

ELA: Grade 6, Lesson 11, Arachne

Lesson Focus: This lesson will focus on a myth that tells how the spider came into existence.

Practice Focus: Students will focus on point of view to develop an understanding of how the story unfolds.

Objective: Students will use *Arachne* to examine Athena's point of view toward Arachne.

Academic Vocabulary: fragrant, embroidered, tapestry, ambition, scornful, boasting, radiant, unabashed, descendants

TN Standards: 6.RL.CS.6, 6.L.AU.4

Teacher Materials:

- The Teacher Packet for ELA, Grade 6, Lesson 11
- Chart paper or white board and markers

Student Materials:

- Several pieces of paper, pen or pencil, surface to write on
- The Student Packer for ELA, Grade 6, Lesson 11 which can be found on www.tn.gov/education

Teacher Delivery Notes:

- Lessons 11-15 are a lesson set, so you will want to keep all of your materials for the lessons accessible. You may find you need to go back and show a reference chart, an independent practice example response, or other visual.
- Today's reading of the text is to get the gist of the story and do some word work. Students will keep a running list of vocabulary words. You may want to list the words on chart paper or make flashcards for the words so that students can see the correct spelling. During the guided practice, students will sort them for negative, positive, and neutral connotations after a mini-lesson on connotation and denotation.
- This text has some Greek names and places. There are some phonetic spellings provided. You may want to Google the phrases to hear the pronunciations. Arachne [uh-rak-nee], Idmon [lhd-min], Colophon [kol-uh-fon, -fuh n]
- In the text, the Greek goddess's name is spelled Athené. The accent mark on the 'e' indicates the sound is voiced. Most of us are used to seeing it spelled Athena. Since that's more familiar and gives us the correct pronunciation, I have used that spelling throughout the lessons.

Teacher Do	Students Do
<p>Opening (1 min)</p> <p>Hello! Welcome to Tennessee's At Home Learning Series for literacy! Today's lesson is for all our 6th graders out there, though everyone is welcome to tune in. This lesson is the first in this week's series.</p> <p>My name is ____ and I'm a ____ grade teacher in Tennessee schools. I'm so excited to be your teacher for this lesson! Welcome to my virtual classroom!</p> <p>If you didn't see our previous lessons, you can find them on www.tn.gov/education. You can still tune in to today's lesson if you haven't seen any of our others.</p>	

<p>Today, we will be reading <i>Arachne</i>, which is a Greek myth created to explain how spiders came into being. Before we get started, to participate fully in our lesson today, you will need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several pieces of paper, pen or pencil, surface to write on • The Student Packer for ELA, Grade 6, Lesson 11 which can be found on www.tn.gov/education <p>Since we are focusing on this text for several lessons, you will want to keep all of your notes together. I'll pause while you get your supplies. [Pause.]</p> <p>Ok, let's begin!</p>	<p>Students gather materials for the lesson and prepare to engage with the lesson's content.</p>
<p>Intro (1 min)</p> <p>In our lessons last week, we read the historical fiction text, <i>The Wall</i>. You wrote an informational paragraph describing how one character's actions demonstrated the theme: People sometimes sacrifice for the good of others. I hope you shared your writing with someone!</p> <p>Today, our goal is to read a Greek myth and learn how spiders came into existence. We will read the myth and then we will study the myth from Athena's perspective to see why she does what she does. Finally, I will give you independent practice to get ready for our next lesson.</p> <p>Our story this week is a new genre. Last time we read a historical fiction and now we are reading a myth. A myth is a kind of story which attempts to interpret some aspect of the world around us. Greek myths often contain interactions between supernatural gods and humans. Greek myths often reflect the rules of Greek culture like the importance of being welcoming to strangers and of not having excessive pride.</p> <p>[This lesson will have several places that students will need to take notes. You may want to create a PPT deck or chart paper so the students can see your model of notes and answers to guided questions.]</p>	<p>Students prepare to follow the gradual-release trajectory, understanding that they will be doing more listening at first and more "doing" toward the end of the lesson.</p>
<p>Teacher Model/Read-Aloud (18 min)</p> <p>[Show slide L11-A.] So let's read our myth, <i>Arachne</i>. Wait, before we start reading...the title, <i>Arachne</i>, reminds me of something. Does anyone know the scientific name for a spider? [Pause.] That's right, it is arachnid. So <i>Arachne</i>...<i>Arachnid</i>. They sound similar, right? This story is a</p>	<p>Students follow along, comprehending the text. They use teacher think-alouds and tips (e.g., definitions of words) to support their comprehension, and they think</p>

