



# Folktales

## **Adventures in Reading:**

*Family Literacy Bags from Reading Rockets*

### **Contents:**

- Two books – one fiction, one nonfiction
- Parent information sheet
- Three activity Sheets
- Bookmark
- Parent survey



## for teachers and librarians

*This Reading Rockets Activity Packet is designed to support reading activities at home. We've chosen a folktale and nonfiction appropriate for a first grade listening level, and included related activities to encourage some hands-on fun and learning. Just assemble the packet in a two-gallon zip top bag, and send home with your students.*

Reading Rockets carefully chose books that are widely available and appealing to young readers. The titles selected should be available in your school library. If the two featured titles are not available, or you prefer another title, feel free to substitute books related to the theme. You'll find a list of alternative titles included in the bookmark.

The Folktale Activity Packet pairs a folktale that explains something about nature with a nonfiction book. The featured books for the Folktale Activity Packet are **Anansi the Spider: A Tale from the Ashanti** by Gerald McDermott and **The Moon Book** by Gail Gibbons. The **Anansi** story tells how the spider's sons rescue him from danger, and how his reward for them ends up becoming the moon. **The Moon Book** describes the moon's movement and phases, eclipses, exploration, and beliefs about it.

The parent information sheet includes an introductory note that you can personalize, instructions about how to use the packet, and tips for sharing fiction and non-fiction books with children.

The activities are designed to encourage further exploration and learning at home:

- >> the Creativity Activity is a hands-on craft project
- >> the Imagination Activity encourages imaginative play, writing, or drawing
- >> the Get Real Activity focuses on real-world experiences for parent and child
- >> The bookmark lists both the featured titles and additional titles

### Putting it all together

Print out copies of the parent information sheet, the activities, the survey, and a master for making bookmarks. Cut the bookmark page into strips. You may wish to print the activity pages and bookmark on card stock for durability.

Into a two-gallon zip top bag, place:

- >> two books – one fiction and one nonfiction
- >> parent information sheet
- >> three themed activity pages
- >> bookmark
- >> survey for parents

Send the packet home with your student. Encourage parents to keep the parent information sheet, the activities, and bookmark, and return the books and survey to you by the date you specify.

Let Reading Rockets know what you think of the family activity packets by e-mailing us through our website: [www.readingrockets.org/sitecontact](http://www.readingrockets.org/sitecontact). Click on "Family Literacy Bags."

## ADVENTURES IN READING!

# Welcome

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

Exploring new ideas and enjoying books with you sends a powerful message to your child: Reading and learning are fun, and happen everywhere – not just at school. This Reading Rockets Activity Packet about \_\_\_\_\_ was created to help you and your child enjoy reading and learning together.

Start your learning adventure by reading some books with your child about this popular topic. Then explore the topic with three activities. Enclosed you'll find what you need:

- >> two books to share with your child
- >> three related activities
- >> bookmark with a list of other books to extend the fun, if you wish
- >> short survey to tell me if you enjoyed using the packet

The simple steps on the back explain how to use the packet.

The bookmark, this parent information sheet, and the activities are yours to keep.

When you've finished with the materials, please return the books and the completed survey to school in your child's backpack. Please return the Reading Rockets Activity Packet by \_\_\_\_\_.

I hope you'll enjoy reading and learning together!

***To learn more about children's books, reading with your child, and information about helping kids become confident readers, please visit [www.ReadingRockets.org](http://www.ReadingRockets.org)***

# ADVENTURES IN READING!

## Instructions

### *How to use your Reading Rockets Activity Packet*

#### **Getting ready**

1. Before you read the books to your child, be sure to read them yourself. One book is fiction – a “make-believe” story. The other book is nonfiction, or informational and true. Reading the books first will give you the “inside scoop” to the twists and turns of the story, the interesting information inside, and the parts of the books that will appeal most to your child.

2. Next, read the three activities to see which of them you think your child will enjoy most, and which one you have the time and materials on-hand to do right away. Chances are, after you read one (or both) of the books with your child, he or she may want to do an activity right away.

