

IROHIN



SPRING



2003

TAKING AFRICA TO THE CLASSROOM

A Publication of the Center for African Studies

 University of Florida 

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The Center for African Studies
University of Florida

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The Center for African Studies

Outreach Program at the University of Florida

The Center is partially funded under Title VI of the federal Higher Education Act as a National Resource Center on Africa. One of 12 resource centers, Florida's is the only Center located in the southeastern United States. The Center directs, develops, and coordinates interdisciplinary instruction, research, and outreach on Africa.

The Outreach Program includes a variety of activities whose objective is to improve the teaching of Africa in primary and secondary schools, colleges, universities and local communities. Following are some of the regular activities which fall under the Outreach Program.

Teachers' Workshops. The Center offers in-service workshops for K-12 teachers about instruction on Africa throughout the school year.

Summer Institutes. Each summer, the Center holds teaching institutes for K-12 teachers.

Publications. The Center publishes and distributes teaching resources including *Irohin*. In addition, the Center has published a monograph entitled *Lesson Plans on African History and Geography: A Teaching Resource*.

Library. Teachers may borrow videotapes and books from the Outreach office.

Community and School Presentations. Faculty and graduate students make presentations on Africa to local communities and schools.

Research Affiliate Program. Two one-month appointments are provided each summer. The program enables African specialists at institutions which do not have adequate resources for African-related research to increase their expertise on Africa through contact with other Africanists. They also have access to Africa-related resources at the University of Florida libraries.



- ◆ *One of the main goals of the Center is to teach African culture. Students and teachers participate in learning and educating about Africa by displaying traditional African clothing and performing numerous fun activities. In this picture, Rose Smouse, an instructor of Xhosa at the University of Florida, is teaching a group of elementary students about South Africa.*

Editor's Note

Each summer, the Center for African Studies at the University of Florida hosts a K-12 teachers' institute. The objective of the institute is to help teachers increase their knowledge about Africa and develop lesson plans to use in their classrooms. The creative lesson plans in this issue of *Irohin* were written by participants in the 2002 institute. Please feel free to use these materials in your teaching and share them with other teachers. Write or call the Center for additional copies.

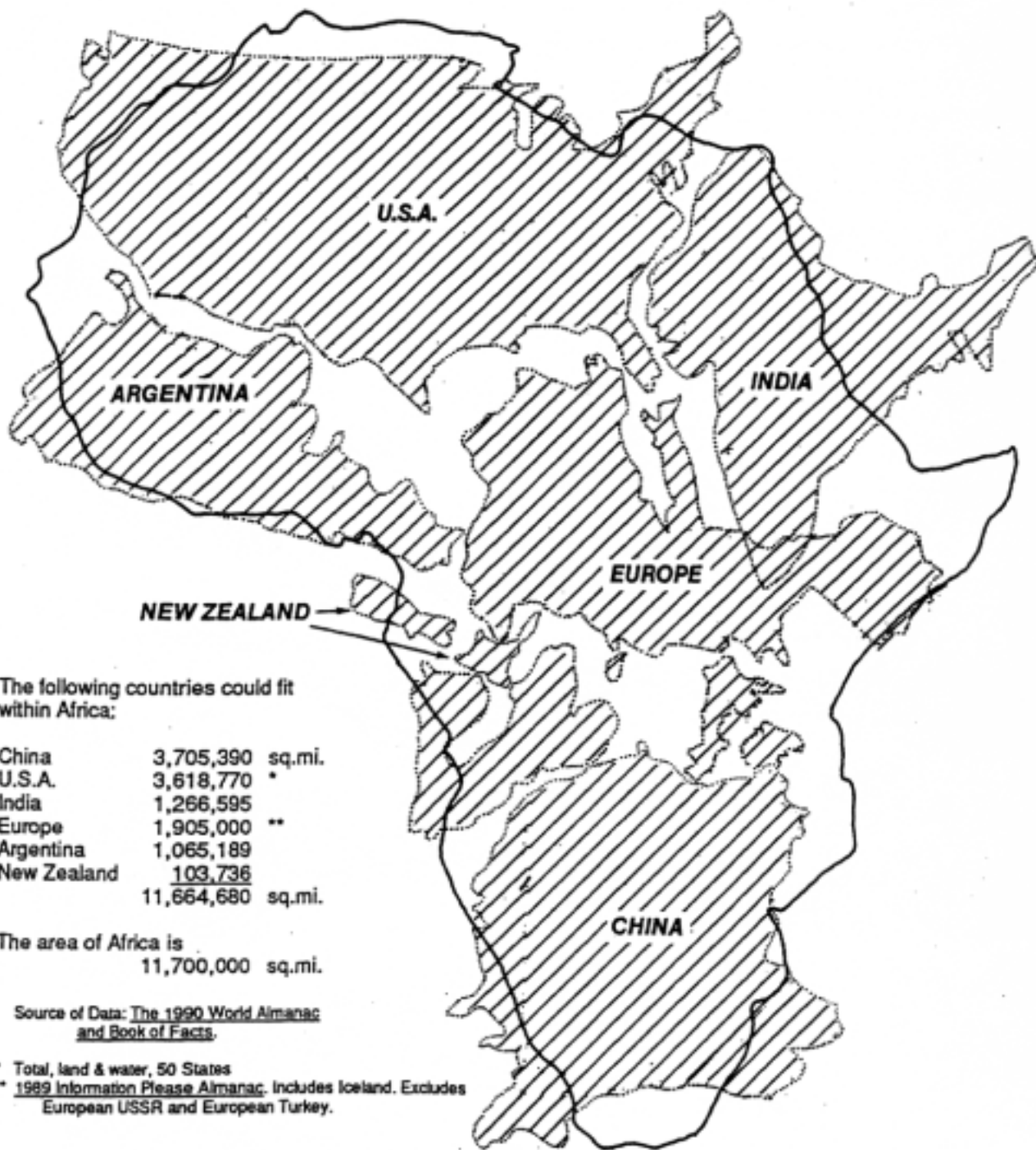
Sincerely,

Agnes Ngoma Leslie



- ◆ Back row from left: Dr. Agnes Ngoma Leslie (Outreach director) with K-12 teachers in the 2002 summer institute: Kathryn Zara-Smith, Claretta Jones, Peggy Ferguson, Jennifer Gilbert, Floretha Bryant, Elizabeth Frank, Brenda Whitfield, Chris Ott, Robert Morris. Kneeling: Andrew Wasserman, Christine Aurelio and Derek Hagler.

WOULD YOU BELIEVE?



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- ◆ *Alachua County educators discussing ways to integrate teaching Africa in their classrooms.*



Oral Historical Traditions of Africa

..... ✨ By Kathryn Zara-Smith ✨

“It is only the story that can continue beyond the war and the warrior. It is the story that outlives the sound of war-drums and the exploits of brave fighters. It is the story...that saves our progeny from blundering like blind beggars into the spikes of the cactus fence. The story is our escort; without which we are blind. Does the blind man own his escort? No, neither do we the story; rather it is the story that directs us.”

-Chinua Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah*

As African writer Chinua Achebe explains, the story does many things. It entertains, informs, and instructs. The stories of Africa are no exception. The oral arts of the continent of Africa are rich and varied, developing with the beginning of African cultures and remaining living traditions that continue to evolve and flourish today. In contrast to written literature, African ‘orature’ is orally composed and transmitted, and often created to be verbally and communally performed as an integral part of African dance and music (Agatucci 1). It serves to relate the historical background, traditions, or moral values that are important to a particular ethnic group or community.

The assumption is often made particularly in Western cultures that this orature often lacks structure, organization, and even accuracy. While it is true that many parts of Africa existed without written histories before the colonial period, this only serves to make the existing oral histories even more important in efforts to delve into the African past. In attempts to uncover this past, historians have discovered two distinct types of storytelling referred to as fixed or free texts, as well as three time periods into which these texts can be divided. It must be pointed out, however, that oral history “must be understood to represent only a limited reality. It must be carefully analyzed, always within the wider cultural context of the society producing it, to decode the message it contains” (Lanphear and Falola 74).



◆ Many of the oral traditions originated from the ancient Mali Empire (pictured here) of the Mande people. Sundjata Keita, the cultural hero and ancestor of the Mande peoples and founder of the great Mali Empire is well known for bringing the culture of oral traditions to the world.

Fixed Text

In African nations with either a highly centralized political system or powerful hereditary dynasties, such as the West African countries of Mali, Ghana, and Nigeria, oral traditions are usually centered around what are known as ‘fixed texts’. These texts, or historical narratives, are used to lend support to the ruling government and are recited verbatim. Praise-singers or storytellers, known as griots, are entrusted with the memorization, recitation, and passing on of cultural traditions from one generation to the next. These griots are seen as professionals within the community and in addition to the training they receive in the oral arts, they learn to play the kora, a stringed instrument used to accompany their recitations.

Fixed texts are referred to by historians as



◆ Griots are the gatekeepers of history and culture. They assume the roles of historians, praise-singers and musical entertainers. **Left:** Papa Susso, an internationally known traditional griot and musician is playing a kora. **Right:** The students of Duval Elementary School in Florida are learning from Papa Susso, who is illustrating the importance of the Mandinka kora in praise-singing.

‘functionalists’, meaning they serve a specific function within the community. In this case, their purpose is to reflect the ‘official version’ of a particular cultural event or tradition. Neither interaction nor interjection by the listeners is welcome, as it is at other times, nor does the personality of the storyteller come through in the recitation. An example of this type of narrative is the *Sundjiata Epic*, which traces the history of the first emperor of the Mali Empire (1230-1255) and is still recited by many West African griots.

Free Text

In contrast to the ‘fixed texts’, of the more centralized African nations are the ‘free texts’ found primarily in countries in which a structured government or hereditary rule are notably absent. Rather than being passed on by professional storytellers, as is the case with the fixed texts, free texts can be told by any member of the community, though usually it is the elder members who delight most in undertaking this task. Free texts are not recited verbatim, but instead usually change from

one telling to the next as a result of the emergence of the differing personalities of each storyteller.

Free texts are referred to by historians as being ‘structuralist’ due to the fact that they embody the “fundamental sociocultural concerns of the society” rather than serving a particular function, as does the fixed text. An example of the free text is an East African narrative that depicts a young man taking his livestock to the pasture and never returning it to his community. This is meant to illustrate the concern felt by the older members of the society over the departure of the younger members for more urban areas, the “pioneering role which younger men often played in the migrations of pastoral people” in addition to fostering a sense of communal unity (Lanphear and Falola 75). Under this heading of ‘free text’ are folktales, stories essential to the development and perpetuation of a system of ethics and morality within a particular community. The content of these folktales is usually closely linked to the physical geography of the region, incorporating various natural occurrences, plants and animals into the stories.

The Periods of African Oral History

African oral traditions, including both the fixed and free texts, can be divided into three historical periods: origins, middle, and recent. While there is no definite distinction between these three time periods, they can be roughly defined as follows:

1. Origins: The earliest time period in which the Earth was formed and the particular culture originated. Historians see this time period as the most difficult to interpret due to the fact that there are usually very few, if any, written records to confirm specific dates and locations. This has led to the argument over whether this lack of documentation has led to “faulty transmission” of information (Agatucci 3). However, the counter-argument claims that these differences in accounts in oral tradition often contain the most valuable clues for historians.

2. Middle: The era in which the particular culture began to become more organized, interact with other communities, experience migrations, conflicts or famine. Much of the oral history common to this era concentrates on “those traditions that deal with the individual historical experience of a particular clan or smaller kinship group” (Lanphear and Falola 76). Many of these local traditions are more accurate in terms of historical information than those traditions known throughout the entire community. The narratives are generally of a less structured nature, told more to entertain rather than to instruct, and are related to folktales.

3. Recent: This is the time period which occurred just prior to the birth of the oldest living members of the community and usually only extends two or three generations back. Oral traditions of this chronological period are communal participatory experiences. Such participation is an essential part of traditional African communal life, and basic training in a particular culture’s oral arts and skills are an essential part of children’s traditional indigenous education on their way to becoming an adult member of the community (Agatucci 3).

When looking at the various African oral traditions, as with the oral history of any culture, it is important to realize that many Africans see the past

as being intimately linked to the present and that the “revered customs and traditions find validity in the present by being associated in oral tradition with important personages of the past” (Lanphear and Falola 77). While almost all African societies have a written language, it is oftentimes this orature that fosters this sense of community, conveys the morality, and brings to life the voice of the particular culture.

Activities

- Telephone game to illustrate ‘free text’ and how the information changes from one telling to the next.
- Memorization and recitation of a particular event in African history as an example of a ‘fixed text’.
- Create your own proverb based on examples of African proverbs.

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<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/aoi/opps/spin/storyarts.html#oral>
- “A variety of African myths”
<http://www.afroam.org/children/myths/crocodile/intro.html>

Common Themes Found in the Diversity of Creation

Myths Within Africa's Traditional Religions

..... Andrew Wasserman

Objective: To introduce to the student the concept of the African creation myths which have much in common with other creation myths from around the world, including themes found in creation accounts from Western/European areas. The lesson will help the student to understand the vast diversity of traditional African religions, and at the same time learn that despite the differences, humans share common ideas about their origins.

Subject Areas: English, History, Geography, Anthropology, World Cultures

Materials: Creation myths from various African traditions and the biblical account of creation found in Genesis. These can all be found on the Internet.

The diversity of religion in Africa

It is important to note the diversity of the African continent when discussing the religion and mythology found within it. To begin speaking about African religion and mythology, especially in regards to the traditional African religion and mythology, it is best not to approach the subject in a monolithic, generalized way. Africa has over 600 languages and many traditional religions. Four traditional African religions will be used to provide examples of creation myths. However, one may tap into the numerous other traditional African religions for their own lessons.

Introduction of myth

One of the first logical questions to ask would be; “what is a myth?” Myths can mean many things to many people. An approach to understanding myths is to know that they explain the human experience. They can explain things that are beyond ordinary explanations. These are the “unanswerable” questions such as “how did humans get here and how was the universe created?” When reading myths from other cultures (and even our own), one often finds that what a myth is saying may not be “literally” true. Despite this, myths have the power to convey universal truths about the human experience; ideas, emotions, philosophies, and concepts that humans from all cultures can relate to. Some of these are the explanation of a custom or practice, beliefs about God’s ancestries and legendary heroes, and cosmogonies.

