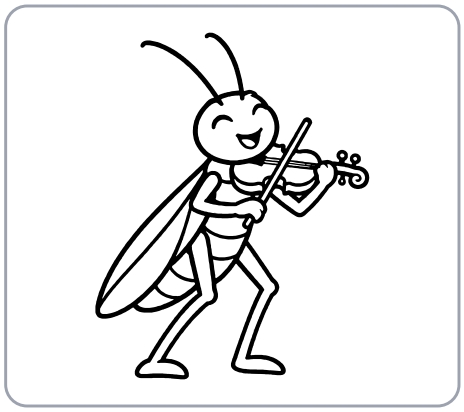
Name _____ Date _____

Fables

Read the tale. The questions are on the next page.

The Ant and the Grasshopper



All summer long, Grasshopper lounged in the warm meadow grass, fiddling cheerful tunes and singing at the top of his voice. Day after day, Ant marched past him, carrying a heavy grain of wheat on her back to the storeroom in her nest.

"Why work so hard on such a beautiful day?" Grasshopper asked. "Come and sing with me instead."

"I am gathering food for the winter," Ant answered, without stopping. "You should do the same before it is too late."

Grasshopper only laughed. "Winter is a long way off, and there is plenty to eat today." And he went right on playing.

Then the days grew shorter and colder. Snow covered the fields, and Grasshopper could not find a single seed to eat. Weak with hunger, he knocked on the door of Ant's nest, where the ants were sharing the wheat they had stored.

"Please, could you spare me a little food?" Grasshopper begged.

"What were you doing all summer while we were working?" asked Ant.

"I was busy singing," said Grasshopper.

"Well then," said Ant, "you sang all summer, so now you may dance all winter." And she closed the door.

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Name _____ Date _____

Fables

The Ant and the Grasshopper: look back at the tale to answer.

1. What did Ant do all summer? Why?

2. Which words show that Grasshopper did not plan ahead?

"I am gathering food for the winter."

"Winter is a long way off."

"Come and sing with me instead."

3. What is the central message of the fable?

Ants are stronger than grasshoppers.

Work today to be ready for hard times later.

Singing is a waste of time.

4. Which detail shows the message best? Explain.

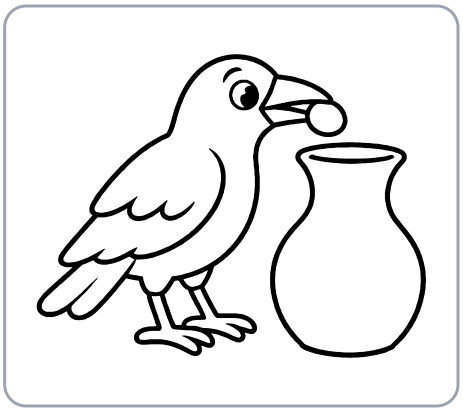
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Name _____ Date _____

Fables

Read the tale. The questions are on the next page.

The Crow and the Pitcher



It had not rained for weeks, and a crow was very thirsty. She flew from place to place, looking for water. At last she spotted a pitcher standing in a garden.

The crow hopped to the pitcher and peered inside. There was water at the bottom! But the pitcher was tall and its neck was narrow, and her beak could not reach far enough. She tried to tip the pitcher over, but it was too heavy to move.

The crow did not give up. She looked around and saw some small pebbles on the ground. She picked one up in her beak and dropped it into the pitcher. Plop! Then she dropped in another, and another.

With each pebble, the water rose a little higher. At last it came up near the top, and the crow drank until she was thirsty no more.

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Name _____ Date _____

Fables

The Crow and the Pitcher: look back at the tale to answer.

1. What was the crow's problem?

She could not find any pebbles.

The pitcher was empty.

She could not reach the water in the pitcher.

2. What did the crow try before the pebbles? Why did it not work?

_____

_____

_____

3. Why did the water rise as the crow dropped in pebbles?

_____

_____

_____

4. What is the central message of the fable?

Never drink from a pitcher.

