

Unit 12 - The Spider King

gorge	intercept	occasion	sever	talon
illuminate	jubilation	preserve	soar	tropical

12A Introduction

Anansi (“The Spider”) is one of the most important figures in West African folklore. There are many Anansi tales, all of which were passed from person to person through story-telling. For hundreds and hundreds of years, they weren’t written down. Anansi is a special character. In his stories, he sometimes takes the form of a spider and other times takes the form of a human. This is an Anansi story about the moon.

12B Song Lyrics

*I’ve got the sun and the stars and the moon,
And they can never stop what I’m gonna do.
Yes, I’ve got the sun and the stars and the moon,
I’ve got the planets, the comets, they can’t stop it.*

The Spider King Anansi had six kids,
And each was named after something that they did.
Son number one was called See-Trouble,
'Cuz he knew when trouble was coming before the others.
His sister Road-Builder? She built roads,
To move through the town, make it easy to go.
Her sis River-Dryer dried rivers for real,
And Game-Skinner skinned the animals they killed.
Stone-Thrower could throw a rock across the town,
And Cushion; ha, dude was as big as a cow!
Now one day Anansi went on a trip,
Said, “You kids behave, I’ll be back in a bit.”
But a bit passed; Anansi didn’t return,
The kids were starting to get real concerned.
And then See-Trouble saw trouble, said, “Oh, no!
A big fish has swallowed our dad whole!
Over in the **gorge**, I think,
You know, the river that runs through the steep cliffs.”
Now where they lived was **tropical**, near the tropics,



Near the middle of the globe where it's hot, kids.
And there was no road to the river,
But that was soon changed by Road-Builder.
But at the river, they said, "We'll never get our dad home.
Where's the big fish? Oh, no, we don't know."

Hook

So on this **occasion**, at this specific time, man,
River-Dryer's powers would help them find him.
She sucked the river dry,
And there was the big ugly fish with the king trapped inside.
Game-Skinner cut the fish wide,
And out popped Anansi, "ta-da!" with a big smile.
Anansi said, "Thanks, kids, I'd like to say...AHHH!!!"
A giant hawk grabbed him and flew away!
Yeah, the hawk started to **soar**,
Fly high above them all, with the king in his claws,
I mean his **talons**. The kids were totally shocked,
Now the only way to save the king was with a rock.
So Stone-Thrower threw a rock like it wasn't a thing,
The stone hit the hawk and he dropped the king.
But, oh! He could **sever** an arm when he falls,
Land hard, he could get an arm chopped off.
Cushion said, "I could **intercept** him, Jack,
Stop him on his way, before he goes ker-splat!"
So he ran to the spot where the king would be,
The king bounced off Cushion like a trampoline.
Landed right on his feet; can you believe?
Everybody was cheering, they were so happy!
Anansi felt **jubilation**, joy and happiness.
He said, "Wow, you kids are the best!
I found a glowing ball on my trip; it was crazy,
I'll give it to the kid that just saved me."
But then he heard the story about the kids working together,
And so Anansi thought of something even better.
He gave his friend the sky god a call,
Said, "Listen, sky god, I just found a big bright ball.
I don't know which kid deserves it,
So why don't you keep it as is and **preserve** it?"
The sky god brought it up to the sky,
Where the bright ball hangs nearly all the time.
Yeah, it **illuminates** the night, makes it light,
What's that ball called? The moon, all right.

Hook

12C Words Defined

gorge

(noun) A narrow passage between steep cliffs, usually with a stream running through. *Riding in a canoe, Emma passed through a towering **gorge**.*

(verb) To stuff oneself with food; to eat too much. *Giovanni **gorged** himself at the all-you-can-eat buffet.*

illuminate

(verb) 1. To light up; to supply with light. *The room was **illuminated** by a single light bulb that the magician held in her hands.* 2. To make known or clear. *I read Tony's diary, and some of the passages really **illuminated** why he and Mica don't get along.*



intercept

(verb) To stop or seize something while it's on its way somewhere. *Marco threw a paper airplane; I jumped up to **intercept** it before it hit Ms. Pew in the back.*