<p>myth that explains how the spider came to exist. This myth features Athena, goddess of wisdom, war, and the arts.</p> <p>Okay. Let's read:</p> <p>The hay that so short a time ago was long, green grass, with fragrant meadow-sweet and gold-eyed flowers growing amongst it in the green mead-land by the river, is now dry hay—fragrant still, though dead, and hidden from the sun's warm rays underneath the dark wooden rafters of the barn.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The opening lines begin to describe a setting. We read hay, grass, river, and barn. So, what can we infer about the setting? [Pause.] Right! It looks like the setting is out in the country. • The author is comparing hay and grass. If you haven't spent time on a farm, you may not know that hay is just dried up, dead grass! The word <i>fragrant</i> is used to describe the flowers growing with the grass. <i>Fragrant</i> means having a sweet or pleasant smell. Why do you think the hay is described as "still fragrant"? [Pause.] Yes, even though the hay is grass that has dried out and lost its color, the smell of the flowers is still there. You know when someone has been in a room wearing perfume, and even when the person leaves, you can still smell the fragrance from the perfume? [Pause.] It's like that for the hay. • Let's keep a list of words that we may be adding to our vocabulary. Take out a piece of paper. Write fragrant as the first word on your list. The definition is sweet-smelling. [Write the word and definition on chart paper.] <p>Close your eyes while I read this next part:</p> <p>Occasionally, a cat on a hunting trip comes into the barn to look for mice, or to nestle cozily down into purring slumber. Now and then a hen comes tip-toeing through the little window in the roof, and through the wooden bars of the window lower down. Yet, whatever other living creatures may come or go, near those windows of the barn, and high up on its dark rafters, there is always one living creature working, ceaselessly working. When, through the skylight, the sun-god drives a golden sunbeam, the web of the unresting worker can also to be seen, for the window is hung with shimmering grey cloths made by Arachne, the spider,</p>	<p>or write as directed in response to prompts and questions.</p> <p>Identify here the key concepts or takeaways the students will glean from the text.</p> <p>Students will write fragrant and a definition in their notes.</p> <p>Students will close their eyes and imagine the scene.</p>
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and from rafter to rafter her threads are suspended with matchless skill.

- Did you imagine the scene? [Pause.] As the country setting is described, where does the author draw our attention? [Pause.] Yes, right up to the spider who is spinning its web in the rafters of the barn!
- Does this scene remind you of another book you may have read? [Pause.] Me, too! It makes me think of *Charlotte's Web*! But this is a Greek myth, so I'm guessing we won't have a barnyard full of talking animals!

Keep that spider in mind as we read:

She was a girl once, they say—the daughter of Idmon the dyer, of Colophon, a city of Lydia. In all Lydia there was no one who could weave as well as the beautiful Arachne.

- Lydia. Where is Lydia? Wow. It is all the way in Greece. Let's see where that is on a map [Show slide L11-B.]
- So, we've been introduced to our main character. Who is she and what do we know about her already? [Pause.] Yes, the main character is Arachne. So far, we know that she is a beautiful girl who weaves.
- Her father is also named. He is Idmon, and he is a dyer of cloth.

To watch her brush the wool of the white-fleeced sheep until in her fingers it grew like the soft clouds that hang round the hill tops, was pleasure enough to draw a crowd from all over. And when she drove her swift weaving shuttle here and there, the crowd would catch its breath. Magical was the growth of the cloth through her darting fingers, and yet more magical the exquisite images that she then embroidered upon them. For birds and flowers and butterflies and pictures of all the beautiful things on earth were created by Arachne, and old tales grew alive again under her creative needle.

- The author, Jean Lang states, "Magical was the growth of the cloth through her darting fingers, and yet more magical the exquisite images that she then embroidered upon them." Based on this description, what does a weaver do? [Pause.] That's right. A weaver makes cloth and creates a pattern by

Students will understand from the text that the main character is Arachne. She is a beautiful girl who weaves.