#### **Start the fun**

3. When you know you’ll have at least enough time to read and talk about one of the books, grab your child and a book, and dive right in. Start with the fiction selection. Talk about the cover of the book with your child – can he guess what it is about? Have they ever read a book by the same author or illustrator or about the same topic?

Read the book to your child. Take time to ask and answer questions, explore the pictures, and wonder what will happen next. Read it again, if your child asks you to. Then, try the nonfiction book or one of the activities.

4. When you read the nonfiction book, take a moment to explain to your child the difference between the two types of books. The first book told a made-up, make-believe story, and a nonfiction book is about real people, places, and things. The information in nonfiction books can answer lots of questions.

5. Feel free to pick and choose from the activities, or change them to suit your child’s interests. Read the books again over the next few days and try different activities. Most important: have fun!

#### **When you’re done...**

6. Keep the bookmark, the activities, and this page. Complete the survey and return it with the books to your child’s school.

Make the most of the excitement the books create, and try some hands-on learning or make-believe fun. Exploring new ideas alongside you lets your child see you learning – and reading – too, and gives your child personal experiences to support her growing knowledge.

#### **Tips for reading nonfiction books with kids:**

- >> *Wonder out loud. As you are reading, or afterward, talk about facts you find interesting or questions you have.*
- >> *Show your child how to use the table of contents, section headings, index, and word list (glossary) to find the answer to a specific question.*
- >> *Don’t be afraid to jump around, reading pages that especially interest your child. You don’t have to read a nonfiction book straight through.*

#### **Tips for reading fiction books with kids:**

- >> *Take your time and talk about the story with your child. Ask your child questions.*
- >> *Explore the pictures with your child.*
- >> *Read with expression. Change your voice or how fast you read to create excitement. Ham it up!*
- >> *You don’t need to read every word. Keeping your child interested is the goal.*



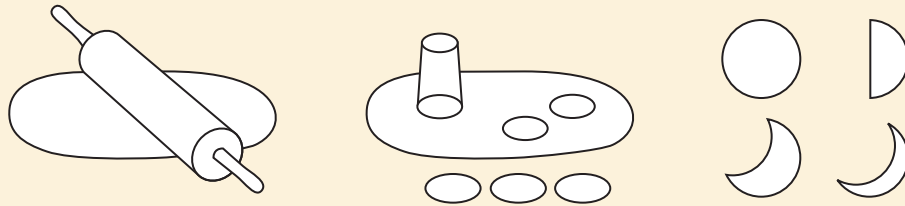
# the changing moon

*Get a feel for the phases of the moon by making them out of playdough or cookie dough*

## Supplies

- >> playdough (store bought or home made) or sugar cookie dough (store-bought or home-made)
- >> rolling pin or wine or soda bottle
- >> round cookie cutter or glass
- >> knife

## Instructions



1. Using the rolling pin or bottle, roll out the dough to about 1/4-inch thick
2. Cut four circles with the cookie cutter or glass
3. Leave one circle whole – that is your full moon
4. Using the knife, cut one circle in half – that is your half moon
5. Using the cookie cutter or glass, cut a crescent out of the side of each of the last two circles – they will be your two crescent and gibbous moons
6. Repeat the process as many times as you like
7. If you are using cookie dough, decorate your moons however you like and bake according to the recipe or package

When your moon shapes are ready, work with your child to line your moons up in order of the phases of the moon. Start with an empty space for your new moon, then crescent, half, gibbous, full, gibbous, half, crescent.

Talk with your child about how the earth's shadow makes the shape of the moon that we can see and how the phases of the moon are just parts of a circle.

**Variation** *If you don't have a rolling pin or bottle, you can use store bought pie crust or cheese slices. You can also use paper and scissors – just trace around a glass to make the circles.*

### **Homemade playdough recipe**

1/4 cup salt  
1 cup flour  
1/4 cup water

Mix flour and salt together in a bowl. Add water and knead until it is the consistency of dough. Add more water if necessary. Store in a closed plastic bag or container in the refrigerator.



