

Arachne versus Athene

"Introduce Me" and Drama Activities



I live in a small horrible village in Greece. My father is poor and silly. I think I should live in a palace. I love to weave cloth. I am the best weaver in the world. I am the finest and the greatest. I can even beat Athene at weaving.

Your weaving looks good, Arachne, but you boast about it too much. We think that you must have learned how to weave so well from the great goddess Athene.

Meet the characters

Plan a Greek drama and present

Now Athene is going to look at Arachne's cloth. She looks impressed by the work. Why look! Her face is turning red. Get back everybody!

Arachne versus Athene

These activities were first developed with Jane Cairns' Year 3 at Tolworth Junior School in the London Borough of Kingston. We used a cartoon version of the story of Arachne (in the book *Greek Myths* by Marcia Williams ISBN074453075X). We wanted to devise a way in which everyone in the class could participate in a retelling of the story as well as take on the flavour of a Greek play with a chorus. We also wanted to demonstrate that every new story teller can make up their own version of the narrative.

First the class play the character card game. You will need to put different coloured dots on each set of four character cards.

Then a small group become the actors and rehearse so that they can mime the story. If you select a group, who can produce a small amount of dialogue, that would be even better. The rest of the class became the chorus, divide into six groups and share out the statements between them so they can comment in twos and threes as the events are mimed. They will need some time to add more comments. As in a traditional Greek chorus, sometimes they talk to an 'audience' sometimes they speak directly to the characters and sometimes they speak aloud to themselves.

In our case the class did so well they presented the story in an assembly with props to the the rest of the school.

This activity was last updated 11th April 2016

The webaddress for this activity is:

<http://www.collaborativelearning.org/arachne.pdf>

Our collaborative talk for learning activities are designed to:

...build on prior knowledge.

...move from concrete to abstract thinking.

...ensure everyone works with everyone else.

...extend social language into curriculum language.

...provide motivating ways to go over the same topic more than once.

For more details go to: www.collaborativelearning.org

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROJECT

Project Director: Stuart Scott

We support a network of teaching professionals to develop and disseminate accessible talk-for-learning activities in all subject areas and for all ages.

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BRIEF SUMMARY OF BASIC PRINCIPLES BEHIND OUR TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

The project is a teacher network, and a non-profit making educational trust. Our main aim is to develop and disseminate classroom tested examples of effective group strategies that promote talk across all phases and subjects. We hope they will inspire you to develop and use similar strategies in other topics and curriculum areas. We want to encourage you to change them and adapt them to your classroom and students. We run teacher workshops and conferences worldwide but mainly in the UK. The project posts online many activities in all subject areas. An online newsletter is also updated regularly.

*These activities are influenced by current thinking about the role of language in learning. They are designed to help children learn through talk and active learning in small groups. They work best in non selective classes where children in need of language or learning support are integrated. They are well suited for the development of speaking and listening. They provide teachers ideal opportunities for assessment of spoken language.

*They provide scaffolding for differentiation by placing a high value on what children can offer to each other on a particular topic, and also give children the chance to respect each other's views and formulate shared opinions which they can disseminate to peers. By helping them to take ideas and abstract concepts, discuss, paraphrase and move them about physically, they help to develop thinking skills.

*They give children the opportunity to participate in their own words and language in their own time without pressure. Many activities can be tried out in pupils' first languages and afterwards in English. A growing number of activities are available in more than one language, not translated, but mixed, so that you may need more than one language to complete the activity.

*They encourage study skills in context, and should therefore be used with a range of appropriate information books which are preferably within reach in the classroom.

*They are generally work effectively over a wide age range because children can bring their own knowledge to an activity and refer to books at an appropriate level. The activities work like catalysts.

*All project activities were planned and developed by teachers working together, and the main reason they are disseminated is to encourage teachers to work with each other inside and outside the classroom. They have made it possible for mainstream and language and learning support teachers to share an equal role in curriculum delivery. They should be adapted to local conditions. In order to help us keep pace with curriculum changes, please send any new or revised activities back to the project, so that we can add them to our lists of materials.

<http://www.collaborativelearning.org/arachne.pdf>

Character cards - Teacher Instructions

Four character descriptions are written on separate cards. You will need seven or eight sets, depending on size of class. Each set of four will need a different coloured dot.

Deal out the cards. You may want to deal from the bottom of the pack to ensure that certain readers work with other readers. Children read their card and memorise some information.

