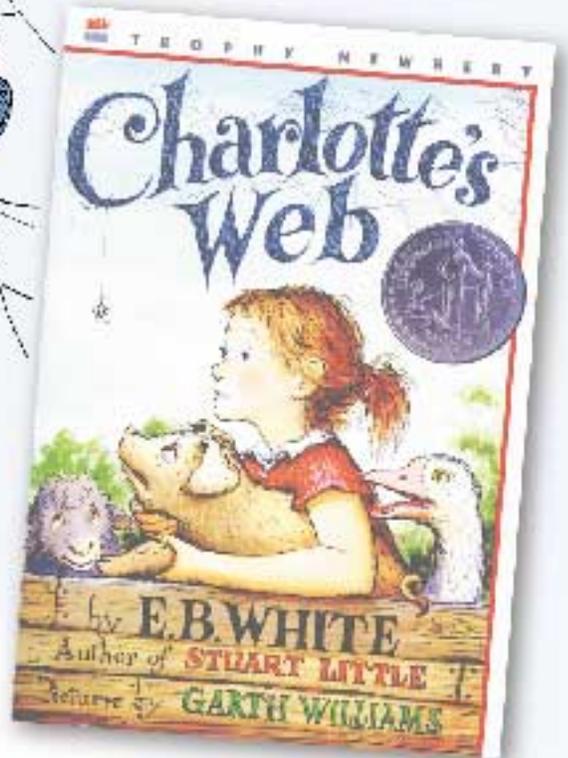


Charlotte's Web

By E. B. White
Illustrated by Garth Williams
HarperTrophy, 1980
184 pages • Grades 2-6
ISBN 0-06-440055-7

"Some pig!" These words that Charlotte spins into her web to describe Wilbur cause plenty of excitement, and, ultimately, help save his life. First published in 1952, this heartwarming classic about a likable pig and his loyal spider friend shows readers that true friendships last forever. This Newbery Honor book portrays the relationship of these two extraordinary creatures. It also depicts life and death, the passage of time, and the wonders of nature with sensitivity and humor.



by Karen Lowther, Farmer Lane Elementary, Pflugerville, TX

Before Reading the Book: A spider that spells? A rat with an attitude? Sure—with the help of his imagination and his experiences on a farm, E. B. White created these unique animals. Set the stage for reading about White's fanciful farm critters with this speaking activity. Tell students that during one vacation in Maine, White watched a spider spin an egg sac. White was so fascinated by the spider (and anxious to see the eggs hatch) that he carefully put the spider and its sac in a box and took them to his New York home. The eggs hatched a short time later on his dresser. This memorable experience inspired White to create Charlotte, the clever spider in *Charlotte's Web*.

Next have youngsters brainstorm other farm animals that White might have seen. Write each type of animal on a separate slip of paper (prepare duplicates as necessary so that there are at least as many slips as students). Fold each slip and place it in a container.

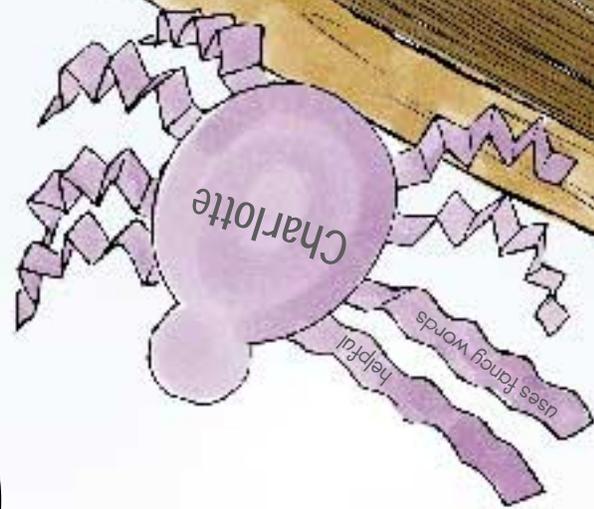
To begin the activity, each student, in turn, takes a slip from the container and silently thinks about what the animal might say if it could speak. Then, without revealing its identity, the student speaks to the class from the animal's point of view and challenges his classmates to name the animal. The first classmate to correctly identify it takes the next turn (if the classmate has already taken a turn, ask him to choose another student). Now that's a speaking activity to crow about!

More Books by E. B. White

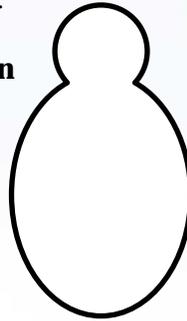
The Trumpet of the Swan • Illustrated by Edward Frascino • HarperTrophy, 1970 • 210 pages • ISBN 0-06-440048-4
Stuart Little • Illustrated by Garth Williams • HarperTrophy, 1973 • 131 pages • ISBN 0-06-440056-5

After Reading Chapter 5: Challenge students to reflect on Wilbur's first impressions of Charlotte with this "spider-ific" display idea. Make several spider body templates (or enlarge copies of the pattern shown). To create a spider, each youngster uses a template to make two construction paper spider cutouts. She glues construction paper strips onto one cutout as shown. The youngster glues her second cutout atop the first, sandwiching the strips between the two body pieces; then she labels it "Charlotte." On each leg, she writes a word or phrase that describes Charlotte from Wilbur's point of view. Then she accordion-folds each leg.

Showcase students' completed spiders on a classroom wall. Review the display periodically as students continue the book. Discuss whether Wilbur's first impressions are supported by later story events.



