

Taking Africa to the Classroom

2007-2008



Irohin

2007-2008

Irohin

Taking Africa to the Classroom



A publication of the Center for African Studies

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African Studies Center for

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 only nine in the U.S., Florida's is the only Center located in the Southeastern US. 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. The following are some of the regular activities which fall under the Outreach Program.

3 Ghanian women

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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 Africa-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's libraries.

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 and articles in this issue of *Irohin* were written by participants in the 2006 and 2007 institutes. Please feel free to use these materials in your teaching and share them with other teachers.

Write or call the Center for African Studies for additional copies or download this issue, as well as previous ones in PDF format at

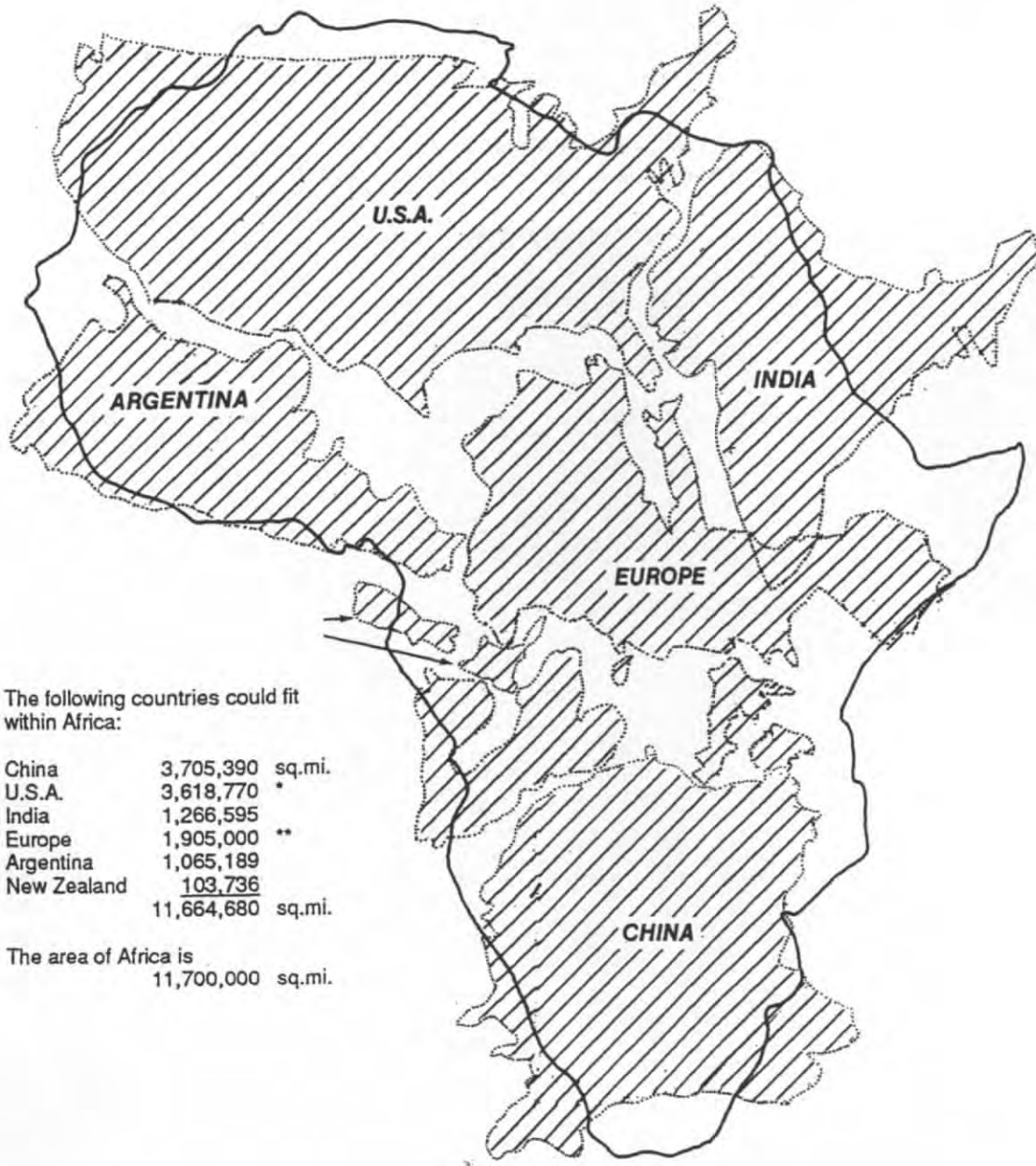
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Participants in the 2007 Summer Institute:

Agnes Ngoma Leslie (Institute Director), William Derousie, Rose Lugano (faculty), Baruti Katembo, Maryjo Tracy, April Palmer, Robert Herssels. **Kneeling:** Susan David, Jamie Friedrich, Fred Koerner, Sandra Lyall, and Melissa Olver

Would You Believe?



The following countries could fit within Africa:

China	3,705,390	sq.mi.
U.S.A.	3,618,770	*
India	1,266,595	
Europe	1,905,000	**
Argentina	1,065,189	
New Zealand	103,736	
	11,664,680	sq.mi.

The area of Africa is
11,700,000 sq.mi.

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Irohin 2006 Articles

Africa in Books for Classrooms

Roxanne Anderson

Africa is the most misunderstood and most misrepresented place in the world. Many mistake Africa as being a country when in fact it is a continent with 54 countries and over 1100 spoken languages. It is the second largest continent in the world and is more than three times the size of the U.S. Africa is presented to the world by distorted images from the media as being backwards, uncivilized, underdeveloped, starving and rampant with disease and death. When something happens in one African country, all of Africa is identified with it. What goes unreported is how truly modern, rich, and developed many countries in Africa really are.

Heritage, culture, traditions and family are all very important and diverse throughout the countries of Africa. As time passes, Africans pass stories of the past on to their young so that their roots will never be forgotten. The history of Africa is sung by professional storytellers called griots.

Resource Books

Faraway Drums by Virginia Kroll is a story about an African child who had relocated to the U.S. remembering her heritage as told by her grandmother. The child was taking care of her younger sister while her mother had to work. The children were a little frightened by the sounds they heard outside the apartment. So the oldest child uses sounds from home such as elephants charging, lions roaring, monkeys chattering to replace the noisy street sounds of the U.S. and to comfort her younger sister.

The Children of Egypt by Matti A. Pitkanen is a story showing the modern Egypt while not forgetting the ancient heritage. It talks about skyscrapers and homes made with mud bricks existing almost side-by-side

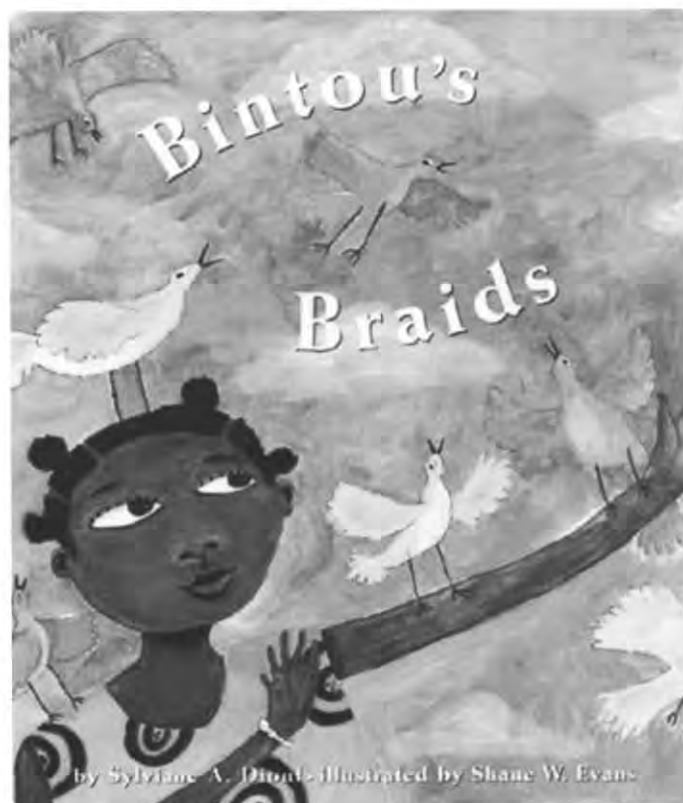
Mali Land of Gold and Glory by Joy Masoff is a book that describes the griot (the singer of history and celebration) and their importance. The book also describes at a child's level about trade, natural resources, the main waterways and basic information about the countries of Africa.

Beatrice's Goat by Page McBrier is a story of a child who is given a goat and is able to lift her family out of poverty using the goat. The goat provided the family with milk to drink and to sell. This gave the family money to buy a school uniform and a new house with a steel roof. This book also shows a school that is

located outside under a shady tree with wooden benches.

Africa can come alive through children's literature. It portrays the past, geography, regions, fashions, styles, dance, art, music, society, and traditions. It can also link the U.S. with the numerous influences of the many African cultures.

Bintou's Braids by Sylviane A. Diouf is a story about a small African girl who can't wait to be grown up so she can have her hair braided like the older girls. She saves her two cousins from drowning by going through the briars where no one else could go to seek help. As a reward, her grandmother gives her hair ornaments, which make her feel grown up and she learns the value of helping others.



Nobia's Well by Donna W. Guthrie is a modern African folktale, which describes a young boy's way of life in a village. It pictures his humble abode made from dry grass and mud and how precious water can be during the drought season. This book

shows that water jars were carried on the top of people's heads for great distances. The folktale tells how this young, unselfish boy saved his animal friends and how they helped him to dig a well when he didn't believe it could be done.

***I Am Eyes - Ni Macho* by Leila Ward** is about a girl who identifies what she sees to bring your focus on various wonders of Africa.

***Jaffa's Father* by Hugh Lewin** tells about the Bluegum and baobab trees, and about a *weir* (a small dam across a river). It also describes the importance of family closeness.

***Birthday* by John Steptoe** is a story about an African family where both parents had been enslaved in America but were returned to Africa. When the first-born child has a birthday, they have a large celebration with drums, bongos, horns, singing and dancing, and a prayer. Then all the neighborhood joins in feasting.

***I Lost My Tooth in Africa* by Penda Diakite** explains what an African child in Mali (West Africa) would do when the African Tooth Fairy visits.

***Kente Colors* by Debbi Chocolate** is a book that explains



the history and traditions of the cloth used by the Ashanti people of Ghana. It also explains what each color in the cloth means.

***Fatuma's New Cloth* by Leslie Bulion** is a story with a moral about a visit to an African outdoor market. It shows the kanga cloth and explains its significance and also gives a recipe for chai (a tea). Swahili moral: Don't judge the tea by its color (Don't judge a book by its cover).

***Catch that Goat* by Polly Alakija** is a story about a little girl's goat that runs rapidly through a Nigerian street market and

collects items throughout his journey. It is a fun book for children to see what is sold in markets and also as a task to remembering the items that were taken by the goat.

***I Love My Hair!* By Natasha Anastasi** is a story of an African American girl celebrating her identity.

The many regions of Africa include mountains, savannas/grasslands, deserts, forests, and wetlands. Thirty-five percent of Africa has seasonal rainfall (grassland/savanna). The Kalahari Desert covers 80% of Botswana. The Sahara Desert in North Africa is almost the size of the U.S. and is the largest desert in the world. Despite the hot temperature (up to 136 degrees Fahrenheit) animals and plants abound there. Plants such as the watermelon and others with large tubers can survive the extreme heat. Date palms also have adapted to the climate giving fruit, wood that is used to build, and leaves, which may be woven into baskets. Desert crops include tobacco, grapes, rubber, sisal, cotton, rice and peanuts. Desert creatures abound and include zebra, wildass, wild horses, fox, jackal, hyena (aardwolf), ostrich, gerbils, jerboas, and various insects.

