

UNICORN
ONLINE



ANANSI THE SPIDER RE-SPUN

TEACHER RESOURCE PACK

PRESCHOOL — GRADE 2



A Unicorn and Illuminations Production

ANANSI THE SPIDER RE-SPUN

Created and directed by Justin Audibert

FOR STUDENTS IN PRESCHOOL – GRADE 2

A NEW AND UNIQUE DIGITAL THEATRE EXPERIENCE FOR AGES 3 – 8.

The Unicorn's very first entirely digitally created theatre experience, *Anansi the Spider Re-spun* contains three episodes, streamed for free on CTC's website. Each episode is around 15 minutes long.

Inspired by the Unicorn's 2019 five-star hit show, *Anansi the Spider*, about the infamous mischief-maker and master spinner of yarns, the Unicorn has adapted these classic West African and Caribbean tales for Unicorn Online. Made with film partner, Illuminations, the Unicorn has creatively responded to the current situation as the cast film themselves in their own homes and the production is created and directed remotely.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION p. 4

ABOUT THE RESOURCES p. 5

STORY OVERVIEW p. 7

HOME SCHOOLING ACTIVITIES

SEQUENCE 1: ANANSI STORIES AND THEIR ORIGINS p. 9

SEQUENCE 2: ANIMAL STORIES p. 13

SEQUENCE 3: BROTHER ANANSI AND BROTHER SNAKE p. 15

SEQUENCE 4: ANANSI AND THE TWO DINNERS p. 16

SEQUENCE 5 ANANSI AND THE POT OF WISDOM p. 21

SEQUENCE 6: CREATE YOUR OWN ANANSI STORY p. 26

INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR JUSTIN AUDIBERT p. 29

INTRODUCTION

This is the Learning Resource for the Unicorn Theatre's digital production of *Anansi the Spider Re-spun*.

The Unicorn Theatre is the UK's leading professional theatre for young audiences, dedicated to inspiring and invigorating young people of all ages, perspectives and abilities, and empowering them to explore the world – on their own terms – through theatre.

The Unicorn's critically acclaimed, sell-out production of *Anansi the Spider* premiered on the Unicorn's stage in 2019 and now, in response to these extraordinary times, the show has been re-imagined and re-spun into the Unicorn's first ever on-screen only theatre experience for children as part of Unicorn Online.

With *Anansi the Spider Re-spun*, the Unicorn will be bringing the theatre's work direct to the homes of audiences with new theatre created from the homes of the artists.

Anansi is one of the great folk heroes of the world. He is as clever as he is lazy and he loves to prove how smart he is by tricking the people in his village and the animals in the jungle. Drawn from the rich vein of traditional African and Caribbean stories, the legendary Spider tricks, sings and dances his way out of trouble and often right back into it.

The Anansi legend originated in Ghana, with the Ashanti tribe. The stories were part of a vibrant oral tradition, recounted from generation to generation, all featuring the central character of Anansi – both human and spider. These stories were carried to the Caribbean with the Transatlantic slave trade, and so Anansi's ability to outwit and defeat those more powerful than himself has become both a symbol of hope and rebellion. These myths of resistance and subversion have endured and evolved into one of folklore's most popular characters who although small can outsmart those bigger than himself.

'I think he is very relatable to young children, because they're growing and learning and working the world out and as they do, they're pushing at and exploring boundaries, and that is what Anansi does all the time.' Justin Audibert, Director of *Anansi the Spider Re-spun*

HOME SCHOOLING ACTIVITIES

The activities in this pack have been designed to be used at home before and after viewing the stories online. Offering accessible and engaging ways to pick up on and explore the themes and characters before and after watching the stories, they use drama, storytelling, drawing and writing tasks which support the EYFS framework and KS1 and KS2 curriculum, particularly through:

Communication and language development: giving children opportunities to experience rich language; to develop their confidence and skills in expressing themselves; and speaking and listening in a range of contexts.

Expressive arts and design: enabling children to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials, as well as providing opportunities and encouragement for sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings.

Teachers will be able to establish links to the relevant curriculum objectives for their class, selecting from the range of activities and adapting them for their specific year group.

HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

We encourage you to select activities to create your own lesson plans to send to pupils at home or to teach online or in the classroom (when appropriate). Having made your selection, you may need to adapt, simplify, or extend them for your particular year group, to meet your specific priorities and link to curriculum objectives. You could choose to introduce discussions and tasks via a video link or ask parents and carers to do so at home.

Activities are written to be accessible to children, and are designed so that parents, carers and siblings can also enjoy and explore the work together. Some activities will need an adult to facilitate them and will work best if the adult can join in alongside their children. We'd ask adults to have fun, share ideas and have fun with their children. The great thing about many of the activities included here is that there are not right or wrong answers - it's much more about exploring what you think and feel about the stories.

Other tasks are designed for children to do independently – we have made it clear where the activity has been designed to be child-led.

Drama games are included to allow children to step into the stories and become the characters. Adults can join in, share ideas, play together and experience the difference between 'talking about' and 'being' a character and how that can help bring stories alive.

Timings give an indication of how long a task may take, but of course, the length of time will also depend on the age and interests of the children as they may become absorbed in a particular task and want to spend more time developing their ideas.

The activities break down into the following sequences:

SEQUENCE 1: ANANSI STORIES AND THEIR ORIGINS

The activities in this sequence are designed to be done before seeing the stories. They give the children the chance to think about all the different ways in which they experience story in their lives. They also provide the opportunity to find out a little about Ghana, the place the Anansi stories originally came from.

SEQUENCE 2: ANIMAL STORIES

These activities can also be done before you watch the stories. This sequence starts by exploring children's favourite animals and then introduces animals that come from Ghana and the Caribbean, some of which feature in our stories.

SEQUENCE 3: BROTHER ANANSI AND BROTHER SNAKE

This sequence includes a link to our online workshop (which will be available from 30 May 2020) in which actors teach the children one of the songs from the story. It also explores ideas of working together when times are hard.

SEQUENCE 4: ANANSI AND THE TWO DINNERS

These activities explore the first story *Anansi and the Two Dinners*. They focus on what it is like when you cannot choose between two things that you really want. They draw on children's own experience of parties and lead to an acting out of the story for family and friends.

SEQUENCE 5: ANANSI AND THE POT OF WISDOM

This sequence provides ways for children to explore the concept of 'wisdom' with members of their family before they watch *Anansi and the Pot of Wisdom*. The sequence provides a simple framework that helps children act out and create a map of the story.

SEQUENCE 6: CREATE YOUR OWN ANANSI STORY

This activity will give children the chance to write their own Anansi story using what they know about the kind of character Anansi is. Adults will scribe the story for the children and then they can act out their original story, or create an animation using the 'Animation is Fun' online resource for guidance (available on the Unicorn's YouTube channel and Primary Schools webpage).