<p>overlapping the material. Weavers can make pictures based on how the different colored threads are woven together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apparently, Arachne was such a talented weaver that a crowd of people would gather just to watch her work. We read, <i>And when she drove her swift weaving shuttle here and there, the crowd would catch its breath</i>. What does “the crowd would catch its breath” mean? [Pause.] Her work must have been so amazing--both the process and the product that people just had to come and watch! Maybe not as exciting as Friday night football, but pretty entertaining for the ancient Greeks! • Let’s think about the word <i>embroider</i>. Look at this picture. [Show slide L11-C.] What do you see? [Pause.] Yes, I see very complicated stitch work. I wonder how hard that is to create. The entire work is called a <i>tapestry</i>. Write that down because we will see this word again. Let’s write embroidered, too. [Write the words and definitions on chart paper.] <p>One day, Athena, goddess of craftsmen, heard news that there was a girl whose skill rivaled that of the goddess herself, and she, always jealous, disguised herself as a woman bent with age, and, leaning on her cane, joined the little crowd that so often hung round Arachne as she did her busy work with the needle. As the crowd watched, woven flowers sprang up under Arachne’s fingers, just as real as the flowers that spring from the ground. Despite herself, Athena marveled at the magic skill of the fair Arachne.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athena, the goddess of craftsmen... Hmm... I think we talked about craftsmen in our first week when we studied the Middle Ages. Does anyone remember what craftsmen were? [Pause.] That is right. They are highly skilled tradesmen-they make things. And Athena is the goddess of craftsmen. Here is what one artist believed Athena looked like. [Show slide L11-D.] How does Athena feel when she hears about Arachne’s talent as a weaver? [Pause.] Right! She’s jealous! In fact we read that she is always jealous! That’s not a goddess you’d want to cross! • It’s interesting that the text says, “she marveled at the magic skill of the fair Arachne” when Athena is the one who is the goddess and can do magic. It sounds like she’s feeling a little threatened! 	<p>Students will add the words tapestry and embroidered to their word lists.</p>
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Gently, she spoke to the girl with the words of a wise old woman and warned her that she must not let her ambition soar too high. "Be careful, girl, there is no better craftswoman than the goddess Athena, and were you to dream that one day you might equal her...that would indeed be a crime for any god to punish."

- Even though we know Athena is feeling jealous, she speaks to Arachne gently. She tries to warn her "not let her ambition soar too high." What is ambition? [Pause.] Yes, ambition is a desire for fame or power or to achieve something. I've always heard that it's good to have ambition. Let's add that to our vocabulary list. [Write the word and definition on chart paper.] Why is Athena warning Arachne not to be *too* ambitious? [Pause.] In ancient Greek culture, I think it would always be a bad idea for a human to want to reach the same level as one of the gods or goddesses.

Glancing up for a moment from the picture whose perfect colors grew fast under her slim fingers, Arachne fixed scornful eyes on the old woman and gave a merry laugh.

- *Scornful* is used to describe Arachne's eyes as she prepared to respond to the old woman, who was really Athena in disguise. *Scornful* shows contempt or hate; looking down on someone. If Arachne has scornful eyes and a laugh, do you think she is ready to listen to the old woman's wise advice? [Pause.] No, I don't think so either. We are going to add *scornful* to our list. [Write the word and definition on chart paper.]

"Did you say *equal* Athena? Old woman," she said. "You must be from the far-off hills where the goat-herds live, otherwise, you would not speak to me, Arachne, of *equaling* the work of Athene"; *excelling* is the better word."

- Wow! Those are some bold words, aren't they? In Greek culture, older people were highly respected because of their wisdom and experience. How does Arachne treat this person who she believes to be an old woman? [Pause.] I agree. She is very disrespectful! She calls her an old woman and says she must have come from the backwoods where the goat-herds live.

Students will add the word ambition and a definition to their word lists.

Students will add the word scornful to their word lists.

- **How does she respond to the woman's warning that she shouldn't dream that one day she might equal Athena? [Pause.] Well, she doesn't stop at being equal with Athena, she wants to do better than Athena... Wow. She wants to be better than a Greek god.**

Athena flushed with anger at the bold words of the girl. "Be careful what you say, child, there may indeed be punishment with time," the old woman croaked.

Laughing still, Arachne replied, "I don't fear Athena." And turning to the crowd who, half afraid, listened to her daring words, she said: "You who watch me day by day, you know well that I am not just boasting. My skill is as great as that of Athena, and greater still it shall be. Let Athena compete with me if she dare! Well do I know who will be the victor?"

- **What is a synonym for boasting?** [Pause.] **Yes, I think bragging is a good one! Take a second and add boasting to your list.** [Write the word and definition on chart paper.]
- **How does Arachne justify her lack of fear for Athena?** [Pause.] **I hear her saying that it is okay for her to be proud--but maybe too proud-- because she is so good at weaving. Have you ever known someone with that attitude?** [Pause.] **I have, too, and they aren't much fun to be around!**

Enraged at the girl's bold words and her challenge, Athena cast off her disguise. The crowd cowered as before them stood the radiant goddess with eyes that blazed with anger and insulted pride.

- Why is Athena offended by Arachne's claim to be a better weaver than Athena? [Pause.] Yes, Athena is offended by Arachne's claim to be the better weaver because Athena is a goddess and Arachne is a mortal. Goddesses are always superior to mortals!
- The word *radiant* means glowing brightly. What else have you heard described as *radiant*? [Pause.] Me, too! I've heard the sun described as radiant. That helps me picture what Athena looked like at that moment. Add radiant and a definition to your list. [Write the word and definition on chart paper.]