The three major mountainous areas of Africa are the Atlas Mountains in the north, the Drakensberg Mountains of the south, and ones located in the Great Rift Valley in the east. There are also smaller mountains in different locations of Africa including the middle of the Sahara Desert. Animals that may be found in these regions include Barbary squirrels, golden eagles, lammergeiers (gray backed vultures), red crossbills, owls, golden jackals and geckos.

Tropical rain forests are found in Central and West Africa. These rain forests have three layers, a canopy which has the tallest trees and plentiful sunlight. The under story which is home to many animals, and the forest floor which is quite dark, warm and humid. Trees of the forests include the African rubber and are homes for many birds, monkeys, and insects. The under story is the habitat for toucans (birds), mambas (snakes), squirrels, monkeys, and other primates. On the forest floor we find chameleons, leopards, giant snails, antelope, Goliath frogs, jaguars, pangolins (scale-covered anteaters), elephants, and the Okapis (horse-like head, legs striped like a zebra but related to the giraffe). The average temperature may be 80 degrees Fahrenheit and the average annual rainfall is 165 inches in some areas. Less than ten percent of the original forests remain today due to loggers and it is estimated that the forests will disappear within fifty years. The mountain areas may have deep gorges and cliffs. Throughout the various geographical regions animals have adapted themselves to the diverse climates.

Calabash Cat and his Amazing Journey

by James Rumford is about a cat that goes on a journey across desert on a camel, the grasslands on a horse, the jungle on a tiger, the ocean on a whale and the sky on an eagle and ended up around the world (over the ocean, then jungle, then grassland, then desert).

***Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain* by Verna Aardema** is a book that portrays animals and habitats from Africa. The book is a folktale that resembles "The House that Jack Built.



My Christmas Safari by Fran Manushkin is a fun way to sing about a safari using the tune to "The 12 Days of Christmas".

We're Going on a Lion Hunt by David Axtell is a fun way to involve children using movement to go through long grasses, a lake, a swamp, and a cave a back home as you hunt a lion. This activity resembles "Going on a bear hunt".

Crocodile Listens by April Pulley Sayre is a true story of a crocodile in the Nile River swamp area as it hunts for prey and protects its eggs from predators.

Desert December by Leon Vermeulen is about a boy from Namib desert that crosses the Kuiseb Canyon to go inland in a cart pulled by two donkeys. On his journey he gives an old man a ride, gives another man a drink of water and helps free an oryx trapped by thorns.

East Africa has many different climates. It has areas that are dry and desert like with very little grass and small bushes, savannas, grasslands, and woodlands. Higher places have greener fertile areas. Volcanoes formed both Mt. Kenya and Mt. Kilimanjaro, which is the highest mountain in Africa. Mt. Kenya is surrounded by savannas around the base and as you go up the slopes you find forests and near the top snow and glaciers. Animals found in the Eastern part of Africa include the wildebeest, wild dogs, cheetahs, hyenas, rhinos, hippos, giraffes, and elephants.

Africa Brothers and Sisters by Virginia Kroll is a story about an African family from East Africa that plays a game to remember their African cultures. It talks about the farming, foods, different professions, storytellers, clothing, art, dances, and masks worn.

For You are a Kenyan Child by Kelly Cunnane. This is a story comparing the village life of a boy in East Africa with an American child.

The Namib Desert of South Africa is known to have the highest sand dunes in the world and has sparse rainfall. Despite that, it is home to many animals such as the baboon, antelope, and elephant. An interesting fact to remember is that the Namib Desert has an abundance of buried treasures (diamonds). South Africa also has a low and wet area called the Okavango Delta. This wetland has slow-moving streams, soggy soil and varied wildlife. Another South African desert is Kalahari, which is home for the largest bird on earth (the ostrich), meerkat families, antbears and aardwolves.

One Child, One Seed by Kathryn Cave. This book describes a young South African boy who gets one seed from a pumpkin and how he learns from his family how to care for the seed until it becomes a pumpkin. Children are given responsibilities to help the family.

Gugi's House by Catherine Stock. This story is from Zimbabwe where the soil is poor and the country has periods of drought. This is a story about an ancient village, paint (from nature), clay (from earth) sculpture and story telling.

Jubela by Cristina Kessler is a book from Swaziland about a mother hippo that is killed by poachers leaving the baby orphaned.

An old rhino adopts the baby and teaches it how to survive.

There are many natural resources available in Africa, including oil, copper, diamonds, gold and manganese. The savannas have ivory, gold, grain, gum, and shea butter. Forests produce spices (malaguetta pepper), gold, and kola nuts and in the desert salt mines, copper, and dates. The major agricultural crops are cocoa, tea, palm oil, wheat, coffee, roots and tubers (yams, cassava, sweet potatoes).

Studying the diverse continent of Africa with its 54 countries provides us with an educational opportunity. Using a variety of sources, we can explore the many regions and learn how each country develops its own identity and also relates to its neighbors. There are differences from country to country as well as likenesses much like you have on other continents. There is no better way to learn about the continent of Africa than through reading and studying.



Anansi

Juanamaria Camara

The people of Ghana are made up of six major ethnic groups: The Akan (Ashanti and Fanti), the Ewe, the Ga-Adangbe, the Mole-Dagbani, the Guan, and the Gurma. The Ashanti are best known today for their crafts, weaving, wooden carved stools, and the kente cloth. Long ago, their kingdom was known for its wealth and rulers. Their social life revolves around the village and everyone participates in the ceremonies and celebrations.

Legend has it that "The Golden Stool" came from heaven and is a supernatural stool of solid gold that enshrines and protects the soul of the nation. It is never sitting up; it is always on its side and sits on a chair, never on the ground. "The Golden Stool" is used on special occasions and ceremonies (Poyner, 2006).

It is hard to understand a culture unless one spends time with the people and/or visit the country. It is also difficult to overcome one's own ethnocentricity. Stories can help us uncover the similarities between people despite the cultural differences, such as in dress, food, rituals, beliefs, geography, political structure, and economics (Rubright, 1996).

Folktales are created by ordinary folk. They are ancestral creative answers to the challenges of daily living, dealing with a particular environment, its persistent problems, and the people's beliefs, values, and ideals. In Ghana, pure folktales are those referred to as anansesem in honor of the main character-Kwaku Anansi. The bulk of the stories tell how, driven by the urgent needs of his harsh living conditions, of the reoccurrence of drought, hunger and famine, Anansi uses creative acts of deception, trickery, greed, and selfishness, which reveal his inner wisdom and resourcefulness (Hanson, 1993).

Anansi means spider in the Twi language. The Akan people sometimes call him Kwaku Anansi, or Uncle Anansi, while the Hausa named this trickster-hero Giza (Climo, 1985).

Kwaku Anansi the Spider acts as a man and returns to the ceiling cobwebs only when he is in trouble and to escape punishment. Nyame, the Sky God, declares that Anansi is the cleverest of all animals. Anansi is also very likable (Appiah, 1967).

Anansi tales should be used to study a culture's beliefs, customs, and values, respecting the historical and cultural framework from which they came (Rubright, 1996).

Anansi tales are so important because they teach valuable lessons. Folktales prepare children for life, as they teach many useful lessons. The stories deal with jealousy, greed, gluttony, trickery, foolishness, honesty, deviousness, and wisdom (Rubright, 1996). Creativity to solve problems is also seen throughout the stories in which Anansi faces a challenge and needs to be resourceful to overcome it. Anansi can be lazy, funny, entertaining, and silly but one is sure to learn a lesson from Anansi.

Trickster stories are defined by their sense of humor that reveals the nature of human beings. Through his cleverness, Anansi is able to win over larger animals. Many stories talk about the relationship that exists between God and people. African storytelling is interactive and everyone participates by chanting, singing in the chorus, and answering the questions the storyteller asks the audience (Chocolate, 1982).

Translations do not always do justice to the original tale (e.g., *Why The Sky is So Far Away*, where the writer neither uses the simple language of children nor dialog to make this story interesting). For the most part however, retold stories do use interesting language and dialogue to explain or reveal the true character of Anansi that, when revealed, he runs away to hide his shame. Some authors add some western touches (a football and a football match) such as in *The Frog And The Duck* by Abena Korama who is trying to explain why ducks eat frogs every time they see them (Hanson, 1993).

The Anansi folktales are found in many areas of the world with little variation. When the slaves were brought from Africa, they carried their folktales with them to North America, South America, and the West Indies. When Anansi came to the United States, the Anansi stories became the "Aunt Nancy" stories as told by the Gulla of the southeastern part of the United States. At times the spelling changes from Anansi to Ananse and even Aunt Nancy.

The table below shows the variation in the name throughout the African Diaspora.

Jamaica	Anansi
Haiti	Ti-Jean or Uncle John
St. Lucia-Grenada	Compre Czien or Brother Spider
United States:	Aunt Nancy
SE US; Louisiana	Br'er Rabbit

Lesson Plan

Subject: Geography

Sunshine State Standard (Social Studies-Geography):

Cultural Awareness

Objectives:

The students will be able to:

- Develop an understanding for cultures other than one's own by reading literature, stories, myths, and listening to music and examining Art.
- Identify the common cultural characteristics of a region; e.g., language, traditions/customs, art, music, and food.

Materials:

- *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* by Walt Disney
- *Anansi and the Magic Stick* by Eric Kimmel
- The Sorcerer's Apprentice and Anansi and the Magic Stick Comparison Table
- Anansi and the Magic Stick and The Sorcerer's Apprentice teacher assessment sheet (optional)
- Pen/pencil/paper

Activities/Procedure:

- Whole class or group work
- Tell students they are going to read two stories with similar story lines
- Ask students to make predictions as to what is going to happen in *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* and in *Anansi and the Magic Stick*
- Read *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* and then *Anansi and the Magic Stick*
- Discuss the story/share predictions
- Allow students to fill in the two stories' Comparison Tables
- Discuss the similarities and differences between the two stories

Assessment:

- Journal entry: Give an explanation/reason as to why these stories are so alike

Home Learning:

- Essay: Which story did you like best? Why?

Summary of Walt Disney's Film *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* :

Mickey Mouse is the lazy, young, and mischievous apprentice-magician of the powerful Wizard, assigned the tiring task of filling the large water vat in the cavern with buckets of water from an outdoor fountain. He wipes his brow, weary from carrying water. Left alone in the sorcerer's underground cavern after the Wizard retires; he sees that the mystical Wizard has left behind his tall, pointed magical hat.

Mickey dons it and pretends to be the Wizard. Dabbling with spells, he extends his arms toward a broom leaning against the wall. He brings one broom to life with a bluish and white glow, and lures it to stand upright. Then, he commands it to move, hop, and sprout arms. The arms and "feet" are taught to do his work, to carry buckets of water from the fountain to fill the huge vat. Mickey has a cute and cocky attitude, broadly grinning at the success of his trick. He sits back in the Wizard's chair, orchestrating the movements of the broom, while watching it tirelessly fetch and tote water buckets. He soon falls asleep.

