

# A Gift From the Gods?

## Lesson 3.1 Worksheet

"Arachne" is one of the tales in *Metamorphoses* by Ovid, a Roman poet who was born in 43 BCE. Although Ovid was Roman, not Greek, he and many other writers looked to the Greeks for inspiration. Many Roman myths use the same characters as Greek myths, but they give the gods and goddesses new names. For instance, in "Arachne," Ovid refers to Minerva—that's the Roman name for Athena (the goddess of wisdom, arts, and crafts).

A British poet named Ted Hughes, who was born in the 20th century, retold some of the tales from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in a book he titled *Tales from Ovid*. That's where the version of "Arachne" for this lesson comes from.



The tales in *Metamorphoses* are all about, as the title suggests, "metamorphosis." This is a word used to describe big changes. For example, it's used to describe the process by which tadpoles turn into frogs. So, you know if you're reading something from the *Metamorphoses*, there will be a big change or transformation in at least one of the characters.

**Read "Arachne" in Amplify book pgs 442-444, lines 1-66.**

1. Select the line that mentions the skill that made Arachne famous.
  - a. "Minerva, goddess of weavers,
  - b. Had heard too much of Arachne.
  - c. She had heard
  - d. That the weaving of Arachne
  - e. Equalled her own, or surpassed it."
  
2. Minerva dresses like an old woman and tells Arachne to be \_\_\_\_\_.
  
3. The poem says that Arachne "reared like a cobra" (52) when the old woman (who is Minerva) gives her advice. Why does the writer compare Arachne to a venomous snake?
 

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4. Arachne tells the old woman (who is really Minerva) that she makes up her own mind. Based on what you have read so far, how do you think Minerva will react to Arachne's response? Give a reason for your answer.
 

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5. Arachne and Minerva disagree about why Arachne has great weaving skills. Work with your partner to identify Arachne's and Minerva's arguments. Record text evidence, words or sentences, that show you how and why your character feels this way.

Arguments for Arachne	Arguments for Minerva
<i>Arachne believes she was born with her skills.</i>	<i>Minerva believes that her skills were gifts from the gods and goddesses.</i>

6. Now that I have analyzed the arguments made by Minerva and Arachne, I think:
- Minerva is right—Arachne should praise Minerva for her talent at weaving.
  - Arachne is right—it's her talent, and she should feel proud that she is the best weaver.

7. Connect each piece of evidence with the claim that it best supports.

"Leave it to her to boast of you, if she wants to, / And ask her to forgive you / For your reckless remarks / Against her. / She will hear and she will be merciful." (46-50)

Minerva tries to give Arachne a chance.

"Arachne turned from her loom. / She reared like a cobra, scowling, / And came near to striking the old woman, / Her eyes hard with fury." (51-54)

Arachne acts rudely toward Minerva from the start.