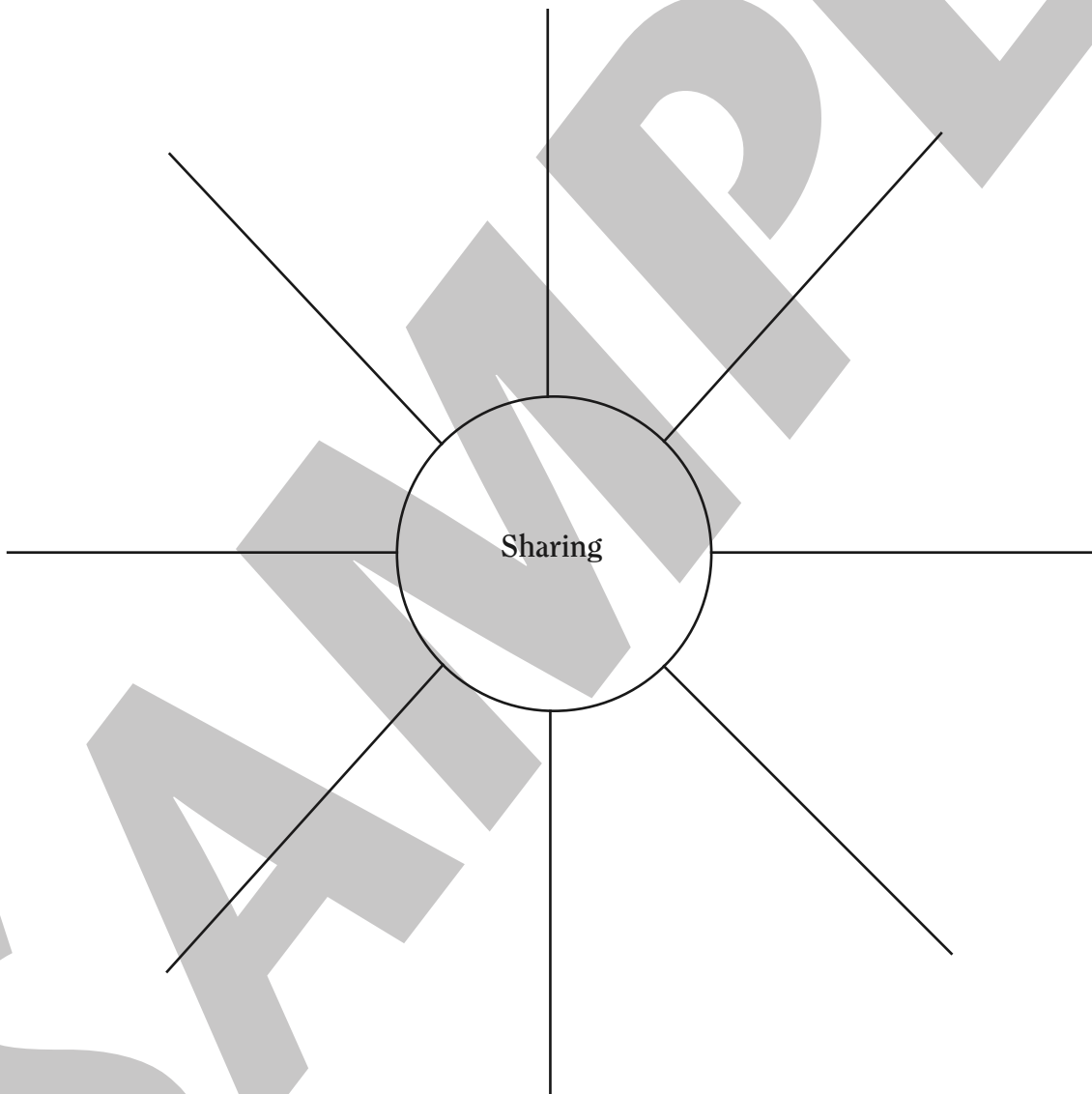


Sharing

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The Magic Moneybag

The following passage is based on a Korean folk tale.