Suddenly, he awakens to waves of water crashing over him. His chair is floating on water that fills the cavern. The persistent broom has filled the vat with thousands of gallons of water, causing a gigantic ocean and flood. Mickey cannot get the broom to stop and obey him, unable to control the spell he has created. The unstoppable broom walks right over him on its way to the fountain for more water. Desperately, Mickey grabs an axe and splits the broom into splinters; the fragments twitch and then proliferate, generating more brooms. Each broom mechanically carries two more buckets, marching in an army from the fountain into the cavern. The robot-like battalion of brooms continues their appointed task of fetching buckets of water, even when they become completely submerged. Frantically, Mickey jumps on the master's huge book of magic and spells, looking for an antidote, riding (actually surfing) in a swirling, out-of-control whirlpool of water that threatens to drown everything.

The Sorcerer makes a dramatic appearance at the top of the stairway just in time. With five sweeps of his hands, he parts and calms the waters commanding the army of brooms to become one broom again. With piercing eyes, the Sorcerer summons his mischievous apprentice to chastise him. He retrieves his soggy, drooping hat. A sheepish Mickey has a variety of expressions on his face - guilt, embarrassment and coyness. He hands the broom to the unsmiling magician. As Mickey tiptoes away to cart buckets of water the hard way, he is given a whack on the backside with the broom.

* This is both a synopsis of *Fantasia* (1940, <http://www.filmsite.org/fant2.html>) and Disney's book *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*, Review by Tim Dirks

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Republic of Liberia Gives the Continent its First Female President

Simon Harris

Liberia is a country that is located on the West Coast of Africa. Liberia, which means land of the free, was founded as an independent nation in 1847 by black American settlers. The settlers named the country from which their forefathers had been taken, as the "Promise Land". One could compare the plight of America during Martin Luther King's speech to the plight of Liberia. In King's speech, unity was highlighted and he used the analogy of how Pharaoh would prolong slavery in Egypt by having the slaves fight amongst themselves. Likewise, Liberia has been searching for someone that can bring unity to a country that has a long history of civil wars. The civil wars have inflicted Liberia with poverty, political instability, and the economic stagnation. Liberia's most recent civil war between the Americo-Liberians and Charles Taylor's militant group, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) has left the country in desperate need of a new leader that could resurrect the war tormented country and end the social inequalities and political strife.

Before new leadership could be given to Liberia, the country needed aid to keep another civil war from occurring. In 1999, the rebel group Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy emerged in Northern Liberia, sparking a second civil war. In 2003, a second rebel group emerged in the south of the country further exacerbating the conflict. When the combined rebel forces shut down the country, global attention began to focus on Liberia. Charles Taylor, Liberia's president, fled to exile in Nigeria. In his absence, preparations began for democratic elections to decide the political future of Liberia.

A commission on Good Governance was chartered to advise the transitional government and to prepare the country for the October 11, 2005 elections. Twenty-two candidates campaigned for the presidency vacancy. However, only two candidates emerged with enough votes to have a run-off. When the run-off was complete, the world had no clue of the history taking place when the twenty-fourth president of Liberia was elected. One of Liberia's own became president.

On January 16, 2006, Liberia named Ellen Johnson Sirleaf the President of Liberia. She would be the first female president in the world, and of an African country.

Due to Africa's culture and tradition, women were considered to be custodians of the family, nurturers and industrious. They also held positions of power in different societies. According to Jestina



Image of Ellen Johnson Sirleaf is courtesy of the White House, U.S.A.

Doe-Anderson of the *Perspect Newspaper*, "Many have said that the election of a woman as president of a nation that has upheld a legacy of male supremacy is an indication that our women are challenging the stereotypes and making extraordinary strides toward gender equity. This feat, unprecedented in Africa as well as in many developed and also in underdeveloped nations demonstrates that some women have succeeded in rising above the intimidation of our conventional male dominated political mainstream".

Liberia's newly elected president has made history and has set a milestone for women all over the world to follow. Her experience in politics and professional development spans over 30 years.

Political Experience

1972-1978	Assistant Minister of Finance, Liberia
1979-1980	Minister of Finance, Liberia

1982-1985	Vice President of the Africa Regional Office of Citibank, Nairobi
1986-1992	Vice President and member of the Executive Equator Bank, Washington, D.C
1988-1999	Member of the Board of Directors for the Synergos Institute
1992-1997	Director of UN Development Programme Regional Bureau for Africa
2004-2005	Chairperson of the Commission on Good Governance (Liberia)
2005-	Standard Bearer of Unity Party; Candidate for President

Professional Experience

- Founding member of the International Institute for Women in Political Leadership
- Member of the Advisory Board of Modern Africa Growth and Investment Company
- Member of the Finance Committee of Modern Africa Fund Managers
- President of Liberian Bank for Development and Investment
- President of Kormah Development and Investment Corporation
- Senior Loan Officer of World Bank
- Vice President of Citibank

{ Women all over are poised to enjoy this victory. This is a great door opening for women over the continent and I am very pleased that I am the one who is going to open the doors. } ~ Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, President of Liberia.



Somalia: A Nation of Poets

Eva-Marie Hope

Somalia, where are you?

Situated on the geographic region known as the Horn of Africa on the eastern coast, Somalia is comparable in size to the state of Texas. Its eastern and southern boundaries face the Indian Ocean. The Somali coastline is the longest in Africa. By land, it shares borders with the countries of Ethiopia and Kenya, and is generally flat, except in the north, where an east-west mountain range lies.

Because rainfall is rare in most areas (as little as two to six inches annually), the climate is tropical (hot) and arid (dry). This results in a lifestyle that is both nomadic (following water sources) and based on livestock husbandry. Often, nomadic camps herd camels, which can survive for two weeks or more without drinking. The camels produce milk which may at times provide these Somali their only source of sustenance. The country has only two permanent rivers: The Juba and Shabelle. Vegetation can include acacia trees, aloe and juniper. Somali wildlife includes elephant, giraffe, zebra, antelope gazelles, leopard, cheetah, lion, snakes, crocodiles, scorpions, eagles, hawks and buzzards, to name a few.

Somalia, speak to me

Unlike most other African countries, the Somali people primarily speak one language. Until 1972, Somalia had no formal written language, until the Latin alphabet was applied to Somali phonetics. Prior to this time, the Somali had to memorize songs and words and training that began at an early age. Children were required to learn the 114 suras or chapters of the Qur'an. In fact, there is a Somali proverb which says that "he who looks at paper never becomes a memorizer."

Somalia, what happened to you?

In Ancient Egypt, Somalia was known as the Land of Punt and was revered for its desirable frankincense and myrrh, which is still exported today. Ptolemy, an astronomer and geographer who lived in Egypt, described the Somali people in his book, *Geography*, which was compiled between the 2nd and 5th centuries. Contact with Persian, Greek and Roman cultures through trading practices also shaped the Somali culture. Additionally, during the 10th century, China exported wildlife such as giraffes, leopards and tortoises from Somalia for the imperial menagerie. Somalia came under the control of British colonialism until 1960, when it



was granted independence and began its democratic government. This was an unstable time that involved conflict with neighboring countries such as Ethiopia and Kenya. Some Somali leaders relied on international powers such as the Soviet Union and China during the 1960's. In the late sixties, the army took over the government after the president was assassinated, and organized the new governing body, the SRC.

This new regime, closely allied with the Soviet Union, introduced the Somali writing system in 1972, developed projects of infrastructure, health and education and launched a literacy campaign for the Somali people. Because of its strong alliance with the Soviet Union, the United States suspended aid to Somalia in the early 1970's. In 1978, however, the Soviet Union shifted its support to Ethiopia. At the time, Somali leader, Siyaad Barre turned to Europe and the United States for support both economically and militarily.

By the mid-1980s, opposition movements began brutal uprisings against the government. These attacks became so violent, that in 1992, Siyaad Barre fled the country. With the absence of formal government, south and central Somalia fell into anarchy. Many Somalis died from violence, disease and famine. In fact, one-

fourth of Somali's population was in danger of starvation. International relief operations began to supply emergency supplies and within a couple of years, starvation was eliminated and agricultural production restored.

Somalia, who are you?

What is unique about the Somalis is that they speak one language, Somali, and practice one religion, Islam. Somali people trace their origin to two brothers, Samaal and Saab, members of Muhammed's ethnic group. Over their long and colorful history, the Somalis grouped themselves according to a clan system. There are six primary clans that exist in current Somalia: the Dir, the Darod, the Isaq and the Hawiya, all of whom form seventy-five percent of Somalia's current population. The Digil and Yahanwein, descendants of Saab, comprise twenty percent of the population.

The family unit is the source of personal identity and security for the Somalis. For example, this is illustrated beautifully in the common Somali question: *tolmaa tahay?* (What is your lineage?) Historian Charles Gesheker notes,

When Somalis meet each other they don't ask:
Where are you from? Rather, they ask: Whom are
you from? Genealogy is to Somalis what an address
is to Americans.

Somalis value the ideals of independence, democracy, individualism and generosity. However, unlike Western practice, Somalis do not express their appreciation verbally. Somalis are said to be a proud people and their boasting often stretches



Image Courtesy of © Sbafi
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Five Somali girls in traditional attire

the bounds of reality. Somalis have a history of going abroad to study and are known for their ability to adjust to new or difficult situations. Somalis also value family (safety), loyalty and friendships. It has been said that once a Somali becomes a friend, he is usually one for life.

Because Somalia has been an integral part in international trading due to its location, Somali attire is quite unique and diverse. Men wear a white cotton cloth with a *macaawiis*, a

brightly colored cloth, much like an Indonesian sarong. Their heads are covered with a *benadiry kuffia*, a Somali cap. Women wear the traditional *guntiino*, which is similar to an Indian sari, made of white or red cotton. Women also paint their hands and feet using henna and khidaab dyes in elaborate styles during special occasions such as marriage or birth celebrations.

Somalia, what is in your heart?

Because Somali nomads are cut off from the rest of the country, poets are the primary source for information and entertainment. Poetry begins early in Somali life as children are often given riddles and tongue twisters to improve good diction. Intelligence is frequently measured in Somali culture by mental adroitness and verbal ability. In fact, one's abilities as a political or religious leader, a warrior or suitor, depended largely in part, on one's way with words. The 19th-century British explorer Richard Burton described these gifted verbalists in his book *First Footsteps in East Africa*:

The country teems with poets, Every man has his recognised position in literature as accurately defined as though he had been reviewed in a century of magazines - the fine ear of this people causing them to take the greatest pleasure in harmonious sounds and poetic expressions.

He goes on to state: "It is strange that a dialect which has no written character should so abound in poetry and eloquences..."

Recitation of poetry was frequently accompanied by the chewing of *qat*, a mild stimulant which produces an effect that is similar to drinking 3 or 4 cups of coffee. Many Somalis believe that this beverage helps one to think and talk better.

Because pride is a prevalent characteristic of the Somalis, the art of negotiation and humor is strongly valued. Skillful negotiation has developed over time into an art form. Humor is often used to diminish harsh criticisms or to disentangle oneself from difficult or embarrassing social situations. This use of humor is captured in a Somali proverb: "A man with a sense of humor is never at a loss for words or action."

Whereas poetry has little influence in the daily life of most citizens of industrialized nations, in Somalia the poet is a person of prestige and power, respected for his cleverness and sometimes even feared for his *afmishaar* - his "mouth like a saw."

Poets are divided into four classes based on their verbal prowess. The first is the *afmaal*, which means literally "mouth of wealth," then *aftahan*, meaning "generous mouth" next is *afmishaar*, "saw mouth," and lastly, *afgaroo*, "deformed mouth."