THE STORIES

Anansi the Spider Re-spun includes three of director Justin Audibert's favourite Anansi stories.

BROTHER ANANSI AND BROTHER SNAKE

All the animals heard the news; famine was coming to the land, so they decided to get together and work hard to plant and grow food for the coming famine. All that is except for Anansi who said 'Work? With you fools? No way. Me a gan mek me own plan. Anansi always comes out on top.'

So while the rest of the animals sowed their seeds and gathered in the harvest Anansi just relaxed and chilled, confident that he'd think of plan when he needed to.

The time came when all the animals had gathered in their harvest and had plenty of food to see them through the famine. But Anansi was hungry. So he went to see Brother Snake and pleaded with him to give him some food.

At first Brother Snake refused, but Anansi ground him down until, at last, he agreed, but 'on one condition. At midnight I will come to your house and whip you with my long, long tail.' Anansi agreed.

Anansi went home with the food but realised he needed a plan for when Brother Snake came at midnight with his long, long tail. So that night he invited Brother Goat to come and eat with him and when they were finished suggested he lie down and have a rest.

At midnight there was a knock at Anansi's door and Brother Goat went to open it. As soon as he did Brother Snake, thinking it was Anansi, whipped him with his tail and Brother Goat fell down.

The next day Anansi started to make a delicious goat stew but needed some more vegetables to go in it. He went back to see Brother Snake – who could not understand why Anansi was looking so well! Brother Snake agreed to give him some vegetables 'on one condition. At midnight I will come to your house and whip you with my long, long tail.' Anansi agreed again.

This time Anansi invited Brother Hog to dinner and afterwards suggested he might want to lie down and have a rest. When Brother Hog was awakened at midnight by someone at the door, he opened it and was whipped by Brother Snake's long, long tail.

The next day Anansi was busy making Hog stew, but he needed some vegetables to go in it. So once again he visited Brother Snake and once again he gave him some vegetables 'on one condition'.

That evening Anansi invited Brother Armadillo to his home, but he was a vegetarian so didn't have any of the supper and didn't need an after-dinner nap. When the door knocked at midnight Anansi tried to get Brother Armadillo to answer it, but he refused saying 'your house, your guest, your door'. So, in the end, Anansi had to answer his own door and was whipped to the ground by Brother Snake's long, long tail.

ANANSI AND THE TWO DINNERS

Anansi can't decide which of the two parties to go to and ends up making it to neither.

Anansi loves parties, and he particularly enjoys dancing as he thinks he is very good at it. He is invited to two parties on the same day: one on one side of the island at West Village, the other at East Village. He hears that there will be lots of delicious food at the parties - fried chicken, plantain and coconut cake at one, and lobster, pepper soup with dumplings, and chocolate ice cream at the other. Some might call Anansi greedy, but he says he just enjoys good food.

The next day, the day of the parties, Anansi sets off with his two children, Kuma and Kwek, all dressed up in their party clothes. But when they arrive at the crossroads, with one direction signposted West Village and the other East Village, Anansi cannot decide which one to go to first. Crucially, he doesn't know which will be serving food first.

Thinking he has found a solution, he decides to send his children on to the parties ahead of him; one to the West and one to the East. But each child will take a vine with them and when the food is being served, they should pull on the rope, which Anansi has secured around his waist, letting him know that food is served.

The children set off and have a wonderful time at each of the parties, dancing and having fun. Then when the food is announced, each one pulls hard on the vine to give the signal to their father. But the food arrives at both parties at exactly the same time, and so both children pull at the same time. At the crossroads, Anansi cannot move, as each vine tied around his waist pulls him in both directions, he is stuck at the crossroads

When the parties end, the children return to the crossroads and find Anansi tired and hungry. And where the ropes have been pulled tight around him, Anansi's waist has become extra thin, and his body has puffed out either side. And this is how Anansi looks to this day.

ANANSI AND THE POT OF WISDOM

Anansi decides he wants all the common sense for himself, realising that if he owns all the wisdom in the world, he will be at a great advantage.

Anansi goes around the island collecting wisdom from all of those who have it and stores it in a pot. However, worried that others might get their hands on his wisdom, he decides to hide the pot at the top of a very tall tree. He straps the pot onto his front and starts to climb, but with the pot tied to him he can barely climb; his arms and legs struggle to reach the trunk or the branches.

As he attempts to climb the tree, a child watches from below and calls out to Anansi asking if it would be easier if he tied the pot to his back, leaving his arms and legs free to climb. When the child leaves, Anansi ties the pot to his back and makes it to the top of the tree. But as he sits there, he realises all the wisdom in the world is of little use to him if a little child is cleverer than he is. So instead he throws away the pot and as he does the wisdom spills out, catches on the wind and the rain and is redistributed across the land to all the animals and humans below.

HOME SCHOOLING ACTIVITIES

SEQUENCE 1: ANANSI STORIES AND THEIR ORIGINS

The activities in this sequence can be done before you watch the stories online. They will help you think about different ways people enjoy stories and help you to find out a little about Ghana, the place where the Anansi stories came from originally.

ACTIVITY 1: HOW WE ENJOY STORIES

Time: 15 - 25 mins

Resources: paper and colouring pencils

Outline: This activity will explore how we enjoy stories in many ways

1. Discussion - favourite ways of enjoying stories (5 - 10 mins)

Discuss all the different ways in which you enjoy stories.

(Examples: story time in your classroom, a relative reading to you at home, looking at a book alone, picture books and comics, listening to audiobooks, going to the cinema or theatre, watching a story on television or an iPad, computer games).

Decide which is your favourite way of experiencing a story and describe why. For example, what is it you particularly like about having a bedtime story, or reading a picture book alone?

Adults and siblings/classmates: make sure you share your favourite way of experiencing a story and explain why.

If you haven't already done so, now share a favourite story that you have enjoyed and explain what it is about the story that you love.

Anansi stories are hundreds of years old, and sometimes would have been told by a storyteller who would gather people from a village together to listen. This was a time before books, computers, televisions or theatres.

The Unicorn Theatre usually bring the audience together in the theatre to experience the story together, live. We have filmed our stories *Anansi the Spider- Re-spun* at this time so that you can enjoy the play at home.

2: Draw (or write) 'my favourite way of enjoying a story' (10 – 15 mins)

Independent activity

Find some paper and colouring pencils or crayons and draw yourself enjoying a story in your favourite way.

- How can you show where you are, who else (if anyone) is there and how you are enjoying your story?
- Can you also show what the story you are enjoying is and maybe what is happening in the story? For example, you could draw an image of the story on an i-Pad or TV, or draw a thought bubble showing the pictures inside your head as you listen to someone reading to you.