Other forms: *Thanks to the **interception** (noun) of the letter, the English were able to crack the German code during World War II.*

jubilation

(noun) A feeling of great joy. *The **jubilation** that Ashley felt when she hit the game-winning shot was hard to describe.*

occasion

(noun) A particular time or happening. *On this kind of serious **occasion**, we take time to remember those who came before us.*

Note: When occasion is preceded by the word on, the meaning is "from time to time." *She likes to take bike rides on **occasion**.*

preserve

(verb) To save; to protect. *I know I'll be different when I get older, but I want to **preserve** at least a little bit of my hilarious sense of humor.*

sever

(verb) To separate a part from the whole by cutting. *The chain had been **severed**, probably by a very powerful tool.*



soar

(verb) To fly high in the sky. ***Soaring** above the city, Superman looked down at the little people below and felt lonely.*

talon

(noun) A claw (especially of a bird of prey). *On the \$1 bill, you can see an image of an eagle gripping bundles of arrows and olive branches in its talons.*

tropical

(noun) Of or similar to the tropics, the area near the Equator. *There's nothing like a tropical vacation to make you hate the winter.*

12D Synonyms

Circle the word on the right that matches the meaning of the word or phrase on the left.

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| 1. to cut a part away from the whole | sever | illuminate | soar |
| 2. to stuff oneself full of food | intercept | gorge | preserve |
| 3. a particular time | gorge | occasion | talon |
| 4. a claw | jubilation | talon | interception |
| 5. to light | illuminate | intercept | sever |

12E Fill in the Blank

Write the word in the blank so that the sentence makes sense.

1. The spy _____ the message before it could get to the president.

illuminated severed intercepted

2. We must work hard to _____ the rainforests because they are very important to the environment.

gorge preserve illuminate

3. The townspeople were filled with _____ when they heard the wicked witch had finally been defeated.

jubilation interception talons

4. I would love to live on a(n) _____ island like Hawaii someday.

tropical severed illuminated

5. The small plane _____ high above the city.

severed intercepted soared

12F Connections

Each sentence has a strong connection with one of the words from the unit. Write the correct word on the line below.

1. My 10th birthday was a very important day in my life.

2. Before Peter could catch the Frisbee, his dog snapped it out of the air.

3. The hawk grabbed a mouse with its sharp claws.

4. My mom scanned a bunch of old photos into the computer so they would be safe forever.

5. The jet plane flew across the sky.

12G Applying Meanings

Circle the letter that makes sense or answers the question.

1. Who would be most likely to feel **jubilation**?

- (A) a person who learns he has a serious illness
- (B) a student who can't understand a math problem
- (C) a musician who is trying to write a new song
- (D) a swimmer who wins an Olympic gold medal

2. Which of these things could be used to **illuminate**?

- (A) a flashlight
- (B) a drinking cup
- (C) a football
- (D) an iron

3. What animals live mostly in a **tropical** climate?

- (A) polar bears
- (B) parrots
- (C) squirrels
- (D) horses

4. If you **severed** communication with someone, that means you

- (A) had a nice conversation with that person
- (B) only spoke with that person through letters
- (C) stopped talking to that person
- (D) wished you could talk to that person

5. Where would you be most likely to walk through a **gorge**?

- (A) a shopping mall
- (B) New York City
- (C) the Grand Canyon
- (D) a wedding

12H Reading

Read the passage below and then answer the questions that follow.

The Maleo



It must be nice being a bird. Who hasn't dreamed of being able to **soar** high in the sky? Some birds have it better than others. Would you believe that one type of bird, the maleo, even owns a private **tropical** beach?

Maleos are birds that live on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi. These birds are about the same size as chickens. They are mostly black with pink bellies. They have grayish-blue feet with four sharp **talons**.

Maleos are unique in the way they lay their eggs. They don't build their nests in trees like most birds. Instead, maleos lay their eggs in holes in the ground. And while most other female birds sit on their eggs to keep them warm, maleos do not need to sit on their eggs. The warm sand of Sulawesi keeps the eggs at the right temperature.

When the eggs hatch, the newborn maleos dig themselves out of the sand. Unlike almost all other birds, maleos can fly as soon as they are born. They fly into the forest of Sulawesi, where they spend the rest of their lives avoiding predators that love to **gorge** on the tasty birds.