Classical poetry, primarily the written and performed by Somali nomads, is very lengthy and adheres to strict guidelines. There are strict rules of meter and alliteration. In fact, the length of its vowel determines whether a syllable counts as one or two *moras*, or units. Rules of classical poetry dictate that each poem must have

20-22 moras per line, a pause after the 12th mora and two words per line that share the same initial letter. *Buranbur* is another genre of poetry which is written and performed by females and which also must follow a similarly set of precise rules.

Somali poetry contains a great deal of metaphorical symbolism. For example, the symbol of the camel may in fact, be referring to the ideals of beauty, femininity, sustainer of life, sustenance, erratic temperament or even, nationhood.

"Somali poets talk in the abstract," says Hanghee. "You'll find one describing the beauty of a camel, but what he really means is Somali liberty and independence. Or the subject of the poem might be a horse, but he's really describing the woman he loves. The waves of the Indian Ocean become the waves of decolonization and the freeing of Africa."

The following is an excerpt from the poem, "Passing Cloud" by Maxamed Xaashi Dhamac:

*Setting sun
You're on the run:
Late afternoon
And gone so soon!
Have you gone
To warn the moon
That she must face
This greater grace?
The roll of the clouds, the furl of the waves -
A sea of cloud stained purple and red,
The swing of her arms, the swing and the sway
Of her hips as she walks is just like the way
You sway and dip and the end of the day.
Now the clouds turn their backs on you.
They only have eyes for the eyes of the girl:
Eyes that launch love-darts, darts that sink
Into the flanks of the clouds and draw
Droplets of blood that stain the sky.
Setting sun
You're on the run:
Late afternoon
And gone so soon ...
These are the lines
That seemed to fall
To hand when first
I saw the girl.
Now this is what
I most recall:
The way she reached up to gather fruit
Believing herself to be alone
Until she saw me there, wide-eyed,
As the wind read my mind and sent a gust*

Although the Somalis can be a fierce and hard-edged people, they are also great romantics capable of such gentle tenderness,

as illustrated by the poet, Hassan Sheikh Mumin:

*I bade you farewell, wished you a journey full of blessing;
Every hour you exist, when you go to sleep and
when you awake
Keep in mind the truth between us
I am waiting for you. Come safely back, come safely back.*

In addition to poetry, Somalis enjoy sharing proverbs with each other. The proverbs have been passed on from generation to generation and play a significant role in everyday conversations. Some examples of Somali proverbs include the following:

*Aqoon la'aani waa iftiin la'aan
Being without knowledge is to be without light.*

*Ilko wada jir bey wax ku gooyaan.
Unity is power. (literally, "Together the teeth can cut.")*

*Intaadan faUn ka firso
Look before you leap. (literally, "Think before you do.")*

*Nabar doogi rna haro
An old wound will not go away.*

Somalia, let us begin...

Although we now have a better understanding of the Somali people, their history and culture, we have made a mere beginning. Since the development of a written language in 1972, Somali poetic literature has become more readily available for the study and enjoyment of the international community. It is here that one can begin a longer journey into the rich culture of the Somali people.

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Changing perspectives of the African Continent

Philip Kozlowski

Many American perceptions of Africa are starving children, "Bushmen" desert land, AIDS, or any number of negative views. As educational professionals, we need to make sure our students know that this is not Africa, and that Africa is a continent made up of many countries with many cultures, peoples, and political entities; not just one big country, like the United States, we can show them that Africa is not the depressed land they see and read about in the media, and that the images on television are not always factual.

There is much to be learned from the African continent. Africa holds many lessons to impart to our students, from economics, art, disease and health, political strife, and unique animal life and survival, to a vast variety of topographical forms, and a history that impacts not only the individual African countries but also the continent of Africa and the world. There is much beauty to be found in African art, music, and stories, as well as lessons to be learned about survival and pride in one's heritage. A study and comparison of individual countries and their development can open the students' eyes to a new world.

Lesson Plan Objective

To introduce the students to the brighter side of Africa and to compare and contrast the developed South African countries with the ones they see on television and in the media. Students will also be introduced to the idea that Africa is a continent with many countries, and not one big country. The students will learn that all of Africa is not AIDS and starvation. They will become aware of the fact that there is vast beauty in Africa. They will learn to use pictures and writings from books and Internet resources, as they discover a vast new source of knowledge in their quest for information on Africa. Center the information on Southern Africa, for example, the countries of Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa.

Level - Middle grades (6-8)

Subjects - Geography, Sociology, History

Materials - Library access, map of Africa, printer, paper, pen & pencils, markers, glue, and poster board

Activities

First Day - Take students to the library and split them into groups of two. Show the students a map of Africa. Talk to them about how Africa is a continent with many countries not one big country. Talk to them about the perception they have of Africa and write these on the board. Have the students write these down on paper for them to keep to use on their project. Using books and Internet resources, have the students look up information on some developed southern African countries (such as Namibia, Botswana, and South Africa). Have them write down what they see and read. Let them print out pictures for later use.

Second Day - Take them to the library and have them sit in their groups. One group at a time, have them discuss the new perceptions they have of Africa. Their new perceptions should be very different from their prior perceptions. Have them write down the new perceptions and then have them compare and contrast their first day perceptions with their second day perceptions. Assign a project to be completed in their pairs. Have them use the information from their compare and contrast papers and transfer the information onto poster board. On one side, have them put what they thought Africa was before this lesson and on the other side have them put their new perceptions. Let them use their pictures. Discuss their perceptions and projects. Grade this on participation and effort.

Resources

Library Catalog Search

National Geographic - Related articles

Internet Sites

Library of Congress Country Studies- www.lcweb2joc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html

CIA Countries-The World Fact book- www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html

Discovery Channel- www.discovery.com

History Channel- www.history.com

www.southafrica.info



Wild Life In Africa: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

Jemeshia Lyons

From people to animals the continent of Africa is filled with diversity. On the continent are the world's biggest, tallest and fastest animals (the elephant, the giraffe, and the cheetah, respectively). The word Africa often evokes images of many species of exotic animals, especially lions and elephants, roaming freely over huge grasslands. Sadly, human interference has taken its toll on the wildlife. For example, African and foreign countries looking for oil, diamonds and other resources have destroyed both animals and their habitats. Many people believe that wildlife in general should be conserved. Nelson Mandela said, "If we do not do something to prevent it, Africa's animals and the places in which they live will be lost to our world and her children- forever." There have been attempts to save the diversity of exotic animals and plants in Africa by organizations along with governments through programs. There are three categories of protected areas recognized within the wildlife sector: strict nature reserves, game reserves and national parks.

As previously stated, human interferences have taken their toll on the wildlife. One of the most obvious consequences of development is the number of endangered species due mainly to habitat loss. The rate at which this is occurring is too rapid and has caused a disastrous effect on individual species of plants and animals. As the rainforests are logged for wood and exploited for other natural resources, hundreds of species are made homeless. In Kenya, for example, habitat fragmentation and habitat loss due to increasing population growth, poaching, overfishing and destructive fishing, account for the main threats toward wildlife conservation.

Many African governments, concerned about their environments and animal habitats and the effect on tourism, have set aside large pieces of land as protected wildlife parks. Some of the animal populations that have been affected by human interferences are black rhinos and elephants. In the 1970s, Africa had 70,000 black rhinos and in the 1980s there were about 3,000. The BBC News reported in their article, "The Battle for DR Congo's Wildlife" (September of 2004) that Congolese conservationists estimate that out of more than 70,000 elephants before the war in 1994, only an estimated 14,000 remain. Declines in populations of hippopotami and mountain gorillas have also been noted. Other endangered animals include cheetahs and wild dogs, whose habitats frequently overlap with those of humans, resulting in

poaching, habitat loss, and disease.

In addition to animal preservation, there are also efforts to preserve quality of life for humans through environmental conservation such as tree conservation. Deforestation is a serious issue in many parts of Africa and contributes to desertification as well as loss of habitat for animals. Several prominent individuals and organizations are working to combat deforestation such as the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize winner, ecologist Wangari Maathai, who has spent years working with African women to reverse deforestation by planting millions of trees.

The revenue brought in by tourism in many African countries has led to concentrated efforts to preserve land and animal habitats. International tourism exceeds US \$444 billion (World Bank 1999:368) and ecotourism accounts for 40-60% of that figure (Ecotourism Society 1998). In countries like Kenya and Tanzania tourism is the fastest growing industry. Kenya reported \$502 million in 1997, much of it from nature and wildlife tourism (Honey 1999: 133,296). Moreover, tourism has been influential in



Left to Right: UF graduate student, Steve Marr, with Center Director, Leonardo Villalón, at a national park in Botswana.

helping to protect Rwanda's mountain gorillas and their habitat in Volcanoes National Park. Prior to the outbreak of civil war, tourist provided \$1.02 million in direct annual revenues, enabling the government to create anti-poaching patrols and employ local

residents (Gossling 1999:310). Despite being an economic benefit on one hand, mass safari tourism also has negative impacts on wildlife, changing animal behavior and threatening to transform habitats.



Watching wildlife from afar on a safari through a national park.

Some of the problems with national parks include size (some are too small to contain animal populations), habitat degradation in the parks themselves, and human proximity and incursion (e.g., poaching). Parks that share land near communities have particular problems with poaching and conflicts between park rangers and local populations who are often left out of the decisionmaking process for land they inhabit. In addition, there is the cost involved of operating a national park. Most depend on pledges and/or donations from other organizations. Another obstacle is poorly-planned, unregulated ecotourism, which can bring significant social and environmental costs. Perhaps the biggest problem to overcome is the people's need for the land versus the animals' needs. In 1978, Kenya and Tanzania were places where wildlife and humans co-existed. Kenya's fast-growing human population, which rose from 6 million to 20 million between 1957 and 1987, in turn placed more pressure on land needed to plant crops, which in turn meant more conflicts with baboons, zebras, and elephants.

There are some parks that are making the effort to reduce these challenges to preservation by encouraging community involvement in the management of protected areas and to reduce the negative interactions between wildlife and humans. Although great strides have been made, there is still much to be done to ensure that African wildlife and habitat is preserved and can coexist with human populations.

Suggested Activities for Students

A. Power Point or Movie Maker

Have students collect information from the internet, library, or an encyclopedia about endangered animals on the continent of Africa. They should collect data about conservation and its importance. Once research is done allow them to make a movie or Power Point presentation based on their findings.

B. The People vs. The Parks

There is a court case in which land rights are being argued. Assign student a role of being a lawyer arguing a court case either for the people or for the parks. Students should research to find facts or cases in which they will use in order to enable them win their case.

C. Travel Brochure

Have students make a travel brochure advertising a trip to one of Africa's Wildlife Parks. Have students collect information from the internet, library, or an encyclopedia. They should collect data about animals and geographical features of the park. They need pictures or they can incorporate their own drawings. Once they have the information, they need to compile and design their brochure and its cover.

Vocabulary Terms

Endangered Species, Conservation, Subsistence farming, Habitat, Poaching, Tourism and Ecotourists

Important people and places

Nelson Mandela, Wangari Maathai, Maasai peoples in southern Kenya, Olduvai Gorge.

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Irohin 2007 Articles

Just Passing Through: Life Stages of the Ga Past and Present

Jamie Friedrich

Every culture in the world today goes through stages of life from birth to death. The events that transpire through these stages can vary from place to place and people to people. The events themselves, as you will see, can also change through time with the introduction of new religions and values.

The Ga people, people of the southeast coast of Ghana, West Africa, pass through these stages of life with great celebration and ceremony, each with their share of significance and symbolism.

Birth and Naming Ceremony

When a child is born, it is kept inside for seven days.