ACTIVITY 2: HOW ANANSI STORIES HAVE TRAVELLED THE WORLD

Time: 20 – 35 mins

Resources: Globe or map of the world and Africa, images of Ghana, YouTube link to a video titled Learn Twi numbers - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZgJMyDXz-O>, paper and colouring pencils

Outline: This activity explores how Anansi stories have been around for hundreds of years and how they have travelled around the world.

A Story from long long ago

And far far away

A story from when the animals spoke words and walked on two legs just like people

A story that travelled from Africa

Across the Atlantic Ocean

And back again

A tale that was spun

And re-spun

By many different voices

Over hundreds of years

Until it reached their eager ears ...

In a bustling, busy, brilliant city of a million different faces

1: Contrast Ghana and the UK (10 – 15 mins)

Child and adult or independent activity

The Anansi stories originated in West Africa hundreds of years ago and then travelled across the world, first to the Caribbean and then on to the UK (and all over the world).

The stories were first told by the Ashanti people of West Africa – now Ghana. Some of the stories are part of the creation myths which explained how the world began and tell how Anansi the Spider would climb up his thread to speak to the God Nyame.

Have a look at where Ghana is on a world map or a map of Africa.

Discuss what you know, or imagine, the differences between Ghana and the UK might be. You can write down your ideas with Ghana on one side of a piece of paper and the UK on the other. You could discuss:

- Climate – the weather
- Landscape or environment
- Vegetation and food
- Wildlife – the kind of animals you might find there
- Language

Look at some images of Ghana, you can search for landscapes in Ghana that will show the coast and countryside as well as cities like Accra the capital city, or Kumasi the second largest city.

Ghana is where the Anansi stories originated hundreds of years ago. Just like in the UK at that time, there wouldn't have been cities, cars and tower blocks when these stories were first told.

2. Learn to count in Twi (10 - 20 mins)

Independent activity

In the play the actors count down from 5 to 1 in Twi – the Akan language from southern Ghana. Use the link to learn how to count from 1 to 10. Then when you see the play online you will recognise the numbers and can count down with the actors.

Resource: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nZgJMyDXz-0>

The actors also sing a song about crossing the sea to new lands - here is the song in Twi and English. You could sing along with the actors when you see the stories online.

Twi song:

Fa me ko nsuo nomu
Fa me ko
Asomdwe mu
Wo ekro fofro mu

English song:

Carry me over.
Into the water.
Carry me safely
Into new lands.

3. The journey from Ghana to the Caribbean (5 mins)

Child and adult or independent activity

The Anansi stories travelled from Ghana to the Caribbean where more stories about the trickster spider were created; stories in which the clever, mischievous, funny and quick-thinking spider is always able to outwit those bigger and more powerful than him.

Look at a globe or world map and find Ghana and the Caribbean. Can you trace the route ships would have sailed to travel from Ghana to the Caribbean?

Adults - with older children you may want to talk about how people from Ghana and other countries

in West Africa were taken from their homes as part of the transatlantic slave trade. You could think about why the stories, language and were taken from their homes against their will.

4: Draw Flags of Ghana, the Caribbean Islands and the UK

Independent activity

Can you do a drawing of one of the maps from the countries where our stories are told?

Ghanaian Flag



The red represents the blood of those who died in the country's struggle for freedom from the UK, the gold represents the gold wealth of the country, the green symbolises the country's rich forests, and the black star is the symbol of African emancipation.

Ashanti Flag



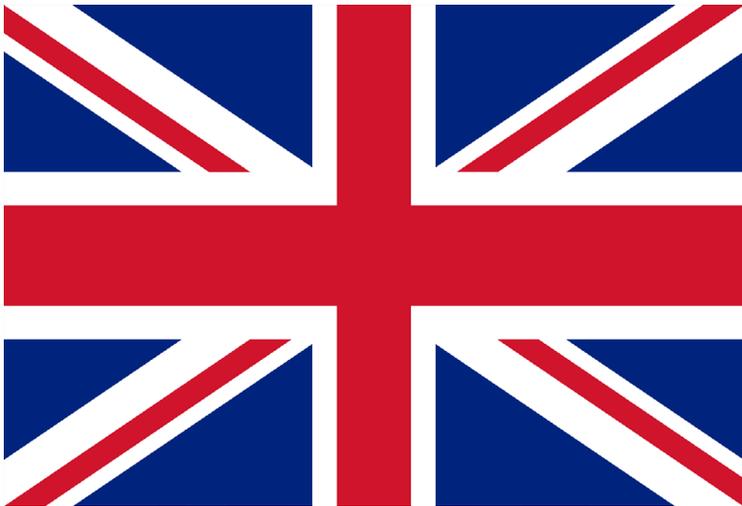
The flag of the Ashanti people, who live in a region of South Ghana. The golden stool is a symbol of power - the throne of the kings of the Ashanti people.

There are lots of different flags for the Islands in the Caribbean. You could research them and draw your favourite.

Here's one of Antigua, what do you think the images on it might represent?



British Flag: it is also known as The Union Jack. Can you find out what the colours represent?



SEQUENCE 2: ANIMAL STORIES

These activities explore different animals that children might like in different ways. This sequence can be done before watching the Anansi stories.

In the Anansi stories, the main character, Anansi, is a spider, and most of the other characters are different animals that you would find in Africa or the Caribbean.

ACTIVITY 1: FAVOURITE ANIMALS

Resources: Globe or map of the world and Africa, images of animals, music, paper and coloured pencils

1: What animal would you be – a simple drama game (5 – 10 mins)

Child and adult activity

Imagine you could be any animal, what would you be?

Now transform yourself into that animal; move as them and make the sounds they might make. Ask your adult or sibling to choose their animal too and move and make sounds like them.

What is it about the animal that you particularly like? Share your reasons with each other.

People love stories about animals – why do you think that is?

2: Animals found in Ghana (10 – 15 mins)

Independent activity

Look at a map of Africa and find Ghana. What animals do you think you might find there?

Look at images of some of the animals that are found in Ghana. Can you spot any of the animals you suggested? <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/animals-that-live-in-ghana.html>

Some of the animals that you guessed might be found in Africa but not in Ghana. For example, giraffes are found in other countries in Africa, but not Ghana. Use the map to look again at how many countries there are in Africa and where Ghana is.

3: Animal musical statues (10 mins)

Child and adult activity

Play a game of musical statues. You will need someone to play some music, and when the music stops to call out an animal for you and at that point make yourself into a statue of that animal. Now bring the animals to life, make the noises you imagine the animals would make and move how they would move.

Include animals that are found in Ghana and some of the other animals from the plays you will see.

For example:

Antelope	Snake	Bear	Crocodile	Lion	Elephant
Armadillo	Goat	Dog	Eagle	Turtle	Spider

4: Drawing and writing (10 – 20 mins)

Independent activity

Draw your favourite animal and explain why you particularly like this animal.