Students will add the word boasting to their word lists.

Students will add the word radiant to their word lists.

"Athena is here," she said, and the crowd fell on their knees before her, humbly adoring.

Arachne alone was unabashed. Her cheeks showed how fast her heart was beating. From rosy red to white went the color in them, yet, in firm, low voice she spoke.

"I have spoken truth," she said. "Not woman, nor goddess, can weave like me. I am ready to abide by what I have said, and if I did boast, by my boast I stand. If you will agree, great goddess, to try your skill against mine and if you win, I will gladly pay the price."

- **As soon as Athena revealed herself to the people, everyone fell on their knees...everyone except Arachne. *Unabashed* means without embarrassment or shame. So, Arachne is holding her position, whether she is talking to an old woman or to Athena herself! She just challenged a goddess to a weaving contest! Take a second and add unabashed to your list. [Write the word and definition on chart paper.]**

The grey-eyes of Athena the goddess, grew dark as the sea when a thunder-cloud hangs over it and a night storm is coming. Not for one moment did she delay, but took her place by the side of Arachne. On loom they stretched out two webs with a fine yarn, and quickly set to work.

Athena and Arachne began their weaving, covering the splendid cloths with pictures such as no skilled worker of tapestry has ever since dreamed of accomplishing.

- **Remember what a tapestry looks like? I'll show you the picture again. [Show slide L11-E.]**

Under the fingers of Athena grew up scenes so real, so perfect that the crowd could not tell whether the goddess was indeed creating life. And each picture was one that told of the power of the gods and of the doom that came upon those humans who had dared to struggle as equals with them.

- **Not very subtle of Athena to create scenes of doom for mortals who tried to stand up to gods, was it? [Pause.]**

Arachne glanced up from her web and looked with eyes that glowed with the love of beautiful things at the creations of

Students will add the word unabashed to their word lists.

Athena. Yet, unafraid, her fingers still sped on, and the goddess saw, with a look that grew yet more clouded, how a mere girl had chosen for subjects the tales that showed the weaknesses of the gods. One after another the living pictures grew beneath her hand, and the crowd held their breath in mingled fear and excitement at Arachne's godlike skill and daring.

- This is one tough competition, and Arachne is holding her own! What stories is she telling with tapestries? [Pause.] Right, stories showing weaknesses of the gods.
- How are Arachne's skills described? [Pause.] Daring, yes...but more importantly...godlike!

Will she beat the goddess Athena? [Pause.] Let's keep reading:

It was impossible to choose between the work of the goddess and the girl.

Darker and yet more dark grew the eyes of Athena as they looked on the magical beauty of the pictures, each one of which was an insult to the gods.

- How is Athena responding to the fact that Arachne's weaving is as beautiful as hers? [Pause.] I agree. She is getting more and more furious...and maybe embarrassed!

Then at last the storm broke, and with a scream, the enraged goddess shredded Arachne's weaving, the beautiful pictures were torn into rags and ribbons.

Arachne, shamed to the dust, knew that life for her was no longer worth living. She had aspired, in the pride of her splendid genius, to compete with a god, and knew now that such a contest can never be won.

Athena looked at her and smiled with icy kindness. "Oh, guilty and shameless Arachne! Forevermore you and your descendants will live and weave as you did today so that men will never forget the punishment of those dare to rival a god."

- The contest is over. How did it end? [Pause.] I know! Athena destroyed Arachne's tapestry!

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we know this wasn't ever a fair contest? [Pause.] Yes, because it was between a mortal and a goddess. The mortal never really had a chance. Athena couldn't risk losing to a mortal because of all the other mortals looking on. • Who are Arachne's descendants? [Pause.] That's right, descendants are all of the generations that will come after Arachne--her children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and so on. Let's include descendants on our list. [Write the word and definition on chart paper.] <p>Even as Athena spoke, Arachne's fair form dried up and withered. Her straight limbs grew grey and crooked and wiry, and her smooth white arms were no more. Eight legs sprouted and her body shrank. And then, just as suddenly as it had started, there was silence. Tiny beside the loom, where just moments before the beautiful weaver of Lydia had stood, crawled a creature that few love and many fear.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was Arachne's punishment? [Pause.] You remember, Arachne said she would gladly pay the price if she lost. I don't think she could have imagined that her punishment would be to be turned into a spider! <p>Now the story returns to our setting from the beginning:</p> <p>The sun has not long enough shown his face to dry up the dew in the garden, and look at the little clipped tree of boxwood, a great wonder! For in and out, and all over its twigs and leaves, Arachne has woven her web, and on the web the dew has dropped a million diamond drops. And, suddenly, all the colors in the sky are mirrored dazzlingly on the grey tapestry of her making. Arachne has come to her own again.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you picture the spider's work a little differently now? [Pause.] [Show slide L11-F.] I do! I can't help but think of Arachne weaving, weaving, weaving and producing beautiful works of art with her webs. I'm still a little afraid of spiders though! 	<p>Students will add the word descendants to their word lists.</p>
<p><u>Guided Practice</u> (5 min)</p> <p>Let's look back at our list of words. [Show slide L11-G or use chart paper to list vocabulary.] Make sure you have all the ones we talked about. This is the list: fragrant, embroidered,</p>	<p>Students follow along and think and act as instructed, gradually gaining confidence and competence.</p>