Spider Pattern



After Reading Chapter 11: There's no doubt about it—Charlotte is an extraordinary creature. In fact, *all* spiders are pretty amazing. Use this fact-filled lotto game to teach your students about these eight-legged wonders. First ask students to research spiders and to share what they learn. *Web Weavers and Other Spiders* by Bobbie D. Kalman (Crabtree Publishing Company, 1996; 32 pages; ISBN 0-86505-732-X) and *Spiders* by Gail Gibbons (Holiday House, 1994; 32 pages; ISBN 0-8234-1081-1) are wonderful resources.

Next copy each of the questions shown on a separate slip of paper and place the slips in a container. Give each student 12 game markers and a copy of page 15. Have him cut out the boxes at the bottom of his sheet and glue them onto his board in random order.

To play one round, take a strip from the container and read the question aloud. Have each youngster find the answer on his board and place a marker on it. Continue the game in a like manner until one student has placed a game marker on each space in one horizontal row. After verifying his answers, declare him the winner. Return the slips to the container and have students clear their boards. Then invite the winner to read the questions for the next round.

Spider Lotto Questions

- What kind of spider was Charlotte? *Aranea cavatica*
- What are baby spiders called? *spiderlings*
- What is it called when spiders change color to protect themselves? *camouflage*
- What is the average number of eggs that a spider lays at one time? *100*
- How are spiders helpful to people? *They eat harmful insects.*
- How do spiders stun or kill their prey? *They poison their prey.*
- How many eyes do most spiders have? *eight*
- What is the fastest way for spiderlings to travel? *ballooning*
- What is the biggest type of spider? *tarantula*
- For how many years do most spiders live? *one*
- What are the two main body parts of a spider? *cephalothorax and abdomen*
- What type of animal is a spider? *arachnid*



After Reading Chapter 15: Like the threads in a spiderweb, qualities such as loyalty and trust strengthen Charlotte and Wilbur's relationship. Invite each student to create a booklet showcasing the friendship qualities that *she* values.

To make a front cover, each youngster lightly tapes a nine-inch black construction paper circle to the inside of an aluminum pie pan. She dribbles a small amount of white tempera paint in the center of the paper and then drops in a marble. The student rolls the marble through the paint by tilting the pan until she has achieved a desired web design. She removes the marble and the paper to allow her painting to dry.

Next, each youngster places her cover atop a supply of white paper and a sheet of black construction paper, staples the stack together, and then trims the attached paper to match the outline of the front cover. She adds a title as shown. The youngster labels each booklet page with a different friendship quality, writes an explanation, and illustrates the page.

Weaving a Friendship

Kindness

My friends do kind things like share their games.



After Finishing the Book: Challenge students to describe how White conveyed the passage of time with this eye-catching writing project. Ask each student to summarize on a sheet of writing paper the details that reflect the changing of the seasons, such as the school year ending and the tree leaves changing color. Have him mount his work onto colored construction paper. Then give each student the following materials and directions to make a seasonal pinwheel. Provide assistance as needed. Display each youngster's writing and pinwheel on a bulletin board titled "Seasons of Change."

Materials for each student:

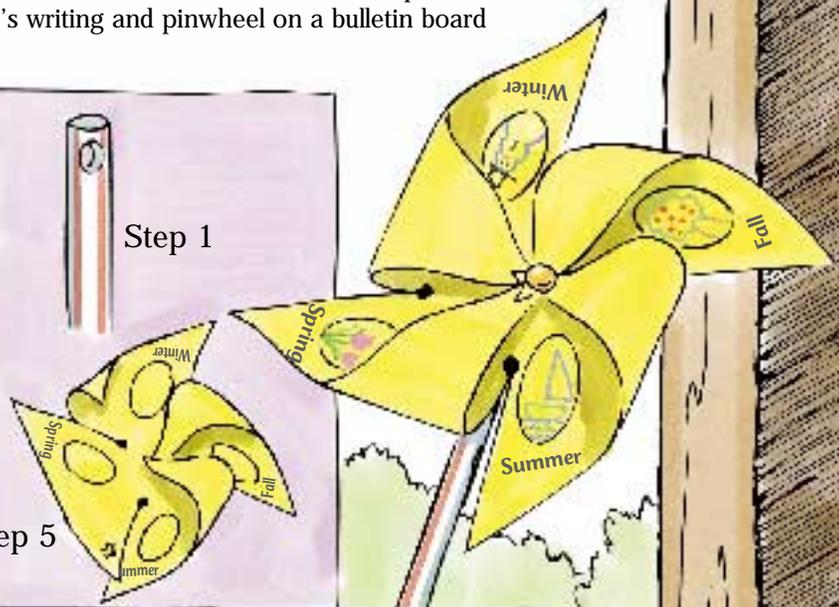
- 1 colored construction paper copy of page 16
- 1 brad
- 1 unjointed straw
- scissors
- markers or crayons
- access to a hole puncher

Directions for each student:

1. Punch a hole near the top of the straw. Put it aside.
2. Cut out the square on the bold lines.
3. Use crayons or markers to decorate it as desired (see the sample).
4. Cut along the dotted lines to each •.
5. Bring each point marked with a ☆ to the center, overlapping the points slightly as shown.
6. Carefully poke the brad through the points, then through the straw. Open the brad to secure it to the straw.

Step 1

Step 5



Wilbur was born in the spring. He went wading with Fern. In the summer, Fern was on vacation, so she visited the barn a lot. When fall came, Fern went back to school and Charlotte got ready to lay eggs. Fern became friends with Henry. The days got shorter. When winter came, Wilbur saw snow for the first time.

Name _____

Spider Lotto



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They eat harmful insects.	arachnid	They poison their prey.	ballooning
tarantula	one	<i>Aranea cavatica</i>	100
cephalothorax and abdomen	eight	spiderlings	camouflage

Pattern

Use with "After Finishing the Book" on page 14.