# study the moon

*See for yourself what is fact and fiction. Become a junior astronomer and study the moon!*

## **Follow the phases of the moon**

Look in your newspaper or on the Internet for the current phase of the moon. Watch the night sky every few nights and watch the moon “wax and wane.”

The Stardate website shows the phases of the moon: <http://stardate.org/nightsky/moon/>

Talk about how the moon changes shape and why – shadows, rotation of the earth, and position of the sun. (Your nonfiction book will explain these concepts.)

Talk about how much light is shed by the moon – how much can you see at night when the moon is full? How much when it is a crescent? And what about when there’s a “new moon?”

## **Look for the moon in the daytime!**

Did you ever notice the moon in the daytime sky? It’s visible several days a month, especially in the third quarter of the phase. Look for it in the morning in the western sky.

This physics website from the University of California at Los Angeles explains when and how to find the moon in the daytime sky:  
[www.physics.ucla.edu/~huffman/daymn.html](http://www.physics.ucla.edu/~huffman/daymn.html)

## **The moon is just the beginning...**

Explore earth and space with these NASA websites:

NASA’s website for K-4 students: [www.nasa.gov/audience/forstudents/k-4/index.html](http://www.nasa.gov/audience/forstudents/k-4/index.html)

NASA’s Kid’s Club: <http://www.nasa.gov/audience/forkids/kidsclub/flash/index.html>

NASA’s Space Place: <http://spaceplace.nasa.gov/en/kids/>



# create your own folktale

*Folktales from all over the world often explain something about nature – like why the moon is in the sky. Raven by Gerald McDermott explains where the sun comes from. The Legend of the Blue Bonnet by Tomie dePaola explains where the blue bonnet flower comes from.*

### **Encourage your child to create their own story to explain something about nature**

Get him started by asking what part of nature interests him.

- >> What makes a rainbows?
- >> Why do volcanoes erupt?
- >> Who do flowers lean toward the sun?
- >> Why does a tiger (or your cat) have stripes?
- >> ...or anything else that interests your child

Your child can tell the story, write the story, or draw the story. Ask your child to tell you about the story he created and the choices he made about the characters, the place it happens, and any details, twists, or surprises he included.

### **Encourage your child to make a picture in the style of the illustration of the folktale you read**

A picture is worth a thousand words! The folktales featured in the Reading Rockets Family Activity Packet have beautiful illustrations.

Take some time to look at and talk about the illustrations in the folktale. Look for notes about the illustrations at the beginning or end of the book. Ask your child what materials does he think the illustrator used? How would he make a picture in that same style?

When he has finished his artwork, ask how he liked working in the artist's style and about the details of his picture.

### **Or encourage your child to retell the folktale with their own illustrations**

Re-read the folktale to your child while she listens with her eyes closed. Ask her to imagine the pictures in her head as you read the story to her. Then encourage her make her own illustrations with her favorite materials.

When she is finished, have her tell you about her creation. What choices did she make? How is the story different with her illustrations?





# FOLKTALES



## Featured titles

### Folktales

*Anansi the Spider: A Tale from the Ashanti* by Gerald McDermott

### Nonfiction

*The Moon Book* by Gail Gibbons

### Additional folktales

*Grandfather Twilight* by Barbara Berger

*Moon Rope* by Lois Ehlert

*Why The Sun and the Moon Live in the Sky* by Elphinstone Dayrell, illustrations by Blair Lent

### Additional nonfiction titles

*Me and My Place In Space* by Joan Sweeney, illustrated by Annette Cole

*The Moon* by Carmen Bredeson (Rookie Read-About-Science series)

*The Moon* by Jenny Tesar (Space Observer series)

*What the Moon is Like* by Franklyn M. Branley, illustrated by True Kelley (Let's-Read-and-Find-Out Science series)

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