Summary
This Cherokee myth explains how the Cherokee (and the rest of us) got sun’s heat and light. The myth is presented here as a play, illustrated with a class acting it out.

Lesson Vocabulary
accomplish  chorus  
commanding  disappeared  
misfortune  perimeter  
quest

Introduce the Book
Discuss the Title and Author  Discuss the title and author of Grandmother Spider Steals the Sun. Invite students to speculate about the illustration. Ask: Where do you think this tale is taking place? What makes you think so?

Build Background  Remind students that people who lived long ago in cultures around the world made up stories, or myths, to explain to themselves aspects of nature before anyone knew enough science to understand the real reasons.

Preview/Use Text Features  Have students preview the book by paging through it and looking at the illustrations. Ask: How are pages 3 and 24 different from the rest of the book? How is most of the book presented? Is most of the book fiction or nonfiction? What makes you think as you do?

Make sure all students understand that a play is a story presented in a different form. Help them realize that movies and television shows are plays, or stories acted out.

Read the Book
Set Purpose  Recall with students that they should use what they learned as they previewed the book to help them set a purpose for reading. Remind them that their purpose might change as they read and discover more about the book.

Strategy Support: Inferring  Recall with students that good readers “read between the lines” to figure out what a myth is trying to explain and why it has the kinds of characters it does. Tell students that they can combine what they read with what they already know to draw a conclusion, but then they can go further to infer a lesson or to interpret what they have read.

Comprehension Questions
Page 3  Are the Cherokee Native Americans? What makes you think so? (Yes. They lived in what is now the southeast part of the United States.)

Pages 4–5  What clues on these pages show that this is a play? (It lists characters, settings, and staging directions as well as specific directions and dialogue for Scene 1.) What does the illustration show? (It shows a class of third-graders putting on the story as a play.)

Pages 4–18  What do Possum, Fox, Buzzard, and Grandmother Spider try to do? (They all try to bring some of the sun to the people so they don’t have to always be in the dark.)

Page 20  Why was Grandmother Spider successful even though the others had failed? (She was more clever. She was small enough not to be noticed, and she figured out that she should take a pot to protect herself from the heat and light of the piece of sun she wanted to get.)
REVISIT THE BOOK

READER RESPONSE
1. Students should name the three main characters: Possum, who tried to carry the sun in his tail but burned the fur from it; Buzzard, who tried to carry the piece of sun on his head but burned the feathers from it; Grandmother Spider, who successfully took some sun in a pot she made to protect herself from it.

2. Grandmother Spider was successful because she was small enough not to be seen and smart enough to make a pot to carry the sun so she wouldn’t be burned by it.

3. In disappeared, the prefix is dis- and the base word is appear (the -ed is an inflectional ending). The base word appear is contradicted by the prefix dis-, which means “opposite.” In misfortune, the prefix is mis- and the base fortune. The meaning of fortune is reversed by the meaning of the prefix, which also is “opposite.”

4. Cherokee, like most peoples long ago, told myths to try to explain nature. At the time, they did not know the scientific explanations for things.

EXTEND UNDERSTANDING Point out to students that many Native American tribal peoples went through a “Trail of Tears” as they were forced to move far from their homes and to give up their territories.

RESPONSE OPTIONS

DRAMA Encourage students to put on the play. Have small teams work together to do the writing, plan the props and costumes, and so on. All students in the class can participate in the acting, as those who are not named characters can be in the chorus or act as people or wasps. You may want to encourage students to put on the play for another class, perhaps of younger students.

SCIENCE CONNECTION
Provide students with books and other resources to find out about the sun, including how Earth’s orbit brings day and night. Encourage them to report their findings and compare the facts to the getting of sunlight as portrayed in the myth.

Skill Work

TEACH/REVIEW VOCABULARY
Work with students to use each vocabulary word in an oral sentence. Encourage them to try to include context clues to the meaning of each word.

TARGET SKILL AND STRATEGY
CHARACTERS, SETTING, PLOT Remind students that characters are the people or animals in a story, setting is its time and place, and plot is what happens. Point out that these are easy to discover in a play, because the author usually specifically names the characters, tells the setting, and describes the action.

INFERRING In discussion, have students infer what kinds of animals lived in the area where the Cherokee did. Ask them to explain why they think as they do.

ADDITIONAL SKILL INSTRUCTION
MAIN IDEA Remind students that the main idea of a story is what the whole story is about. Have them discuss whether the title of this myth tells its main idea.
Characters, Setting, Plot

- **Characters** are the people or animals a story is about.
- **Setting** is where and when a story takes place.
- **Plot** is what happens in a story: the beginning, the middle, and the end.

**Directions**  Answer the questions that follow about *Grandmother Spider Steals the Sun*.

1. Some characters in a story are main characters because most of the action tells about them. Who do you think are the main characters in the story?

2. Some characters are minor characters because they don’t have much to do with the action in the story or play. Who are the minor characters in the play?

3. What is the setting of the play? Tell where it takes place. When do you think it took place? Why?

4. Tell what happens in each part of the play.
   
   **Beginning:**

   **Middle:**

   **End:**
Vocabulary

Directions  Write the meaning of each vocabulary word. Use a dictionary if you need to. Then write a sentence that includes each word.

Check the Words You Know

accomplish  chorus  commanding
disappeared  misfortune  perimeter
quest

1. accomplish

2. chorus

3. commanding

4. disappeared

5. misfortune

6. perimeter

7. quest