In 2009, the United States Wildlife Conservation Society bought the beach on Sulawesi where the maleos live. The Conservation Society works to **preserve** animals that are in danger of dying out. The maleos are in trouble because of humans. Their eggs, which are five times as large as chicken eggs, are eaten by the people of Sulawesi. By giving the birds a private beach, the Conservation Society hopes to stop people from eating the eggs. This will help the maleo population grow, saving these fascinating birds for generations to come.

1. Where do maleos live?

2. What do maleos look like?

3. Why don't female maleos need to sit on their eggs?

4. What is interesting about maleos when they are born?

5. Why are maleos in danger of dying out?

12I Thinking Creatively

Answer each question below. Don't be afraid to think creatively.

1. What kind of food do you like to **gorge** yourself on?

2. What gives you a feeling of **jubilation**?

3. Pretend you **intercepted** an important message. What does it say?

4. Describe what it would be like if you had **talons** instead of hands.

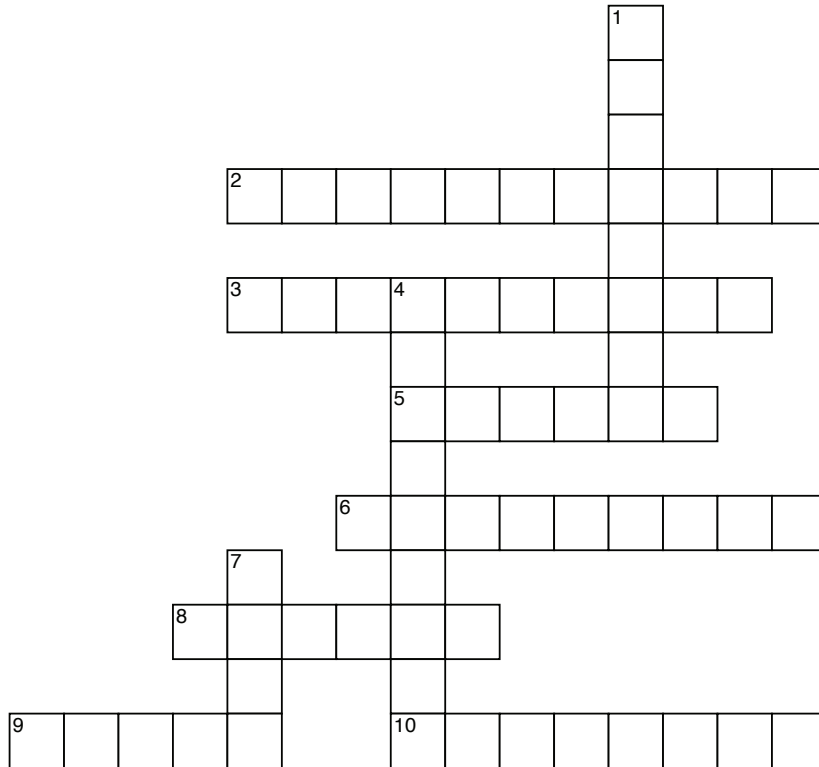
5. What's something you like to do on **occasion**, but would not like to do all the time?

Word Breakdown

Many people have written about a group of people called the Illuminati. The name *Illuminati* comes from the word *illuminate*. They took this name because they said they had an "illuminated" view of the world. The group was made up of politicians and leaders in the 1700s. Although the group only lasted for 10 years, some people think it continued. Today, people write books that say the Illuminati are secretly controlling the world. Some people think the pyramid on the back of the dollar bill is a secret sign of the Illuminati!

Bonus: Crossword Puzzle

Solve this crossword puzzle. Note: Some answers may be different forms of the vocab words from this unit.



ACROSS

- 2 When the power went out, we _____ our house with candles.
- 3 The farmer felt a great sense of _____ when it finally started to rain; his crops really needed the water.
- 5 The dragon held the knight in his sharp _____.
- 6 The American way of life will be _____ as long as we have a strong democracy.
- 8 I felt a little sick after I _____ myself on cotton candy.
- 9 To separate a part from the whole by cutting.
- 10 We were surrounded by monkeys when we visited the _____ rainforest.

DOWN

- 1 Tamara doesn't golf a lot, but she likes to play on _____.
- 4 We have to _____ the message before it reaches Prince Leafheart!
- 7 To fly high in the sky.