Before you do this you could do some research about your animal - find out about their habitat (where they live), what they eat (are they carnivores, herbivores or omnivores?), if they are prey for other animals, what their young are called and any other information you can find out about them.

SEQUENCE 3: BROTHER ANANSI AND BROTHER SNAKE

These activities can be done after watching the first online story *Brother Anansi and Brother Snake*. You can think about the idea of working together when times are hard, learn a song from the story and think about what the story means to you.

ACTIVITY 1: LEARN THE SONG FROM THE STORY

Resources: The workshop video will be on the Unicorn's YouTube channel from Sat 30 May, 11am.

We have created an online workshop with the actors where they will teach you the song from the story. You can record yourself singing the song, send us your recording, and join a choir of voices. There will be an online form where you can also upload the video, via the *Anansi the Spider Re-spun* webpage.

ACTIVITY 2: COOPERATION – WORKING TOGETHER

Resources: paper and pencils, Adrinkra symbols

1) Discuss working together and sharing (5 - 10 mins)

Child and adult activity

Talk to the people in your household about the saying 'many hands make light work'. What does it mean? Can you think of any examples in your life of people working together on something? How is it different to doing something on your own?

In the story, the owl tells everyone that the famine is coming. Famine means that 'there is no food' so they all prepare; working hard together to plant, grow and harvest food for the hard times ahead when the famine comes.

Discuss times when you have worked with others to get ready for hard times. How important has working together and sharing things been during social distancing measures? Can you think of examples of when you have worked together and shared things in the last few weeks?

2) Draw the Adrinkra symbol for cooperation

Independent activity

Adrinkra symbols were created by the Ashanti, or Asante, of southern Ghana hundreds of years ago. They represent things that were important to their people and can be found on pottery, buildings, woven fabrics and measuring weights. This is the Adrinkra symbol for cooperation – can you draw it?

What would your symbol look like? Maybe you could design your own symbol for cooperation – working together and sharing.



3) What do you think about what happened in the story?

Answer these questions about the story *Brother Anansi and Brother Snake*:

- When they heard about the famine why do you think all the animals decided they should work together to prepare?
- Why do you think Anansi decided to make his own plan for when the famine came?
- How did Anansi's plan work out?
- What is the moral at the end of the story?
- Do you think Anansi has learnt a lesson?

SEQUENCE 4: ANANSI AND THE TWO DINNERS

These activities explore the final story *Anansi and the Two Dinners* and ask you to think about what you do when you cannot choose between two things you want. We'll also look at the idea of parties – Anansi loves a party.

Activity 1: Can be done before or after watching *Anansi and the Two Dinners*.

Activity 2: Should be done after watching the story.

ACTIVITY 1: MAKING A CHOICE

This activity is all about having to choose between two things.

Resources: paper and pencils

1: Discuss – making a choice (5 - 10 mins)

Child and adult activity

Can you think about a time when you have had to make a choice between two things but found it difficult to choose? Share your example with your adult or sibling and ask them to think of an example for them too.

(In our partner school, children talked about buying new shoes and needing to decide between two pairs they loved or having to choose between going to visit family or playing with friends.)

Try and describe to each other what it felt like when you were trying to choose.

2: Mime what you would choose (10 mins)

Child and adult activity

We are going to give you a series of choices, and you have to decide which of the two you would pick – can you mime an action to show the choice you have made?

The first choice is between ice cream and cake - if you choose ice cream then mime eating an ice

cream, if you choose cake then mime eating a piece of cake.

If you really can't decide between the two options, then can you mime an action that shows what it is like not being able to choose?

You could put several options into a hat and pull them out in turn. There are some ideas below, but see if you can add some of your own: can you think of things that would be really difficult for your classmates to choose between?

Ice cream	Cake
Swimming pool with flumes	Seaside
Scooter	Bicycle
Sour Haribos	Sweet Haribos
Cinema	Soft play
Fried chicken	Pizza
New shoes	New hat
Ipad	Colouring
A party	Amusement park

Discuss why you made the choice you did and if it was difficult to choose why that was.

3: Draw or write about your favourite choice (10 mins)

Independent activity

Write about, or do a drawing, of one of your favourite choices. If you found it hard to choose, describe what it was like trying to make that choice and why it was hard.

ACTIVITY 2: PARTIES

Resources: Paper and coloured pencils, props (things you can find or make at home) and costumes (party clothes)

1: The Best Party – act out your ideal party (10 – 15 mins)

Child and adult activity

Anansi the Spider loves going to parties. We want to find out what kind of parties you enjoy and what would make the best party.

Discuss what you like about parties and what your favourite things to do at parties are – maybe write all your ideas down.

(For example: children at our partner school came up with: breaking the piñata, eating cake, kicking and bouncing balloons around, seeing friends, dancing, presents, party bags, party games, singing happy birthday, blowing out candles and bouncy castles).

Think of three things that would make the best party and create still images (like statues) that show your ideas. Play some music and practice moving from image one, to image two, to image three.

If you enjoyed acting out your 'best party' you can add to it by making some props – can you make a piñata, some party hats, a pass the parcel or some party bags, using what you can find at home?

Write a description of the best party ever, do a drawing, make a video or take a photo that shows your three favourite party activities.

ACTIVITY 3: CREATING A MAP OF ANANSI AND THE TWO DINNERS

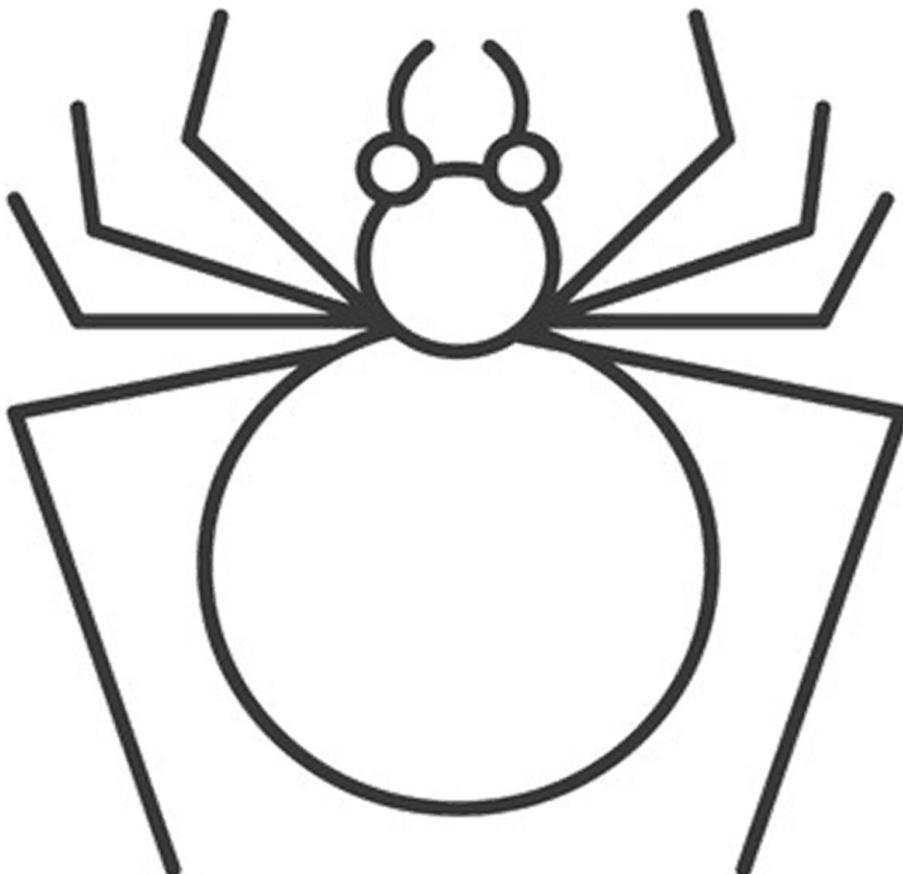
This activity will help you show what happens in the story by making a map.

