

Unit Overview: Parent Guide

Folktales - Cajun and Other Cultural Tales, Grade 3

What is the goal of this unit?

Your child will read fiction and nonfiction texts to learn how storytelling can be entertaining as well educational. She'll learn about Louisiana history and culture and also about character and theme development. Your child will write stories based on information they learn about Louisiana.

What topics and skills is your third grader learning in this unit?

- Louisiana history
- Louisiana culture
- Folktales
- Character development
- Theme development
- Narrative writing
- Opinion writing

What tasks will your child engage in to help them consider the topics and skills of this unit?

- **Culminating Writing Task:** Your child will bring together all her learning near the end of the unit by writing an essay that answers the question: *Is a rabbit a good animal to play the role of a trickster?*
- **Extension Task:** Your child will extend her learning by writing her own trickster tale that incorporates elements of Louisiana culture.

Your child will read these texts and watch these videos:

Text Title	Author/Source	How it is used in the Unit
<i>Lapin Plays Possum: Trickster Tales From the Louisiana Bayou</i>	Sharon Arms Doucet	Main text of the unit/Read Aloud
<i>Dear Peter Rabbit</i>	Alma Flor Ada	Read Aloud
<i>Tops and Bottoms</i>	Janet Stevens	Student
<i>Writer's Toolbox: Learn</i>	Nancy Loewen	Read Aloud

<i>How to Write Letters, Fairy Tales, Scary Stories, Journals, Poems, and Reports</i>		
<i>The Classic Tales of Brer Rabbit</i>	Don Daily and Joel Chandler Harris	Student
<i>The Tale of Peter Rabbit</i>	Beatrix Potter	Student
"The Cajun Experience" - Video	Jacob Gavin for The History Channel	Read Aloud

Ideas for discussing folktales

- What did you learn about Cajun culture?
- What does "Cajun" mean?
- How are folktales different from other stories?
- What was the most important part of each story? How did you know?
- What is a trickster rabbit?
- How is a trickster rabbit the same or different from a real rabbit?
- Is the rabbit a good animal to play the role of a trickster?

Want to deepen your and your child's knowledge on the topic being studied?

Here is a suggested book list:

- *Anansi the Spider* by Gerald McDermott
- *Coyote: A Trickster Tale* by Sam Besson
- *How the Stars Fell Into the Sky* by Jerrie Oughton
- *Jabuti The Tortoise: A Trickster Tale From the Amazon* by Gerald McDermott
- *Love And Roast Chicken: A Trickster Tale From the Andes Mountains* by Barbara Knutson
- *The Monkey And The Crocodile: A Jakata Tale From India* by Paul Galdone
- *Papagayo: The Mischief Maker* by Gerald McDermott
- *The Pot Of Wisdom: Ananse Stories* by Adwoa Badoe
- *Raven: A Trickster Tale From the Pacific Northwest* by Gerald McDermott
- *Trickster* by Matt Dembicki

**Note: If you have folktales from your own culture, you can share those stories with your child!*

What does independent reading look like at home?

Independent reading gives your child the opportunity to read and interact with books

that are on her reading level and that address topics that she chooses. Supporting independent reading at home helps build your child's confidence with reading, her reading stamina and reading achievement, and will help her do better in school.

Here are some ways you can encourage independent reading at home:

- Let your child pick out books that she finds interesting
- Prioritize reading. Protect time every day for reading. Before bedtime is a great time to read!
- Read together
- Read aloud
- Discuss what you're reading. Ask questions like:
 - What was that book about?
 - What did you like about it?
 - What didn't you like about it?
 - What did you learn?
 - What questions do you have about what you read?
 - What didn't you understand about what you read?
 - What do you want to learn more about after reading the book?
 - How does this book connect to other books you've read?