Themes and aspects of creation myths

There are certain themes found within the many creation myths of human cultures. The first theme and most frequent, is known as the cosmic egg, which exemplifies the idea of a featureless, undifferentiated universe. It can often be linked to a watery existence. Greek myths referred to this initial formless state of the universe as chaos and this is the origin of the term. Many times, this primordial substance may contain everything in the universe and a deity will be responsible for separating the chaos, thus creating a thing.

A second theme is known as ex nihilo, which has a deity creating the universe out of nothing. This theme is found in most monotheistic religions, and the “something” that is created out of “nothing” can often resemble the chaos of the cosmic egg. It might be beneficial at this point to note that creation myths may involve one creative event, or have creation occur in several stages. Sometimes a supreme deity will have offspring or create lesser deities that will continue the creation. A third theme of creation myths involves the separation of nature, such as the seas from earth, and celestial bodies like the sun and moon. Another theme that occurs within creation myths is the idea the earth, parts of it, or the universe are the transformation of a deity. For instance, a deity may turn into the sky or fire.

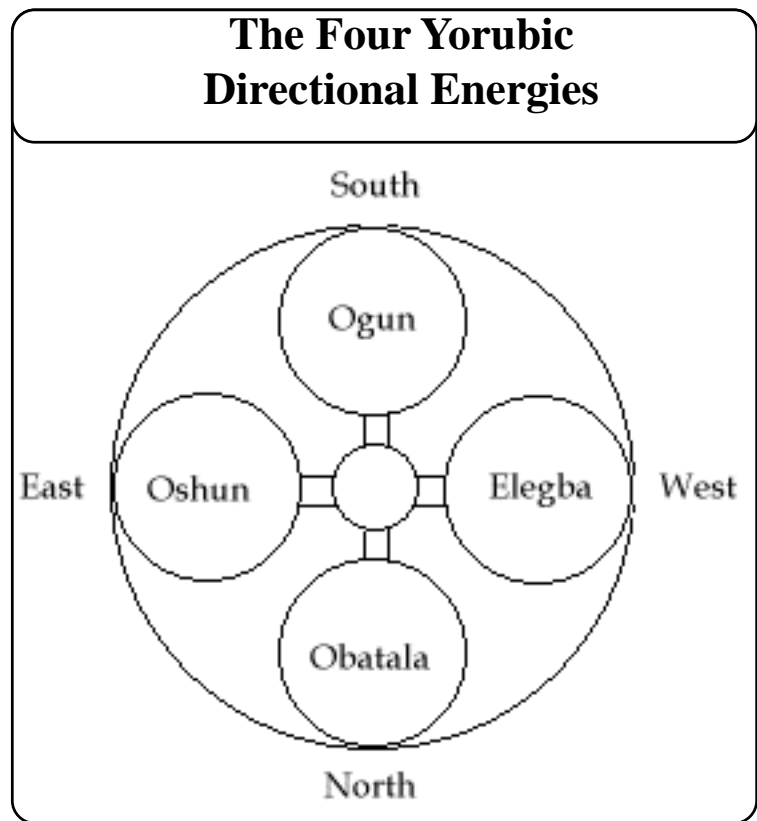
The final general aspect of creation myths is the creation of humans by a deity. This connects the human world with the supernatural world. In addition, it also establishes the place of humans in relation to other creatures in the universe. Humans tend to be found greater than animals or plants, yet below the power of gods. Also, once created, these humans often find themselves involved with some sort of behavior that is unfavorable to the divine. These questionably inappropriate, yet inevitable acts of disobedience will then be used as explanations for “the way things are”. For example, a divinity might separate humans by language or skin color, or make humans subject to sickness or labor due to actions not desired by the divinity. These themes illustrate the creation myths ability to explain the world and universe, as well as create some type of social organization.

Mande Cosmogony

There are several examples of these themes in African myths from various regions throughout Africa. The *Mande*-speaking people of southern Mali have provided an excellent example of several creation motifs. The supreme god *Mangala* was the only thing in existence (*ex nihilo*). Contained within *Mangala* were four divisions, which are symbolic of many important things: four days of their week (time), four elements of earth, fire, water, and wind (matter), and four directions of north, south, east, and west (space). This is a sufficient example of how myths help humans to relate to their surroundings, explain them, and begin traditions. *Mangala* puts a seed into a cosmic egg, wherein it begins to grow into the world. When it grows to his dissatisfaction, *Mangala* destroys the world. *Mangala* tries again, and with two sets of twin seeds, this time successfully creates the world to his liking.

Yoruba Cosmogony

The *Yoruba* of Nigeria have a creation myth that also contains common elements. This myth gives examples of the cosmic egg, the separation of chaos, the creation of Earth, and the creation of humans. The myth tells of the Yoruba creator god named *Olorun*. In the beginning, according to the myth, there was only water and chaos. *Olorun* sends lesser gods who separate land out of the water and chaos. Via a long gold chain, a rooster, some iron and a palm kernel, the earth begins vegetation. *Olorun* names earth *Ife*, and the first city "Ile-Ife." A lesser god named *Obatala* creates humans out of clay that he digs out of the earth, and *Olorun* blows life into them. The myth continues with *Obatala* creating a group of imperfect humans because of a drunken state. *Olorun* demands protections of these particular humans and gives them a special status. *Olokun*, goddess of the sea, in anger over not being consulted about humans, sends a flood to destroy all humans and only a few survive. (As an interesting side note, a teacher may be interested in comparing flood myths). In comparing this myth to the biblical flood, one might offer an examination of why the floods occur: the Yoruba account, a goddess' whimsical destruction versus the biblical, a god that demands moral behavior.



Bushongo Cosmogony

The *Bushongo*, a *Bantu*-speaking group from Central Africa, offers another creation myth. This myth is a good example of an explanation of race diversity and the position of humans in the natural order. Here is another myth with its beginning in watery nothingness. *Bumba*, the Supreme Being, is alone. In terrible stomach distress, *Bumba* vomits up the sun, which dries the earth creating land. Still sick, *Bumba* vomits the moon and stars, thus creating night and day. Living creatures appear when *Bumba* vomits one more time, bringing forth nine animals from which all other animals are created. The ability to create fire is also taught to humans by *Bumba*. Lastly, *Bumba* tells his people "Behold these wonders. They belong to you."

Lozi Cosmogony

One final creation myth from the *Lozi* people of Zambia is a great example of human activity that upsets the divine. The god, *Nyambi*, made the earth and all of the animals and lived on earth with his wife. One thing that he made that was different was the first human, *Kamonu*. *Kamonu* did everything that *Nyambi* did copying him all the time and this threatened *Nyambi*.

When *Kamonu* asks to have some of *Nyambi*'s magic powers, *Nyambi* is forced to hide from *Kamonu*. A spider finds a place for *Nyambi* in the sky and brings him there on a long thread of silk. *Nyambi* pokes out the spider's eyes so the spider will not be able to show *Kamonu* where he is hiding. *Kamonu* tries to build a structure to reach *Nyambi*, but it fell down. In the end, *Nyambi* is seen as the sun in the sky. This myth explains why the divine is not found on Earth, but in the heavens.

Comparison to Genesis

There have been many accounts of the comparison of the Genesis creation account and the Mesopotamian epic, the *Enuma Elish* (which coincidentally translates to "In the beginning", which is the same English translation of the word *Bereshit* in Hebrew and the word *Genesis*). Genesis 1:1 begins with *ex nihilo* creation, as does the Mande creation myth. Out of the nothingness, God creates the heavens and earth. In Genesis 1:3, God begins to create and separate things to create the natural order: night and day, sun and moon, seas and land, vegetation, and animals. This is similar to the Bushongo account of *Bumba*'s creation of celestial entities and animals. These again are both creation accounts that work in stages, rather than in one single creative event.

Genesis then moves on to tell of the creation of humans. There are two biblical accounts of human creation in Genesis: Genesis 1:26 and Genesis 2:7. Genesis 1:26 has humans appear *ex nihilo*, with God creating man in God's image, male and female in the same event. Genesis 2:7 can be compared to the Yoruba account of *Obatala* creating humans out of clay, as God does forming man out of dust from the ground, and woman from one of man's ribs.

Genesis also has the placement of humans in the order of the world. God gives the first humans dominion over all of the creatures, but prohibits them from eating from certain trees. In comparison to African creation myths, the Bushongo myth has a Bantu saying "Behold these wonders, they belong to you" to the first humans. Also, the Zambian myth has *Kamonu* punished for defiant behavior. These are some of the comparisons one can draw from the biblical account of creation with several African creation accounts.



◆ *Osun Shrine at Oshogbo, Nigeria, which also houses some decorated calabashes.*

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A VISIT TO THE SWAHILI-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

By Claretta Jones

Objectives:

- Name the eleven African countries that speak Swahili.
- Gain knowledge about the Swahili culture.
- Gain an understanding of the origin of the Swahili language.
- Learn to count in Swahili from one to ten.
- Learn some common Swahili words.

There are many aspects to the Swahili culture. To some people, it is only a language while to others it is a way of life. The term Swahili is derived from the Arabic word *Swahil* (plural of *Sahil*), which means “coast”. Swahili culture may be translated literally as *coastal culture*. Ibn Batuta, the Arab writer and traveler was the first to use the term Swahili. Swahili is one of the major languages spoken in Africa, second only to Arabic. Over fifty million people in Eastern and Central Africa speak Swahili. A little over one million people speak Swahili as their first language, and many others speak Swahili as a second, third, or fourth language. Swahili is the official language in the three countries (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda)

that largely make up the east African community. It is also spoken in Rwanda, Burundi, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Somalia, Seychelles, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea, Congo, the Comoro Islands, and the North of Madagascar.

It is believed that the Arab traders began to settle in the East African Coastal villages about the time of Christ. It is suggested that Swahili is an old language, dating back to the 2nd century AD. The

Swahili people are a mixture of Bantu and Arab ancestry. The language originates from the Arabs and some believe that Persia, Portugal, Germany, England and various Asian countries left their mark on both the culture and languages of East Africa.

The Swahili language is used throughout East Africa for business and communication among various ethnic

groups. Swahili is used as a *lingua franca* in the place of other languages of East Africa because of its simplicity and no ethnic group could claim a hold on it. Being a mixture of different languages



◆ Copyright: UCL: Language Materials Project: Swahili Profile
<http://www.lmp.ucla.edu/profiles/profs04.htm>

of the coastal people made it an easy form of communication.

Swahili native speakers are those who have adopted the Swahili culture and use Swahili as their first language. As the Swahili language evolved and began to gain acceptance among the coastal people, later generations of Arabs, Asians, Persians and some Africans who had lost contact with their mother tongues began to use Swahili as their first language. Swahili is basically Bantu, mostly related to *Mijikendas* (*Digo, Giriama, Duruma...*) and in Comorian dialects of the Comoro Island, with a mixture of many words from Arabic, some European and Asian languages, which make it stand out as a language of communication between the different peoples of East Africa. Many words from Arabic are also used as a result of the Swahili people using the Quran, which is written in Arabic.

The Swahili vocabulary can be associated with Arab and Persian, but the syntax or grammar of the language is Bantu. The chart below demonstrates the contribution of each culture to the Swahili language.

There are some words absorbed from Portuguese as a result of their control of the Swahili coastal towns around 1500-1700 AD. Some of their borrowed words are: “leso” (Handkerchief), “meza” (table), “gereza” (prison), “pesa” (money). Swahili bullfighting, still popular on the Pemba Island, is a Portuguese legacy from that period. Swahili also borrowed some words from the language of later colonial powers such as Britain and Germany. English words include “baiskeli” (bicycle), “basi” (bus), “penseli” (pencil), “maschine” (machine), and “koti” (coat). The German words include “shule” for school and “hela” for a German coin.

Here are a few Swahili words and phrases to acquaint you with the language:

Arabic in Origin

Site six
Saba seven
Tisa nine

Persian in Origin

chai tea
achani pickle
serikali government
diwani councilor
sheha village councilor

Bantu in Origin

Moja one
Mbili two
Tatu three
Nne four
Tano five
Nane eight
Kumi ten

The African American celebration of **Kwanzaa** uses Swahili words. Its **7 principles** are:

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| > Unity | <i>Umojo</i> |
| > Self determination | <i>Kujichagulia</i> |
| > Collective work & responsibility | <i>Ujima</i> |
| > Economics | <i>Ujamaa</i> |
| > Purpose | <i>Nia</i> |
| > Creativity | <i>Kuumba</i> |
| > Faith | <i>Imani</i> |

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Fatuma: | <i>Karibu nyumbane.</i>
Welcome home. |
| Ali: | <i>Asante.</i>
Thank you. |
| Fatuma: | <i>Hujambo?</i>
How are you? |
| Ali: | <i>Sijambo.</i>
I am fine. |
| Fatuma: | <i>Habarii za nyumbani?</i>
What's the news from home? |
| Ali: | <i>Nzuri sana. Asante.</i>
Very good. Thank you. |
| Fatuma: | <i>Je! Watota hawajambo?</i>
How are the children? |
| Ali: | <i>Hawajambo wote wazima. Asante sana.</i>
They are fine. Thank you very much. |
| Fatuma: | <i>Haya. Kwaheri.</i>
Okay. Good-bye. |
| Ali: | <i>Kwaheri ya kuonana.</i>
Good-bye. See you next time. |

The colonial administrators pioneered the effort to standardize the Swahili language. Zanzibar was the epicenter of culture and commerce, therefore colonial administrators selected the dialect of the Zanzibar town Unguja as standard Swahili. The Unguja dialect (kiunguja) was then used for all formal communication taught in schools, used in mass media (newspapers and radio), in books and in other publications.

For centuries, Swahili remained the language of the East African coast. Long time interaction with other people, other countries, migration, trade, and marriages during the 19th century helped spread the language. Christian missionaries used the language to spread the Gospel. A missionary prepared the first Swahili-English dictionary.

In Kenya and Uganda, Swahili is the national language, but official correspondence is still conducted in English. Almost all Tanzanians speak Swahili proficiently and are unified by it. Tanzania has made a deliberate effort to promote the language primarily because of the late Julius K. Nyerere, its first President's campaign to have Swahili as the official language.

