

EXPLORING THE WORLD THROUGH STORY
LEVEL B: TRICKSTER TALES

ANDREW CAMPBELL

Revised edition © 2022 by Andrew Campbell, PhD

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

Permission is hereby given to individual purchasers to print this file for use within their immediate family only, including multiple copies of the maps for student use. If you wish to use this curriculum in a co-op or school, whether in-person or online, please contact the author at quidnampress@gmail.com for [licensing information](#). Thank you for respecting copyright.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrew Campbell, PhD, has worked in education since the 1980s and holds degrees in German literature and language from Bennington College and Washington University, St Louis. Dr. Campbell is the author of *The Latin-Centered Curriculum*, *Living Memory*, and *I Speak Latin*. A former homeschooling parent, classroom teacher, and school administrator, he now works as a curriculum developer and literary translator.

ABOUT QUIDNAM PRESS

Quidnam Press helps homeschooling parents share the wonder of words with their children. Our literature and language programs bring the classical liberal arts into the 21st century with a thoroughly modern, inclusive, global perspective. For more information, visit quidnampress.com.

Welcome to *Exploring the World through Story!*

Exploring the World through Story introduces children to the wonder of words and the diversity of human cultures through the study of world literature. In the primary grades—K-2 or ages 4-8—students enjoy folktales from around the world, gaining both cultural literacy and an understanding of basic narrative forms. Simple geography readings, map/globe work, and memory work round out the program, helping students put the stories in context. Detailed teaching notes and schedules make it easy for parents to teach literature and geography to their children, even if they have never taught these subjects before.

The elementary and middle school levels build on the foundation laid in the primary levels, preparing students to study world literature in high school and beyond.

ABOUT LEVEL B

Exploring the World through Story: Level B provides a gentle introduction to world literature for students ages 5-7 (first grade). Children meet famous trickster characters from around the globe while expanding their knowledge of world geography. African and African-American tales take center stage this year. Students learn the art of oral narration, a foundational skill for writing, and practice writing mechanics with copywork. They review the previous year's geography work and then expand on it, learning about latitude and longitude as well as neighboring countries.

The program presents one folktale per week for the 36 weeks of the standard US school year. Each lesson takes about 30 minutes, including read-aloud time. Narrations are completed orally, and students practice handwriting and writing mechanics with short copywork exercises.

Exploring the World through Story: Level B is just one component of a complete English Language Arts program for first graders. Your child also needs, at minimum, a phonics-based reading program, a handwriting program, and a wide range of fiction and nonfiction picture books, graded readers, and read-alouds. Aim for at least 30 minutes of read-alouds a day. Books you read to your child as part of this and other homeschooling curricula—history, science, art, and so on—count toward this total, as do audiobooks, bedtime stories, and other leisure reading.

Some homeschoolers begin teaching grammar and composition in first grade. While they are not required for EWS at this level, I recommend [First Language Lessons 1](#) and

[Writing with Ease 1](#), both from Well-Trained Mind Press, for parents who want to give their children a solid grounding in the English language arts.

About the Lesson Plans

Each lesson plan is numbered by level (A, B, or C) and week (1, 2, 3, etc.) to help families who are using multiple levels of the program with different children.

At the top of the page, you will find the title of the week's story, the book it appears in with the page number, and the country or people group the story originates from. You will use some of this information to introduce each story to your child.

The **Teaching Notes** contain background information for you, the teacher, and are not meant to be read verbatim to children. In the first few lessons, the Teaching Notes include scripts that show how to introduce the tales to your child. The instructions become more streamlined as you gain experience and confidence with the program. You will also find a **printables checklist** here, showing which printables you will need for that lesson.

Next you will find a list of **vocabulary words** that may be unfamiliar to your child. (Some stories are simple enough that this section is blank.) In place of complex formal dictionary definitions, you'll find student-friendly language you can use to clarify the readings for your child. There is no need to introduce the words before reading the story, nor do students need to memorize definitions at this stage. Simply read the text and add the substitution afterward as an aside: "When we hear the bell ringing, we will know *immediately*—that means *right away*—that our enemy is coming."

Following the vocabulary words you will see the **Narration** section. Here you will use the printable **Story Summary graphic organizer (page 10)** and **Narration sheet (page 11)**. The notes and prompts in this section, along with the graphic organizer, will help you teach oral narration and the basic elements of story structure to your child.¹ As you progress through the curriculum and your child gets used to the narration process, you may find you don't need to rely on the prompts or the graphic organizer. Use them as scaffolding only if your child is struggling to narrate.