Resources: Outline of Anansi, paper and colouring pencils

1) Draw a map of the story (10 - 20 mins)

Independent activity

After you have watched the play *Anansi and the Two Dinners* think about what words you would use to describe Anansi in the story? Write them inside an outline of Anansi - you can create your own drawing or use the template we have provided.



You can return to your outlines later when you have watched more stories and add more words to describe Anansi the Spider.

Now create a map of the story. Here are some different locations from the story:

- The story takes place on an island – draw the outline of your island
- The village where Anansi, Quek and Kuma live
- The West Village where the antelope lives
- The East Village where the dog lives
- The crossroads in the middle of the island
- The roads which lead to the different villages
- Maybe you can add in the sea around the island

See if you can draw a map with all the different places the story takes place and add some of the characters that are found in those places. Can you show what is happening at the two parties and some of the food they are eating? Can you show Anansi stuck at the crossroads?

ACTIVITY 4: CREATE YOUR OWN PERFORMANCE OF ANANSI AND THE TWO DINNERS

Resources: Props - things you can find or make at home for example a scarf for the vines - and costumes to act out the story (10 – 30 mins)

Child and adult or independent activity

Now that you have seen *Anansi and the Two Dinners*, can you create your own version of the story and act it out for family and friends?

Think about what the main things are that you want to show in your performance. How many scenes will you include? Where do they take place and which characters are in each scene?

The main locations in the story are Anansi's village, the East Village, the West Village, and the crossroads.

There are lots of different ways you can act out the stories; with a storyteller or narrator telling the audience what happens and the actors being the characters in the scenes, or you could use toys and puppets to be some of the characters and show what happens. Or you could get other members of your household to help act out the story with you.

Can you find or make some props around your home? For example: invitations to the parties, Anansi's party cape, a vine or rope to tie Anansi to his sons, party activities and maybe party food for the 'two dinners'.

In the play Anansi is described as 'the best dancer', his children Kuma and Quek are great dancers too. Can you work out some dance moves for each of them – you may get some ideas from our actors in the play – you could watch that part of the play again and see if you can learn their dance moves. Or you can make up your own dance routine.

When you have rehearsed your version of *Anansi and the Two Dinners* you could put on a show for your family, or make a film to send to school, family or friends.

Here is an outline of the story if you need help in remembering what happens:

Anansi and the Two Dinners

One day Anansi was out walking when he bumped into Brer Antelope who invited Anansi to a party and told him there would be a delicious dinner of fried chicken, rice and peas, coconut cake and custard. "That sounds like a good dinner!" said Anansi. "I'll definitely come to your party," Brer Antelope told him "The party is at 3pm today. I live in the West Village, and bring your boys."

Later that day Anansi bumped into Brer Dog who invited him and his boys to his party. "I'll be cooking pepper soup, calaloo, lobster, and chocolate ice-cream."

"That sure sounds like a good dinner!" said Anansi. "I'll come to your party."

"Good," said Brer Dog "My party is today at 3pm. I live in the East Village."

Anansi and his sons get ready, Anansi put on his party cape, because he wants to look good.

Then Anansi Quek and Kuma set off to the parties, Anansi is really looking forward to two dinners. But which party should they go to first?

They set off to the West Village for fried chicken, rice and peas.

Then Anansi changed his mind and they turned round to go to the East village for the pepper soup and calaloo.

No West Village for coconut cake and custard.

But what about chocolate ice cream.

Anansi couldn't choose and they ended up running around in circles getting more and more tired.

Then Anansi had an idea. He told his boys to fetch some vines from a tree and tie it around his waist. 'I will wait here at this crossroads. Kuma, you take this end, go to East Village, and when the food is served there, you will pull on the rope and I will know to come there. Quek, you take this end, go to West Village, and when the food is served, you will pull the rope and I will come there. And so I can go from one party to the other and eat my fill.'

The brothers set off, one to the East and one to the West, and when they arrived everyone was pleased to see them. Soon they were showing off their dance moves and having lots of fun.

At the crossroads Anansi was getting hungrier and hungrier and more and more bored.

Then at both parties, at exactly the same time, the bell started ringing to tell them that the food was ready.

Kuma and Quek both pulled on their vines at the same time to bring Anansi to their party. They enjoyed eating all the party food themselves and even had seconds. But Anansi didn't arrive however hard they pulled on the ropes.

Back at the crossroads Anansi was stuck, with one vine pulling him towards the West Village and the other towards the East village, he couldn't move.

After the parties were over Kuma and Quek returned to the crossroads where they found Anansi tired and hungry. They couldn't understand why Anansi hadn't joined them for the dancing and the delicious food.

They set off back home where there was a pot of food waiting, so Anansi didn't go completely hungry that night – but he hadn't had his two dinners!

You can return to your outlines later when you have watched more stories and add more words to describe Anansi the spider.

SEQUENCE 5: ANANSI AND THE POT OF WISDOM

Activity 1 can be done before or after seeing episode 3, *Anansi and the Pot of Wisdom*, it will help you to explore you and your family's ideas about wisdom.

Activity 2 is for after you have seen the play *Anansi and the Pot of Wisdom*.

ACTIVITY 1: WHAT IS WISDOM?

Time: 10 – 30 mins

Child and adult activity

Think about what wisdom is: do you know someone who is wise? What is about them that makes you think they are wise? Where does wisdom come from?