Today Swahili is spreading inland. It is one of the languages that have been accepted by the former Organization of African Unity (now African Union) as the official language. It is also one of the few African languages being taught in many universities of the world. Many radio stations in Europe, Asia and America broadcast news and other programs in Swahili. It is becoming one of the important languages of the world.

Resources

Books

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A Journey to South Africa



Floretha S. Bryant



Visit “A World in One Country” on one great classroom trip

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- * Recognize Africa as a continent
- * Recognize South Africa as a country in Africa
- * Locate South Africa on a map
- * Identify which oceans border South Africa
- * Gain knowledge about the people who live in South Africa
- * Understand what apartheid means
- * Name some foods and drinks of South Africa
- * Learn about South Africans’ recreational activities
- * Know what it’s like to get an Education in South Africa
- * Understand what the economy is like in South Africa
- * Learn more about the arts in South Africa

Introduction

Traditionally, at the elementary level, students have always had the opportunity to learn how to spell Africa, draw its shape and color it, know that it is one of the continents and locate it on the world map.

This lesson is designed for the elementary and middle School students to encourage a higher level of knowledge about South Africa.

“Quick Picks”

South Africa is the average richest and most developed country in Africa.

- * South Africa generates more than half the continent’s electricity, about two-fifths of its automobiles, and half of its telephones.
- * The country is nearly three times the size of California.
- * Johannesburg and Cape Town are South Africa’s largest cities.
- * The climate is usually mild and sunny.
- * South Africa produces more gold than any other country.
- * The official languages are Afrikaans and English.
- * Blacks in South Africa were granted suffrage in 1990.

Welcome to a land so vast and diverse that its inhabitants proudly call it “A World in One Country.”

Historical Background

Hunters and gatherers inhabited South Africa for thousands of years. They left behind evidence of their existence in rock art. More than 2,000 years ago, descendants of the San people came from the north. The Khoisan would be the first indigenous people to interact with European sea workers along the coast from the late 15th century.

Small groups of farmers moved into the northern parts of South Africa. They grew their own crops and the population began to grow and develop into small kingdoms. Some of the farmers experienced periods of wealth. Trading routes were formed and the coastal areas were linked with the interior. The farmers began to spread southwards to what is now called the Orange Free State and the Transkei.

Apartheid

The Dutch and the English colonized South Africa in the 17th century. England was able to gain control over the Dutch descendants, also known as the Boers. As a result of the domination of the British, the Boers established new colonies called the Orange Free State and Transvaal. Diamonds were discovered in these colonies in the early 1900’s resulting in an invasion by the British, which started the Boer War. To ensure that they would maintain control of the colonies, the National Party comprised of Boers legalized and enforced a sociopolitical movement called apartheid, which means “separateness” in 1948. The purpose of apartheid was to allow the European descendants to maintain control of the native black South Africans. Apartheid enforced a class system based on race. Black South Africans were given the least amount of political rights and were banned from many establishments that were reserved for “whites only”. There was also race segregation in public places, trains, buses, post offices, hospitals and even ambulance service.

Apartheid Abandoned

After many years of bloodshed, demonstrations and rebelling, apartheid ended with much reluctance under General Louis Botha. The general met with African Na



tional Congress leader, Nelson Mandela and recognized him as the next possible leader. Botha had a stroke and resigned as president. F.W. de Klerk was elected state president in 1989. In February 1990, Nelson Mandela, a black leader and member of the ANC, was released from prison. He had been sentenced to life in 1964 for sabotage and conspiracy against the South African Government.

Later in 1990, Mandela met with President de Klerk to discuss political change in South Africa. From these talks the government agreed to end its ban on all political parties. Because of this, a new Constitution was formed that would give nonwhites full rights to vote and participate in government. All of the apartheid laws were repealed. In May 1994, the National Assembly elected Mandela as President. His inauguration ceremony was attended by a large number of international dignitaries. Although apartheid has been abolished, many South Africans are still coping with the effects of it.

Some of the people have made remarkable progress, but because of apartheid many black South Africans today face poverty and unemployment. The crime rate is high and people are distrustful of each other. Mandela established a Truth and Reconciliation Committee led by Archbishop Desmond Tutu to address injustices caused by apartheid.

Quick Focus on South Africa

Official Name: Republic of South Africa

National Anthem: “God Bless Africa” and “The Call of South Africa”

Location: Southernmost country in Africa

Area: 470,689 square miles (1,219,080 square kilometers) It’s nearly three times the size of California and twice as large as France

Population: 43,421,021 (the year 2000)

Languages: 11 Official – Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Pedi, Sotho, Swazi, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, Zulu



◆ **Right:** Map courtesy [Africa for Visitors](http://goafrica.about.com/library/maps/blfreesamap.htm)
<http://goafrica.about.com/library/maps/blfreesamap.htm>
 Copyright © 2003 About, Inc.
Left: Flag of South Africa

People: Black, 75%; White, 13%; colored (mixed Black, White, and Asian), 9%; Asian, 3%

Religions: Christian, 68%; Muslim, 2%; Hindu, 1%; other and traditional beliefs, 29%

Terrain: Vast interior plain surrounded by hills, narrow coast, and deserts

Government: Democratic, multi-party government

Natural Resources: mining gold, diamonds, coal, iron ore, manganese

Money: 1 rand = 100 South African cents (\$1 = R9.26)

Climate: Dry, sunny days and cool nights

Independence Day: April 27 (when it took effect)

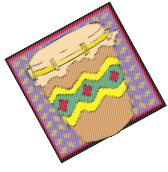
Main Products: corn, wheat, wool, milk, potatoes, tobacco, beef cattle, citrus fruit, sugarcane.

Manufacturing: motor vehicles, iron and steel, metal products, machinery, chemicals, processed foods and beverages, clothing and textiles.

Recreation: Sports Events— soccer, rugby, and football, beaches, national parks, game reserves and theatres

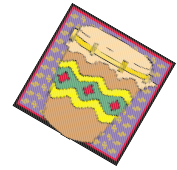
The Arts: ballets, concerts, operas, plays, music, painting, sculpture and literature.

Education: School attendance is compulsory for children of all population groups between the ages of 7 and 16 years. In 1999 there were 21 universities and 15 technology schools and commercial vocational training institutions.



MAKING THE CURRICULUM CONNECTION

Suggested Activities



- * **Teacher teaches about South Africa**
- * **Teacher shares common South African expressions**

Lekker- good, nice, fun, cool, hip

Howzit- hi, hello, hey, how are you?

Serviette-napkin

Lift- elevator

Flat- apartment

Robot- traffic light

Takkies- sneakers

Mobile- cell phone

Sharp- cool, okay, good-bye, thank you

Paw paw- papaya

Teacher reads South African stories to students

- * *South Africa* by Ettagale Blauer and Jason Laure (Ages 5 & up)
- * *Marriage of the Rain Goddess* by Margaret Olivia Wolfson (Ages 3 & up)
- * *South Africa* by Garrett Nagle (Ages 6 and up)
- * The novels of Beverly Naidoo
 - Journey to Jo'burg* 1985
 - Chain of Fire* 1990
 - No turning back* 1999

Request guest speakers: Call the Social Studies Department and they will arrange for a speaker to come visit your classroom.

Encourage students to come in African dress on a selected day.

Music Teacher

- * The music teacher could teach a selected song
- * Play music heard in South Africa and compare to music in America
- * Show traditional musical instruments used by South African musicians

Art Teacher

- * Engage students to paint a picture or create a sculpture
- * Engage students in a tie-dye cloth activity
- * Arrange a field trip to the museum to see African exhibits

Media Specialist (Librarian)

- * Display books from South Africa
- * Read stories and encourage student to read them
- * Select films and share available resources

Physical Education

- * Teach students how to play rugby football, soccer, and cricket

Lunchroom staff (See Manager)

- * Prepare a simple South African dish.
(Ex: Cucumber and Yogurt Salad)
Cucumbers sliced in rounds, an amount of yogurt equal to cucumbers. Mix cucumbers and yogurt. In a hot cast-iron skillet, toast cumin seeds without oil until brown. Don't burn. Put the seeds into the mixture. Serve cold. Have a tasting party.

Parents

- * Participate, help serve the meal, or help provide items needed for this lesson.

Evaluation

- * Class participation
- * Keep daily journal
- * Write paper on the country of what was learned throughout the Curriculum Connection.

FCAT Questions for Reading & Writing

1. South Africa is a very rich country.

Name one thing that you learned about its richness and write details about it.

2. There are many places to visit in Africa.

Think about a place in Africa that you could visit and write a story about a day in that country.

Classroom Scenery

Set up your classroom with pictures and items from Africa. Ask friends, librarians, or art teachers for things that may be available or made.

Examples: pottery, sculptures, baskets, cloth, clothing, jewelry, masks, pictures, literature books, cookbooks.

Materials

Large African Map

Current Events

Time - Line of the Country in Topic

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Physical Features of Southern Africa and Effects on Human Populations

.....  **Derek S. Hagler** 

The physical environment has traditionally shaped the settlement patterns of human populations. The southern portion of the African continent is no exception to this fact. While encountering diverse landscapes from deserts to mountains, the peopling of this area has constantly been shaped by nature's dictates.

Physical Features

The physical features of this region have dictated human settlement patterns. When Europeans began navigating the surrounding oceans they discovered a land with a smooth coastline and few navigable rivers. The rivers that were encountered could only be used for a limited distance before waterfalls or rapids discouraged progress. As they moved inland, mountain ranges and plateaus rose, which further increased the difficulty. Additionally, they found few harbors, a lack of a coastal plain and excessive offshore sandbars, which made interior exploration difficult.

Other conditions have complicated life in this area. There is a lack of internal water transportation mechanisms and along the coastline there are few places that are suitable for agriculture. With high temperatures and low rainfall, the emergence of large urban civilizations was only possible in recent years.

Countries/Oceans

It must be stressed that political boundaries in Africa are largely the result of the Europeans. Historical land divisions between groups were largely avoided when colonization occurred. The countries of mainland southern Africa are Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland and Zambia.

To the east is the Indian Ocean, with a mixture of the Indian and Atlantic Oceans to the south and the Atlantic Ocean to the western coastline.

Deserts

The Namib Desert lies between the Southern Atlantic Ocean and the Great Western Escarpment.

With a length of 1,200 miles and a width of 70 miles, it has the highest sand dunes in the world. There is evidence that hunter/gatherer groups have inhabited the area for 750,000 years.

The Kalahari Desert is located in South Africa, Botswana and Namibia. The San people have adapted to living in this locale, which receives about 9 inches of rain per year. The San people change home sites about once a month as food supplies dwindle. Historically, they have lived by hunting animals and by collecting berries, nuts, fruits, and roots.

Capes

Located on the southwest corner of the continent is the Cape of Good Hope. This hook-like peninsula includes Cape Town, one of the major cities of South Africa. The extreme southern point is called Cape Point. The Cape of Good Hope is located about 100 miles northwest of Cape Agulhas, Africa's southern tip.

Rivers

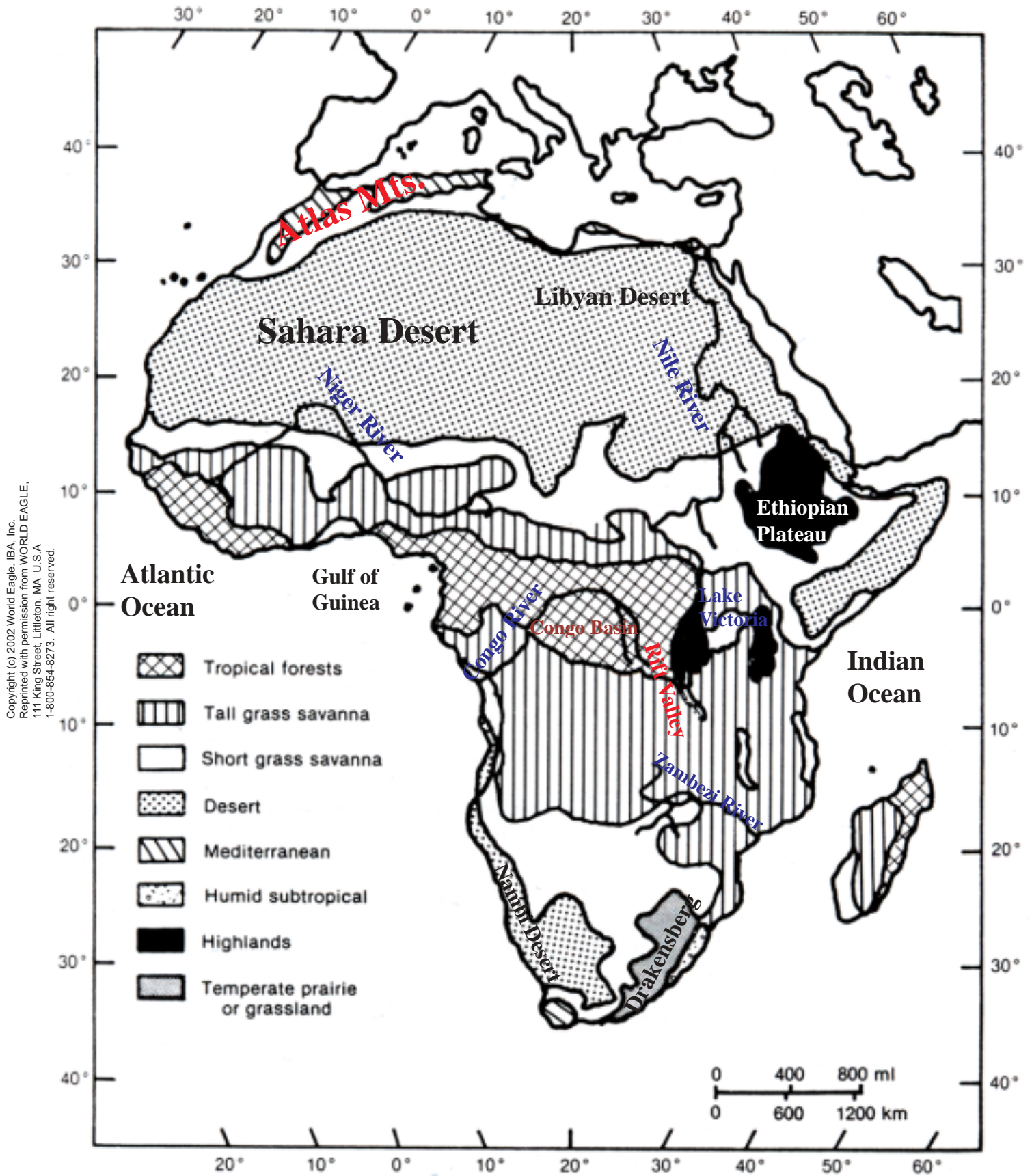
The Limpopo River has been altered by the presence of many dams. These dams provide water supplies to cities along the route and provide water for irrigation in Zimbabwe. Along with the Save and Zambezi rivers, the Limpopo has contributed to recent flooding in Mozambique, which has caused over 1 million people to be without their homes.