The mother is permitted to go outside, but the child, unless in an emergency, must remain indoors. This is because many Ghanaians believe a child is a wanderer from the spirit world who may decide to return at any point during the first week of life. The pregnant woman, traditionally, is expected to stay, deliver, and nurse the newborn in the comfort of her family's home. Once the child is born, the elder of the woman's family informs the father of the birth. Upon hearing the news, the father and members of his family visit the mother and her newborn child. There are two sets of gifts given to the new mother. The first set consists of various drinks, called *defamo daa*, and are an expression of thanks to the woman's family for attending to her during her pregnancy and birth. The second gift includes a good piece of the father's clothing which is folded and used as a headrest for the newborn. This piece is symbolic of the father taking paternal responsibility for the child. For the seven days following the child's birth, he or she is considered to be a person with no real identity. The child is referred to simply as "it" or "baby."

The ceremony of naming the child is called *Bi Kpojiena*, literally "child out-taking." It is so called due to this being the first day the new child comes out of isolation.

This "outdooing" ceremony, as it is sometimes called today, is very planned and symbolic in nature. On the day of the ceremony, which is the eighth day of the child's life, the baby is retrieved from the house of the mother's family. Members of both sides of the child's family line and members of the whole community gather around the father's house, usually in brightly colored clothing. In the past, one would usually see men and women both wearing their traditional clothing to this event, but now, it is becoming more commonplace to see modern clothing such as blouses and skirts for women and suits for men. Never, however, would one

see red or black at such an occasion, as these colors represent danger and death. Prior to the gathering of these people, the entire family's compound has been swept clean to remove dirt as well as any evil presence. The mother enters the throng of well-wishers that are seated in a semi-circle and obtains the seat of honor facing the crowd. With her are two elders from her family and two elders from her husband's family. The elders present two drinks that are used for the ceremony.

After the drinks are presented, a series of libations, or pouring a liquid as a sacrifice, ensues. These libations are performed to invite the ancestral spirits to participate in the ceremony. When these are completed, an individual of reputable character and good moral integrity introduces the child to the universe. Due to the fact that the Ga people believe the child can take on the character traits of this person, the selection is made with great care. This designated person, who is always the same sex as the infant, raises the infant toward the sky, and sets him on the ground gently. This process is repeated three times. Then, the child is placed on the ground, and water is trickled onto the infant to introduce the baby to earth and water. This process, too, is repeated three times.

The child is then picked up by the godfather, who puts drops of corn-wine into its mouth. He admonishes the child to keep up the intricacies of the Ga culture as he or she grows older, and tells the child to understand the difference between water and alcohol. The godfather then symbolically touches the feet of the child and implores the child to follow in his footsteps. Following this, the elder of the father's family presents the crowd with the *gbee woo daa*, or naming drink. He raises it in the presence of the people gathered and states the given name of the child. The people are then served liquor which they sip after saying the child's name. Those who accept this drink are also symbolically accepting responsibility of raising the child. Those gathered are asked to bring gifts, usually monetary, to be given to the family. Following this, the group officially welcomes the child as part of the clan and the ceremony is complete.

The actual name of a child has two parts. The first is a soul-name that refers to the sex of the child and to the day of the week he or she was born. In other words, every boy born on Tuesday would have the same first name. The second part is the name the father chooses at the ceremony. Usually this name comes from an ancestor or someone who exhibits qualities the father would like to see in his child. Names in the Ga culture were traditionally so important that it was deemed "unpardonable" to

call someone by any name other than that which they received on the day of their naming ceremony. Most of these traditions have held among the Ga despite cultural changes, such as the practice of Christianity and other religions, which have led some Ga to give their children a third name that reflect this belief.

Marriage

Among the Ga, as a child grows, it is made clear that marriage is a mandatory and expected stage of life.

There are two types of marriage laws in Ghana. The first is a "marriage ordinance." This ordinance was brought about during the colonial period, and consists of the wife assuming the husband's name and the title of Mrs. This type of marriage only allows for a monogamous relationship, and is found throughout Ghana.

The other type of marriage law, which includes 80 percent of all marriages in Ghana, is known as "customary law." Under customary law, marriage is essentially the union between two families, and traditionally, not even divorce or death can terminate the relationship. In order for a customary marriage to be valid, there must be an agreement for the parties to live together, the consent of the families involved, and payment of the bride price. The bride price symbolizes the man's gratitude and appreciation to the woman's family. Depending on the family, this may include the giving of bottles of liquor, pots of palm wine, kola nuts, tobacco, or money. If the family is wealthy, they will sometimes give goats or chickens as well. In some traditional customary marriages, the union was often arranged or agreed upon by the leading male figures of the two parties. It was viewed as a social union that was used to link the two groups. As a result, marriage within the ethnic group was greatly encouraged. Though it is not often practiced today, customary marriages allow for polygyny, or the taking of many wives. Polygyny was prevalent in the days before colonial influences, and was often preferred due to the practice of many cultural customs. For instance, as stated earlier, a woman returns to her family's care during pregnancy. Thus, having more than one wife meant a man was sure to have someone around to help with the domestic duties required. Now, monogamy is being viewed as the norm due to Christian influences and the economic strain on a man that is required to take a wife. Only about 30 percent of customary marriages of today are polygamous. At the core of the customary type of marriage is family involvement. Traditionally, the families, from the time of expression of intent or interest, to the time of the actual joining of the two in marriage are intricately involved. The two individuals would seek parental as well as extended family permission or support before proceeding in the arrangements. Today, however, it is common to see individuals pursuing union without aid or agreement from relatives.

Divorce is generally not approved of, but is becoming more common, especially in marriages under the ordinance. Traditionally, if a man died, the woman married the closest male relative of her late husband. Now, the woman may choose to remain unmarried and have her oldest son become her heir.

Death

Just as the previous stages of life have been described, death is also an important stage of life. Ghanaians do not mourn the dead as most Westerners do. Death in Ga culture marks the transition to the world of the ancestors, or the spirit world. Throughout Ghana, it is not uncommon for one to attend a funeral every weekend, as failing to show proper respect to the deceased and the surviving family is considered a disgrace. The amount of observance depends on the person who died. For instance, because the Ga do not believe a child is a person with a soul until after it is named on the eighth day, if a child happens to die within the first seven days of life, there is no ceremony, and little mourning. The body is simply buried, and the title of "parents" is not attached to the father and mother. However, the death of



Image Courtesy of
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Coca Cola bottle-shaped coffin at a shop in Tesbie neighborhood of Accra, the capital of Ghana

a chief is extremely elaborate, and involves much pomp and the participation of many.

After death, the relatives perform libations and cleanse the body. The body is then embalmed, dressed in his best apparel, and placed on a decorated bed. At this time, the *yarawo*, or public wailing and mourning can begin. It is believed that spirits are hovering over the area of the deceased ready to welcome their relative, so honor is paid to these spirits before proceeding further. The weeping continues with extended relatives and then members of the greater community doing the same, and lasts as long as the person is lies in state.

While this period of weeping is going on, the Ga present gifts to their dead. The gift presented is usually money or gold, and sometimes a piece of cloth. The sum, though not a set amount, must be greater than 4 shillings (about a dollar) and must be in even increments. The Ga believe these gifts are essential items that will be needed in the spirit world the deceased is entering.

The body is placed in a coffin with the gifts he or she received during the time of wailing. Many burials throughout Ghana take place in the cemeteries that are right outside the city or village of the deceased person.

On the third week after the death, the *otsiitefemo*, or "celebrating the third week," takes place. This celebration is accompanied by a great deal of dancing, singing, and feasting. Today, if the deceased person was a member of a Christian church, this celebration would take place in the form of what we know as a memorial service in the church to which he or she belonged. In most cases, this *otsiitefemo* concludes the funeral proceedings. In the case of the death of a dignitary or king, however, a Great Lamentation takes place in which the entire nation is involved. Neighboring governments are invited to attend. These proceedings, which also involve priests and priestesses of all national divinities, last about a week. During this time, under customary law, public looting is made legal. Any person who lives within the limits of the king's domain has free access to his neighbor's yard. He may lay claim to sheep, farm products, and articles in the marketplace that are for sale. The idea behind this is that the entire nation is to be observing and mourning the death of their king, and those who are going to market to sell, for instance, are not cooperating and their goods are fair game.

The previous rites of passage saw various changes with the onset of Christianity and other new customs. Death rituals are no different. Where formerly, the families would bury their deceased in a traditional coffin, there is a new surge among the Ga to bury their loved ones in coffins that are designed to depict an aspect of their life. If the person was a driver, he may be buried in a coffin in the shape of a car, or, if the person made a living off the sea, he may be buried in a coffin fashioned like a fish. These coffins are valued anywhere between USD\$500-600, which is what the average Ghanaian makes in a year.

The influence of modern society is a reality in Africa, but the Ga of Southeastern Ghana have found a way to maintain their customs and practice them without hindrance.

Suggested Class Activities

1. Give students a brief overview of the geography of Africa so they know where Ghana is located. Have them locate Ghana, and label it on a map.
2. Give students the traditional Ghanaian names found at <http://home.wxs.nl/~degenj/ghana/gh-names.html>, and have them figure out what their name would be by using a calendar. Have students write how their Ghanaian name does or does not reflect who they are.
3. Have students compare and contrast marriage and death customs in our country to those among the Ga. Then, have them write a reflection on one or more of these customs and tell how their life may be different if they participated in that custom.

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Background to the Food Crisis in Africa - Northern Nigeria

Robert Hessels

Africa's food crisis has become a media event; it visits our living rooms almost weekly. Television evangelists, movie stars, and rock'n roll musicians use it as a background for their performances. But, unlike the soap operas, it is real and unlikely to go away soon.

The magnitude of the crisis is without question. Africa is the only continent where food production per capita has declined over the last 3 decades. With a continent-wide population growth of approximately 3 percent per annum, recorded per capita agricultural production declined by almost 2 percent per annum from the middle 1970s to the middle 1990s.

The results are predictable. Nearly one-third of Africa's people are directly threatened by famine and malnutrition. "Not just people, but entire communities and ways of life are threatened with extinction (Lemarchand 25). Nigeria, one of the wealthier sub-Saharan African nations in terms of Gross National Product (GNP), is growing at the staggering rate of 3 percent per annum which translates into a population of over 300 million by the year 2020 (Cohen 1988). Given the vagaries of global warming, and a long history of political instability, the ability of Nigeria to feed itself in the future remains problematic.

Yet population growth is not the only villain in this script. Inept agricultural policies of the African nations themselves, constraints of the world economy, the legacy of colonial rule, and the unpredictability of adequate rainfall have all played their part. The future appears to be grim and the outcome uncertain at best.

Population

Sub-Saharan Africa has the fastest population growth and the highest fertility in the world which has led to a growing population density in rural areas and more rural-urban migration (USDA, 1987). If current growth rates continue, sub-Saharan Africa's population will double every 20 years. The age-sex distribution of Africa's population drives its growth rate. In the developed world, birth and death rates have stabilized thus limiting population growth. However, in Nigeria, for example, the median age for females is only 18 years – compared to 29 years in the US (Guthrie 1996). This translates into a huge potential for high population growth in the near future; it is projected that by 2025,

60 percent of all Africans will live in cities (Guthrie 1996). The sad reality of this statistic is that urban-dwellers do not in general produce food, but they will always consume it.