It's fine to let children narrate in other ways on occasion. They can draw a scene from the story, for example, or act out the story with stuffed animals. I have suggested alternative narration methods for certain stories.

¹ For an explanation of oral narration as a foundational pre-writing skill, see Susan Wise Bauer's [Writing with Ease: Strong Fundamentals](#).

The Literature section ends with **copywork**. The copywork sentences emphasize mechanics: capitalization and punctuation. You will find a reproducible **copywork sheet on page 12**.

Your child may enjoy combining copywork with drawing to create a folktale journal, and there are [inexpensive notebooks](#) that provide both drawing and lined writing space on the same page. Search for “primary journal” at online retailers or office supply stores. The handwriting programs that most children use at this age call for 5/8” ruling, so look for that when selecting a copywork notebook. If you choose this option for copywork, you will not need the copywork printable.

The **Geography** section consists of map work, a short reading from a geography reference book, and memory work.

After you have read the story and your child has narrated it back to you, you will **identify the country** that the week’s story comes from on your world map and place a sticker on it, following the instructions in the “Map Work and Reading” subsection. I recommend using a **star for countries** and a **colored dot for states and cities**. Next, you will explore the country’s entry in the **geography reference book**. Read the short country description aloud, and use the captions on the photos to describe them to your child. If you find the child’s attention flagging, it’s fine just to read the short description and let them look at the pictures. You can also take a break and come back to the book later in the day. This book is used for all three primary levels of *Exploring the World through Story*, so your child will have plenty of time to get familiar with its contents.

Then you will prompt your child to **recite previous memory work** and **teach them any new memory work items** listed. (Level B includes a review of the memory work material from Level A for newcomers to the program.) **Memory work should be reviewed daily, not just during the weekly literature and geography lesson**. Some of the memory work requires the use of the **reproducible maps** at the end of this book, and this is noted in the lesson plans. You may wish to **print out these maps in advance** and **have them laminated**.

Required Materials For EWS: Level B

Core Literature Texts

- Trickster Tales: Forty Folk Stories from Around the World* – Josepha Sherman
([paperback](#))

The main text this year collects trickster stories from all corners of the globe. Josepha Sherman (1946–2012) was a prolific children’s author, fantasy writer, and folklorist.

- The Adventures of Brer Rabbit and Friends* – Karima Amin
([paperback](#))

This volume includes some of the best-known Brer Rabbit stories, based on the collection by Joel Chandler Harris (1848–1908). The language in this edition is modernized but rich, and the lavish illustrations capture the energy and humor of the tales.

- African–American Folktales for Young Readers* – Richard & Judy Dockery Young (eds.)
([paperback](#))

This collection features stories from Africa and the African diaspora, retold by contemporary Black storytellers.

Geography Reference Text

- DK Countries of the World: Our World in Pictures* – Andrea Mills
([hardcover/ebook](#))

This reference book is used in all three levels of this curriculum. You’ll see it referred to in the lesson plans as “the geography text.”

Additional Materials

- A [large, current world map](#) you can mark²
- Small star and dot stickers in bright colors
- A current globe
- Multiples copies of the printable worksheets on pages 10-12
- Print-outs of maps M-1, M-3, M-4 (lamination recommended)

² If you used Level A of this curriculum, you can use the same map for this level and the next.

LESSON B-1

“Why Anansi Owns Every Story”

Trickster Tales, p. 15

Ashanti (Ghana)

Literature

Teaching Notes

► **Printables Needed for this Lesson:** Story Summary Narration Copywork

Folktales are stories that originate in popular (“folk”) culture and were traditionally passed on by word of mouth. As part of an oral tradition, they do not have authors per se. Instead, we name the people or country that the story originated from, if known, with the understanding that there are as many variations of the tale as there are storytellers. The core literature texts for this program list that information, and I’ve provided it in the lesson plans for each tale.

There are many folktale genres, including fables, pourquoi (“how and why”) tales, wonder tales, wisdom tales, and so on. This year we will be focusing on trickster tales. **Tricksters are literary characters whose craftiness delights and edifies listeners.** Despite their sly ways and moral ambiguity, they often function as **culture heroes**, bringing gifts, skills, and knowledge to the people.

Anansi is one of the best-known trickster characters in the world. His tales are told in Africa and throughout the African diaspora, especially in North America and the Caribbean. We’ll be reading a number of his stories this year. This story usually has four tasks for Anansi to complete, but in this version, there are only three.