Survival in Africa is dependent upon strategic use of the fresh water resources. Environmental problems such as poor timber management, poor farming practices and deforestation have led to extreme soil erosion. The future of the region near these rivers will depend upon the choices applied in using this water supply.

Mountains

The Great Karroo Mountains run from the east to the west along the southern portion of the continent. The Drakensberg Mountains run north to south along the southeastern portion of the continent. The small countries of Lesotho and Swaziland are in this area, and are enclosed by the nation of South Africa. This moun

ECOLOGICAL AREAS OF AFRICA



tain range separates the plateau from the coastal regions. These mountains contain paintings from the San people which date back to 1200 AD.

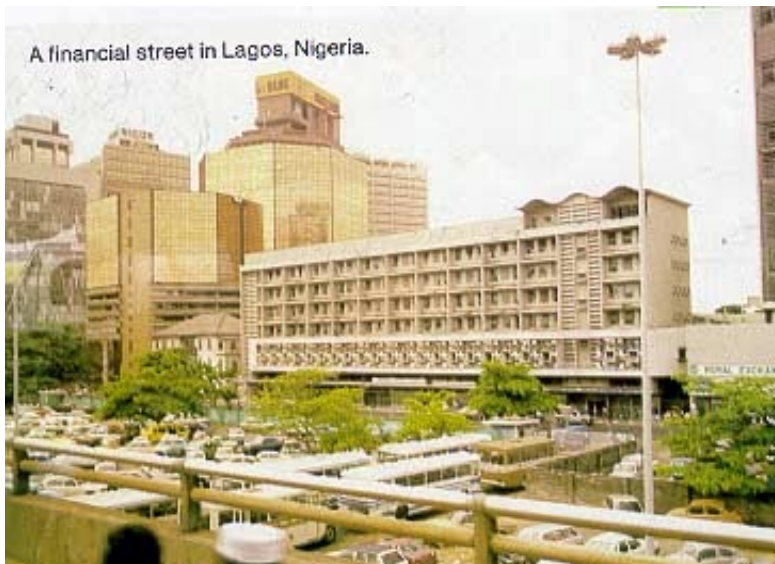
Population Centers

The settlement of a particular locale is dependent on the existing subsistence patterns. In a hunting-and-gathering society, 25 square kilometers are needed per person. In a traditional pastoralism society, three persons can live on a square kilometer. When small grain cultivation is used, such as the savanna, eight persons can live on a square kilometer.

With permanent cultivation patterns, the land may support 25-160 persons per square kilometer.

The major centers of population are found near the major commercial centers. Thus, the areas where production is the highest attracts the largest number of settlers. By comparing population distribution, major production areas, railways, and economic islands, a distinctive corridor originates in the southeastern portion of the continent. The colonial history of southern Africa revolves around the mining industry which has resulted in the development of this southeastern corridor.

Africa has the world's highest rate of urban growth but is the least urbanized of all the continents. In southern Africa the population is concentrated along the coastal locales from Cape Town to southern Mozambique. In South Africa, approximately 65 percent of the population lives in urban areas. At the current rate, the population is growing too fast for the economy to keep up. Scholars have suggested that Africa must control its population growth if it is to control poverty.



◆ Lagos, Nigeria is one of the most populated cities in Africa.

TYPE OF SUBSISTENCE	POPULATION SUPPORTED
Hunting And Gathering	1 Person Per 25 Sq Km
Traditional Pastoralism	3 Persons Per Sq Km
Small Grain Cultivation	8 Persons Per Sq Km
Permanent Cultivation	25-160 Persons Per Sq Km

Solutions for Human Needs

Human settlements will always be dependent on adequate water supplies. As populations are expected to double in the next 25 years in this region, it is imperative that conservation and control measures are used. Currently, the rivers and air are threatened with pollution and the growth rate threatens to outpace the supply. When these factors are accompanied with the periodic prolonged droughts and land degradation, the only solution is adopting practices of conservation and storage.

Namibia recognized the importance of the environment, as it was the first country in the world to include protection of the environment in its constitution.

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A Creative Way to Teach Colonialism



By Christina Aurelio



Preface

The following information and lessons should be used after a unit (or units) on some of the original empires of the African continent have been studied (Nubia and Kush, Egypt, Great Zimbabwe, the Asante, Mali & Timbuktu, Ethiopia, etc). This will allow the students to visualize a rich, diverse and developed African continent prior to Western exploitation.

Objectives

- ⇒ Students will understand the implications of drawing lines across and dividing ethnic groups that had existed in Africa for centuries.
- ⇒ Students will analyze the reasons the European nations used to explain their colonization of Africa and evaluate the true motives behind them.
- ⇒ Students will understand that forced African labor was used to create wealth for Europe and the Americas.
- ⇒ Students will evaluate how this forced labor created poverty for the Africans and impacted the development of African countries during and after the colonial period.

Vocabulary

Colonialism	Imperialism	Cash Crops
Ethnic Groups	Chiefdoms	Indigenous

Lesson Plan

The following ideas are provided in developing a unit of study on African colonization. Any and all of them should be modified for different levels, grades and time constraints.

DAY ONE

1. Hand out blank maps of North America or any blank map could be used. Students should be asked to draw lines to divide the area of land in a new way—either by the instructors choice or their own. The key idea here is that the students be given parameters to guide them in the activity. Ideas on division—based on geography, areas they would like to own and to award to others, by resource availability, or by whim.



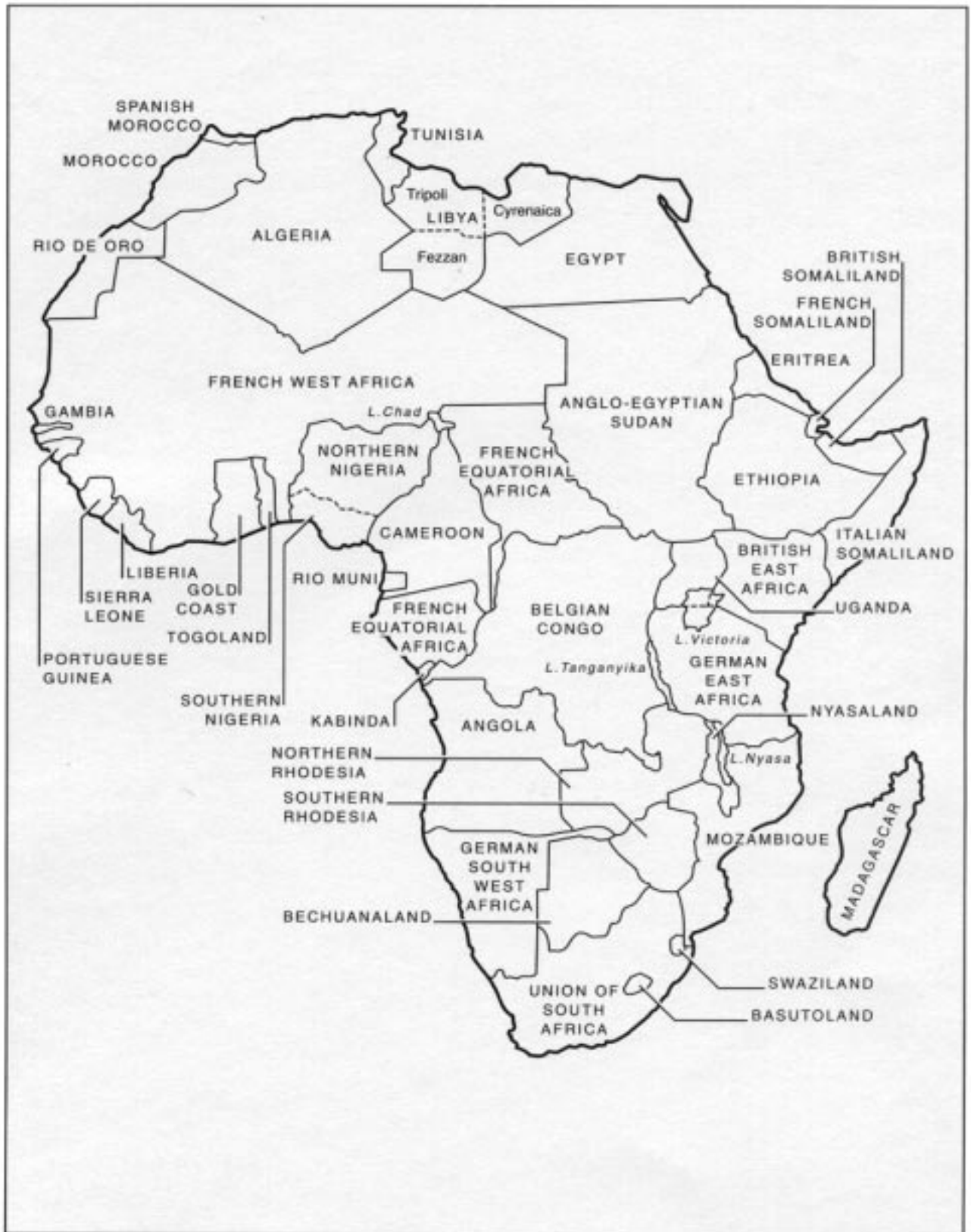
◆ *President Kenneth Kaunda (center), the first president of Zambia was among the first presidents to fight against colonialism in Africa. He visited the University of Florida in the Fall of 2002 to speak about the impact of “Children and Aids in Southern Africa.” Left- Dr. Leonardo Villalon, Director of Center for African Studies and right, Dr. Agnes Leslie, Outreach Director.*

2. A map showing where communities exist or did exist in that region (could use North American groups with the North American map to really show conflicts!) should be handed out. A discussion over the effects of their dividing lines should then be held. Topics for discussion- how will these lines affect the groups, what might change in the communities, how local people might handle these problems.

DAY TWO & THREE

1. Lecture and discussion of the factors that led to the **Colonization of Africa**- Industrial Revolution, discovery of gold and diamonds on the African continent, competition among the European countries
2. Once the Berlin Conference has been discussed, hand out the map of African ethnic groups and states prior to colonization, the map of colonial control and the divisions created by the Berlin Conference of 1884. Have students get into groups of 3-5 and using tracing paper, draw the lines created by the Berlin Conference over the map of traditional African ethnic groups. The group should then put together a short paragraph of some of the areas they foresee will be problematic and the reason why. They may also discuss some of the problems they think might occur.

COLONIAL BORDERS 1914



© DIAGRAM

3. Using the map that each student individually drew lines upon have the students try to come up with a way to divide the map that satisfies each member of the group. Students could also simply choose one person's division of the area and then elect one person from their groups to be a "representative" for their group. Each representative then assembles at the front of the room to construct a map of divisions that satisfies all of the groups. This would be done in front of the whole class with the different groups being able to react and adlib to the decisions the "Board" is making.

4. Students could divide into groups to further investigate one of the factors that led to the Berlin Conference.

DAY FOUR

1. Have students partner up with a neighbor for this exercise, which will only take a few moments. Do not organize into groups because that will take longer than the actual activity. Hand out one example of an African language to each set of partners. Ask them to spend five minutes quietly figuring out what their paragraph says.

2. Begin discussion of why this is so impossible. Ask students if they have any idea why they did this exercise. This should then lead into a discussion of the different ways that the European nations began to enforce their rule, their languages, and their cultures upon the Africans.

DAY FIVE

1. Have students read and discuss Rudyard Kipling's "The White Man's Burden." Students should assess the feelings of cultural superiority that many Europeans had at this time and how this was used to justify the colonization of Africa.

DAY SIX

1. Divide the class into three separate groups. Groups should be planned out with care so that each has a good balance of skills in reading, math, writing, and art.

2. Give each group written instructions on how to create an African mask that must be measured to fit an average person's head in the group. They must read the directions, measure heads, come up with an average, and then create the mask.

3. As the groups are working, the instructor should take one person at a time (for any reason to be contrived) to help only one of the other groups (the same groups each time). Meanwhile he/she should oversee the third group very directly and very strictly.

4. The activity should not be stopped until after the groups are done or the two groups which are being

manipulated become so thoroughly frustrated that no one is getting work done.

5. Now a discussion/lecture can occur on the problems that may be derived from taking people from the work that provides for their family and using them to work solely for the advancement of another group. Also the slave—like situation of being forced to work on something with a harsh overseer can be discussed.

DAY SEVEN

1. Discussion/lecture of the effects of colonialism on the African continent.

2. Divide the class into groups and have them decide upon an African country to research. The research should focus on the development of that country after independence. Botswana, Kenya, Zimbabwe, the Congo (Zaire) should be used in order to provide adequate contrasts. These four countries provide excellent contrasts and examples of some of the information the students have discussed.

Botswana was governed by indirect rule and no truly valuable resources were discovered until after independence (diamonds).

Kenya was very appealing to the British so there were a great number of white settlers still involved there after independence.

Rwanda illustrates the ethnic group divisions that were strengthened by colonial rule.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo provides a look at a western—backed leader who continued to run the country for profit rather than for success of the people.

Historical Background

The continent of Africa is home to a variety of ethnic groups, all with their own distinct cultures, languages, and religions. The continent's political boundaries, however, do not necessarily reflect the true separations of these culture groups. A map showing the divisions of the ethnic grouping of Africa provides a totally different picture than a map of the country boundaries that we generally see. These political boundaries did not originate in the hands of the African people, nor their chiefs or religious leaders but instead they were drawn in Europe. They were drawn by hands that had no concern for the people or their cultures but only for the increased wealth of European states. This imperialistic attitude is what led Europe to colonize the majority of the African continent, except for Liberia and Ethiopia. The Berlin Conference of 1884 gave them the authority to do so.