Climate

Outside of the humid coastal belt, Africa's semiarid climate causes special problems for agriculture. The cropping season is short, the temperatures generally high, and the tropical soils are fragile. Rainfall varies greatly from year to year and from place to place. Frequent droughts, averaging 1 every 3 years, affect food production in the short term, and plantation crops and livestock in the medium term (USDA 1987). In West Africa, climatic variations tend to be abrupt and extreme. Both wet and dry periods can persist for decades, thereby creating a false sense of normal conditions (Nicholson 1986). Policy decisions made on the basis of crops yields obtained during abnormally high periods of rainfall have had disastrous consequences when rainfall returned to "normal" levels. In addition, when agriculture or pastoralism is extended into marginal areas during periods of high rainfall, the environmental damage that occurs in these areas during subsequent dry periods is accelerated and intensified (Nicholson 1996). Vast and costly irrigation schemes use water, from lakes that have a historical record of wildly fluctuating water levels. For example, in northern Nigeria, Lake Chad, which was used as a major source of irrigation water has essentially disappeared taking with it a formerly vibrant and thriving fishery.

Colonial Legacy

Some scholars have argued that colonialism was not a negative force and that it laid the foundations for a new political order and economic transformation (Rostow 1960). These scholars maintain that colonialism had the effect of consolidating hundreds of hitherto autonomous ethnic groups into nation-states, which made economic development and modernization possible. They argue that the colonized gained a set of ideas and knowledge that would result in improvements in social welfare, peace between formerly warring ethnic groups, and economic growth and modernization.

Other scholars have taken a strongly opposite view. They argue that the effects of colonization deprived colonial peoples of their independence and created an institutional framework, which favored the economic interests of the colonizers (Cookey 1980). The colonial economy in Africa was historically dominated

by the exportation of raw materials and the production of agricultural products for export to Europe. In some areas of Africa the emphasis upon cash crops for export distorted the local economy such that food crops were neglected and it became necessary to rely upon food imports to feed the local population.

Technology

The use of modern agricultural technology in Africa is limited. Fertilizer and tractor use is the lowest in the world. Crop varieties are, for the most part, traditional, and although adapted to the climate, their yields are comparatively low even under favorable conditions (USDA 1986). With the exception of large-scale, export-dominated food production schemes, Africa agriculture can be characterized as small-scale, low intensity, rain-fed, minimal fertilizer cropping systems – usually dominated by female hand labor.

Overview of Nigeria

Nigeria, with a population of at least 150 million, is the most populous country in Africa and ranks 8th in terms of world population. It ranks first or second among Africa countries in terms of national income. Until recently it was one of the 10 largest importers of US grain and one of the largest suppliers of petroleum products to the US (USDA 1996). Nigeria's 924,000 square kilometers make it the 7th largest nation in Africa and its extensive oil reserves make it potentially one of the strongest economies in the third world.

Nigeria is a nation that contains more than 200 ethnic groups, most of which possess a distinct language, social custom and belief. In Northern Nigeria there are 3 major ethnic groups: the Kanuri in the northeast corner around Lake Chad; the Hausa who form the major ethnic group north of the Niger River in the northwestern and north-central regions; the Fulani who are found in scattered settlements all over Northern Nigeria. In the middle belt of the country there are many small ethnic groups including the *Tiv*, the *Nupe*, the *Jukun*, and the *Igala*. In the southern regions and to the east of the lower Niger River are the *Ibibio*, the *Efik*, and the *Ibo*, while to the west are the *Yoruba* and the *Ido*.

Religion in Nigeria is divided geographically. The northern regions of the country are almost exclusively Muslim, while the southern and coastal regions are mostly Christian. Ethnic and religious allegiances tend to be stronger than national affiliation. Political parties tend to follow religious or ethnic factions, which makes national consensus very difficult.

The Agricultural Economy

At independence, about 70 percent of Nigeria's GDP and 75 percent of its people were involved in the agricultural sector of the economy. By 1980 and nearly to the present, the estimated GDP share of agriculture was less than 20 percent, about 5 percent of total exports were derived from agriculture (Fed. Govt. of Nigeria 1997).

Root crops make up the greatest volume of agricultural production. Cassava, yams and taro account for just over 30



Farmer tending to the fields

million tons annually and provide for about 30 percent of the calories consumed in Nigeria (FAO 1991). Grains provide about 40 percent of the calories consumed.

Historically tree and bush crops, along with groundnuts and cotton, have been the major export and commercial export crops of the country and are usually grown in the southern half of the country. Cocoa, rubber and palm products, and bananas are grown in southeast Nigeria.

Agricultural Production Techniques

In the northern regions of Nigeria, where field crops predominate, several production systems have evolved. Rainfed agriculture located on high land is called *gona*, and in depressions and along river valleys it is called *fadama* (Norman, Simmons and Hays 1982). In addition, there are some areas in which the land is irrigated. In large-scale irrigated tracts, intercropping and crop rotation are also practiced.

Millet, sorghum, cowpeas and peanuts are grown on *gona* land using various rotation schemes (Norman et al. 1982). Cowpeas and millet are grown only in combination with other crops but occupy up to 50 percent of the land area in the savanna (USDA 1986). Sole cropping is predominant in *fadama* areas, due to the fact that most of the extensive high-value crops grown in these areas (rice and sugarcane) are incompatible with other crops (Norman et al. 1982).

Although yields may be higher when a crop is grown individually, mixed cropping systems appear to hold several advantages. Various growth cycles of the different crops allow fuller utilization of the land and labor throughout the year (Kowal and Kassam 1978). Mixed cropping also maintains mature crops in the fields for a longer period of time and, thus affords some protection from erosion. Mixed cropping also reduces yield-variability and raises average returns to labor (Norman et al. 1982). "Indigenous cropping systems with their emphasis on mixed cropping appear to be well attuned to the social and economic environment as well as to the physical environment" (Norman et al. 1982, p. 55).

Crop rotation is commonly practiced, often with legumes occupying part of the cycle. Food crops are grown closer to the family compound, and, thus, can receive more organic matter and attention. Tree crops are grown mainly by small landholders. Bananas and plantains are grown mostly in southern Nigeria and are generally consumed within the household.

Land Tenure

Traditional land tenure arrangements throughout Nigeria allocated use-rights and ownership without formal institutions for land sale or rent (Hill 1982). Land rights were determined by village chiefs on the basis of the farmer's membership in the community and upon his ability to use the land. Grazing land, wild trees and fish were thought of as common property. Inheritance of use rights was patriarchal and was generally limited to one son or brother of the deceased. However, in the early part of the 19th century, land tenure arrangements in Northern Nigeria changed as Fulani invaders imposed a system of land tenure consistent with Islamic law. With the extension of British rule into Northern Nigeria in the early 20th century, European land tenure arrangements were introduced. However, their effects were largely limited to urban areas (Hill 1982). To this day, the Fulani style land tenure system remains the norm in the more remote areas of the north (Cohen 1988).

The general consensus among most researchers is that land tenure and distribution patterns are not yet a major source of inequality in Nigeria (Bienen 1991). In the view of one commentator, agriculture in Africa can be seen as a struggle between two contradictory tendencies: one moving towards a rural agricultural proletariat, the other toward capitalist agriculture (Igbozurike, 1976). Still another (Hyden 1980) introduces the notion of the uncaptured peasantry – small scale rural farmers actively rejecting the influence of the central government (and outside agencies) in order to maintain their independence from entanglements that have historically always worked to their disadvantage.

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Development, Pan-Africanism, and the EAC Model

Baruti Katembo

The EAC (East African Community) created in June 2001, is the regional intergovernmental organization of the Republics of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi and is headquartered in Arusha, Tanzania.

These five countries (comprising the core of the East Africa region) are working toward the goal of consolidation, by 2013, into a geopolitical confederation, namely, the East African Federation (EAF). Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda were the original constituency members of the EAC with Rwanda and Burundi being accepted as members in November 2006. An official ceremony and treaty signing for the inclusion of Rwanda and Burundi is scheduled for June 18, 2007.

This consortium is actually a revival of the old East African Confederation which collapsed in 1977, after a 10-year existence, due to ideological splits amongst Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda over the type of political and economic model (i.e. socialism with particular reference to *Ujamaa* in the case of Tanzania) to be used in advancing and governing the then tri-nation confederation. Having taken steps to avoid repeating the old mistakes, the new trade bloc encourages regional collecting of resource and free trade.

Establishing the EAC

With the acceptance of new members Rwanda and Burundi, the bloc's population increases from 90 million to around 115 million people with an additional land annexation of 681,980 sq. miles as a consequence (*Business in Africa*, 2006). In this age, where the challenges of globalization necessitate greater cooperation between countries to enhance socioeconomic development, the EAC initiative and concept is expected to boost the political and economic clout of the region – a territory which is also rich in various natural resources (e.g. forests, minerals, exotic wildlife, and water). The main purpose of establishing the EAC is to strengthen regional cooperation, infrastructure and development via full political, economic and cultural integration of the member states. Some of the areas of cooperation include commerce, technology, health, environmental concerns, and tourism. The EAC also cooperates in political matters including defense, security, foreign affairs and judicial matters. Under the auspices of the EAC, the penta-nation region will feature a common currency, a common legislative assembly, a common language, and shared initiatives on research, regional transportation and resource usage (*Africa Business Pages*, 2003). By 2013, the EAC plans to have facilitated

the creation of the East African Federation which will be a federal super state where all member countries will keep their own identities with national parliaments, presidents, and flags, but share a federal parliament & cabinet, a chief justice, a supreme court, and a super state president appointed by rotation from the member states (Peterson, 2005; Kasasira, 2007).

Kiswahili

A key tool in the advances of the EAC is the adoption of *Kiswahili* as the lingua franc. This is a major role factor in the success of the EAF because a common language, over time, tends to create loyalty, assimilation and cooperation among diverse groups (Mulokozi, 2002). For example, *Kiswahili* has proven useful as a peacekeeping tool in minimizing Tutsi-Hutu conflict in both Rwanda and Burundi. In promoting *Kiswahili*, the EAC encourages its use as the regional common language for a variety of reasons: a) widely understood, b) ethnically neutral, c) relatively small learning curve needed for mastery, d) related to other Bantu languages in syntax structure and vocabulary, e) Pan-African appeal, and f) akin to a resource language. Having at least 120 million speakers, it is not only spoken extensively in the EAC countries and Congo but also with increasing significance in parts of the Horn of Africa, Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Africa and the Indian Ocean Islands (i.e. Mauritius, Seychelles, and Comoros Islands).

Kiswahili has become as much a symbol of Pan-African unity as *Kente*, the internationally popular *Asante* ceremonial cloth emanating from the Akan word *kenten* meaning basket. In the 1960s and 1970s, Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere (aka "Mwalimu" – teacher in *Kiswahili*) advocated that *Kiswahili* should be adopted and promoted as a common language for Africa, particularly in East Africa, and as the national language for Tanzania.

Coinciding with anti-colonial movements in Africa, Organization Us, founded by Karenga, was a key player in the late 1960s Black Power Movement and had a great impact on Black expression and culture in the United States as a pioneer group who popularized and promoted *Kiswahili*, the Afro, adopting African names, the wearing of African clothes and cloth, female natural hairstyles, spiritual/cultural re-linkage with Africa and the creation of African-American Studies departments in colleges. The promotion of *Kwanzaa* and *Kiswahili* within the U.S. sociopolitical and cultural context and landscape helped to draw African-American attention and connectedness to Tanzania, under the leadership of Nyerere, as one of the major hubs of Pan-Africanism.