- 1 Long ago there was a young couple that lived in a small thatched hut. To survive, the impoverished couple had to cut two bundles of firewood and sell them at the market. One day, the young couple came back from chopping the firewood. They put one bundle in their courtyard and planned to sell it at the market the next day to buy rice. They kept the other bundle for their own use. When they woke up the next morning, the bundle in the courtyard had mysteriously disappeared.
- 2 They cut another two bundles of firewood in hopes of selling those instead, but the following morning the bundles in the courtyard vanished again. The same thing happened on the next day as well, and the husband began to think someone was playing a devious trick on them. He made a hollow in the bundle of firewood and hid himself there. At midnight an enormous rope descended from the sky, attached itself to the bundle, and lifted it with the woodcutter still inside.
- 3 When he landed, the woodcutter looked out and saw a kind looking, white-haired old man walking in his direction. The old man untied the bundle. When he found the woodcutter inside it, he asked, "Other people only cut one bundle of firewood a day. Why do you cut two?"
- 4 The woodcutter replied, "We are penniless. That's why my wife and I cut two bundles of firewood a day. One bundle is for our own use, and the other we carry to the market. With it we can buy rice."
- 5 The old man chuckled and told the woodcutter in a warmhearted voice, "I've known for a long time that you are a decent, hardworking couple. I shall give you a piece of treasure. Take it back with you, and it will provide you with your livelihood."
- 6 The old man showed the woodcutter his palace. Inside the palace there were moneybags of all shapes and sizes. The woodcutter happily declared, "I'd like that moneybag, that round, bulging one."
- 7 With a stern expression on his face, the white-haired old man said, "You cannot take that one. I'll give you an empty one. Every day you can take one tael of silver out of it, and no more. Be careful not to succumb to greed." The woodcutter reluctantly agreed. He took the empty moneybag and, clinging onto the enormous rope, he was lowered to the ground.
- 8 Once home, he told his wife the whole story and she was thrilled. From then on, whenever they returned home after dark, they closed the door and opened the moneybag. Instantly, a lump of silver would roll jingling out. Every day one tael of silver and no more came rolling out of the bag, and the wife saved them one by one.

- 9 Time passed slowly. One day the husband suggested, "Let's buy an ox."
- 10 The wife didn't agree. A few days later, the husband suggested again, "How about buying a few acres of land?"
- 11 His wife didn't agree with that either. A few more days elapsed, and the husband proposed, "Since we have so much money in hand, I want to build a luxurious brick house."
- 12 The wife could not dissuade her husband and reluctantly went along with his idea. The husband spent the money on bricks, tiles, timber, and on hiring the most experienced carpenters and masons. From that time on, neither of them went to cut firewood any more. The day came when their pile of silver was almost exhausted, but the new house was still unfinished. For a long time, the husband had considered asking the moneybag to produce more silver, and without his wife's knowledge, he opened the bag for a second time that day. Instantly, another lump of snow-white silver rolled jingling out of the bag. He opened the bag a third time and received a third lump.
- 13 "If I go on like this," the husband said, "I can get the house finished in no time!" But when he opened the bag for the fourth time, it was absolutely empty. Not a scrap of silver came out of it. When he turned around, his unfinished brick house was gone. Before him was his old thatched hut.
- 14 The woodcutter felt miserable. His wife came home and consoled him, "We can't depend on the magic moneybag for happiness. Let's go back and cut firewood as we did before." The husband reluctantly agreed, and they returned to their old, hardworking life.



Thunder and Anansi

The following passage is based on a West African folk tale.

- 1 There had been a long and severe famine where Anansi lived, and he was unable to obtain food for his wife and family. As he gazed desperately out to sea, he saw a tiny island with a tall palm tree upon it. He felt determined to reach this tree and take whatever fruit it might have back to his family. Further down the beach, he found an old broken boat. It did not look very dependable, but Anansi decided to try it.
- 2 As Anansi rowed toward the island, a great wave dashed him overboard, and the boat disappeared from his eyes. Another great wave came, but instead of being drowned, Anansi found himself standing on the sea bottom in front of a quaint little cottage. From the cottage came an old man, who asked Anansi what he wanted so badly that he had come to Thunder's cottage to seek it. Anansi told his tale of woe, and Thunder showed himself to be most sympathetic.
- 3 Thunder went into the cottage and fetched a fine cooking pot, which he presented to Anansi. The pot would always supply enough food for himself and his family. Anansi was most grateful, and left Thunder with many thanks. He swam for land and, anxious to test the pot at once, said, "Pot, what you used to do for your master do now for me." Immediately, mouthwatering food of all sorts appeared. Anansi ate a hearty meal. As he stood up to walk home, a selfish, greedy fear overcame him.
- 4 "What if I should use all the magic of the pot on them, and have nothing more left for myself? I should keep the pot a secret. That way I can enjoy a meal when I want one."
- 5 Anansi reached his home, hid the pot behind his shed, and pretended to be utterly worn out with fatigue and hunger. There was not a grain of food to be had anywhere. His wife and poor children were weak, but selfish Anansi took no notice of that. He retired to the shed from time to time when he felt hungry and enjoyed a succulent meal. His family grew thinner and thinner, but he grew plumper and plumper. They began to suspect some secret, and his eldest son, Kweku, began to follow his father everywhere. At last, Anansi, feeling hungry, went to the shed, ate, and hid the pot once again.
- 6 As soon as Anansi was out of sight, Kweku fetched the pot and called on his hungry family to come at once. They had the most delicious meal of their lives, and when they had finished, Mrs. Anansi—to punish her husband—said she would take the pot down to the village and give everybody a good meal for once. This she did, but in working to prepare so much food at one time, the pot grew too hot and melted away.