◆ *Photos of present day downtown Harare, Zimbabwe (formerly known as Southern Rhodesia).*

The Search for African Markets and Resources

By 1880, Britain and France had already begun to encroach upon the coastal countries of Western Africa with imperialistic fervor. Imperialism had a strong tradition in Europe since Roman time and the wealthiest families and classes had every reason to push for it once again (Lugard). Many economic factors contributed to this push. The Industrial Revolution made it necessary to find new sources of raw materials. Not only was Africa proving to be a wondrous wealth of these resources, chiefly gold and diamonds, but it also could provide new markets and more importantly new labor sources. Increased demand for raw materials, increasing labor and new markets led to a rise in imperialism and in fact, imperialism has been defined by Lenin as the monopoly stage of capitalism. Along with these historical and economic factors came cultural influences that helped Europeans promote and justify their imperialistic efforts. Social Darwinism had developed from Darwin's theory of 'survival of the fittest' just in time to help Europeans feel better about what was happening to the African people. In addition to Darwin's theory, feelings of cultural superiority made the Europeans feel obligated to uplift the African people from their "savage state." These feelings can be seen in the writings of those times. Rudyard Kipling's poem, "The White Man's Burden," is one example. The first verse is provided here.

Take up the White Man's Burden—
 Send forth the best ye breed—
 Go bind your sons to exile
 To serve your captives' need:
 To wait in heavy harness
 On fluttered folk and wild—
 Your new-caught, sullen peoples'
 Half devil and half child. (Kipling)

The main cause for dividing Africa up was the economic competition among the countries of Europe. Wanting to keep up with his rivals, King Leopold II of Belgium began his push and eventual conquest of the Congo. Because the Congo held some of the most valuable land in Africa, the French, Portuguese and British all began to challenge Leopold's claim. This growing conflict led Prince Von Bismark of Germany, whose constituents had been pushing for a German role in the colonial game, to call for the Berlin Conference. The conference, which began in November of 1884 and ended in February 1885, was the final blow to the development of Africa for its own people. The decisions and lines that were drawn during those four fatal months resulted in the complete colonization of Africa by 1914, excluding Liberia and Ethiopia. At the time of colonial conquest, the continent included not only large-scale states such as Egypt, but also smaller chiefdoms like the Asante of Western Africa and decentralized societies such as the Bangala of the Congo, reflecting different levels of political, social and economic development (Martin and O'Meara 136). The new boundaries that were created cut through about 177 ethnic cultures areas and often divided the groups at one or more of these levels: political, social and economical.



◆ *Black South Africans attained the right to vote in 1994. Pictured above— students outside Howard College, University of Natal at the Durban Campus, South Africa. Copyright © University of Natal. http://www.nu.ac.za/bkgnd/pics_dbn.asp*

The terms of the Berlin Conference required that the European nations occupy the territory before claiming their sovereignty. This occupation was obviously often violent. The leaders of many of these groups were forced to sign treaties written in languages and with implications they did not understand at the time. Without knowing it, their land and power were being taken from them. Although at times the chiefs knew exactly what was going on, they could do nothing to stop it. Many actually did attempt to fight back such as the Zulus of Southern Africa but usually the results were only high death numbers and ruthless domination of the people. Africans lacked the necessary means to fight back and win. The European markets were closed to them without the help of Europeans and their technologies. Basically they had few opportunities to gain the most important tools needed—guns and gunpowder. In 1884 the Maxim machine gun was patented. It could fire eleven bullets per seconds at the resisting African groups who, if they were lucky, were armed with early 19th century muskets that took one minute to load and often misfired (Holmes 30).

The imposition of colonial rule had forced both leaders and the masses to become colonial subjects with little human or political rights. It devalued and almost completely did away with traditional authority except where it benefited the colonial power and fulfilled the economic pursuit of European nations (Martin and O'Meara 136). In fact, the colonial states often used traditional rulers to help govern their new conquests but required them to perform duties such as tax collection and encouragement of their people to produce cash crops for the colonial regime. When labor shortages could not meet the demand for gold and diamonds, rulers were changed to “force more Africans onto the labor market” (Reade 505).

Using African chiefs or other local leaders often caused problems. Since the duties they were asked to perform such as tax collection were not welcomed, people’s views of their leaders sometimes changed to one of distrust. Due to the new lines that were drawn, some people were now not only separated from their rightful ethnic group and leader but also expected to be

obedient to another group. In some areas, the colonial governments would show explicit favor of one ethnic group over another. Taking advantages of traditional political and ethnic rivalries also proved to be an effective means of undermining local efforts to form alliances for the common purposes of resisting the invader. Thus the basis for ethnic rivalries and regional cleavages, which plague contemporary Africa, were either created or exploited during the colonial era (Martin and O'Meara 138, 146).

In the section of this paper entitled "Suggestions for Student Research" there is a list of some of the many groups which could be researched to discover the results in post-colonial era of these conflicts.

There were many different types of colonies on the African continent. The main situations that occurred were the following: white settled colonies (Kenya and Southern Rhodesia [Zimbabwe]), indirect rule colonies (Nigeria and Botswana), and direct rule colonies (Senegal).

The indirect and direct systems both utilized traditional rulers. The British generally used indirect rule and limited the numbers of administrators in a given area. In northern Nigeria, for example, there was one British administrator for every 100,000 Africans (Emeagwli). They did not settle the area and did not allow the indigenous population to gain the rights or the education associated with being British subjects. But in areas such as Kenya, where many British settlers wished to live, they established an elite caste system. White settlers held their economic and political supremacy in a basic master-slave relationship.

The Europeans took over the best areas for farming pushing the local populations to less desirable land. The French used the method of indirect rule, educating and attempting to "culture" the Africans in the French ways. The Portuguese were the most distant and were severe and harsh rulers. Although King Leopold's treatment of those living in the Congo rivaled this severity, however and even the European population found it abhorrent to have the Belgian government take over control.

Results of Colonialism

In 1957 Ghana became the first African country to attain independence. In the decades that followed, one by one the countries of Africa would fight for and eventually gain independence from their respective colonial regimes. The effects of colonialism would not be shed though. Colonialism had inhibited the development of indigenous Africa to a large extent. Colonial domination brought with it a shift to a cash crop economy (Emeagwli). Crops like cassava and corn were

introduced, which began to change local food supplies. Also, cash crops like cotton and coffee were forced upon the people, taking away the ability to grow as much for local consumption.

By 1987, Africa was producing a quarter of the world's gold output with over 69,000 Africans working in slave labor conditions to make that happen (Reader 519). Laws were created to deliberately suppress the technical development of the indigenous population. Meanwhile African markets were flooded with cheap mass-produced textiles, glass, and iron products (Emeagwli). Due to this shift to cash crops and the suppression of technical advancement, the ability of these countries to sustain themselves as independent countries after the end of domination was completely destroyed. A dependency was created upon the old colonial powers, which in many ways still persists today.

Suggested Research Topics

- The French favor of the Fula over the Mandinka and Susa in French Guinea
- The Tutsi domination of the Hutu in Rwanda
- The Creation of the "Bangala" and the "Bakonga" and their rivalry in the Congo
- The Bemba and Ngoni of Zambia
- The Igbo of Nigeria

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Exploring the Arts of West Africa

.....  Brenda Whitfield 

Introduction

Africa is the second largest continent in the world and it has the world's third largest population. Africa is divided into 54 different independent countries and five geographical regions. We are going to take a close look at the arts of the Western region of Africa, which includes the countries of Senegal, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon, Guinea, and Congo, a West African country housing over 250 ethnic groups and over 300 different languages.

Many different arts and crafts have been developed throughout Africa. Among them are basketry, clothing art designs, pottery, and various bead and jewelry creations. West African artists undergo special training to learn how to make items employing the different art forms. African art serves several purposes such as providing a means of storing food during ceremonial practices, as well as being used in weddings, funerals, and for serving goods.

Objectives:

1. Viewing different types of African art
2. Understanding the definition of African art
3. Developing an awareness of African art



A. Basketry

Both men and women in West Africa perform basketry, also known as basket making or weaving. The materials used for basketry include, but are not limited to, wood, palm leaves, reeds, grasses, and roots. Plaited basketry and sewn basketry are the two different techniques of basket making. The method of plaited basketry involves plant fibers that are intertwined, woven or twisted together after they have been soaked in water. Some Africans use a thin, continuous strip of grass that is stitched onto itself in a coil in sewn basketry. Some of the baskets are weaved so tightly that they can be used to store liquid.

Africans use the art of basketry to create many items other than baskets. Other products include blankets, bags, sheets, rugs, mats, tent dividers,



◆ *Baskets made in Sierra Leone are identical to those made by Sea Island Gullahs.*



◆ *Raffia-wrapped coiled basket made in Ibadan, Nigeria. Such baskets can be utilized as a hamper or storage container.*

pillows, umbrellas, hats, shawls, head cloths, trousers, robes, and smocks. Hats that are created by basketry are accentuated with nature's finest fiber, feather, fur, and leather. A tribe called Somali uses mats to cover the tops of their homes or temporary shelters.

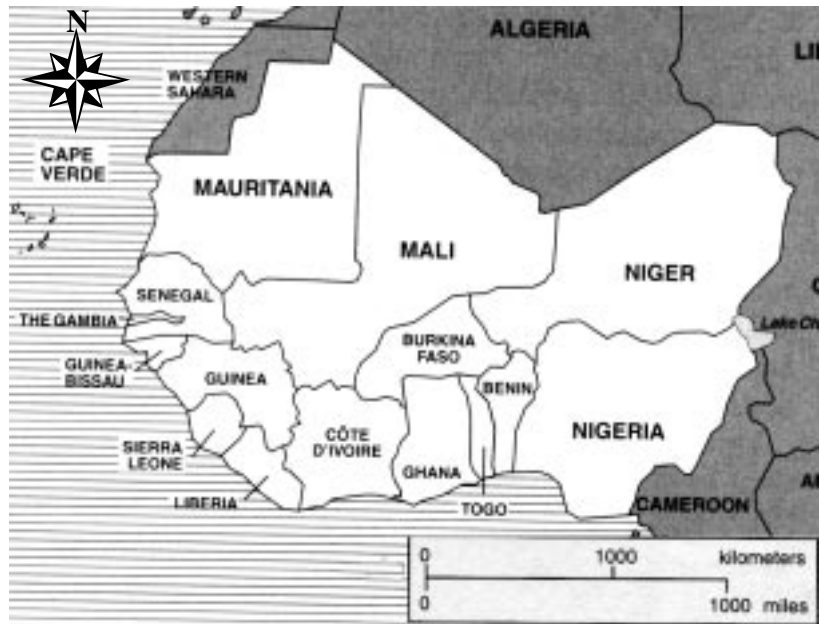
B. Beads and Jewelry

Africans wear beads and jewelry for special ceremonies like weddings and funerals, but they also adorn their bodies in everyday wear. Jewelry can include rings, necklaces, bracelets and various ornaments that are worn on or around the body. Jewelry is made out of all sorts of different material. In some areas, jewelry is made out of bone, wood, or iron. This type of jewelry can be placed in the nose or ear. Jewelry can also be made from teeth, seeds, and shells, along with materials that Americans are accustomed to, such as strings, gold and diamonds.

In Nigeria, a glass bead industry was launched in 1000 BC. Old trade routes produced beads of bone, stone, ivory, seed, ostrich eggshell, metal, and shell. Jewelry is also worn as a sign of wealth, and in West Africa beads are used to decorate furniture, sculpture, and different types of clothing. In Cameroon, Africans dress up their pictures by putting borders of small colorful beads around them. For some rural cultures in Africa, beads were the first form of visual artwork. Some people believe that beads are magical, and some children wear beads on their bodies as charms of good luck and health.

C. Different Clothing and Art Design

Africans have different styles of clothing just like Americans do, and like many other parts of the



world, Africans have also been affected by Western fads. It is not unusual in urban areas to see Africans in a pair of blue jeans and sneakers. On the other hand, there are still Africans, mostly in rural areas, who prefer to dress in more traditional clothing. West African men tend to wear a long, loose, robe or baggy pants, with a loose shirt or tunic. Men also wear loose fitting caps. Many

West African women are usually seen in wrap-around dresses. These dresses are made out of a long cloth that simply wraps around the body in a variety of decorative ways. West African women also wear cloths around their head in the style of a scarf.

The way in which Africans dress depends on the occasion. West Africa is known for tie-dye, wax and starch resist. The raw material of these clothes comes in the form of woven cotton or

imported cloth. Women usually buy two pairs of cloth: one for a shirt, and the other for a wrap around skirt and headscarf. Various types of cloths are found in West Africa. Among them are Bambara cotton blankets, which are made by male



◆ *Antique bronze necklace from Mali. Such jewelry can be worn for numerous celebratory events.*

weavers from Mali. There are also cotton covers, decorative wool blankets, and the famous kente cloth. Nigeria is greatly known for its cloth woven from cotton and silk. Men weave long narrow strips of cloth on horizontal looms and women use broader vertical looms to make wider panels of cloth. Women also use their cloths to make wrap around carriage holders that hold their babies to their chest.

Conclusion

West African art should not be underestimated. Arts are used to perform many different tasks in the West African culture, and serves domestic, social, commercial, and religious purposes. Africans have produced hand-made arts like cloth, baskets, and jewelry for many years. The purpose of this lesson is to develop an appreciation for the different arts that we see and admire. Although there is nothing wrong with admiring a beautiful thing, it is important to learn its history and origins.