Introduce today’s story to your child with words like these:

Today we are reading a trickster tale from the Ashanti people of Ghana, in Africa. The title of the story is “Why Anansi Owns Every Story.” Tricksters are characters who like to play pranks on people.

Vocabulary

dejected: disappointed and sad

python: a large snake

gourd: a fruit with a hard skin

calabash: a kind of gourd often hollowed out, dried, and used as a container

perilous: dangerous

Narration

In Level A of this program, comprehension questions helped your child understand the content of stories and relate those stories to their own lives. In Level B, we will help them tell the story in their own words. This is called **oral narration**. The goal at this stage is to elicit a **brief summary of the story**, with all of the action in the correct order.

Some children will need little or no prompting to narrate at length and may echo the language of the story verbatim. In that case, simply **scribe (write down) your child's narration** on a copy of the sheet provided on page 11. If the narration is too long for you to write down, you can record it with your computer or phone. It isn't necessary to scribe or record every single narration, especially if they are long; record one every 6–8 lessons to track student progress.

Other children—perhaps the majority—will benefit from more explicit structure. The **Story Summary graphic organizer** on page 10 provides the student with helpful scaffolding to narrate the main points of a story. Here is how the parts of the graphic organizer correspond to the aspects of story structure.

Somebody	Character (usually the main character)
Wanted	Goal, orientation
But	Conflict, complication
So	Plot, action, episodes
Then	Resolution, conclusion, outcome

If your child needs help narrating today's story, ask them the following questions, and write down their answers on the Story Summary sheet as indicated.

Instructor: This story is about somebody. Who is it about?

Student: Anansi.

Instructor: Yes! Anansi is the *main character*. He's the person the story is about. Let's write his name in this box, next to the word *Somebody*. And what did Anansi want at the beginning of the story?

Student: To own all the stories in the world.

Instructor: That's right. That goes next to the word *Wanted*. Anansi wanted to own all the stories. But why wasn't he able to do that right away?

Student: He had to buy them from the Sky God, Nyame.

(Your child may not remember the name of the Sky God. That's fine; just supply it.)

Instructor: What did Anansi have to do to buy the stories from Nyame?

Student: He had to bring three animals to Nyame.

Again, you may need to supply the answer for your child. They may also give a partial answer or one that is out of order, such as "Anansi had to trap a snake." Encourage any correct answers the child provides and help fill in the blanks for them: "That's right! How many animals did Anansi have to catch altogether?"

Instructor: Correct. Let's write that in the box next to *But*: "he had to buy them from Nyame by bringing him three animals." How did Anansi go about catching these animals? They were pretty dangerous, weren't they?

Student: He tricked them.

Instructor: Yes. Let's write that here, next to the word *So*: "Anansi tricked the animals and brought them to Nyame." What happened at the end? Did Anansi get what he wanted?

Student: Yes, after Anansi brought him all the animals, Nyame gave him the stories.

Instructor: Great. We'll write that down here, after *Then*. Now we have a summary of the whole story. Let's use that to make an oral narration.

Here is how the graphic organizer will look when completed for today's story:

Somebody	Anansi
Wanted	To own all the stories
But	He had to buy the stories from Nyame, the Sky God, by bringing him three dangerous animals.
So	Anansi tricked the animals and brought them to Nyame.
Then	Nyame gave him the stories.

Now ask your child to tell the story back to you, using the information you've written on the graphic organizer and prompting them as necessary. Write down the narration on the sheet provided and date it for your records.

A narration based on this outline might sound like this (keywords from the graphic organizer are underlined for emphasis):

Anansi wanted to own all the stories in the world, but he had to buy them from Nyame, the Sky God, by bringing him three dangerous animals. So Anansi tricked the animals and brought them to Nyame. Then Nyame gave Anansi all the stories.

If your child can answer the narration prompts but balks at giving a complete narration, you can also ask them to draw a picture of Anansi or of an episode from the story. Sometimes children will hesitate to narrate during lesson time but will happily retell the story to a family member or friend later. This is a perfectly acceptable way to ease into narration.

Copywork

Using **My Copywork sheet on page 12**, write the following sentence as a model at the top, including the quotation marks. **Highlight the features** of the sentence to your child: capital letters, punctuation, and any challenging spelling words. Then ask your child to copy the sentence in their best handwriting.

“From now on, all stories belong to you.”

Geography

Map Work and Reading

Locate and mark **Ghana** on your world map, and read page 56 of the geography text.

If you completed EWS Level A, some countries will already be marked on your map. Review the appropriate pages of the geography text.