Definition: wisdom is the ability to use your experience and knowledge in order to make sensible decisions or judgements (Collins dictionary online)

Talk to different members of your family (at home and on the phone if you can) and ask them to think of things they have been told that they consider to be wisdom or common sense. It may be some advice someone gave them in a particular situation, or a proverb or saying that they remember.

Proverbs and sayings have been a way for wisdom to be passed down from generation to generation, for example:

- Do unto others as you would have done unto you
- The early bird catches the worm
- A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush
- Practice makes perfect
- Actions speak louder than words
- Two wrongs don't make a right
- Rain wets a Leopards skin, but it does not wash out the spots (Akran proverb)
- One person does not rule a nation (Akran proverb)

Are there any different proverbs or sayings that you and your family know?

Write as many words of wisdom as you can on circles of paper and put them into a pot. You can use this later to act out the story.

Discuss:

- What would it be like if no one in the world was wise?
- What if only one person had all of this wisdom or common sense and no one else could get hold of it?

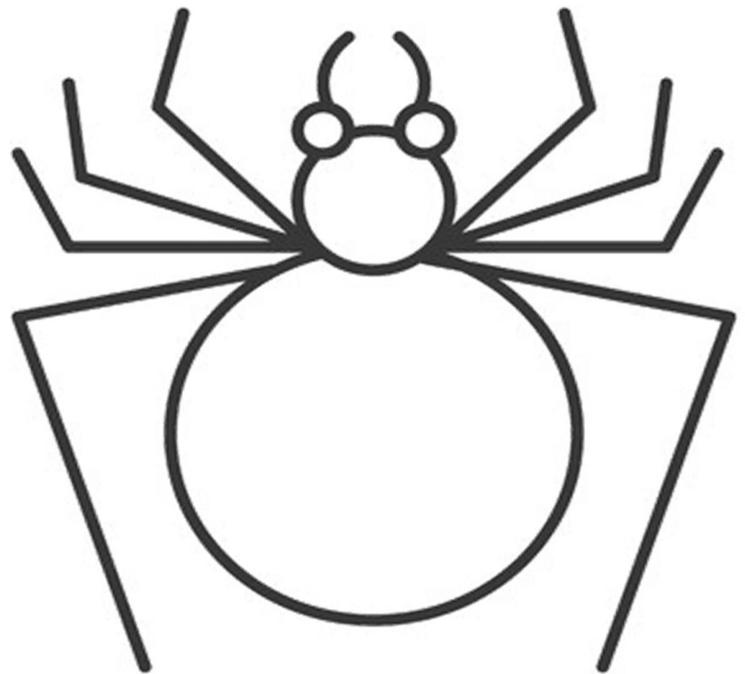
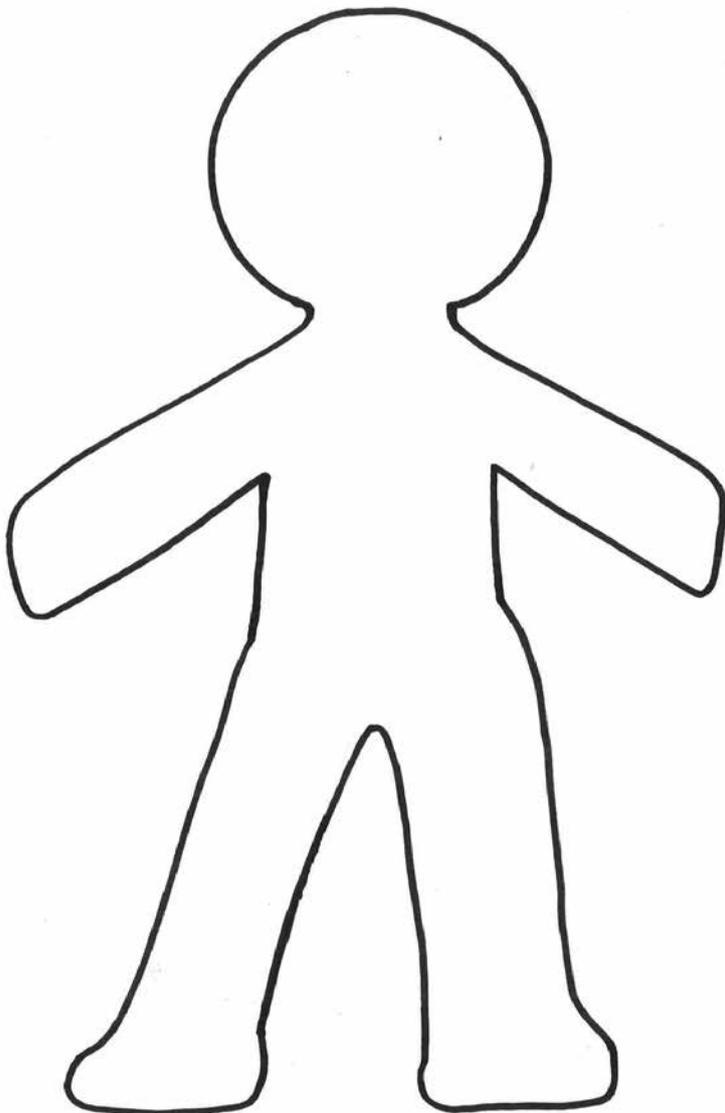
ACTIVITY 2: CREATE A MAP OF THE STORY

Resources: paper and colouring pencils

Time: 10 – 30 mins

Independent task [try put these in a box to highlight them?]

After you have watched *Anansi and the Pot of Wisdom* think about what words you would use to describe Anansi and the girl in the story? Write them inside an outline of Anansi and the girl; you can create your own drawings or use the template we have provided.



You can return to your outlines later when you have watched more stories and add more words to describe Anansi the Spider.

Now create a map of the story. Here are some different locations from the story:

- The sky which Nyame the god looks down from
- The village where the people and animals live
- The places Anansi thought he might hide his pot of wisdom - the cave where the grumpy bears are, the great lake with the cunning crocodile, the tall mountains where the beady eyed eagles are.
- Deep in the bush where Anansi finds the tall, wide thorn tree.

See if you can draw a map with all the different places the story takes place in and add some of the characters that are found in those places. Can you show what is happening in each place?

ACTIVITY 3: ACTING OUT THE STORY OF ANANSI AND THE POT OF WISDOM

Resources: props (things you can find at home for example a cooking pot and a scarf), costumes and music to act the story out

1: STOP and GO – drama game acting out the story (10 – 15 mins)

Child and adult activity

This activity works a little like musical statues. Ask an adult or older sibling to play some music and then when they stop the music they can read out the moments from the story for you to act out:

- The god Nyame looked down from the sky on the animals and people in the world
- Some of the animals and people were good, hard working and kind
- Some of them were wicked, lazy and greedy

Nyame sent down a gift, the gift of wisdom, to the people and animals so that they would stop fighting and having so many problems.