◆ *Man displaying a finished indigo tie-dyed cloth in Kano, Nigeria. Documented by Joseph Miller. Copyright © 2000, University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents.*

Adinkra Symbols:	
	greatness, charisma, leadership
	vigilance, wariness
	mercy, nurturing
	patience & tolerance
	understanding, agreement
	peace, harmony
	intelligence, ingenuity
	humility and strength
	love, safety, security
	friendship and interdependence

◆ *Adinkra symbols are traditionally prominent in Ghana. They are also found in numerous places including decorations on walls, pottery, and numerous logos.*

Small Loom Weaving

Objective:

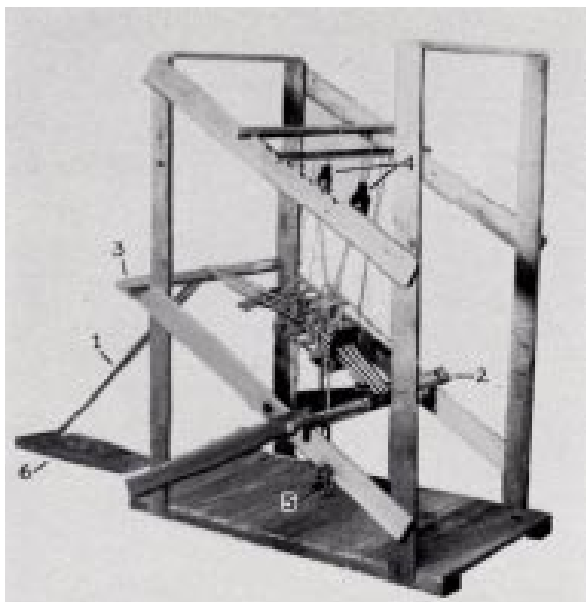
To show how African children build their own looms.



Materials:

- Three 6 x 1/4 dowels
- One chopstick or 1/8 round metal rod
- Two ice cream sticks or tongue depressors
- Cotton thread or thin strong packaging string
- A wooden base

Make a triangular African children's loom by using three dowels. Push the dowels into the wooden base forming a triangle, two at a distance of eight inches for the back of the loom and one centered between these two inches away. Attach a thinner cross stick or metal rod horizontally close to the tops of the first two vertical dowels. You can do this with string or by making two holes through the dowels. Wrap thread around the front dowel and bring it up and over the cross stick and back around the front dowel until 15 to 20 threads are laid out at even distances from one another forming a warp. Make a shuttle using a flat stick or a tongue depressor to hold the cross thread, the weft, which will go over and under the individual warp threads at right angles. Use a second flat stick or tongue depressor to separate odd warp threads from even warp threads to prepare an opening through which the shuttle holding the weft thread can pass. Pack the new weft thread into the warp with your fingers or a comb. Now separate the opposite set of threads in the warp to create a second opening thread, and then pack down tightly towards the first weft thread. Continue by repeating step one, then two.



◆ *Left: A traditional African loom used to create Kente cloth.*

Right: Strips of Kente cloth are combined to produce a larger cloth, however a strip can also be worn as scarf.

Kente Paper Weaving

Objectives:

- Recognize Kente cloth as an African ceremonial cloth, handwoven in strips on a loom.
- Define pattern as lines, colors, and shapes that repeat or alternate.
- Create a paper weaving using a Kente cloth design.



Materials:

- Rulers or 2-inch cardboard strips
- Scissors
- Glue sticks
- 12 x 18 inch construction paper (variety of colors)
- 1/2 inch strips of colored construction or fadeless paper
- Strip of kente cloth (optional)
- Kente reproductions and/or posters

Definitions:

- Kente
- Warp
- Loom
- Pattern
- Weft
- Strip

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Weaving Africa into the Classroom: An FCAT-Based Lesson Plan



Chris Ott



Objectives

1. Learn that African people from different geographic regions have textiles they have adapted for their comfort to suit the various climates.
2. Appreciate the creativity of particular ethnic groups that have developed particular methods, designs, and techniques to express their culture
3. Recognize and name two types of African textiles: Kente cloth and Mud cloth, and describe similarities and differences in how they are made.
4. Students will explore the meaning of colors and symbols for the ideas and beliefs they express.

Vocabulary:

Textile—any loom-woven material such as cloth, tent fabric, or rugs.

Loom—any framework, usually wooden, that holds threads, strings or other spun fibers in parallel rows for weavers.

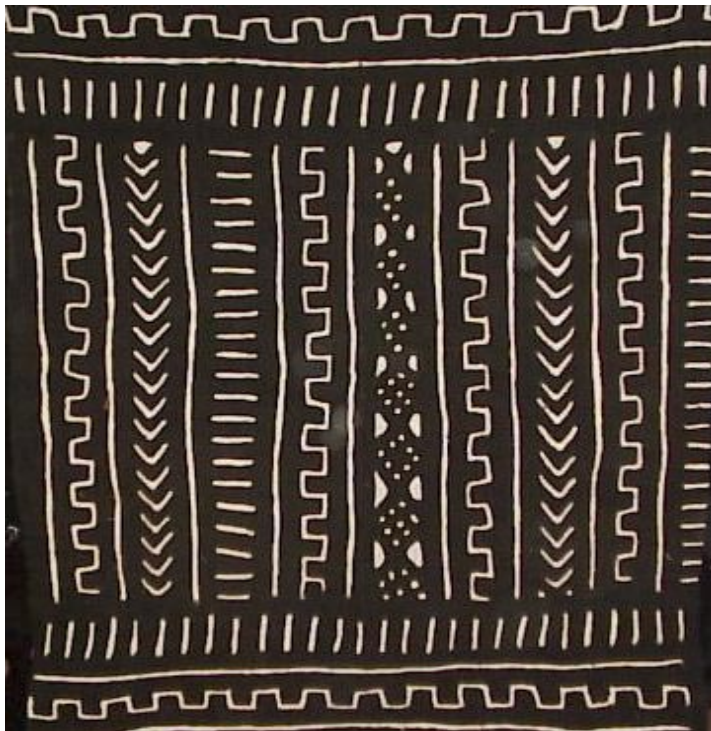
Natural fibers—the hair-like strings from cotton bolls, palm leaves, tree bark, sheep wool or other animal fur, spun into thread.

Introduction

Africa is a huge continent, large enough to hold four and one-half countries the area of the United States of America. It is home to hundreds of different ethnic peoples who speak over seven hundred languages. Anthropologists have found evidence that earth's earliest ancestors inhabited Africa before some migrated out settling in other continents.

African ethnic groups' creativity is demonstrated in part by their adaptation to their environment as well as in their development of unique textiles. After

food, the making of textiles for clothing, food storage, rugs, tents, etc. required the second most amount of time and effort. Throughout Africa's five geographical regions: North, West, Central, South, and East, woven and decorated textiles express the beliefs and ideas of the various indigenous Africans. They learned to clothe and shelter themselves with the available natural fibers found or cultivated in their area. These raw materials include cotton, raffia (from palm leaves), wool, and silk cocoons.



◆ An example of mud cloth, a significant medium for displaying traditional culture using symbols and patterns.

North Africa

For centuries Tunisian ethnic people have tended their sheep in temperatures that fluctuate between extreme daytime heat and below freezing nights. These nomadic people must move their sheep much of the year seeking forage. They depend on the meat, skins, and also process wool for weaving into tents, robes, camel blankets,

and thick rugs to survive low rainfall and sand storms that blow from the northern deserts. These textiles incorporate colors and designs that express their beliefs:

“For the nomadic people and sedentary country of the arid Maghreb lands, textiles were more than just simple necessities in life. They were a mode of creative expression, a way of recording man’s relationship with animals and plants, with the earth and sky, and with the rhythms and forces of nature.”
- Reswick, 1985

Comparing two textiles from Western Africa: The Kente and Mud Cloth

The Bamana speaking people of Mali and the Asante of Ghana design clothing for the rainy and dry seasons in West Africa. The Bamana make Mud cloth, or *bokolanfini*, while the Ashanti design *Kente* cloth. While both cloths are woven by men into narrow strips that are later sewn together to make larger cloths, they express meaning through geometric patterns that are quite different.

Kente cloth is a very tight and precisely woven colorful fabric originally made for royalty. *Kente*’s geometric patterns are woven into the fabric from a broad pallet of brightly dyed silk and/or cotton threads. In contrast, Mud cloth is loosely woven with a few earthtone colors applied as dye to the cloth after weaving. Mud cloth is worn mostly by rural men, since it is cheaper than imported or machine made fabric. *Kente* is worn as a display of status by the wealthy Ashanti and given as gifts on special occasions such as weddings, funerals, etc.

Other Ashanti may own *Kente* outfit that they wear only to commemorate special events.

Kente cloth’s colors and geometric patterns communicate meaning:

“The Ashanti name cloth after famous people (for instance kings or queens), things from nature (like trees and plants), and to express proverbs and social commentary.”
- Luke-Boone, 94



◆ Paramount chief Nana Akyanfu Akowuah Dateh II in Kumase, Ghana, Photograph by Eliot Elisofon, 1970, Eliot Elisofon Photographic Archives, National Museum of African Art

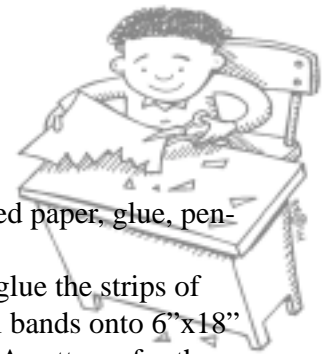
© Copyright: National Museum of African Art/Smithsonian Institution

Traditionally, Mud cloth is made from local materials as follows: women process cotton to remove the seeds and then spin it into yarn onto a spindle. Men use wooden looms to weave the yarn into narrow cotton strips. Next, the plain white strips are stitched side-by-side to make wider cloths. Finally, mud gathered from local ponds is combined with traditional leaves and barks and cooked or fermented to make strong black or deep-woven colored mud dyes. Women apply the mixture as a background color, leaving the base color to show through as geometrical patterns that communicate meanings: “The more complicated patterns consist of many different designs which together often represent a well-known historical event (battle) or commemorate a local hero” (Imperato 37).

Conclusion: Desire for Western factory-produced textiles is causing some types of textiles production to die out. However, interest in some traditional fabrics such as *Kente* cloth and Mud cloth is being revived as designers incorporate them into modern styles.



Lesson plan ideas for kindergarten



Read and discuss *Seven Spools of Thread: A Kwanzaa Story* by Angela Shelf Medearis.

Objectives & Florida Sunshine State Standards

- ⇒ Students will predict what the story is about from hearing the title and illustrations. LAA1.1.1
- ⇒ Students will learn the basic characteristic of fables, stories, and legends LAE 1.1.1

Curriculum:

Phonics / phonemic awareness—Teachers can introduce or review the capital letters S, T, or K from the title during a week when these letters are being featured. Teacher will direct students to examine the title text and have them point out any upper or lower case letters they recognize, as well as the letter sounds and blends—‘Sp’ and ‘Th’ (Spools and Thread) that these letters and digraphs make.

The number 7 — Math is woven into this story. Students can count the spools of thread, colors, ears of corn, brothers, and seven principles of Kwanzaa etc. What other things come in sevens? Days of the week, etc.

Math patterns — Children can recognize AB, ABB, and other patterns in Kente cloth and create their own.

Holidays — Kwanzaa could be studied and compared to Hannukah and Christmas traditions.

Character education — compare the seven principles of Kwanzaa: unity, self-determination, collective work and responsibility, co-operative economics, purpose, creativity, and faith to the character traits taught by your school district. Discuss similarities and differences.

Colors and shapes — Kindergarteners learn to recognize colors and basic geometric shapes.

Ashante Kente cloth is full of colors and they represent specific things. See **Luke-Boone, *African Fabrics*** p 93-94 for wonderful charts of colors and geometric designs and their meanings.

Extending the lesson: Art & Crafts Projects

1. Make paper *Kente* cloth—from **Rodriguez, *Culture Smart*** activity 4. Materials 6”x18” assorted colored paper, 6”x6” assorted colored squares,

1”x18” strips of assorted colored paper, glue, pencils, and scissors.

Direct students to arrange and glue the strips of paper in vertical and horizontal bands onto 6”x18” paper base. Assign AB or ABBA patterns for the vertical strips. Have them think about what personal colors and symbols they could select to represent themselves—ie. soccer balls, cats, horses, etc. Have students draw their symbols onto the center of the 6”x6” assorted colored squares and place these squares onto the center of their *Kente* designs.

2. Weaving Cloth—African Style. See page 25 for simple directions to create a straw loom used to weave a yarn belt. This is for more advanced students, older grades, or for use with aides and volunteers.

3. Adapt children’s Pot Holder looms available at toy stores to weave and link together 3 or more potholders into Kente patterns.

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Popular Culture in Urban Africa

.....  Jennifer Gilbert 

urban Africa are Western productions, the tide is changing. Many self-trained African filmmakers are creating movies that depict African life and culture accurately, “countermanding stereotypical views and assumptions about the continent.” Because these films are created by and for Africans, those who support these films feel a sense of pride and satisfaction at seeing positive portrayals of themselves and their culture. This sense of fulfillment and pride has catapulted this medium to popular status. The social and political aspect of these films has received much support from organizations who view cinema as a means of social change (Martin and O’Meara 284). The concept of social change and commentary is a popular theme in many of the films.

Filmmaking is much more of a “raw” art form in Ghana than in the Francophone countries. Since most producers are self-trained, their continued success is dependent on the popularity of their products. Therefore, many of the Ghanaian videos screened in theatres in Accra, the capital, revolve around themes prevalent in urban life—primarily the struggles which make life so unforgiving and uncompromising. Issues of poverty and the everyday struggle to survive are popular among audiences. In addition, most films are Christian in nature. In fact, the film industry was originally established by Catholic missions as a means of promoting Christian propaganda (Martin and O’Meara 283). Today the film industry in Ghana has become so popular that these videos compete with American and European films shown in Accra, with the former being favored more often, especially on weekends (Meyer 92). While audiences are comprised of both men and women, the popularity of these films is reliant heavily on female viewers since women usually convince their partners to go out to the movies or buy home videos. Most audiences, regardless of their demography, are actively engaged in the viewing experience, often shouting, clapping, and laughing throughout a feature (Meyer 98). Such reactions and engagement are quite similar to audience engagement at theatres in the United States.

Theatre

Theatre in Africa relies much on audience participation and is very different in structure and form from Western theatre, which takes great strides to separate the art from the spectator. Much of popular theatre in Africa is actually “unrehearsed and unscripted” (Martin and

Popular culture is a global trend, influenced in almost every part of the world by western technology and ideals. In order to understand the identity of urban Africans, a study of the African interpretation of this global trend is imperative.

Popular culture is the everyday expression of traditional culture. Whereas traditional cultural studies focus on those aspects of a society which have been passed down throughout generations, the study of popular culture focuses on those aspects of society which are constantly changing. Traditional culture is “static” by definition—it seeks to relive the past and to impart the fundamental values of society. Popular culture, on the other hand, is about the present.

