

# SOAR

## SOAR [4]

- Folktales/Legends
- History/Culture
- Horror
- Sports
- STEM

# Table of Contents

Introduction . . . . .	4
Comprehension Skills Chart . . . . .	8
Book Overview Chart . . . . .	10
Differentiation Strategies . . . . .	11
Program Progress Chart . . . . .	13
Genre: Folktales/Legends . . . . .	15
Anansi and the Stories . . . . .	16
The Frog Prince . . . . .	20
The Language of the Birds . . . . .	24
NF Leprechauns . . . . .	28
Genre: History/Culture . . . . .	32
Call Me . . . . .	33
The Scare . . . . .	37
Uprising . . . . .	41
NF The Mercury 13 . . . . .	45
Genre: Horror . . . . .	49
Blood-Red Rock . . . . .	50
The Glow . . . . .	54
It Came from Below . . . . .	58
NF Vlad the Impaler . . . . .	62
Genre: Sports . . . . .	66
Goalie Trouble . . . . .	67
Step Up . . . . .	71
The Way Through . . . . .	75
NF Usain Bolt . . . . .	79
Genre: STEM . . . . .	83
Drone Pilot . . . . .	84
Hacker . . . . .	88
Stolen . . . . .	92
NF Hard Evidence . . . . .	96
Answer Key . . . . .	100

# Instructional Support Components

This guide contains instructional support for each book.

## GENRE OVERVIEW AND LESSON PLAN

(one for each genre): Use these pages to introduce and discuss the genres in this set. Lessons are appropriate for whole class or small group instruction.



## BOOK LESSON PLAN

(one for each book): Use these pages to introduce the books, to teach or review specific reading skills, and to introduce any



special vocabulary in the books. Lessons are appropriate for whole class, small group, or individual instruction.

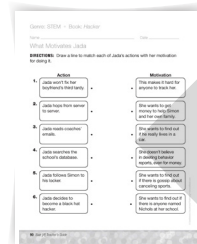
## GUIDED READING QUESTIONS

(one for each book): Use these pages after the initial reading of the book. These questions allow for a deeper rereading of the book and an exploration of the book's issues and character dynamics. Questions are appropriate for whole class, small group, or individual instruction.



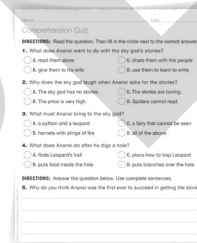
## COMPREHENSION ACTIVITY

(one for each book): Use these pages to monitor comprehension and build reading skills. Activities are appropriate for paired or independent work.



## BOOK QUIZ

(one for each book): Use these pages to assess comprehension. Quizzes are a mix of multiple-choice questions and one short-answer question.



## Implementation Options

Soar is intended as a supplemental set of books for classroom use. The lesson plans and guided reading questions in this guide are designed for both small groups and individual students. Here are some options for implementation:

- Display the books as part of a classroom library and allow students to self-select titles. Use the reproducible activity and quiz for each book to monitor comprehension.
- Form small groups for genre exploration. Assign two or more books from a genre set to each small group. Use the genre overviews and lesson plans to introduce each genre. As each group completes a book, use the guided reading questions to spur discussion and to check comprehension. Have the groups complete a presentation on how the books represent the genre they are exploring. Use the reproducible activities and quizzes for the books to monitor comprehension.
- Use selected titles for intervention with teens reading below level. Assign a specific title to a group, and use the lesson plan in this guide to introduce the book and teach any special vocabulary. Have the students read the book independently or as part of a small group. Use the guided reading questions after the first read to build comprehension and encourage book discussion. Then assign the reproducible activity. Students may work independently or in pairs. Use the quiz to assess comprehension.

Clark, C. & Rumbold, K. "Reading for Pleasure: A Research Overview." National Literacy Trust, 2006.

Cullinan, B. E. "Independent Reading and School Achievement." American Association of School Librarians, 2000.

National Endowment for the Arts. "To Read or Not to Read: A Question of National Consequence." Research Report #47. 2007.

Walberg, H.J. "Scientific Literacy and Economic Productivity in International Perspective." Daedalus, 112, 1-28. 1983.

# TEFL Comprehension Skills Chart

This chart can be used to quickly reference which lessons cover key skills you want to target with your students.