- Anansi the Spider saw all the wisdom the people and animals had and he wanted it all for himself. So he crept around and began to collect up all the wisdom for himself and put all the wisdom into a cooking pot.
- Anansi looked for somewhere to hide the pot of wisdom – he looked in the caves but he worried the grumpy bears that were there might find it.
- He went to lake, but the cunning crocodile was there.
- He climbed to the top of the mountain, but the beady eagles were eyeing his pot.

- So he went deep into the bush and found a tall wide thorn tree. He strapped the pot of wisdom onto his front and began to try and climb the tree. But it was really difficult and he struggled to climb up. There were thorns everywhere.
- A little girl watched Anansi as he tried to climb the tree and laughed at him – ‘surely there’s a better way to do it’ ‘she said ‘Why don’t you tie the pot on your back?’
- When he was sure the girl had left and couldn’t see him Anansi took the pot off his front and tied it onto his back.
- Now Anansi can climb the tree easily and soon he was at the top looking down.
- From the top of the tree Anansi could hear the animals and people in the villages yelling and fighting.
- ‘What use is all this wisdom if a little girl has more common sense than me’ he thought. So he threw down the pot and all the wisdom was carried by the wind and the rain back to the animals and people all over the land.

2: Perform the story *Anansi and the Pot of Wisdom* (10 – 20 mins)

Gather together the things you think you might need to act out the story for example: a pot, some pieces of wisdom and a cloth to tie the pot onto your back might be good.

Think about how you will show the difference between Anansi the Spider, the girl, the god Nyame and the people and other animals in the story. You could find some costumes or use your body to become all the different characters.

In the play we use narration, this is when the actors tell the audience parts of the story.

We also have scenes where the actors are the characters and act out the story using action (showing what they do) and dialogue (what they say to each other).

Decide whether you want to be the narrator of your story, act out the moments in the story, or both. Can you get other people in your household to take on some parts? Or maybe you could use toys to

be different characters? Decide which moments you think are most important in the story to share. Now start to practice, or rehearse, how you are going to perform your story.

Having some music at the beginning and end, or in the background can help bring the story to life.

When you are ready find your audience. This can be people in your household, your toys, or you can film your version of the story and send it to your teacher, family or friends.

ACTIVITY 4: THINKING ABOUT WISDOM

Resources: paper and pencils

1: Draw the Adrinkra symbol for wisdom (10 - 15 mins)

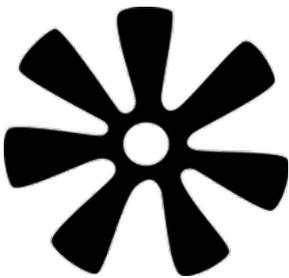
Independent activity

The Adrinkra symbols represent things that are important to the Ashanti people and can be found woven on pottery, buildings, fabrics and measuring weights.

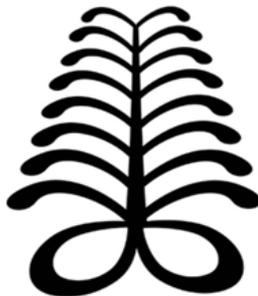
See if you can copy the Adrinkra symbol for wisdom



Here are some other Adrinkra symbols; you can copy the ones you find most interesting. If you are doing some writing or drawing you could create a border using the symbols around your paper or or make a drawing of a patchwork blanket using your favourites.



Creativity



Pervserance



Co-operation



Strength

4: What do you think about what happened in the story? (10 - 15 mins)

Independent activity

Answer these questions about the story:

- Why do you think Anansi wanted all the wisdom for himself?
- Why do you think he changed his mind and gave all the wisdom back to be shared by everyone?
- Is there anything in particular that the girl says or does which makes him change his mind?
- The girl left the village because everyone was 'yelling and fighting'. How do you think getting the wisdom back would change their behaviour? Is there any of the wisdom you collected in your pot that you think might have helped people who were 'yelling and fighting'?

You could write your answers down or discuss them with members of your household.

SEQUENCE 6: TELL YOUR OWN ANANSI STORY

This activity will give you the chance to write your own Anansi story. Now you know more about his character you can use your imagination and make up your own story about the adventures of Anansi.

ACTIVITY 1: CREATE YOUR OWN ANANSI STORY

Resources: outline of Anansi; paper and pencils

Now that you have seen *Anansi the Spider – Re-spun* you know a lot more about the character and the kinds of things he gets up to.

1: Describe Anansi (5 – 10 mins)

Independent activity

Use your outline of Anansi and look at all the different ways you have described him. Can you add more words now that you have seen more stories? Here are some of the ways he's described by himself and other characters in the stories.

Clever	Proud
Lazy	Stubborn
Trickster	Greedy
The best dancer	Loves a party
Funny	Outwits others

2: Tell your own Anansi story (5 – 10 mins)

Child and adult activity

Now that you have thought about the character of Anansi make up a story about him. What kind of adventures do you think Anansi might have? Who else will be in your Anansi story – it could be other animals, or maybe some of Anansi's children? Does Anansi get into trouble? You can create whatever story you like. It could take place in Ghana, the Caribbean or in the UK.

Here are some titles of Anansi stories you could use the title to imagine what might happen and write your own version.

- How Anansi got a bald head (or Anansi and the pot of beans)
- Anansi and the Sky King
- How spider helped a fisherman
- Anansi and the turtle
- Anansi and the melon

Or you can create a completely new story about Anansi.

Tell your story to an adult or older sibling in your household and ask them to write it down for you – exactly as you say it. It can be as long or short as you like and anything you like can happen.

Now you have created your story you can act it out in the way you have with the other Anansi stories, or draw a comic version, film or even make an animation of it.

Adults - ask your child to begin their story and try to write it down exactly as they tell it word for word. This is a chance for them to go off on wild tangents and tell whatever story their imagination comes up with. You can try asking things like 'Then what happens?' See if you can resist making suggestions of where the story might go. When you think they have finished check by asking 'Is there anything you want to add, or is that the end of your story? The story may not make sense or seem finished to you - the challenge is to help them tell their story just as they imagine it.

ACTIVITY 2: MAKE AN ANIMATION OF YOUR STORY

Resources: scissors, old magazines and leaflets, glue, blue tac, tape, a smart phone or tablet, download the 'I Can Animate' app

Time: 25 – 40 mins

Child and adult activity

If you want to make an animation of your story you will need help from an adult. Watch the film created by Matthew Robins and the Unicorn Theatre for his production of *The Iron Man* which takes you through the stages of how to make a simple collage animation. Visit the Unicorn's YouTube channel or Primary School webpage).

You can start by making a storyboard of your animation, drawing what will happen in your story. Keep it short and simple – two or three minutes is quite a long time in an animation.