When preparing a unit on African culture and history, it is as important to provide students with an understanding of the popular culture prevalent throughout the continent as it is to provide a historical overview of the region and its emergence from western colonial rule.

The study of popular culture in Africa should follow an examination of the history of colonization. Students should be aware of the European invasion of Africa and the oppressive and violent practices of those nations which controlled most of the continent for nearly 100 years. Because most countries in Africa did not gain independence until late in the 20th century, the European influence is evident in almost every aspect of urban African identity. Therefore, any lesson(s) on popular culture in urban Africa should be the culmination of a larger unit on African history.

While popular culture encompasses almost every aspect of urban life, this paper will explore only popular forms of entertainment, primarily popular cinema, theatre, and music, as they are presented in select urban centers of Africa. Because popular culture is constantly changing, any teacher wishing to include a lesson on popular culture in urban Africa will have to do research independent of the information provided in this article.

Cinema

Cinema in Africa began as a tool for western propaganda, both political and religious. According to Phyllis M. Martin and Patrick O’Meara, popular cinema in Africa today is “a medium for social change”. While many of the films popular today in

O'Meara 280). Performances, for instance, can take place on city buses where riders first find themselves amidst a comedy of errors in which everyone becomes involved. Not all theatrical performances are unscripted, however. Theatre in Africa is evolving into an art form similar to that of Western societies, with the phenomenon of the theatre artist beginning to take shape. Theatre artists can consist of groups of professionals who became known through school drama activities or they can be individuals who received formal education and training in theatrical arts. During the years when most countries began to gain independence, theatre existed as a medium for social and political satire and exists today to fulfill the same agendas.



“Unlike Western theatre, which relies mainly on the language of the colonizer, popular theatre speaks the language—slang, effete mannerisms, and all—of the person on the street and the neighbor next door. It communicates with the struggling urban worker and satirizes the boss/bossed relationship that townspeople are only too familiar with.” - Martin and O'Meara

◆ The community gathers around a local band performing in an open market. Performances such as this one are common in Africa. The public is able to participate by dancing and singing along.

In this form of theatre, audience participation is common. Comments from audience members during shows are worked into the production, with the actors interacting with the audience (Martin and O'Meara 281).

The prevalence of the struggles of urban life in African theatre and cinema are examples of western influence on African culture. With development and industrialization come new struggles of poverty for Africans. Africans have taken these influences and through the artistic expressions of cinema and theatre created an urban identity as much African as it is Western.

music as is the case with hip-hop. The hip-hop movement in Cape Town emerged in the early 80's before hip-hop became a commercial success in America (Faber 1).

Popular music in Africa is further fueled by popular urban radio stations, which air everything from African Reggae to Rock. Like popular cinema and theatre, pop music in Africa is a medium of expression and opportunity for Africans to explore cultural identity in their own terms.

The hegemonic global culture has continued to feed into Africa for years through the use of popular culture. In the end, however, the hegemonic global structure is being transformed and subdued to the popular culture of urban Africa.

Music

The popular music scene in the urban centers of Africa is largely influenced by Americanism. MTV permeates popular television, beaming new stars everyday to urban teenagers. Although many of the pop and rock stars appreciated by African youths are Americans or Europeans, a new trend of western-influenced African popular music is beginning to take root. The infusion of western pop sounds are being infused by traditional African beats and languages, and many musicians are beginning to take their music abroad to the American and European markets.

While popular music in Africa is greatly influenced by the west, African pop artists are creating their own identities through their music. They are creating African interpretations of popular western musical art forms. African popular music has also influenced American



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Loosening Up the Soul: Festival, Dance, and Ritual in Central Africa

..... Elizabeth Frank

Humans need rituals and celebrations; these activities help us to live through somber events in our lives and allow us time and space in which to celebrate the joyful events (Mbiti 143). In African society, life without music, song, dance and worship of God is unimaginable; there is no such thing as an African atheist (Ajani). African festival, music and dance interweave with spirituality and give people a chance to act out their emotions, thus satisfying their spirits (Mbiti 67).

Although traditional festivals in smaller communities have dwindled as nationally-sponsored festivals are organized and Islamic and Christian festivals become more widespread many people maintain traditional beliefs and customs (Mbiti 143). Before we glimpse at a birth festival in Cameroon, the *Obango Dance* of Gabon, or the *Ndombolo Dance* of Rwanda, it is important to understand African ritual and dance in general.

Rituals have vital functions in society. In a sometimes confusing and turbulent world, rituals can create a sense of certainty, familiarity and unity among people who need to feel a part of a group. Also, rituals can be a way to teach children through words, symbols and actions. The words, songs, dances and actions of African rituals are living belief systems. No written texts are needed when rituals allow the celebration of life and our creative participation in the universe.

African rituals can be divided into two groups. The first type revolves around an individual's lifecycle. For example, birth or funeral festivals, naming ceremonies, teething, puberty, engagement, marriage, childbearing, eldership and old age. These occasions tell the individual that she matters, is valuable and unique, and a member of a community. They also provide a clear view of the chain of increasing responsibility, a view which stimulates courage for challenges to come.



◆ *Josephine Badinga, a local instructor of Soukous dance from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) dancing to Central African music.*

The second type of ritual focuses on a group of people. For example, a community-centered ritual might ceremonialize the changing of seasons, a war, raids, or natural disasters. In rural, agriculturally-based communities, rain-making ceremonies can be central. Rain-makers begin their prayers right at the start of the rainy season. These ceremonies focus on the renewal and sanctification of life. The entire farming process is met with the same attitude of reverence. Ceremonies are organized when a field is cleared so that the spirits of the trees which were cut down will be able to live peacefully. Times of planting seeds, weeding and tasting the first fruits of a harvest are ritualized. Harvest ceremonies allow the food to be blessed or made clean and allow the people to express their gratitude. These festivals are times for people to relax, dance, eat, rest, let the earth rest and prepare to enjoy other creative activities (Mbiti 131-136). Aside from agriculture, there are rituals for other significant purposes

such as health rituals that ensure good health, heal, prevent danger, cure barrenness, remove impurities, and protect animals, people, and crops (Mbiti 139). Finally, there are rituals focusing on homes and groups of people who share a common profession (Mbiti 140). During festivals, people are entertained and a sensitivity to unity and common values is nourished. Expressions of artistry and prayer intermingle in an atmosphere where the worlds of the visible and the invisible exist for people at the center (Mbiti 143).

People moving to urban areas are challenged to find ways to balance modern living with their need for ritual and celebration in community. Sometimes people create a new organization to satisfy these needs. The term “religious syncretism” has been created to describe churches in which popular culture is mixed with Christianity. Because these churches are able to incorporate elements of the traditional African religions such as the dancing and musical instruments in songs, they have been very successful (Jegede 276). Even some Muslim churches are including some swaying and clapping during the chanting of melodious verses. Churches that used to forbid dancing now use traditional African instruments in the services (Welsh-Asante 172-173). By showing empathy for people and offering support in individuals’ marriages, finances and professional and social lives these organiza-



◆ *Dance at an Independence Day Celebration, Gabon*
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tions become like families for people in the cities (Jegede 278). Often, people look forward to returning home for their former community’s annual festivals in order to pledge loyalty to the community’s practices and to be renewed (Jegede 275).

African dance was created to allow human bodies to participate in the sacred. Dancing gives praise, thanks, asks for blessings, relieves, bal-

ances positive and negative aspects of life, acknowledges power and celebrates. Dance communicates on the multiple levels of time, space, motion, and through all of the human senses (Welsh-Asante 186). According to Welsh-

Asante, all African dance originates in sacred masquerades. Ancient masks are where the spirits who introduced singing, dancing and music into the world live. New masks symbolize heroes and ancestors. Masks are criticized by new religions, but enjoyed in communities where they never fail to fascinate children (Welsh-Asante 164-165).

Ceremonial dances make up the majority of traditional dances and can be divided into two groups: sectarian and communal. Sectarian dances are held for lifecycle events related to aging, becoming a man or woman, weddings and births or for groups who share an occupation. Communal dances are related to harvests, celebrating heroes, funerals and coronation (Welsh-Asante 167-169).

In urban areas, popular dances can be called



◆ *The significance of ceremonies in African society can be seen as people progress through their life. Most African dances take place as rituals in which the entire village participates. The dancers interact directly with the rest of the people. Ceremonies are ways of participating in activities such as music, arts, song, dance and other forms of expression. Here, the Gambian National Dance Troup performs a traditional dance for the community to experience.*

“social functional dances,” an off-shoot of the sacred masquerade. This “social functional” category encompasses contemporary religious and cultural revival dance shows such as the video production entitled *Ipi Ntombi* (2001). Dazzling national festivals of art promote national identity in reaction to years of humiliation. Of course, African dances also include night club and recreational dances, and entertainment dances range from those which are created to honor visitors to street entertainers’ dances (Welsh-Asante 170-173).

Since dance is such an integral part of social life, it is always a part of important rituals celebrating lifecycle events (Enc. of Dance 88). In Cameroon, at a birth ceremony, the community gathers in the *ndo wayn* (“born house”) to celebrate with the mother, father and baby. People bring a lot of food for a feast. During the festival and dancing, songs are created spontaneously. This festival reinforces the values of a community because participants are given complete freedom to praise or criticize others. People who do not want to be exposed at such gatherings will avoid

behaving irresponsibly. The atmosphere of the festival remains light-hearted as everyone is happy about the baby which is now considered the community’s child to raise (Mbeh).

The *Obango Dance* is from the *Fang* ethnic group in Gabon. The dance is said to loosen up the soul within the body in preparation for its joyful meeting with its ancestors. One voice sings solo as the

group echoes in chorus. The harp, which is the most important instrument, is said to be played by spirits of ancestors or angels (in Christian terms). It is the voice of the sister of God and has the power to clean out the chapel, and carry prayers to heaven. The sounding box symbolizes a womb, the spiritual source of life. Antelope skin covering the harp is painted red and white to symbolize males and females while the high and low pitches symbolize the female and male voices harmonizing in ceremonies. The strings of sinew symbolize endurance and flexibility (Equatorial Microcosm, program notes).

In Rwanda, the *Congolese Ndombolo Dance* will always liven up a party. *Ndombolo* means “crazy.” The philosophy of the dance is to make the craziest motions imaginable. The elegant rhythms, which are best when produced only by the hands and feet, balance this craziness. The dance transcends barriers of age, class, group or country (Rwanda 71).

In Africa, festival, dance and ritual are interwoven in daily life. From this beautiful and vibrant tapestry we can learn that sometimes life’s most important values and lessons are taught, without books or desks, through a community celebrating with ritual and dance together.

Activities

(Emphasis on Pre-school and Kindergarten)

- To study Africa, it is necessary to teach correct language so as to support an atmosphere of mutual respect. See the lesson in "Teaching African Heritage to Pre-School Children" *Black Books Bulletin* W 74 v2, 3 & 4 p34-39 for lesson plans, specifically Lesson 2 entitled, "Oops! I Didn't Say That!"
- Discuss ceremonies and why they are important. See *International Fall Festivals. Projects and Patterns for Holiday Gifts, Greetings, Ornaments, Decorations, and Classroom Displays. A Seasonal Idea/Activity Book for Grades 1-6*. New Jersey, U.S.: 1994.
- Introduce the body as a rhythmic instrument (clapping, stomping). Brainstorm ways to make percussive sounds with body. Introduce rhythm. See *African Songs and Rhythms for Children*, Folkways: Cambridge, 1978, and *Making and Playing Homemade Instruments*, Cathy Fink and Marcy Marxer, Home-spun Video, 1989. There are lots of activities and crafts (including a way to make masks) in *Learning* Feb. 91, Vol. 19, Iss. 6, pp. 32-39.
- Listen to some African music and learn a song. Explore the highly-rated African Lullaby CD of various artists, released 1999 and above African Songs cassette and teacher's guide.
- Talk about dance in Africa as it relates to environment. A traditional Rwandan dance is called the *cow dance* in which arms are held out like the horns and feet are stomping (Rwanda 71). Make up a dance imitating something in our environment. View *African Healing Dance*, a video with lead dancer Wyoma and the dancers and drummers of the Damballa dance troupe. It is a step-by-step dance course on healing traditions and spiritual movements that are special to the African dance heritage (1997) (Description from Amazon.com)
- Combine dance with instruments. Model dance after the dances in Chad in which children circle around with instruments and take turns dancing in the middle, oldest first. (JVC video Anth. Vol. 18 program notes)

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African Culture in the Classroom:

Cash Crops

.....  Peggy Ferguson 

Have you ever wondered while eating a delicious Hershey's candy bar where that chocolate got its beginning? What about the coffee beans that were ground to make your coffee and that sweet-tasting sugar in it?

This article will discuss some things that may be surprising about the origin of these products. As you may know, the main cash crops of Africa include coffee, palm fruits, rubber, cashews, tobacco, coconuts, cotton, sugarcane, cocoa, and tea. The principal beverage crops of Africa are tea, coffee, cocoa, and grapes.

Beverage Production

The largest producers of tea, grown mainly in highland regions, are Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique. Major coffee producers include Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, and Madagascar. Cocoa, best suited to tropical regions, is cultivated in West Africa. Grapes, produced in northern Africa and South Africa, are used primarily for making wine. These are all important cash crops, grown mainly for export. This article will focus on coffee, cocoa, tea, and sugar. A description of each as well as information about where it's grown is given. Finally, I will discuss the exportation and production of each.



◆ Fully grown coffee plant. Courtesy of www.coffeeresearch.org

Agriculture plays a central role in the economies of nations throughout Africa, accounting for between 30% and 60% of all economic production. In many African nations, a majority of the people are engaged in farming, producing goods for domestic use and sometimes for export as well. Peasant and subsistence farming is the basic form of agriculture in most parts of the continent.

Agriculture practices in Africa are extremely varied. Many of the differences are related to the continent's environmental diversity—it's great range of landscapes and climates. Crops and farming methods are suitable

for the dry, desert regions of North Africa and are quite different from those appropriate for the tropical rain forests of central Africa.

