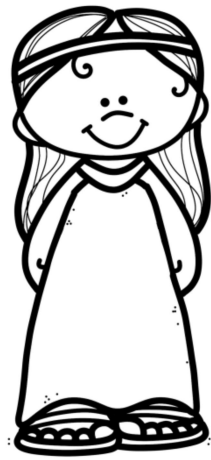


# Arachne the Spinner

Arachne learned how to weave from the nymphs who would leave their **groves** and fountains to come and watch her work. Arachne's weavings were not only beautiful, but watching her twirl the spindle with a skillful touch was a rare treat. One day Arachne boasted, "Let the goddess Minerva try to weave as well as I do. If she beats me, I will pay the **penalty**."



When Minerva heard of this, she was displeased. Assuming the form of an old woman, she went and gave Arachne some friendly advice. "I have had much experience, and I hope you will not be upset by my words. Challenge your fellow-**mortals** as you will, but do not compete with a goddess. In fact, you should ask for forgiveness for comparing yourself to her."

Arachne responded. "Keep your thoughts to yourself, old woman. I stand by what I said. I am not afraid of the goddess. Let her challenge me if she wishes."

Minerva threw off her cloak and transformed into herself. "I accept your challenge. You use one loom, and I will use the other. Let us see who is the best. The loser of the contest will never weave on a loom again."



# Comprehension

5. Which question does the reader know the answer to after reading *Arachne the Spinner*?
- a) Where did Arachne live?
  - b) How did Arachne learn to weave?
  - c) Who told Minerva that Arachne was boasting about weaving better than the gods?
  - d) How did Arachne feel about being a spider?



6. Based on the information provided in *Arachne the Spinner*, place a T for True and an F for False in front of the following statements.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Arachne was a talented weaver.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Minerva thought Arachne's weaving was inferior.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The nymphs enjoyed watching Arachne weave.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The story explains how spiders came to be.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Minerva punished Arachne.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The penalty for losing the contest was being transformed.



7. Which type of conflict is described in *Arachne the Spinner*?

- a) Person vs. Self
- b) Person vs. Person
- c) Person vs. Nature
- d) Person vs. Society

# Comprehension

1. The **main theme** of *Arachne the Spinner* is ---.
- a) The story explains how did the spider come to be.
  - b) There can be dangers in being too clever.
  - c) A person should try to be perfect.
  - d) Human pride is not tolerated.



2. The author of *Arachne the Spinner* most likely wrote the story to ---.
- a) to report information needed for making new decisions
  - b) to satisfy curiosity
  - c) to persuade others to weave
  - d) to teach a lesson with a moral-like story



3. Which event happened first?
- a) Arachne issued a challenge.
  - b) Minerva heard Arachne boast.
  - c) Minerva and Arachne wove tapestries with gods and goddesses.
  - d) The nymphs taught Arachne.



4. Write a "somebody wanted but so" statement to summarize a main event in *Arachne the Spinner*.

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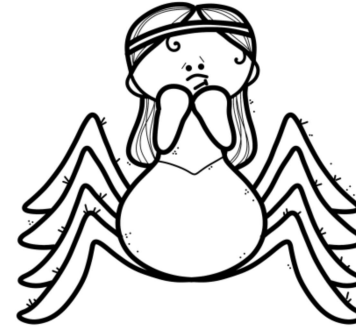
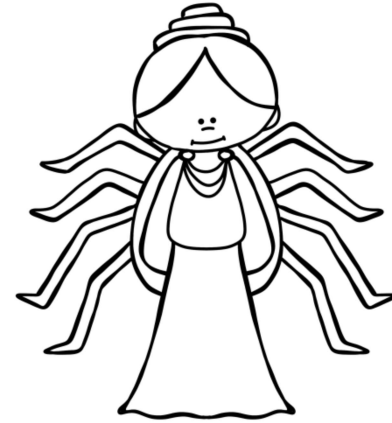
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Both wove scenes of the gods and goddesses. Minerva's weaving showed the gods as **arrogant** mortals. Arachne filled her canvas with scenes of the gods' **failings** and errors.