## Folktales/Legends

Book	Ask "wh" Questions	Cause & Effect	Character Analysis	Character Motivation	Character Traits	Draw Conclusions	Fact & Opinion	Inference	Main Idea & Details	Make Predictions	NF Text Features	Point of View	Setting	Sequence of Events
Anansi and the Stories														✓
The Frog Prince					✓									
The Language of the Birds		✓												
Leprechauns <b>NF</b>											✓			

## History/Culture

Book	Ask "wh" Questions	Cause & Effect	Character Analysis	Character Motivation	Character Traits	Draw Conclusions	Fact & Opinion	Inference	Main Idea & Details	Make Predictions	NF Text Features	Point of View	Setting	Sequence of Events
Call Me							✓							
The Scare								✓						
Uprising	✓													
The Mercury 13 <b>NF</b>											✓			

## Horror

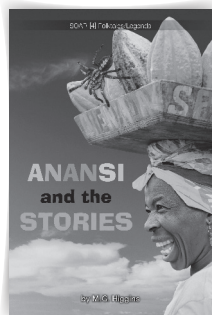
Book	Ask "wh" Questions	Cause & Effect	Character Analysis	Character Motivation	Character Traits	Draw Conclusions	Fact & Opinion	Inference	Main Idea & Details	Make Predictions	NF Text Features	Point of View	Setting	Sequence of Events
Blood-Red Rock						✓								
The Glow			✓											
It Came from Below										✓				
Vlad the Impaler <b>NF</b>											✓			



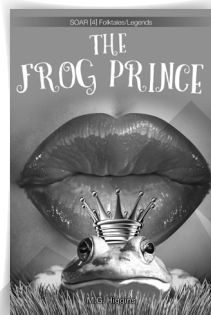
# Genre: Folktales/Legends

**DESCRIPTION** Folklore is a collection of tales, traditions, and beliefs passed from person to person, often in spoken form. As our earliest form of popular fiction, folktales contain many of fiction's key elements: well-structured plots, imaginative characters, and moral lessons. Because their purpose is to entertain, folktales often include dramatic events and fantastical creatures, such as talking animals, fairies, and spirits. To aid storytellers' memory, these tales often include repeating plot elements (such as a character asked to do multiple tasks) and catchphrases (such as "once upon a time" and "happily ever after"). Legends are stories that are partly true or based on historic facts. The events in the stories, however, are often exaggerated. This set of books includes folktales from Africa and Russia, a fairy tale from Europe, and a nonfiction account of an Irish legend.

## Overview of Books



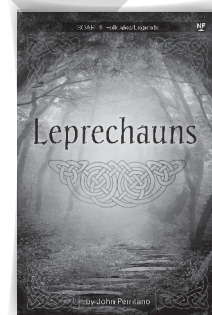
A West African Folktale



A Fairy Tale from Europe



A Folktale from Russia



History of an Irish Legend

**INTRODUCING THIS GENRE** Write *folktale* on the board. Underline *folk* and explain that it means "people." Underline *tale* and ask students what the word means (story). Tell students that a folktale is a story passed along from person to person, often in spoken form. Point out that long before television, storytelling was an important form of entertainment. Many folktales include brave and heroic characters, exciting events, and fantasy elements, such as talking animals, magic spells, and made-up creatures like unicorns and dragons. Folktales often have satisfying endings in which the main character is said to live "happily ever after."

Show students the covers and titles of the four books in this set and have them guess what each one is about. Explain that the three fiction stories include talking animals and events that could not happen in real life. The nonfiction book describes an Irish legend that is popular on St. Patrick's Day.

**PARTNER SHARE** Assign partners and have pairs share any folktales or fairy tales they have read or know about. Then ask pairs to choose one of the fiction titles in this set. Have them describe the kinds of characters and events they might encounter in a book with this title.

Genre: Folktales/Legends

Book: *Anansi and the Stories*

**SYNOPSIS** This book is a retelling of a classic African folktale about the trickster spider, Anansi. When Anansi offers to buy the sky god's stories, the sky god asks a high price in return: a python that can swallow a goat, a leopard with teeth like razors, a hornet with stings of fire, and a fairy that cannot be seen. Anansi uses his powers as a trickster to meet the challenge, while demonstrating the importance of determination.

**PREPARING TO READ** Show students the cover of the book. Read them the following preview:

A spider named Anansi wants to buy stories from the sky god, Nyame. The sky god sets a seemingly impossible price that no one has been able to pay. But Anansi has a few clever tricks in mind.