Since colonial times, the export of raw materials (agricultural and mineral commodities) has been the mainstay of African economies. Most of the export earnings of more than half of all African countries derive from a single commodity, either a mineral or an agricultural product. Some countries have fairly diversified export sectors, especially South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mauritius, Morocco, and Tunisia; they export manufactured products in addition to various primary commodities.

Trading Partners

The industrial countries of the northern hemisphere are Africa's principal trading partners—notably France, Germany, Belgium, Italy, Spain, the United Kingdom, the United States and Japan. Among the African trading nations, South Africa is the main supplier to markets in southern Africa. Côte d'Ivoire is an important supplier to

western Africa and supplies much of eastern Africa.

Agriculture remains the backbone of most African economies, affecting the well being of virtually all Africans in terms of household income, food security, and the national economy.

Africa and U. S. Trade

Two-way trade between the United States and Sub-Saharan Africa recovered strongly in 2000 from a lackluster performance in 1999, propelled by surging prices for imported crude oil and modest increases in the U.S exports to South Africa and Nigeria. Total trade (imports plus exports) soared by 50% to \$29.4 billion. The United States is Africa's largest single market, purchasing 19% of the region's exports in 1999.

Some mornings when you awake, what smell greets

your nose? Ahh! The great aroma of coffee perking when you first wake up! The smell lifts you to your feet and gets you started for the day. The smell engulfs the entire house.

Coffee

Coffee is an evergreen shrub or small tree, generally 5m to 10m in height, indigenous to Asia and tropical Africa. Wild trees grow to 10m, but cultivated shrubs are pruned to a maximum of 3m. The dried seeds (beans) are roasted, ground and brewed in hot water to provide the world's most popular non-alcoholic beverage. Coffee is native to east Africa, and was used first in Ethiopia, although coffee is not widely used in Africa now. Arabs were the first to brew coffee and the use spread from Arabia to Egypt and then to Europe. Coffee was particularly popular in England. Coffee fruit is an accessory berry - the floral cup, exocarp, mesocarp and endocarp are called the parchment. Each fruit contains two seeds (beans), mostly endosperm. Coffee is grown in tropical and subtropical climates with fertile soils and 75" of rainfall, but, also requires a dry season for flower development. Trees begin production during a three-year period and produce for 40 years. Coffee is usually picked by hand. Its processing begins with the separation of the seeds from the fruit which are then fermented and roasted. Brazil currently leads the world in coffee production.

Ethiopia's economy is based primarily on agriculture (primary goods), which accounts for about 45% of its GDP, 90% of its exports, and 80% of total employment. Coffee is Ethiopia's largest export and generates 60% of all its export earnings. The coffee business employs about one of every four people in the country. Among the many African countries that grow coffee are Zaire, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Ghana, Burundi, Nigeria, Rwanda, Angola, Congo, and Cote d'Ivoire. Coffee was considered a potent medicine, as well as a religious potion that helped people remain awake during prayers. Pilgrims of Islam spread the coffee throughout the Middle East and by the end of the 15th century, coffeehouses had replaced mosques as favorite meeting places. With the spread of Ethiopian coffee from Africa to the Middle East, India, Europe, and the Americas, it became one of the most popular blends of coffee in the world. Even great coffee businesses like Maxwell House and Folgers 'lust' for this type of coffee blend.

The production of coffee has not changed much since the 10th century. Nearly all of Ethiopia's coffee bean production is still by hand, from the planting of new trees to the final pickings, which are then sent to



◆ Roasted coffee beans. Courtesy of www.coffeeresearch.org

the big warehouse in Addis Ababa.

Ethiopia produces primarily Arabic coffee from wild trees in the provinces of Djimmah, Sidamo, Lekempti and Salo in the west and southwest. Ethiopia is believed to be one of the two birthplaces of the coffee bean. Addis Ababa, its capital, is the chief interior coffee market. The primary names for Ethiopian coffee are Abyssinian and Djimmahand Harar, which is also known as Harrar and Harari. Harari is the most noted coffee of Ethiopia grown in plantations near the ancient capital of Harare, which is both a city and province in the country.

Ethiopia's annual production of coffee is between 140,000 and 180,000 tons. About 44% of the coffee produced in Ethiopia is exported to other countries (Italy, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Djibouti, Germany, Japan, Saudi Arabia, France, and the United States. Ethiopians consume half of the coffee produced in Ethiopia.

Cocoa

Cocoa is widely grown in the tropics, usually at altitudes less than 300m above sea level, where it needs a fairly high rainfall and good soil. Cocoa trees can take up to four years from planting before producing sufficient fruit for harvesting. The tree is highly vulnerable to pests and diseases, and it is also very sensitive to climate changes. Dutch cocoa is made by pressing out fat (cocoa butter) to create a dry powder that is treated with alkali. The continuous stirring of a mixture of chocolate liquor, cocoa butter, sugar and condensed milk produces milk chocolate.

Cocoa trees grow about 60 feet in the wild, but in order for workers to reach the pods at harvest time, plantation owners trim them to about 20 ft. Since the

cocoa tree prefers shade, banana trees, rubber trees, or coconut palms are planted beside the cocoa tree in the orchard.

The pods take 5 to 6 months to develop. When the pods ripen they turn from green or yellow to orange or red. Cocoa trees can be harvested twice a year. Workers use a machete to cut the pods off the trees. They are placed on banana leaves in large wooden boxes. They are left to ferment for several days.

After fermentation, the beans are sun-dried for several days. They are then packed in burlap sacks and shipped to factories. When the beans arrive at the chocolate factory they are sorted, cleaned, and depending on the bean, roasted in large revolving drums at 2500 to 3500 degrees for 30 minutes to 2 hours.

After roasting, the beans are winnowed, a process that removes the outer shell. The shells are sold as animal feed. The inner nib is then crushed, heated to melt the cocoa butter and ground to a thick paste. The paste is called chocolate liquor, but contains no alcohol.

If left untreated, the chocolate liquor becomes cocoa powder. To make cocoa powder, a large press extracts all but 10-25% of the cocoa butter from the chocolate liquor. The remaining cake is then ground and sifted through fine nylon, silk, or wire mesh. Low-fat cocoa contains between 10-13% fat where high fat contains 15-25%. Low-fat cocoa is used to flavor desserts.

Currently, cocoa beans are grown in tropical countries such as Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Brazil and Indonesia, which together account for about 74% of world's cocoa production. Cocoa farmers receive only about 5% of the profit from chocolate and little of this cocoa is actually processed in these countries. Only six transnational companies account for 80% of the world chocolate market. Five of the six are European: Nestle, Euchred, Mars, Cadbury and Ferrari, which together account for 74% of the world's chocolate sales. The EU consumes 40% of the world's cocoa.

About half of the working population of Ghana depends on cocoa in some way, and 43% of national income is derived from cocoa production. All West African cocoa belong to the Amazonian Forester group, which now accounts for more than 80% of world cocoa production. It includes the Maldonado variety, which is suitable for chocolate manufacturing and is grown in Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire and Nigeria. About 90% of all cocoa produced is used in chocolate-making, for which extra cocoa butter is added, as well as other substances such as sugar and milk in the case of milk chocolate.

After coffee and sugar, cocoa is the most important agricultural export commodity in international trade. The world's leading exporters of cocoa beans in 1997/98



◆ *The cocoa plant grows mainly in tropical areas of the world. Observe the shape of the cocoa.*

were Cote d'Ivoire (964,400 tons), Ghana (325,519 tons), Indonesia (225,951 tons), Nigeria (143,150 tons). Principal importers of cocoa are developed countries with market economies, which account for about 80% of cocoa imports from developing countries. The principal importing countries in 1997-98 included the USA (with 426,873 tons, representing 19.2% of the total), the Netherlands (320,173 tons) and Germany (308,759 tons).

Africa produces as much as 2/3 of the world's cocoa beans, which are often blended with those from other parts of the world to create chocolate. However, it is possible to buy chocolate candy made entirely from African beans. For instance, a Lexington, Kentucky firm, Chocolate by Jamieson, Ltd., has recently begun selling chocolate bars in the United States made entirely from Ghanaian cocoa beans. The chocolate is processed and blended in Ghana and then exported to the U.S. in 12-lb blocks. The molding into individual bars and the wrapping are done in Kentucky.

Ghanaian beans usually command a premium price on the London Cocoa Exchange and the New York Commodities Exchange, which set world cocoa prices. Today, with

the Ivory Coast leading, Ghana is the world's second largest cocoa producer. Cocoa beans and related products, such as cocoa butter and processed chocolate, are the second largest foreign exchange earners for Ghana, generating \$525 million in revenue each year. Gold is the first earning \$585 million.

Sugarcane

Sugarcane is grown on about 90% of the cultivated land area and accounts for 25% of export earnings of Mauritius. The majority of the labor force in Mauritius is construction and industry (36%), services (24%), agriculture and fishing (14%), trade, restaurants, hotels (16%), transportation and communication (7%), and finance (3%).

From the sugarcane fields to our tables, sugar is one of the chief crops of Africa. Sugar is used in almost

everything we eat and drink. What about that cake and ice cream when you celebrate a holiday? I bet it came from a country in Africa. Let's explore wonders of sugar and it's beginning.

Sugar is a sweet crystalline substance, which may be derived from the juices of various plants. Chemically, the basis of sugar is sucrose, one of a group of soluble carbohydrates, which are important sources of energy in the human diet. It can be obtained from trees, including maple and certain palms, but virtually all manufactured sugar comes from plants such as sugar beet and sugar cane. Sugar cane, found in tropical areas, grows to a height of up to 5m. Many African countries including Mauritius and Zambia grow sugarcane. It is grown on about 90% of the cultivated land area and accounts for 25% of export earnings for Mauritius.



◆ Top: *Tea Gardens in the Nandi Hills, Kenya. Documented by Benjamin, Daniel.*
Above: *The Gunaid plantation for growing sugar cane was a government project started in the 1960s. Blue Nile Province, Sudan.*
Both photos: Copyright © 2000, University of Wisconsin System Board of Regents.

Tea

Tea has green shiny pointed leaves and was originally indigenous to China and India. In its wild state, tea grows best in regions which enjoy a warm, humid climate with a rainfall measuring at least 100 centimeters a year. Ideally, it likes deep, light, acidic and well-drained soil. Given these conditions, tea will grow in areas from sea level up to altitudes as high as 2,100 meters above sea level. Tea varies in flavor and charac-

teristics according to the type of soil, altitude and climate conditions of the area in which it is grown. The way it is processed also affects the flavor and characteristic, as does the blending of different teas from different areas.

Today, tea is grown on estates or smallholdings. A smallholding is privately owned and can be as small as .5 hectares or can cover several hectares. In various countries where tea is grown on smallholdings, co-operatives are formed to build a tea-processing factory central to a smallholders. The owners of the smallholders sell their plucked leaf to the factory for processing. An estate is a self-contained unit, often hundreds of hectares in size, housing its own factory, tea fields, schools, hospital, staff houses and gardens, places of worship, reservoir and guest house. Many African countries including Malawi and Kenya produce and export tea.

Teacher's Corner

Goals

- ⇒ Students should be aware of import and export
- ⇒ To understand the production of agricultural products
- ⇒ The impact of production on economics
- ⇒ Careers in agriculture impact every part of society
- ⇒ Geographical make-up of Africa and its effect on cash crop production
- ⇒ The different cash crops grown in countries of Africa

Vocabulary

- | | | |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Cash crop | 2. Cocoa beans | 3. Pods |
| 4. Import | 5. Coffee Beans | 6. Subsistence |
| 7. Root crop | 8. Seed crops | 9. Savanna |
| 10. Export | | |

Activities

- 1 Have students compare and contrast two cash crops and then write a one-sentence summary.
- 2 Students may use a map of Africa to color in the regions where the cash crops are grown.
- 3 Students may create tables including the names of crops and countries where grown and an illustration.
- 4 Use graphs and tables showing cash crops data and allow students to create at least two FCAT type questions using the data found on the graph or table.
- 5 Use newspapers or magazines to find relevant articles about agricultural production in Africa. Then students should create at least 3-4 FCAT-type questions in cooperative groups.
- 6 Choose literature titles that have a chocolate theme for students to read and use CRISS strategies to complete language arts, math, and social science activities.
- 7 Chocolate Heaven-You may also want to serve this with hot chocolate. Tell the students that cocoa and chocolate are made from the beans of cacao trees, which are found in the tropical rainforests of Africa. Ask students to name some different kinds of chocolate and ways in which it is used.
Recipe for Old-fashioned hot chocolate:
Mix together 1/3 cup of cocoa, 1 sugar and 3 quarts of milk in a saucepan over medium heat (serves ~15 students) Enjoy!

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Listing of websites

Agriculture & Economic Growth

- <http://www.usaid.gov/regions/afr/growth.html>
US African Trade Profile. Prepared by: G. Feldman, Department of Commerce, International Trade Administration, and Office of Africa
<http://www.newafricaation.org/das01/ecooo11ob.htm>
- #### African Cocoa
- <http://www.newafrica.com/cocoa/summary.asp>
Agricultural News from Africa: Africa Coffee News, 2000. <http://www.newafrica.com>
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<http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/95fact/et.html/>
- #### Tea Plantation to Cup
- http://www.hollandbymail.nl/tea/tea_manufacturing.html
- #### Mauritius
- <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/Ghana>
- #### Ghana
- <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/Cocoa Growing Countries>
http://www.caburyschweppes.com/faq/cocoa_growing_countries.html
David Johnson. Ghana's Sweet Success Story
http://www.africana.com/dailyarticles/index_20000413htm.
- #### The World Factbook 2001- Rwanda
- <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/rw.html>
- #### Tea Producing Nations
- <http://hjem.get2net.dk/bnielsen/teanations.html>
- #### How Chocolate is Made
- <http://library.thinkquest.org/J0110012/made.htm>
- #### Kwaanza Themes and Activities for Children
- <http://www.childfun.com/themes/kwaanza/shtml>
http://www.sas.upenn.edu/African_studies/country_specific/Ethiopia.htm
<http://www.twinside.org.sg/econ.htm>

- ◆ *Cover: Wedding basket with engraved calabashes, fibers, and gourds.*

The Ga'anda people in the Gongola River region of Nigeria consider gourds, items of significance. The groom's family offers a basket such as this one, filled with decorated gourds to the bride. Reprinted with permission. © Fowler Museum of Cultural History, University of California, Los Angeles.



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