Tanzania, through outreach and invitation from Nyerere in the 1960s and 70s, became a haven for freedom fighter resettlement and associated military training from various anti-colonialist groups (e.g. Black Panthers; ANC; SNCC; PAC; ZAPU; Republic of New Afrika; etc.), thusly maintaining its image as a symbol Pan-Africanism. Because of the efforts, visions, and views of Julius Nyerere and Maulana Karenga (among others) on different shores and across oceans in promoting African cooperation symbolically through Kiswahili, East Africa has garnered appeal across the African Diaspora, particularly in the U.S., from a cultural linkage perspective.

Colonialism and the EAC

In Colonial East Africa, Germany (then Belgium) colonized Rwanda and Burundi under the banner of German and French, respectively, while Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda (the original EAC-constituency countries) were colonized by Britain under the banner of English; therefore the success of the EAC's goals represents African cooperation across colonial language zones and boundary lines. The EAC model promotes Pan-Africanism, technology and socioeconomic development – all of which are concepts and initiatives discouraged by or under colonialism. It facilitates the reversal of the impact and effects of the colonial system and experience which were designed to expropriate Africa's natural resources to simultaneously create disunity, racism and inter-ethnic hatred amongst indigenous peoples for control purposes via foreign-imposed literature, theology, and social policy.

The African Union, which is modeled-loosely on the European Union (EU) is an umbrella organization for 54 nations, and can be used to promote the EAC as a model that can be explored for customized reduplication to fit the needs of other African regions in optimizing economic development, resource management and good governance (BBC News, 2002). On a micro scale, the EAC's existence and goals are the embodiment of the continental ideas, visions, and aspirations of the most noted historic and contemporary Pan-Africanists (Marcus Garvey, Julius Nyerere, W.E.B. DuBois and others) all of whom championed Africa's development.

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The Berlin Conference of 1884/85 to Divide Africa

Fred Koerner

The Berlin Conference of 1884/85 was proposed by Portugal, which had begun the exploration of the continent of Africa back in 1450. In 1450, Portugal was looking for a better route to Asia. The Silk Road was expensive and dangerous. The sea route around the Cape of Good Hope to Asia proved a very successful alternative to the Silk Road for many years to come. Soon, other European powers such as Great Britain and Spain followed Portugal's example. By the nineteenth century, the European powers had established colonies all along the coast of Africa. However, the interior of Africa was left mostly untouched.

Europeans and Africa

Otto von Bismarck, the first German Chancellor, convened all the major western powers at the request of Portugal. Fourteen countries were represented Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Portugal, the Netherlands, Russia, Spain, Sweden-Norway, Turkey and the United States (who did not actually take part in the conference). The stated purpose of the conference was to guarantee free trade and navigation on the Congo and Niger rivers. At the time of the Berlin Conference, 80% of the Africa remained under local African control. Only the coastal areas of Africa were colonized by the European powers. The Berlin Conference was the opportunity for the European colonial powers to gain control over the interior of Africa. Africans were not invited or made privy to their decisions.

European interest in Africa increased in the late 1800's with the onset of the Industrial Revolution and the need for cheap labor, raw materials and new markets for the Western manufactured goods. European explorers became interested in exploring the interior of the African continent for trade, mining and other commercial exploitations. Henry Morton Stanley had discovered the Congo River Basin in 1874, which opened up the interior of Africa. King Leopold II of Belgium had established the International African Society in 1876. This organization was supposedly set up to foster humanitarian projects in the area of central Africa. The stated goal was to discover the largely unexplored Congo and to "civilize" its natives. However, King Leopold II had his own economic interests in Africa.

Although the International African Society was intended to be a joint effort by all of the European countries, each nation formed its own national committee for exploration. While the intent was to share information, national economic interests quickly took precedence over the group's philanthropic ideals. There was very

little sharing of information with each nation claiming certain portions of African land for themselves.

Other European countries were also gaining a foothold in Africa. France occupied Tunisia, today's Republic of the Congo and Guinea. Great Britain occupied the area of Egypt, Sudan and Somalia. Italy took possession of Eritrea. Germany took Togo, Cameroon and South West Africa. Portugal and Great Britain made a treaty to assure that the Congo Society would never gain access to the Atlantic Ocean. The initial cooperative purpose of the International African Society collapsed over each member state's national interests. The competition among the European powers for cheap labor, raw materials and new markets often lead to violent conflicts. This was the atmosphere which led to the necessity for the Berlin Conference and it is widely believed that the Berlin Conference avoided a massive European war over the continent of Africa.

The Berlin Conference and Africa's Divide

The results of the Berlin Conference were called "The General Act". The basic points of the Act were as follows:

- The Free State of the Congo was confirmed as the private property of the Congo Society.
- The fourteen nations in attendance would have free trade throughout the Congo basin as well as Lake Niassa.
- Freedom of navigation on the Congo and Niger Rivers.
- An international prohibition of the slave trade was signed.
- A Principle of Effectivity was introduced to stop powers setting up colonies in name only. This provision simply meant that a European power could not simply claim a new colony but actually had to take possession (sign treaties with local communities, establish administrative structures and actually govern).
- Africa was divided between the main powers of Europe. Great Britain controlled Egypt, Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Nigeria and Ghana. France controlled the Republic of Congo, Gabon and French West Africa which stretched from Mauritania to Chad. Belgium controlled the Democratic Republic of Congo. Portugal controlled Mozambique and Angola. Italy had Somalia and part of Ethiopia (currently Eritrea).

By 1902, 90% of the entire African Continent was under European control. The African people were divided, new borders were



established, injustice and colonial exploitation were widespread and without restraint. In 1963, the Organization for African Unity agreed that to change the borders as established at the 1885 conference would be too traumatic for Africa so they were left in tact. The long term consequences of the Berlin Conference and the resulting establishment of borders and areas of control include :

- African people were divided or merged without consideration for common culture. The new national borders cut across ethnic groups and traditional political grouping that existed in pre-colonial Africa.
- African people became dominated by the language and culture of the colonial power with a loss of identity.
- The European market has dictated the economy of Africa ever since with the selling out of African resources.
- The African infrastructure being one sided and oriented toward exporting.
- The trade imbalance established by colonialism still exists today.
- Wars, genocide, ethnic conflicts resulting from Africans remaining in the victims' role.

The Berlin Conference was an important change in international affairs. It created the rules for dividing a continent with arbitrary boundaries that have created lingering ethnic and political turmoil.

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Teaching 1st Grade ESOL Students to Identify the Tricksters in Folktales

Sandy Lyall

Reading stories to the children can be an exciting and interesting way to teach. In fact, it is one of the only ways to teach children from all over the world. If they can't read the story in English, at least they can relate to the pictures and graphics and from that discern what the story is about.

Instructions for the Teacher

We can use stories so that the children might relate to them. This lesson looks at African and Caribbean stories and identifies which ones might have characters who can be given "the trickster award."

First, the teacher reads the stories ("The Crocodile and the Ostrich," "The Bojabi Tree," and "Horse and Toad")—one per day—to the students. After each story is read, the students pick out words they know and then try to read their favorite page. The teacher then shows the map on the back of each story and points out where the story is from and explores a few of the facts given about the country. The teacher may also point out the words listed in various languages. Then, during writing, the students will write about each story—one per day—following the format found below. Then the students will copy their stories onto the computer and e-mail them to a family member, telling about what they've done.

Finally, the teacher will show the students the first part of the video "Anansi," and encourage them to discuss what they have seen. The final day, the teacher will show the second half of "Anansi" and continue the previous day's discussion, followed by a work sheet, "Anansi, The Spider Trickster Award." The students are encouraged to choose their favorite trickster and explain why. The work sheet serves as the writing assignment.

Historical Information for the Teacher

The Ashanti gave us a brilliant trickster named *Anansi*, the spiderman who tells folktales. His other forms include the hare in Yoruba folktales and the tortoise of the Ibo people. He is generally a spider in most West African stories. Anansi wins by guile not strength. The term *Anansyism*, derived from these stories, means the art of tricking someone for personal gain.

Anansi is one of the most important gods in West Africa. He is a trickster and culture hero. He is frequently a buffoon who is preoccupied with outwitting everyone. He is in endless contest with the community. His father is *Nyame*, the sky god, who said,

"if you want to be king of all the stories you have to bring me the hornets, the python and the leopard." (He did.) His mother is *Asase Ya*. His wife is known as *Aso*. And there is often mention of his children. Anansi stories originated in Ghana. *Anansi* means "spider" in Akan. It is hard to think that all trickster tales are not told by Anansi. After all, he is the king of all storytellers.

Anansi came over to the Americas on slave ships in the form of a spider (as the stories relate) or (as common sense indicates) in the myths the enslaved people brought with them. He became many things in the Americas, from the famous Spiderman of comic books and film to a character in the Uncle Remus stories.

READ ALOUD

First Day

The Crocodile and the Ostrich

The main idea of this story, in which a crocodile proves he can't be trusted, is that sometimes, even though you may be tricked because you have a good heart, something good can come of it.

In this story from Kenya, a crocodile has a sore tooth. He swims down the river asking the various animals to help him with his tooth. They (the kudu and the baboon) refuse to help since they don't trust the crocodile. The ostrich, on the other hand, decides to help the crocodile, but when he puts his head into the crocodile's mouth, the crocodile decides to eat him for breakfast. He clamps down on the ostrich's head and the ostrich pulls and pulls until his neck is completely stretched. Since he has pulled the crocodile out of the water, the crocodile lets go and returns to the river. The ostrich is pleased to find that with his new, long neck he can reach up into the trees for food, as well as find more food on the ground.

Second Day

The Bojabi Tree

The main idea of this story, in which a lowly tortoise listens to advice from his mother and saves a land from famine, is that with good advice and a little talent (singing) you can often be an unlikely hero.

In this story from Gabon, a famine has stricken the land of beasts and there is nothing to eat. However, there is one tree that bears fruit, but it is necessary to call out the name of the tree (the Bojabi) before the fruit will drop. First a gazelle is sent to the tree, told its name, but forgets the name on the way back. The a rat tries, but he too forgets the name by the time he has returned. Finally, a tortoise is sent, but before he leaves he asks his mother for advice. She tells him to make up a song with the name in it and sing that song all the way back home. Even though big waves try to sweep the tortoise away, he keeps singing. When he returns, he names the tree and fruit falls to the earth for all the animals.

Third Day

The Horse and the Toad

The main idea of this story, in which a very clever toad outwits both a king and a horse, is to think of the best way to solve a problem even if the problem seems to be a very big one.

In this story from Haiti, both a horse and a toad want to marry the king's daughter. Since the king wants his daughter to marry the horse, he proposes a long race, knowing that the horse will win. Each time the horse come to one of the race markers, he finds that the toad has already been there. The horse is baffled and races on even harder. Finally, when he arrives at the castle, he finds that the toad is already there and has won the race. Toad, it seems, had many cousins who looked just like him. He placed a cousin at each race marker to make the horse think that he was always behind. All the while, toad never even left the castle. As the "winner," toad marries the princess.

Video

Read to students: "We are going to watch a video, *ANANSI*, that is a Caribbean version of how Anansi came to Jamaica and became king of all storytellers.

The second part of the video, which we will watch tomorrow, tells how Anansi became bald, an example of how sometimes his schemes backfire!"

Fourth Day

Show First Half of Anansi

In the first half of "Anansi," he has to take Snake to Tiger in order to become the king of all storytellers. He tries repeatedly, but

he fails. Finally, he tricks Snake with a contest involving a piece of bamboo, ties him to the bamboo stick and takes him to Tiger.