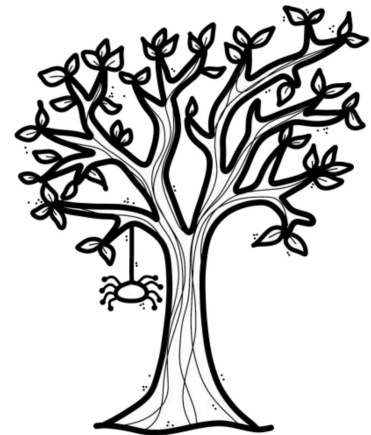
When Minerva saw Arachne's weaving she could not help but to admire its beauty, but she also felt insulted.

She struck the weaving with her shuttle, breaking it to pieces. She then touched the forehead of Arachne and made her feel her guilt. Arachne hid her face and wept. She cried, "Oh, how can I live with this shame."

Minerva pitied her. "Live, guilty woman," said she.

Minerva sprinkled Arachne with the juices of a buttercup. Immediately Arachne's hair came off. Next her form shrank up, and her head grew smaller.

Arachne continued to change until she was a spider. Minerva then said, "You will forever weave." Arachne ran up a tree and began weaving a beautiful web.



# Vocabulary

1. Write one definition for each word. Use context clues to determine which dictionary definition is best.

**grove** - \_\_\_\_\_

**penalty** - \_\_\_\_\_

**mortal** - \_\_\_\_\_

**arrogant** - \_\_\_\_\_

**failing** - \_\_\_\_\_

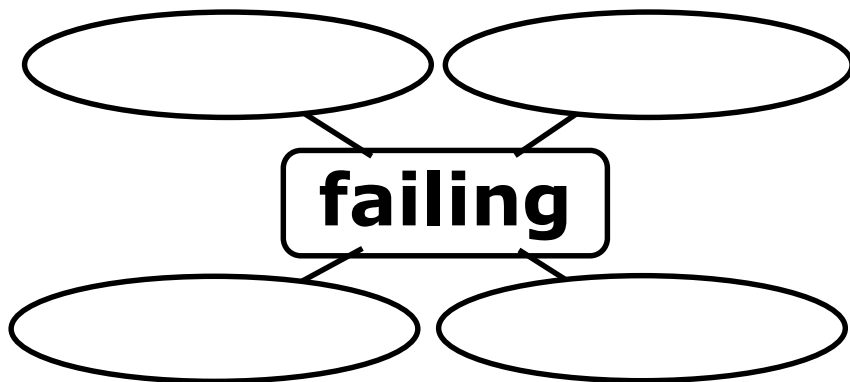


2. Circle six words in the box that are synonyms or closely related to the word **arrogant**.

conceited	big-headed	humble
lowly	meek	superior
proud	self-important	modest
haughty	shy	unassuming



3. Fill in the word web with synonyms of **failing**.



Read these definitions of **penalty**.

- a) punishment for breaking a rule or law
- b) a disadvantage or difficulty you experience
- c) a punishment or disadvantage given to a team or player for breaking a rule in a game

Determine which definition is used in each of the sentences below. Write a, b, or c in the blanks to show your answer.

- 4. \_\_\_\_\_ The basketball player was given a **penalty** for carrying.
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_ Going to jail is the **penalty** for robbery.
- 6. \_\_\_\_\_ Our team was given a **penalty** for an illegal move.
- 7. \_\_\_\_\_ He had to pay extra as a **penalty** for being late with his payment.
- 8. \_\_\_\_\_ Lack of privacy is one of the **penalties** you must pay for being famous.



9. Draw a **grove**.



10. Match the synonyms.

- |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| _____ grove    | a) big-headed  |
| _____ penalty  | b) orchard     |
| _____ mortal   | c) shortcoming |
| _____ arrogant | d) human       |
| _____ failing  | e) punishment  |