They then find one other person with the same colour dot and introduce themselves to each other without looking at their card unless they get stuck. They are encouraged to discuss any extra information they may already know about the character. Then there are two ways to go depending on how confident their reading and speaking is!

A: Pairs split up and find another partner who has the same colour dot. They then exchange information about their characters.

or.....

B: The pair find other pair with the same colour dot and exchange information. They have then 'met' the four characters in the story

We encourage children to read and memorise (this is where rote learning is useful because it is put to work at once!) information and when they present their character to another or others they do so without looking at the card. They can of course take a look if they get stuck, but should put the card away before they speak. We want children to feel that their own words are better and easier to express than remembered read ones.

Arachne versus Athene

Character Card Game:

You have a card with information about a character in the story of Arachne. Read the card carefully and memorise some of the information. Then find someone with the same colour dot on their card as you and introduce yourself in role. Try not to read your card while you speak. If you get stuck then take a look at the card. Put it away before you speak again. They will, in turn, introduce themselves to you. Now you know about two characters.

Then there are two ways to go on. Your teacher will tell you which A or B.

A. Pairs split up and go to find another person with the same colour dot. Again they tell each other about their character.

B. Pairs stay together and go to find another pair with the same colour dot. Each pair tell the other pair about their characters. Try not to look at the cards!

General instructions:

You are going to work in six groups.. Each group has a section of the picture story, the comments from the Chorus and a frame with characters for inserting the speech bubbles.

Using the information in your bit of the story you prepare a script. You can adapt or add information for your characters' speech bubbles



Detailed Instructions:

You have part of the story of Arachne versus Athene. You are going to change a narrative story into a Greek play.

You have a framework with blank speech bubbles and space for two Chorus speeches for the beginning and end of your presentation. Use the information in the story to fill in the speech bubbles. You can change or add your own information to the speeches.

Choose parts to present and practise your part of the new play you have written. You are going to present your part to the rest of the class.

Arachne versus Athene - Character Cards



I live in a small horrible village in Greece. My father is poor and silly. I think I should live in a palace. I love to weave cloth. I am the best weaver in the world. I am the finest and the greatest. I can even beat Athene at weaving.



I live in a lovely village in Greece. Unfortunately I have a daughter. She hates everything and everybody. All she does is weave, weave, weave all day. She is very good at it, but goes on and on all the time about how good she is.



I am a goddess. I am very clever and very proud. My sign is an owl. I am also very good at weaving. I like it when humans are humble and respectful, but if they are rude or proud, I get very angry and explode!



I am the king of the gods. My daughter is wise, but at the moment she is fed up and angry. A human called Arachne says that she can beat her in a weaving contest. I think there will be some trouble in the end.

Chorus statements to share

The Chorus speaks:

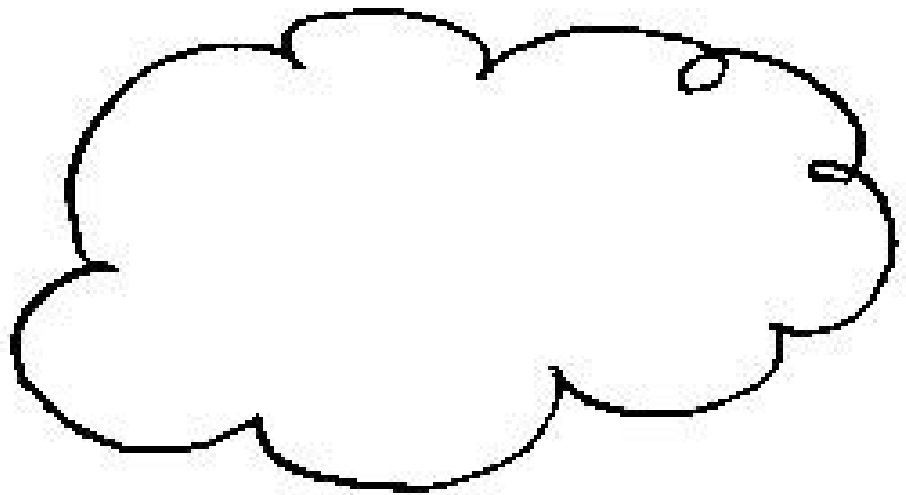
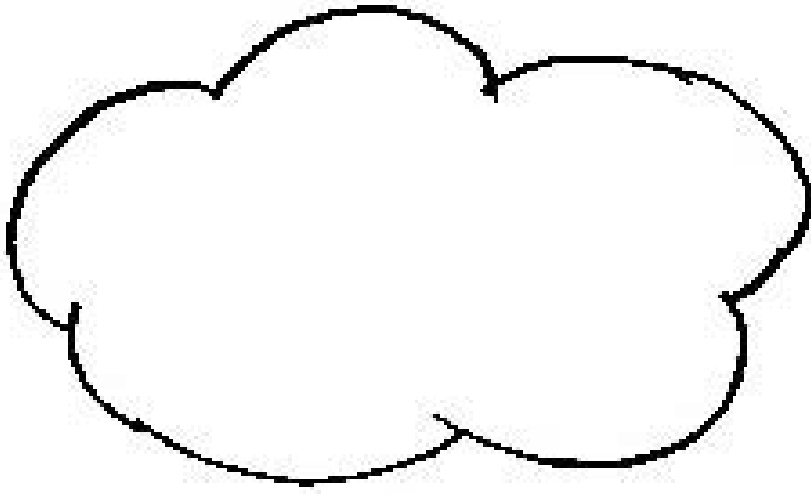
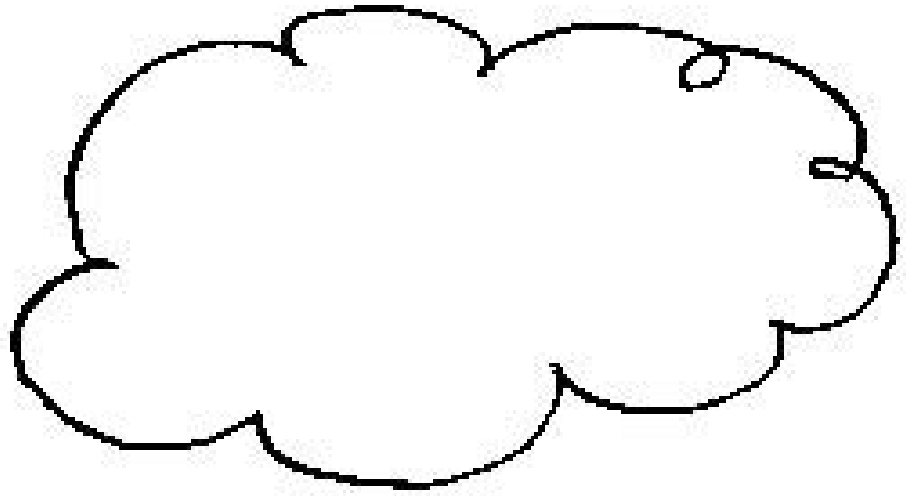
1. We are going to visit the village where Arachne and her father live. There they are! Oh dear! It looks as if they are having an argument.
2. Stop that Arachne! You should treat your father with more respect. He has brought you up, and treated you well. The gods may punish people who are ungrateful.
3. Your weaving looks good, Arachne, but you boast about it too much. We think that you must have learned how to weave so well from the great goddess Athene.
4. Now we can hear the thunder rumbling. The gods are angry, and now that you have challenged Athene, you had better watch out. The gods are very strong and can always see and hear what is going on.

(a little later)

5. Look there's Arachne! She is weaving as usual. We can see an ugly old woman coming to visit. We're certain that Arachne won't welcome her.
6. Goodness! Arachne is still not frightened by Athene. Arachne, listen! Athene is powerful. She can destroy you! She could turn you into anything she likes!
7. Look at the two weavers! They are working so hard. They are both making designs about the gods.
8. Oh no! Arachne is impossible. Even her cloth is rude about the gods. We had better go and hide somewhere safe.
9. Now Athene is going to look at Arachne's cloth. She looks impressed by the work. Why look! Her face is turning red. Get back everybody!
10. What a sad ending, but we could see that this was going to happen. Arachne has deserved what has happened. You must treat the gods with respect.
11. Quick! Father of Arachne! Bow down to the goddess! Beg for your daughter's life
12. So that is the end of the story. Arachne was saved, and now you might see her high up in the corner of a room. She is always busy weaving and weaving and weaving. She never stops. Let her life be a lesson to you. The gods are mighty and powerful.

Arachne versus Athene - Chorus preparation sheet.

Your first statement:



Your final statement: