwork to illustrate the narrative. Gives historical and geographical information on many areas of the continent.

Price, Christine. *Made in West Africa* . New York, E.P. Dutton & Co.,1975 Many different art forms of west Africa are featured in this book. Full of photographs of artworks and people creating them today. The book is organized by craft.

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Segy, Ladislas. *African Sculpture Speaks* . New York: Hill and Wang, 1969 A beautiful book filled with photos of African sculpture. This book gives much detail about the sculpture and where the ideas that inspired them came from.

Thompson, Robert Fariis. *African Art in Motion* . Berkeley, University of California Press, 1974. This beautiful book covers many cultures and their use of dance which includes the study of masks and other icons in rituals and ceremonies. Much study of the Yoruba culture.

\*Tutuola, Amos. *Yoruba Folktales* , Ibadan, Ibadan University Press, 1 986. A small collection of tales from Yoruba with pen and ink illustrations. Appropriate for reading to students.

Willet, Frank. *African Art* . New York: Praeger Pub. Co.,1975. An extensive study of all African arts. Very informative, covers the history of African art.

Winther, Barbara. *Plays From African Tales* . Boston: Plays Inc.,1992. This book offers many one act royalty-free plays for students to use and dramatize African folktales.

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