Crows like gardens.

A clever idea and patience can solve a hard problem.

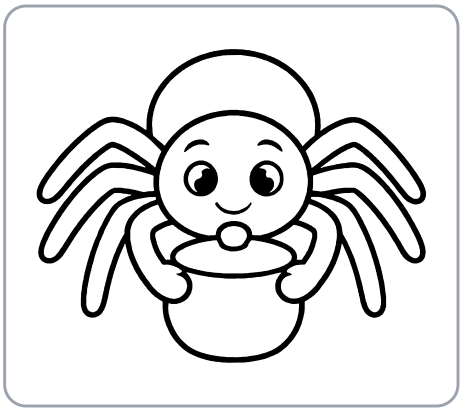
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Name _____ Date _____

Folktales

Read the tale. The questions are on the next page.

Anansi and the Pot of Wisdom



This is a folktale of the Akan people of Ghana, in West Africa. Long ago, they say, Anansi the spider decided to gather all the wisdom in the world. He went from village to village and collected every bit of it in a big clay pot.

"Now I am the wisest one of all," said Anansi. "But someone might take my wisdom. I will hide it at the top of the tallest tree."

Anansi tied the pot to his front and began to climb. But the pot was big and round, and it bumped against the trunk. Again and again he slipped back down.

His son Ntikuma was watching. "Father," he called, "why not tie the pot on your back? Then you could hold on to the tree."

Anansi stopped. His son was right! Anansi was so upset that a child knew something he did not that he let go of the pot. It crashed to the ground and broke. The wisdom spilled out, and the wind carried it all over the world.

That is why, the story goes, no one has all the wisdom. Everyone has a little, and we can learn from each other.

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Name _____ Date _____

Folktales

Anansi and the Pot of Wisdom: look back at the tale to answer.

1. Why did Anansi want to hide the pot at the top of a tree?

_____

_____

2. What problem did Anansi have as he climbed? How did Ntikuma solve it?

_____

_____

_____

3. What does this tale explain?

why everyone has a little wisdom

why spiders live in trees

how clay pots are made

4. What is the central message? Which detail shows it?

_____

_____

_____

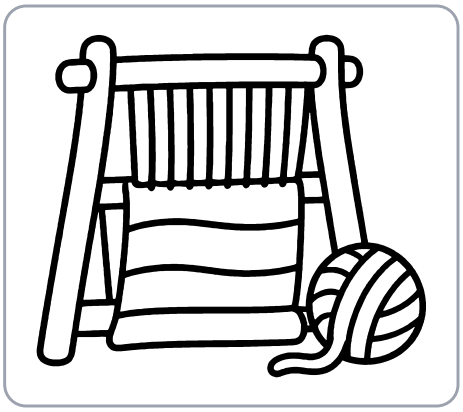
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Name _____ Date _____

Myths

Read the tale. The questions are on the next page.

Arachne



This is a myth from ancient Greece. Long ago, a young woman named Arachne was famous for her weaving. People came from far away to watch her fingers fly. Her cloth was so fine that people said the goddess Athena must have taught her.

"No one taught me," said Arachne. "I weave better than Athena herself."

One day an old woman came to Arachne. "Be careful," she warned. "Do not say you are better than the gods." Arachne only laughed. "Let Athena come and weave against me!"

At once the old woman changed into the goddess Athena, and the contest began. Athena wove a cloth that showed the gods in all their glory. Arachne wove a cloth that showed the gods behaving badly, and it was just as beautiful.

Athena was furious. She tore Arachne's cloth and touched her on the forehead. Arachne began to shrink. Her arms grew thin and long, and she turned into a spider. "Since you love to weave," said Athena, "you will weave forever."

The Greeks told this myth to warn against too much pride. It also tells why spiders spin. Arachne is the Greek word for spider, and today spiders belong to a group of animals called arachnids.

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Name _____ Date _____

Myths

Arachne: look back at the tale to answer.

1. What did Arachne brag about?

_____

_____

2. Who was the old woman? How do you know?

_____

_____

_____

3. What lesson did the Greeks want this myth to teach?

Spiders are clever.

Always practice weaving.

Too much pride can lead to trouble.

4. What does the myth explain about nature?

_____

_____

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Name _____ Date _____

Fable, Folktale or Myth?

Think about the four tales you read. Then answer the questions.

1. A fable is a short tale, often with animals, that teaches a lesson. Which two tales are fables?

The Ant and the Grasshopper, and The Crow and the Pitcher

Arachne, and Anansi and the Pot of Wisdom

Arachne, and The Crow and the Pitcher

2. A myth is an old tale about gods or heroes. It often explains something in nature. Which tale is a myth?

Arachne The Ant and the Grasshopper The Crow and the Pitcher

3. A folktale is passed down by the people of a place, told aloud for many years. Where is Anansi and the Pot of Wisdom told?

in ancient Greece in Ghana, by the Akan people in the United States

4. Two tales explain something. Which two, and what do they explain?

_____

_____

5. Grasshopper and Arachne both make a mistake. What is it, and what happens to each?

_____

_____

_____

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Name _____ Date _____

Recount a Tale

Retell a fable, folktale or myth in order. Then find its central message.

Title

Kind of tale

Circle one: fable folktale myth

Beginning

Middle

End

Central message the lesson, in a sentence

Key details that show the message

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Fables

The Ant and the Grasshopper: look back at the tale to answer.

1. What did Ant do all summer? Why?

She carried wheat to her nest, because she was storing food for the winter.

2. Which words show that Grasshopper did not plan ahead?

"I am gathering food for the winter."

"Winter is a long way off."

"Come and sing with me instead."

3. What is the central message of the fable?

Ants are stronger than grasshoppers.

Work today to be ready for hard times later.

Singing is a waste of time.

4. Which detail shows the message best? Explain.

The ants had food all winter because they stored it, but Grasshopper went hungry.

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Fables

The Crow and the Pitcher: look back at the tale to answer.

1. What was the crow's problem?

She could not find any pebbles.

The pitcher was empty.

She could not reach the water in the pitcher.

2. What did the crow try before the pebbles? Why did it not work?

She tried to tip the pitcher over, but it was too heavy to move.

3. Why did the water rise as the crow dropped in pebbles?

Each pebble took up room in the pitcher, so it pushed the water up.

4. What is the central message of the fable?

Never drink from a pitcher.

Crows like gardens.

A clever idea and patience can solve a hard problem.

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Folktales

Anansi and the Pot of Wisdom: look back at the tale to answer.

1. Why did Anansi want to hide the pot at the top of a tree?

He was afraid someone would take his wisdom.

2. What problem did Anansi have as he climbed? How did Ntikuma solve it?

The pot bumped the trunk, so he slipped. Ntikuma said to tie it on his back.

3. What does this tale explain?

- why everyone has a little wisdom
- why spiders live in trees
- how clay pots are made

4. What is the central message? Which detail shows it?

No one knows everything, and we can learn from anyone. Even Anansi's young son knew something he did not.

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Myths

Arachne: look back at the tale to answer.

1. What did Arachne brag about?

She said she wove better than the goddess Athena.

2. Who was the old woman? How do you know?

She was Athena. The text says the old woman changed into the goddess Athena.

3. What lesson did the Greeks want this myth to teach?

Spiders are clever.

Always practice weaving.

Too much pride can lead to trouble.

4. What does the myth explain about nature?

It explains why spiders spin webs.

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Fable, Folktale or Myth?

Think about the four tales you read. Then answer the questions.

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in ancient Greece in Ghana, by the Akan people in the United States

4. Two tales explain something. Which two, and what do they explain?

Anansi explains why everyone has a little wisdom. Arachne explains why spiders spin.

5. Grasshopper and Arachne both make a mistake. What is it, and what happens to each?

Both ignore a warning. Grasshopper goes hungry, and Arachne is turned into a spider.

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