Genre: Folktale

Read the folktales. Then answer the questions that follow.

Anansi Tries to Steal All the Wisdom in the World

a folktale from West Africa

- Anansi the spider knew that he was not wise. He was a sly trickster who could use his wit to fool many different people. But he knew that he did not have much wisdom.
- Then one day he had a clever thought. "If I can get all of the wisdom in the village and put it in a hollow gourd," he thought, "I will be very wise indeed. In fact, I will be the wisest of all!"
- 3 So he found a hollow gourd and began to carry out his plan. He went from door to door to collect the village's wisdom. People chuckled at poor Anansi, for they knew that more than any other creature, he needed wisdom. So each person put a bit of wisdom in his gourd and wished him well.
- Soon the gourd was overflowing with wisdom and could hold no more. Now Anansi needed to find a place to store it. "I am certainly the wisest person in the world. But if I don't find a good hiding place for my wisdom, I am sure to lose it."



- 5 He looked around and spotted a very tall tree. "Ah," Anansi said, "I will hide my wisdom high in that tree. Then I will never have to worry about someone stealing it from me!"
- Anansi set out to climb the towering tree with the heavy gourd tied to the front of his belly where it would be safe. As he climbed, however, the gourd full of wisdom kept getting in the way. He tried and tried, but he could not climb very high.
- Just then, Anansi's youngest son walked by. "What are you doing, Father?" asked the little spider.
- 8 "I am climbing this tree with my gourd full of wisdom," Anansi replied.
- 9 "But Father," said the son, "wouldn't it be much easier if you tied the gourd behind you instead of in front?"
- Anansi sat there quietly for a very long time. Then he said, "Shouldn't you be going home now?"

- After his son left, Anansi moved the gourd so that it was behind him. Then he proceeded up the tree without a problem. When he reached the top, he cried out, "I collected so much wisdom that I am the wisest person ever, and still my baby son is wiser than me. Here! Take back your wisdom!"
- He lifted the gourd high over his head and spilled its contents into the wind. The wisdom blew far and wide and settled across the land. And this is how wisdom came back to the world.



Anansi and LION

a folktale from West Africa

- Anansi the spider caught some fish and cooked them. He put them in a sack to take into the forest, where he could eat them all himself. "These will taste delicious," he chuckled.
- Anansi hadn't gone very far when he met Lion, and Lion asked him, "Well, brother Anansi, what have you got there?"
- 3 "Oh . . . just some old bones that I'm going to bury in the mountains."
- 4 Lion walked away, but then he started thinking. "I know that Anansi is a great trickster. He probably has something in that sack he doesn't want me to see. I will follow him to see what he's up to."
- When Anansi got into the woods, he set his sack down, took out one fish, and ate it. He didn't think anyone else was around, so he took out another fish. But just then, Lion came up and said, "Well, brother Anansi, those don't look like bones to me. That was a pretty tale you told me."
- 6 "Oh! brother Lion, I am so glad you have come. Never mind what I told you—it was only my fun. Come and join me."



- 7 So Lion sat down and began to eat, and before Anansi had eaten one fish, Lion had almost emptied the sack. Anansi said to himself, "Greedy fellow, eating up all my fish!"
- 8 "What did you say, sir?"
- 9 "I said you do not eat fast enough," Anansi replied, for he was afraid of what Lion might do. Soon, all the fish were gone.
- While Anansi didn't complain, he did want to get back at Lion for eating most of his fish. He had a clever thought. "Which of us do you think is the stronger?"
- 11 Lion said, "Why, I am, of course."
- 12 Then Anansi said, "We will tie one another to that tree, and we shall see who is the stronger."
- Now they agreed that Lion should tie Anansi first, and he tied him with some very fine string, and not very tight. Anansi twisted himself two or three times, and the string broke.
- 14 Then it was Anansi's turn to tie Lion, and he took some very strong rope. Lion said, "You must not tie me tight, for I did not tie you tight."
- 15 And Anansi said, "Oh, no, to be sure, I will not!"
 But he tied him as tight as ever he could and then told him to try and get loose.
- 16 Lion tried and tried, but he could not get loose.
- 17 Anansi thought, "That is what he gets for eating my meal, and now it's time for me to leave." So Anansi took up his empty sack and left Lion behind, tied to the tree.