Have students turn to a partner and discuss what they think will happen in this book based on the preview. Then ask for volunteers to share their ideas with the class.

**READING SKILL** Point out that folktales are based on the traditions and beliefs of a group of people and are passed from person to person. Folktales often include a series of events the main character must go through in order to solve a problem. Words such as *first*, *then*, and *soon* help tell the order of events. Point out the sentences on page 15, explaining that they summarize Anansi's tasks, which are listed in the order he will do them. Knowing the order of the tasks makes it easier to recall and retell the story. Also explain that while reading a story, it is helpful to think of it in pieces—what happens in the beginning, middle, and end. Ask students to recall the beginning, middle, and end of a story they have read or know about.

**VOCABULARY LESSON** This book includes a few words that are at a higher level than the rest of the book but are necessary for communicating the content. Teach these words before students read the story. Write each word on the board. If appropriate, have the students write each word on an index card, and then trace the letters as they say the word.

**curious** wanting to know more about something

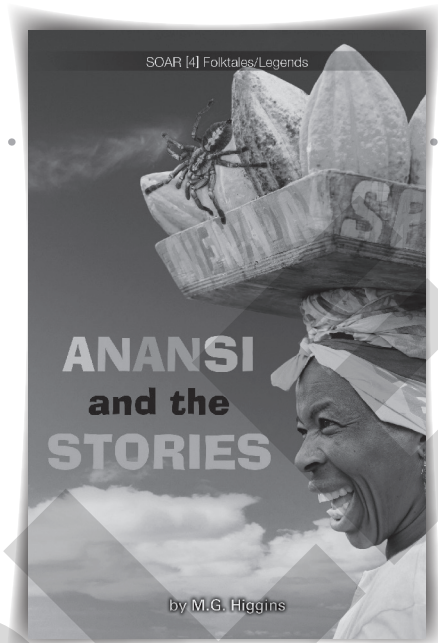
**gourd** the dried, hard shell of a fruit

**ordinary** not special or different

**scowled** frowned in an angry way

**vanished** passed quickly from sight

Have students work with partners or small groups to come up with sentences using each of the vocabulary words. Ask students to share the sentences with the class.



*Anansi and the Stories*

Genre: Folktales/Legends  
Book: *Anansi and the Stories*

## Guided Reading Questions

**PAGES 3–5** What is Anansi like? (strong, smart, tricky, helpful)

**PAGES 6–9** What problem does Anansi have? (He wants to share stories, but the sky god has them.)

**PAGES 10–13** What does the sky god do that causes the clouds to shake? (He laughs.) Why? (He doesn't think Anansi will be able to pay his price for the stories.)

**PAGES 14 AND 15** What do you think “teeth like razors” means? (sharp teeth)

**PAGES 16 AND 17** Why does Nyame think Anansi is a “silly spider”? (He thinks Anansi will fail.)

**PAGES 18–21** Which words help tell the sequence of events? (*that night, first, then, the next morning, soon*)

**PAGES 22–27** How does Anansi trap Python? (He ties Python to a branch.)

**PAGES 28 AND 29** Is the sky god happy with what Anansi has brought him? (no) How do you know? (The sky god says it's only a small part of the price.)

**PAGES 30 AND 31** What is the second creature Anansi must catch? (the leopard)

**PAGES 32 AND 33** What does Anansi's wife tell him to do? (dig a hole and cover it with branches)

**PAGES 34–37** What does Leopard promise? (He won't eat Anansi if the spider helps him get out of the hole.)

**PAGES 38–41** What steps does Anansi follow to catch Leopard? (ties a vine to a bent tree; tells Leopard to tie the vine to his tail; cuts the vine so Leopard flies up and hangs by his tail; wraps Leopard in vines)

**PAGES 42 AND 43** Is the sky god happy when Anansi brings him the leopard? (no) How can you tell? (He frowns and complains that this is only part of his price.)

**PAGES 44–49** What steps does Anansi follow to catch the hornets? (fills a gourd with water; pours it into the hornets' nest; tells hornets it's raining and to fly into the gourd to stay safe; traps them in the gourd)

**PAGES 50–53** What is the last creature Anansi must catch? (a fairy that cannot be seen)

**PAGES 54–61** What steps does Anansi follow to catch the fairy? (puts a sticky doll and food under a tree; gets the fairy to take the food; gets the fairy to stick to the doll; wraps thread around the fairy)

**PAGES 62 AND 63** What does the sky god do when Anansi brings him the fairy? (gives Anansi the stories)

**OVERALL QUESTIONS** What do you think is the lesson of this tale? (Responses will vary.)

What did all the creatures Anansi caught have in common? (They fell for Anansi's tricks.)