Memory Work

At the beginning of this year, your student will review the geography memory work taught in Level A. This gives newcomers to the program a chance to establish a good foundation for Level B knowledge and reinforces the memory work for children who completed Level A.

➤ **Review the following memory work items:**

Q: What is a world map?

A: A world map is a flat drawing of the Earth.

Q: What is a globe?

A: The Earth is shaped like a sphere (a ball), and the globe shows what the Earth looks like from outer space.

Q: What are the cardinal directions?

A: The cardinal directions are North, East, South, and West.

If you are teaching this material to your child for the first time, use the following explanations and demonstrations. Then read the questions and answers above to your child and **ask them to repeat the answers to you three times.**

To teach the world map and globe definitions, show the child both, and explain the difference between them: the map is a drawing of the Earth's surface, while the globe shows it in space.

To teach the cardinal directions, explain to your child that **the sun rises in the eastern part of the sky every morning.** Show your child where that is in real

life. If possible, go outdoors and show them a stable physical landmark to the east; otherwise, show them which wall in your home is (roughly) in the east.

Show them that, if they stand with the east at their right hand, they will be facing north, south will be behind them, and west to their left.

Now look at your world map, and point out the **compass rose** to your child. Show them how the four cardinal directions are labeled (usually N, E, S, and W) and what those abbreviations stand for. Explain that, on most maps, **North is toward the top, East toward the right, South toward the bottom, and West toward the left.**

During the coming week, have your child **practice locating the cardinal directions** both indoors and outdoors. If your child has trouble remembering the clockwise order of the directions, you can teach them the mnemonic device “**Never Eat Slimy Worms.**”

LESSON B-2

“Hare and Tortoise”

Trickster Tales, p. 19

Thonga People (Mozambique)

Literature

Teaching Notes

► **Printables Needed for this Lesson:** Story Summary Narration Copywork

Despite the similarity of the title, this story is not a version of the famous race between the speedy hare and the plodding tortoise. Instead, it introduces us to another famous African trickster character, Hare, whom North Americans will recognize as the progenitor of Brer Rabbit. In this tale, the wily Hare gets outsmarted by yet another trickster, Tortoise!

Introduce this story with words like these:

Today we’re going to be reading another trickster tale. This one is told by the Thonga people in the country of Mozambique in southeastern Africa. The title of the story is “Hare and Tortoise.”

Vocabulary

None

Narration

Ask your child to tell the story back to you. A simple narration might sound like this:

One time it was very hot and dry, and Hare was thirsty. He tricked some animals and drank the water they were guarding. But he couldn’t trick Tortoise, so he suggested they steal sweet potatoes from Boar. When Hare tried to trick Tortoise again, she climbed into the bag and ate up all the sweet potatoes.

If your child is narrating readily, ask them to **identify the animals** that Hare successfully tricks (Lizard and Antelope) **and the trick he plays** (tying them to a

hoe and sticking the hoe fast in the ground so they can't move).

If the child is not yet able to narrate independently—and many won't—it's fine to stick with the bare outline of the story. Use the following questions to help your student understand the narrative. (I do not suggest using the graphic organizer for this lesson, due to multiple complications and resolutions in the tale.)

Q: Who is the story about?

A: Hare.

Q: What does Hare want at the beginning of the story?

A: Water.

Q: But why can't Hare get the water?

A: Because there are animals guarding it.

Q: So what does he do?

A: He tricks the animals guarding the water.

Q: Then what happens?

A: Hare tried to trick Tortoise, but Tortoise won't be fooled.

Q: So what does Hare suggest?

A: That they steal Boar's sweet potatoes.

Q: How did Hare try to get Tortoise away from the stolen food?

A: He pretended to hear Boar coming.

Q: How did Tortoise trick Hare?

A: She climbed into the bag and ate the sweet potatoes herself!

If your child finds narration challenging, take heart. Narration is a complex skill that taxes the working memory, so it's expected that young children will take time to develop it.

Copywork

“Just right,” she said.

Geography

Map Work and Reading

Locate and mark **Mozambique** on your world map, then read page 73 in the geography text.

Memory Work

➤ **Review** the following memory work items:

Q: What is a world map?

A: A world map is a flat drawing of the Earth.

Q: What is a globe?

A: The Earth is shaped like a sphere (a ball), and the globe shows what the Earth looks like from outer space.

Q: What are the cardinal directions?

A: The cardinal directions are North, East, South, and West.

To purchase your complete copy of *Exploring the World through Story: Level B*, visit quidnampress.com.

SAMPLE