7 Anansi returned home ready for his supper. He went to his shed, but there was no pot to be seen anywhere. Enraged at his family for discovering his secret, he started off toward the shore and swam down to Thunder's cottage again. Thunder stood waiting to hear Anansi's tale. The old man listened and showed the same sympathy as before. This time, however, he presented Anansi with an even bigger pot and bade him good-bye.

8 Anansi swiftly returned home to gloat about his prize to his family, but when he commanded the pot to give him another fantastic meal, it did nothing at all. He threw the pot on the ground in anger. His wife picked up the pot and asked very humbly for bread and milk for her children. The pot responded with fresh milk and warm bread. The new pot's magic depended on the generosity of the asker, and rewarded greed with nothing but dust.



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Headlines

If these passages were a news story, it might have this headline:

Greed Leaves People Empty-Handed

On the line below, write a headline of your own about the passages.

Movie Vault

Receiving a magical gift and losing it because of greed has been a popular theme in storytelling for centuries. How do modern filmmakers use this theme? Think about three movies that use this theme, and discuss how on the lines below. Then make a class list.

Movie #1 _____

Movie #2 _____

Movie #3 _____

Extension

Write your own story about being given a magical gift. What would you ask for, and how would you use the gift? How could that power be abused? Share your stories in class.

Use “The Magic Moneybag” (pp. 4–5) to answer questions 1–5.

Standard 2: Key Vocabulary

1. Read the sentence from the story.

The same thing happened on the next day as well, and the husband began to think someone was playing a devious trick on them.

What does the word “devious” mean?

- A Angry, vile
- B Clumsy, awkward
- C Cunning, sly
- D Hazardous, dangerous

Standard 2: Literary Elements

2. Why does the husband open the moneybag repeatedly?

- A Because his wife has requested more silver
- B To get enough silver to complete a new house
- C Because he has to return the moneybag to the old man
- D To determine how much silver is inside the moneybag

Standard 2: Literary Elements

3. Why does the couple cut extra firewood?

- A To sell for money
- B To trade for treasure
- C To give to an old man
- D To use indoors when it is cold

Standard 2: Literary Elements

4. How does the husband change in the story?

- A First he is lazy, and then he is hardworking.
- B First he is careful with the silver, and then he desires wealth.
- C First he wants a fancy lifestyle, and then he welcomes a simple life.
- D First he is dishonest toward his wife, and then he is honest with her.

Standard 2: Key Vocabulary

5. To be “penniless” is a metaphor for—

- A having no rice
- B being very poor
- C being very hungry
- D needing more pots

Use “Thunder and Anansi” (pp. 6–7) to answer questions 6–10.

Standard 2: Literary Elements

6. Anansi purposely keeps the pot a secret, as revealed by his thoughts. These thoughts illustrate that Anansi is—
- A arrogant
 - B careless
 - C starving
 - D stingy

Standard 2: Key Vocabulary

7. Read the sentence from the story.

He retired to the shed from time to time when he felt hungry and enjoyed a succulent meal.

Which word is a synonym for “succulent”?

- A Leisurely
- B Modest
- C Mouthwatering
- D Plain

Standard 2: Literary Elements

8. Why does Anansi’s wife feed the villagers?
- A To gain favor in the village
 - B To help the famished villagers
 - C To take revenge on her husband
 - D To show gratefulness for the pot

Standard 2: Literary Elements

9. Which best describes Anansi at the beginning of the story?
- A Hero achieving a task
 - B Fool who causes trouble
 - C Generous figure with powers
 - D Weak man needing protection

Standard 2: Key Vocabulary

10. In the story, the word “retired” means to—
- A give up
 - B leave a job
 - C quietly exit
 - D be tired again

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Use “The Magic Moneybag” and “Thunder and Anansi” to answer questions 11–14.

Standard 3: Cultural/Ethnic Values

11. What is the moral of **both** stories?
- A Greed goes unrewarded.
 - B Kindness is essential for survival.
 - C People should accept their poverty.
 - D The courageous help those who are needy.

Standard 2: Literary Elements

12. How are the husband and Anansi **similar**?
- A Both take only what they need.
 - B Both are secretive in their behavior.
 - C Both are thankful for the help they receive.
 - D Both get a second chance from a wise man.

Standard 2: Literary Elements

13. Which word **best** characterizes the old men in **both** stories?
- A Impoverished
 - B Revengeful
 - C Sympathetic
 - D Yielding

