

Storytelling

Ideas for 4 lessons, based on storytelling, for teachers to deliver in adult literacy classes

Lesson 3



Objectives

1. To further improve speaking and listening skills.
2. To focus on skills which are of fundamental importance in work and social life. Adult core curriculum standards Ref; SLr – SLc – SLD and Rt.
3. To combine story with art, quiz and games.
4. To encourage interaction in the class between teacher and learners.
5. To introduce Greek Myths (Arachne) to learners and to inspire them to ask about stories from different places and times.

Learning outcomes

- Learners will have experienced stories from other countries and cultures.
- Learners will have interacted with their peers in games and quiz.
- Learners will have discovered the fun of incorporating new games into learning.
- Learners will also have incorporated Art, Social Science and Geography into their lesson.
- Learners will carry out research into stories from other cultures.

Resources

Activity sheets:

1. The story – Arachne.
2. Writing materials.
3. Quiz – you might like to present this as a sheet.

Preparation

Teachers read and learn about the Greek Myth story of Arachne.
Teachers prepare to tell or read the story of Arachne.

This lesson at a glance

- The class learns about stories from other cultures.
- The class discusses ways of finding stories from other cultures.
- The class uses other activities with the story.
- Games and Quiz are introduced to the lessons.

Lesson plan 1 x 1 hour

Introduction (10 minutes)

Tell or read the Arachne story.

Teacher-led (10 minutes)

Discuss the story, where it came from (Greece). Has the class heard of the Greek Myths? Do they know any of them? Bring in stories from other places and times, in particular the Ananse stories from Africa. Discuss how many stories from around the world are very similar. Encourage the class to tell you what their favourite story is. Discuss creating a story wall in the class for the next lesson and get them to write up their name and their favourite story beside it.

Activity 1 (5 minutes)

Group discussion about the story.

Activity 2: Quiz (20 minutes)

- What was wrong with Arachne's behaviour?
- Why did people come from all over the world to see Arachne?
- In your opinion, why was Athena angry about Arachne's weaving?
- Why was Arachne so unkind to Athena?
- Why was it that Arachne did not know she was speaking to Athena?
- Who was the better of the two weavers?
- Why was Arachne punished by Athena?
- What is Arachnophobia?
- Where did the name Arachnophobia come from?

Activity 3: Draw a spider's web (15 minutes)

This is a fun activity enjoyed by adult learners as everyone thinks they know how to draw a spider's web...until they try it! (not as easy as you might think and causes a lot of hilarity as lots of people end up with umbrellas and flowers rather than spider's webs – it's a perception thing).

There could be a small prize awarded for the best spider's web.

Preparation for the next lesson

Find out what they can about the Ananse stories from Jamaica/Africa for next lesson.

The story of Arachne

Athena, goddess of wisdom, was a proud and talented, young goddess. In times of peace, Athena taught Grecians about the arts. She herself was a skilful weaver and potter and always took pride in her pupils' work, as long as they respected her.

One of Athena's pupils was a maiden whose name was Arachne. Arachne was a poor, simple girl who lived in the country. Her father was a quiet man of humble birth. He dyed sheep's wool to earn money for a living. Arachne wove beautiful fabrics of delicate designs, and people began to comment to her that surely she had been taught by the goddess Athena. Arachne denied this and stated that she was certainly better than Athena and that she had learned little or nothing from Athena's teachings. She even went as far as to say that she was a better weaver than Athena!

Arachne was known to have said, 'I have achieved this marvellous skill due to my own talent, hard work and efforts.'

Soon Athena heard of the boastings of Arachne and decided to speak to her. Athena disguised herself as an old woman and went before Arachne stating, 'It is foolish to pretend that you are like one of the gods. You're simply a mortal whose talents are paled in comparison to those of the goddess Athena.'

Arachne charged back to the old lady, 'If Athena doesn't like my words, then let her show her skills in a weaving contest.'

Suddenly, the disguise of the old woman was removed and there stood the radiant goddess Athena standing in front of Arachne. Athena accepted the contest challenge.

As the contest began, it was clear that the beauty of both Athena's and Arachne's tapestries were lovely. However, the goddess worked more quickly and skilfully. Arachne's attitude about her work showed that she felt her weaving was more lovely, but Athena felt it was an insult to the gods. This angered Arachne especially since Athena requested an apology. Arachne refused, and Athena slapped Arachne in the face. Almost instantly Arachne felt her head begin to shrink and her nimble fingers grow into long, thin legs.

'Vain girl, since you love to weave so very much, why don't you go and spin forever.' Athena had turned Arachne into a spider.

So it is said that all spiders have been punished for Arachne's boasting, since they are required to live within their own webs in dark corners and are despised.

Since then spiders have been called arachnids.

The fear of spiders is called arachnophobia.

The Reading for Pleasure suite of materials:

- CPD modules: Reading for pleasure in a number of contexts
- Storytelling: CPD unit with lesson ideas
- Families, Learning and Storytelling: Using archives for community cohesion
- Take Your Partner: Engaging emergent adult readers
- Technology and Reading: How to use blogs, wikis, iPods and e-books to promote reading
- Putting two and 2 together: Creating a bridge between literacy and numeracy learning
- Resources for libraries: Guidance on how to engage families to read for pleasure