tapestry, ambition, scornful, boasting, radiant, unabashed, descendants. [Pause.]

As we read these words in the text, we talked about what they meant--the definitions. But sometimes words have feelings or emotions attached to them. That's called the connotation of a word. Think about these three words: interested, questioning, nosy. [Pause.] They all mean about the same thing, but would you rather be called interested or nosy? [Pause.] I know I don't want to be called nosy! So, we would say that nosy has a negative connotation. Interested has a positive connotation. What about questioning? [Pause.] Questioning doesn't have a strong negative or positive feeling attached to it, so we say it is neutral.

Let's sort our list of words based on their connotations. On your paper, make a three column chart. [Show slide L11-H.] Put titles at the top of the columns: Positive, Neutral, and Negative. [Pause.] Now, let's try a couple of our words together.

Does fragrant have a positive, neutral, or negative connotation? [Pause.] That's right! It is positive! Write fragrant in the positive column. [Pause.] How about tapestry? [Pause.] Well, it doesn't really have an emotion attached to it, so it would be neutral, wouldn't it? [Pause.] Let's do one more together, scornful. Remember Arachne had scornful eyes when she looked at the old woman. What's the connotation? [Pause.] Right! That one is negative. [Pause.] Okay, I want you to sort the rest of the words: Embroidered. [Pause.] Ambition. [Pause.] Scornful. [Pause.] Boasting. [Pause.] Radiant. [Pause.] Unabashed. [Pause.] Descendants. [Pause.] I'm wondering what you decided about ambition? [Pause.] We know that Arachne got into trouble because she had too much ambition, so let's put it in the negative column. In another context, it might have had a positive connotation--like maybe having ambition to be a doctor and studying hard to become one. I'll show you my chart, and you can check your answers. [Show slide L11-I and pause.]

Let's think a little more about our story before I send you off with your independent activity. You may want to take some notes about how Athena feels about Arachne. [Pause.] We heard several words to describe Arachne- boastful, unabashed, and ambition. How does this make Arachne look to Athena? [Pause.] Write down your thoughts. [Pause.]

Students will sort vocabulary words by connotation.

Students will think and record notes about Athena's perspective in this story in preparation for completing the independent activity

<p>Good. And who is Athena, again? [Pause.] Correct, she is the goddess of craftsmen. So, she oversees all men and women who are good at their craft. How do you think Arachne's boastful behavior made Athena feel? [Pause.] Yes, I would be insulted, too! If Greek mythology says the gods give us our talents, then Athena gave Arachne her talent. Arachne doesn't seem to be grateful.</p> <p>Does Arachne have great talent? [Pause.] Yes. Our author says: "Magical was the growth of the cloth through her darting fingers, and yet more magical the exquisite images that she then embroidered upon them."</p> <p>And because Arachne is boastful, thinks she can excel above Athena, and tries to beat Athena in a battle of weaving, what happens? [Pause.] That's right. Athena turns Arachne into a spider.</p> <p>I want to make sure you have all of your notes before we move to your independent practice. [Pause.] Okay, great.</p>	
<p><u>Independent Work</u> (1 min) [Show slide L11-J or have independent practice written on chart paper for students to see.] So for independent practice, I would like you to write a journal from Athena's point of view. I would like you to explain how she felt during her day with Arachne. Please retell this myth that we learned today from Athena's point of view.</p>	<p>Students will write a journal from Athena's point of view. Please explain how she felt during her day with Arachne. Please retell this myth from Athena's point of view.</p>
<p><u>Closing</u> (1 min) I enjoyed learning about Arachne with you today! Thank you for inviting me into your home. I look forward to seeing you in our next lesson in Tennessee's At Home Learning Series! Bye!</p>	