

# Kansas City Young Audiences

## Teacher Program Guide

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### Anansi the Spider

Artist: Jane Gotch

### Workshop Description

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Contact KCYA for more information on this and other programs.

816-531-4022  
[www.kcya.org](http://www.kcya.org)

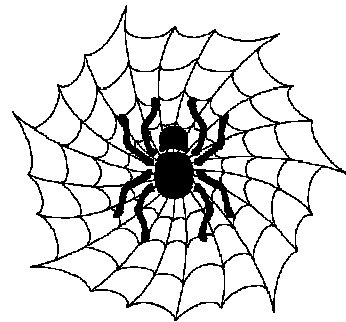
*Anansi the Spider* is a wise, funny, mischievous, and loveable folk hero who recurs in traditional Ashanti tales from Ghana, in West Africa. This story relates the tale of father Anansi and his six spider sons. When Anansi sets out on a dangerous journey and gets into trouble, each son does one thing to help, and all their efforts together save their father.

Teaching Artist Jane Gotch helps the students bring Anansi and his sons to life as she introduces the students to the concept of communicating through shapes. Jane helps them define their Space Bubble, then leads the group through the creation of low, medium, and high shapes. The participants expand upon their creations by forming shapes based on the characters of

Anansi and his sons. The students observe each others' shapes and choose one to represent each character in the book.

The students explore the movement of time (fast and slow), space (high, medium, and low levels), and energy (percussive, sustained, swinging, and vibratory) through the characters they create.

The program ends with the students performing a dance based on the book *Anansi the Spider* using the shapes and movement qualities practiced in the class.



### Educational Objectives and Standards

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Students will:

- Understand the main idea or message in visual media
- Have a greater understanding of the way in which shape can communicate meaning
- Demonstrate motif and variation with six basic shapes

Dance Standards:

- Students use movement and dance as a means to communicate a feeling, idea, or story

Language Arts

- Can talk about characters and their actions in stories

#### Special Points of Interest:

To the Ashanti, a child is said to inherit the father's soul or spirit (ntoro) and from the mother a child receives flesh and blood (mogya)

#### Special REQUIREMENTS:

A large, clear space for dancing, preferably a gymnasium or multi-purpose room

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## Artist Bio: Jane Gotch

Jane Gotch has been teaching movement to children since the age of 10. She has taught ballet, modern, tap, jazz, and creative movement to children of all ages locally and in Omaha, NE, Philadelphia, and the New York area.

She is also a certified trainer and pre-trainer of the **GYROTONIC®** and **GYROKINESIS®** system, which is an exercise and body rehabilitation system developed by a dancer which combines aspects of dance, tai

chi, yoga, martial arts, and swimming. She has taught this system around the world including New York, California, Israel, India, and now Kansas City.

She holds a BFA with honors in dance performance from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. Jane's strength as a teacher is her ability, through movement, to ignite in her students, young and old, a confidence in themselves and their creativity which they can carry into all aspects of their life.



Jane Gotch

## Vocabulary

**Body shapes:** the spatial contour the body makes, such as curved, angular, twisted, or straight

**Choreograph:** the work or skill of planning dance movement to accompany music

**Energy:** an element of dance; the force and quality of movement defined by the degree of impetus and effort

**Motif:** an important and sometimes recurring theme or idea in

a work of literature

**Movement phrase:** dance sequences that have a sense of completion

**Space Bubble:** the kinesphere that one occupies; it includes all levels, planes, and directions both near and far from the body's center

**Spatial concept:** one's relationship to the space around them

## Post-Workshop Activities

1. Practice the movements learned in the workshop. Try to create new shapes inspired by the characters in the story.
2. Move the shapes through space using different locomotors. Try moving slowly or quickly.
3. Practice progressive relaxation which is the sequential tightening and releasing of muscles.

## List of Resources

### BOOKS

Anansi the Spider: A Tale from the Ashanti (An Owlet Book)  
Henry Holt & Company, Inc., March 1987  
ISBN: 0805003118

Ashanti to Zulu: African Traditions  
by Margaret W. Musgrove, Leo Dillon (Illustrator), Diane Dillon (Illustrator)  
Puffin, July 1992  
ISBN: 0140546049

Talk, Talk: An Ashanti Legend (Legends of the World)  
by Deborah M. Newton Chocolate, Dave Albers (Illustrator), Troll Assoc (Lib.) January 1993  
ISBN: 0816728178