'One of the quickest ways and one of the most fun ways to make animation is to use old magazines, and leaflets, anything you've got lying around that's got pictures in. The good thing about that is you don't even have to be very good at drawing to make animation this way.' Matthew Robins

First make your background - find a large piece of card, magazines, scissors, glue and blue-tac. Cut out things from magazines which can create your background. First glue anything down that might be far away; your sky or a field for example, and then put other things on top which are meant to be closer to you – a tree or a cave for example.

Use blue-tac when there is something that they will need to keep still but might need to move during the animation (for example if you want something to appear from behind a hill, or a tree).

Now make the characters in your story. If the characters are quite small make sure the background isn't too busy so that they stand out in your film.

Watch section four of the film: Equipment, which describes how to get the equipment ready to animate your films.

Prepare a space where you will be able to go to animate your story. You will need a clear table to place the backgrounds on and either a tripod or stand to hold the iPad still, or you can improvise creating your own structure. (There are examples of ways to this on the film and other ideas on the internet.)

Make sure you have good lighting, you might need table lamps, but make sure you don't cast shadows across the animations.

When you are ready you will need to secure your background, so it doesn't change position at all during the animation.

'If you don't want it to move you have to stick it down. If you don't at some point in your animation you will nudge it, you might think you won't, you might think you're very careful, but this has happened to me a lot of times. You'll reach over for something and it will just move your background a tiny amount, it'll catch in your sleeve or something and you've ruined that take, you'll have to start again' Matthew Robins

We make animation by taking a sequence of photographs that are all a tiny bit different. Watch part five of the film: Animating your Story.

Explore how the 'I Can Animate' app works; how to take a frame; the onion skin effect; how to delete a frame if you've made a mistake; and the playback facility to check your progress.

When you have practised you are now ready to create an animation of your Anansi story.

INTERVIEW WITH CREATOR AND DIRECTOR JUSTIN AUDIBERT

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO CREATE AN ONLINE VERSION OF THE ANANSI STORIES?

Because they were made in a storytelling tradition it they felt like would really work being re-made for film in lockdown. They already asked the audience to use their imaginations to conjure up the different characters in the theatre show and so I thought it would translate really well to do that onscreen. They allow for a really direct response with the viewer. Plus the stage show was full of singing, music and movement and I realised that these could provide the dynamism in the visual storytelling. I also loved the idea of taking these very, very old stories and reimagining them in the most contemporary medium possible. There was something really exciting about that. In addition to that I also had a GREAT time making them in the first place so was very excited to collaborate with all the existing cast and creative team and also to bring on board Todd and John from Illuminations film production company too. It has been such a pleasure to revisit the source material.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES IN ADAPTING THE STORIES FOR AN ONLINE AUDIENCE?

The pace of things on screen is so much quicker than in the theatre. I miss some of the quiet and control of atmosphere and tempo that you can get from the live stage performance. Film is just a much faster medium. It has been great to try and work that quicker tempo out. I have been really well guided by Todd who is the Director of Photography and Video Editor. Obviously we have had the additional challenge of only being able to film on camera phones and in the actors accommodation whilst under lockdown. In some ways though those limitations have made us more inventive and got us thinking about shots - such as how Snake whacks Anansi - in ways we would never have come up with if the actors had been in the same room together to film it. So much of the storytelling is in how and when you cut away from things. We have had lots of fun with this.

I suppose I also miss the sense of relationship with an audience you have at the Unicorn. We have tried to keep that in the adaptation but won't know if we have succeeded until we watch the final cut.

DID YOU WANT TO DIRECT THE ANANSI STORIES FOR AGES 3 TO 8?

I've always been fascinated since I was a little boy by the character of Anansi. He's inquisitive, he's confident and he's smart, but he knows he's smart and sometimes gets his comeuppance because of that. I guess I think he is very relatable to young children, because they're growing and learning and working the world out and as they do, they're pushing at and exploring boundaries, and that is what Anansi does all the time.

WHAT DO YOU PERSONALLY CONNECT WITH IN THE STORIES?

These stories were told to me at relatives' houses when I was a small boy, and I remember my friends also really enjoying being told them when they were recounted. Somehow, the character of Anansi just remained really vivid to me. I think it's something to do with the fact that he's morally ambiguous; sometimes he does the right thing and sometimes he doesn't, and I suppose that level of complexity is, in many ways, more interesting than simple fairy-tale morality.

DO YOU THINK THE STORIES TEACH A LESSON OR A MORAL, OR ARE THEY JUST GOOD STORIES?

I would say that there's a thread of a kind of wry scepticism running through the stories. Anansi is always looking to take shortcuts to either more knowledge, like in *Anansi and the Pot of Wisdom*, more praise, like in *Anansi and the Three Kings*, or more food, like in *Anansi and the Two Dinners*. And I suppose the bottom line is that these schemes don't tend to pay off. At the same time, when something really dangerous or harmful is about to happen, somehow, he finds a way of using his wits to come out unscathed; so his quick wit is seen as beneficial sometimes. I think it's interesting that the stories show how character traits can be useful in one context, but problematic in another.

WHY ARE THE STORIES RELEVANT FOR CHILDREN TODAY?

I think that there will be children with West African or Caribbean heritage who will be really engaged to see stories from their homes come to life in front of them, and there will be children who will be introduced for the first time to an exciting new character and world. We at the Unicorn want to reflect the different cultures that are found in London and the UK and this feels like a really exciting way of doing that.

DO YOU FEEL A RESPONSIBILITY TO REMAIN TRUE TO THE ORIGINS OF THE STORIES?

We are retelling stories that are part of an oral tradition. They have changed and evolved with each generation which discovers and tells them. There is no such thing as authorship or the writer's intent, so that leaves us free as artists to reinterpret them so that they speak to today, and to today's audience. At the same time, we want to make sure we are representing the heritage of these stories culturally, with the world of our sound and design.

WHICH STORIES HAVE YOU INCLUDED AND WHY?

I've included *Anansi and the Pot of Wisdom*, which is where he tries to gather all the common sense and wisdom in the world so that he can keep it just for himself. I love the idea of someone understanding how important knowledge is, and then attempting such an epic task in order to gain an advantage over others. Needless to say, Anansi gets his comeuppance and I think learns something from it. I've also included *Anansi and the Two Dinners* (or 'Two Parties', as it's sometimes called), which is when Anansi is invited to two parties and doesn't want to miss out on either, to show everyone how he's the best dancer of all the guests and how he can enjoy two really delicious meals, and somehow he comes away with neither food nor fun.

I love how his speed of thought and quickness often count against him but also how they invariably get him out of any real trouble in the end. I just think he is such a compelling character.



ANANSI THE SPIDER RE-SPUN

A Unicorn and Illuminations Production

Created and directed by Justin Audibert
Resource pack written by Catherine Greenwood

UNICORNTHEATRE.COM



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**