Think

- 1 Look at the picture on page 383 that goes with "Anansi Tries to Steal All the Wisdom in the World." What does the picture tell you about the way Anansi feels in this part of the story?
 - **A** He is proud because he got what he wanted.
 - **B** He is excited to see his young son.
 - **C** He is sad and unhappy because someone might steal from him.
 - **D** He is angry because he can't climb faster.
- Which word from "Anansi Tries to Steal All the Wisdom in the World" do both pictures help you understand?
 - **A** village
 - **B** hollow
 - **C** gourd
 - **D** contents
- Read the paragraph from "Anansi Tries to Steal All the Wisdom in the World."
 Underline the sentence that explains what has caused Anansi to do what he is doing in the picture on page 384.

After his son left, Anansi moved the gourd so that it was behind him. Then he proceeded up the tree without a problem. When he reached the top, he cried out, "I collected so much wisdom that I am the wisest person ever, and still my baby son is wiser than me. Here! Take back your wisdom!"

4 Read this sentence from "Anansi and the Lion."

"These will taste delicious," he chuckled.

What does the author's use of "chuckled" in this sentence tell about Anansi?

- **A** He is silly.
- **B** He is happy.
- **C** He is careful.
- **D** He is clever.

5 This question has two parts. First answer Part A. Then answer Part B.

Part A

What is happening in the picture on page 385?

- **A** Anansi is offering to share his fish with Lion.
- **B** Anansi is telling Lion about his bag of bones.
- **C** Anansi has a contest of strength with Lion.
- **D** Anansi is upset that Lion has eaten most of the fish.

Part B

Which sentence from "Anansi and the Lion" **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- **A** "'Oh! brother Lion, I am so glad you have come."
- **B** "While Anansi didn't complain, he did want to get back at Lion for eating most of his fish."
- **C** "When Anansi got into the woods, he set his sack down, took out one fish, and ate it."
- **D** "Lion tried and tried, but he could not get loose."
- 6 Which of the following statements is true about Anansi in **both** stories?
 - A Anansi thinks he is foolish.
 - **B** Others think Anansi is foolish.
 - **C** Anansi thinks he is clever.
 - **D** Others think Anansi is clever.
- Which sentence describes one way the two stories are **alike**?
 - A They both have a happy ending.
 - **B** They both explain why something happens in nature.
 - **C** They both tell how animals get along with each other.
 - **D** They both have a character who wants something all to himself.

- A trickster is a type of character who likes to play tricks on others. Choose **two** answers that explain why Anansi is called a trickster in both stories.
 - A Anansi tricks Lion into getting tied up.
 - **B** Anansi tries to trick his friend into climbing a tree.
 - **C** Anansi tricks Lion into giving away all his fish.
 - **D** Anansi tries to hide all the wisdom from the village in a tree.
- Which statement is true about the setting in **both** stories?
 - **A** A tree is an important part of the setting.
 - **B** A village is an important part of the setting.
 - **C** The mountains are an important part of the setting.
 - **D** The sky is an important part of the setting.
- The box below contains details from both stories.

Details

- Anansi tricks other characters.
- Anansi gives back what he took.
- Anansi's plans are ruined by weather.
- Anansi gets revenge.
- · Another animal defeats Anansi in a contest.

Complete the chart below using information from the box. Write **one** detail from each story and **one** detail that appears in both stories.

"Anansi Tries to Steal All the Wisdom in the World"	"Anansi and the Lion"	Both



Write

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Writing Prompt In both stories, which characters are greedy? What do they want? Do they finally get what they want? Use details from each story to support your answer.

Your writing will be scored based on the development of ideas and the language conventions of grammar, usage, and mechanics.

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