On a scale of 1–10, with 1 being boring and 10 being extremely interesting, how would you rate this story? Why? (Responses will vary.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Put the Events in Order

**DIRECTIONS:** Each sentence below is an event in the book. Write the numbers 1–10 to show the order the events happened. Use the book if you need help.

\_\_\_\_\_ Anansi traps Leopard and brings him to Nyame.

\_\_\_\_\_ Anansi decides to bring stories to the people.

\_\_\_\_\_ Anansi uses thread to tie up the fairy.

\_\_\_\_\_ Anansi sees that people in town are bored.

\_\_\_\_\_ Anansi asks to buy stories from the sky god, Nyame.

\_\_\_\_\_ Nyame gives Anansi the box of stories.

\_\_\_\_\_ Anansi traps hornets in a gourd and brings them to Nyame.

\_\_\_\_\_ Anansi takes the fairy to Nyame.

\_\_\_\_\_ Nyame tells Anansi to bring a python, a leopard, hornets, and a fairy.

\_\_\_\_\_ Anansi ties Python to a branch and brings him to Nyame.

**DIRECTIONS:** Choose one of Anansi’s tricks from the story. Write the steps in order. Use complete sentences.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Comprehension Quiz

**DIRECTIONS:** Read the question. Then fill in the circle next to the correct answer.

**1.** What does Anansi want to do with the sky god's stories?

- A. read them alone                       C. share them with the people  
 B. give them to his wife                 D. use them to learn to write

**2.** Why does the sky god laugh when Anansi asks for the stories?

- A. The sky god has no stories.         C. The stories are boring.  
 B. The price is very high.                D. Spiders cannot read.

**3.** What must Anansi bring to the sky god?

- A. a python and a leopard                C. a fairy that cannot be seen  
 B. hornets with stings of fire            D. all of the above

**4.** What does Anansi do after he digs a hole?

- A. finds Leopard's trail                    C. plans how to trap Leopard  
 B. puts food inside the hole              D. puts branches over the hole

**DIRECTIONS:** Answer the question below. Use complete sentences.

**5.** Why do you think Anansi was the first ever to succeed in getting the stories?

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Genre: Folktales/Legends

Book: *The Language of the Birds*

**SYNOPSIS** This book is a retelling of a Russian folktale about ordinary people and animals that demonstrate values, struggles, and courage. Ivan wants to be a good son, so he learns to communicate with birds in order to please his father. But the birds tell Ivan that he will become a king's son and his father will become a servant. When Ivan tells his parents the prediction, he is punished. But that doesn't stop Ivan from helping others who can benefit from his unique ability.

**PREPARING TO READ** Show students the cover of the book.  
Read them the following preview:



*The Language of the Birds*

Ivan wants to please his parents. When his father wishes to know what birds say, Ivan learns their language. Then Ivan gets news that upsets his father and is sent off to die. Instead, Ivan survives and tries to help others using his ability. Will it put him in more danger, or will he be treated like a hero?

Have students turn to a partner and discuss what kinds of information birds might share with us if they could talk. Then ask for volunteers to share their ideas with the class.

**READING SKILL** Explain that a cause is an event that makes something happen, and the effect is what happens as a result of that event. Write the headings *Cause* and *Effect* on the board. Under *Cause*, write: "It snows." Brainstorm with students effects that might happen as a result, and write them under *Effect*. Explain that sometimes one cause will have more than one effect. Similarly, sometimes multiple causes lead to one effect. Point out that stories are made up of cause-and-effect relationships. To find them, students can ask themselves: Why did an event happen? (cause). What happened? (effect). This can help them understand a story and its characters.

**VOCABULARY LESSON** This book includes a few words that are at a higher level than the rest of the book but are necessary for communicating the content. Teach these words before students read the story. Write each word on the board. If appropriate, have the students write each word on an index card, and then trace the letters as they say the word.

**fate** something that will happen in the future

**gazed** looked at something for a long time

**masts** poles on a ship that hold the sails

**merchant** a person who buys and sells items

**paced** walked back and forth

Have students work with partners or small groups to come up with sentences using each of the vocabulary words. Ask students to share the sentences with the class.