Fifth Day

Show Second Half of Anansi

In the second half of "Anansi," his mother-in-law dies and Anansi tries to hide a pot of beans under his top hat to assure that he can eat when he wants. The beans are so hot they burn all the hair off the top of his head. He has outsmarted himself and now is bald!

After video, teach students "The Writing Song" to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star:"

Beginning with the main idea
First and next and last detail.
Then comes conclusion and you'll have
five sentences for your paragraph.
Beginning with the main idea
First and next and last detail!

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify what the story is about based upon its title and graphics.
- Identify facts about where the story takes place.
- Identify the main idea as it unfolds: what happens first, next, last, and finally.
- Identify words in Swahili, French and Haitian Creole.
- Identify by "think-pair-share."

Sunshine State Standards: Benchmarks

Reading: L.A.A.1.1.1., L.A.A.1.1.2., L.A.A.1.1.3, L.A.A.1.1.4.,
L.A.A.2.1.1., L.A.A.2.1.2., L.A.E.1.1.2.

Writing: L.A.B.1.1.1., L.A.B.2.1.1., L.A.B.2.1.2., L.A.B.2.1.3.

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Inspiring Your Students Through a One Book Read: *Of Beetles and Angels* by Mawi Asgedom

Susan David

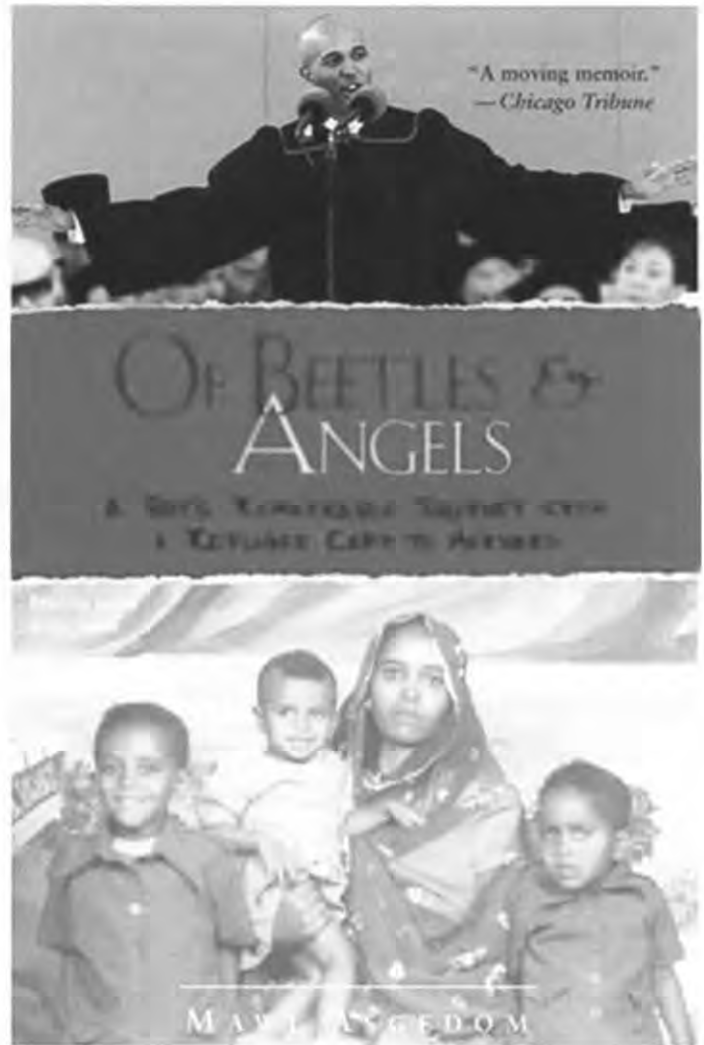
Of the gifts we give, the greatest is to see beauty in each other—in essence, to give beauty to each other. When we give that beauty, we prepare our hearts to receive it back.
— Mawi Asgedom, *Of Beetles and Angels*.

Mawi Asgedom's recounting of his life's story is a fascinating tale which has already touched the hearts and lives of many students and adults. His book, *Of Beetles and Angels*, takes you from his life in a refugee camp in the Sudan to his graduation from Harvard in 1999. Along the way you encounter many aspects of life that give insight into the plight of many human beings around the world. Throughout this book we experience the wisdom and kindness of his father, who was forced to leave his community and family so his family will not be harmed. Tsege, Mawi's mother must leave her home and take the children to safety. She joins the ranks of the many refugees going to Sudan fleeing their troubled country (Ethiopia). Haileab, Mawi's father, keeps his promise to rejoin his family in the refugee camp. There he makes plans for a new start and the family moves to Chicagoland in "Amerikha" to begin this new life.

Mawi's father and many African people believe that God's angels would descend out of the mountains to live among the people. People often mistreated the angels because they never looked like angels, i.e. they were frequently disguised as the lowliest of beetles, itinerants, drifters or tramps. This was a test by God to reveal the deepest sentiments in a person's heart. So we learn and are reminded many times in this book that no matter how much a stranger resembles a beetle they could be angel.

At age seven Mawi started his life in America and overcame welfare, language barriers and personal tragedy. He majored in American history at Harvard and won many honors. He was elected by his peers to be one of the eight class marshals and delivered the commencement address at his graduation. Now as a father himself he has dedicated his life to encourage America's teenagers to set goals and believe in their dreams. Speaking to over 350,000 students and educators he has made a difference in the lives of many people across North America.

This book is an excellent choice for a one-book, one community read. It has been selected by my school as a one-book read for our incoming 9th graders and I plan to give the following background information and research into the areas of Africa where this story began. As Mawi said in his commencement address at his graduation from Harvard in 1999: "We must recall



our membership in the human community that has nourished us: we must accept the responsibility to keep that community alive. Improving the quality of life for the entire human community is the single greatest task that faces our generation and the generations to come."

Sudan

Mawi's family fled from their comfortable home in Ethiopia to a refugee camp in Khartoum, Sudan. To help students relate to this area the following passage will give a brief history of the area.

Sudan is the largest country in Africa. The terrain is by and large flat plains, broken by several mountain ranges. The Blue and White Niles meet in Khartoum. It is there that they form the River Nile, which flows northwards through Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea. The course of the Blue Nile runs through Sudan for nearly 500 miles. The Sudan gained its independence from the United Kingdom in 1956. For the remainder of the 20th century this country has had military regimes supporting Islamic-oriented governments resulting in two prolonged civil wars. These conflicts have stemmed from the northern economic, political and social domination of non-Muslim, non-Arab southern Sudanese. The first civil war ended in 1972, but broke out again in 1983. Today the Sudan is a troubled place with fighting and unrest still a large part of everyday life.

Eritrea

Mawi's father was born in Seraye, Eritrea in 1934. Following is some background and historical information about that country. In 1929, the population of Eritrea was estimated at 405,000, most of the people were either Christian or Muslim in faith. There was also a Jewish community as well as small communities of Parsees and even Buddhists. A number of Catholic and Protestant missionary societies were also active in the colony.

The native population thrived mostly on goats and cattle, and irrigation-based agriculture. The highland, with its more favorable climate, had a higher population density. The Italians who occupied the country experimented with growing coffee and cotton so they would be able to export these items. There was also some mining endeavors (potassium and gold) as well as the fishing.

For years Eritrea was a federated state within Ethiopia, but began its struggles for independence in 1961 and finally gained its separation in 1993. A bloody civil war with Ethiopia followed in 1998, and despite a cease-fire accord in 2000 along with other agreements, tension remains between the two countries.

Ethiopia

Tsege, is Mawi's mother and her native land is Ethiopia. Some facts and information on this country will be given to tie all these neighboring countries together to have a little better understanding of the area.

The oldest known human ancestors have been found in Ethiopia, whose original name is Abyssinia. Today Ethiopia is sub-Saharan Africa's oldest state, and its Solomonic dynasty claims descent from King Menelik I, who is believed to be the son of the queen of Sheba and King Solomon. This country is situated in the Horn of Africa and since the independence of Eritrea in 1993, it has been landlocked.

The ecology of Ethiopia is very diverse, ranging from the deserts along the eastern border to the tropical forests in the south. The cutting of the forest is a major concern for Ethiopia, as deforestation contributes to soil erosion, loss of nutrients, loss of animal habitats and reduction in biodiversity. The government is currently providing programs to control deforestation. These programs consist of education, promoting reforestation programs and providing alternate raw material to timber. In rural areas the

government also provides non-timber fuel sources and access to non-forested land to promote agriculture without destroying forest habitat.

Ethiopia reflects the problems of Africa. It has so much richness but it is torn by politics, economics and poverty. Still the people have big hearts and hope.

This book, *Of Beetles and Angels*, embodies the qualities we all need to make a difference in this world. Goals must be set and paths to reach those goals must be worked on so that dreams can be manifested. Again I quote Mawi Asgedom's commencement address, "Improving the quality of life for the entire human community is the single greatest task that faces our generation and generations to come".

Suggested Class Activities

1. Before reading this book as a group, give some background information of Africa as a continent. Study the different countries there are 54 to choose from, let the students pick a country and report to the class.
2. Divide up into groups and report on a country in East Africa.
3. The book offers reading group guides.
4. The first website gives suggestions for interdisciplinary activities.

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To Reveal and Conceal: Masquerades within African Traditional Religion

The Dan and Mano people of Liberia, The Chewa people of Malawi, & The Kuba people of the Democratic Republic of Congo

Melissa Olver

Masquerade is a term used by anthropologists to describe an interactive event or performance, featuring dancers, donning masks and specialized clothing, musicians and audience members. The masked performer is transformed, his identity concealed, but more than this, he has become a spirit, materially revealed, to intervene with village life on earth. One term is inadequate to explain the complexity and diversity of these performances and the inherent value and function they provide within each community. Some comparisons can be attempted, but are not to be universally assumed as there are countless exceptions. Hence, the following brief study is representative of three groups of people and is a starting point, an invitation, if one will, for further investigation, in what could be an all-encompassing and fascinating lifelong pursuit.

The Dan and Mano

The Dan and related Mano people of West Africa, live in a forested region where the countries of Liberia and Ivory Coast meet. They believe that their world is divided into two spheres: the village which represents domestication and includes family, animals and crops and the forest in which one finds raw materials, wild animals and spirits, and a sacred and secret place, which one must cross into and out of with great care and ritual.

In the forest live bodiless spirits which are revealed to select villagers in the form of dream visions. This visualization provides the inspiration for the physical manifestation of the spirit which is then created in the static form of a fetish or the living form of a mask with ceremonial clothing. All masks are named *ga* which, loosely translated, means, "awesome being". The spirits, which embody the masks and perform during ceremonies, have mystical and divining powers which address many village concerns including protection from evil, health and fertility issues, the education of children and initiation into adult life, gender roles, governing aspects, entertainment and funerals. The function of individual masks may change over time as they change hands

and may become more or less powerful. The most important masks are carved by the master carvers. The techniques associated with the carving are secret. Masks are made in the forest and represent forest spirits so they are also made from materials found in the forest. The primary forms of the Dan and Mano masks are carved from wood. Additions to the main wood form, as well as the clothing, are made from raffia, fiber, roots, branches, bark, feathers, fur, animal teeth, bone, leaves, sheet metals such as tin or brass, clay and various pigments and oils made from clay, mud, smoke, plants and animal blood decorate and preserve the surface.

There are eleven types of masks representing female and male spirits, although all the masks are worn by men only. *Deangle* or "Smiling mask" features a soft, oval, female form with a white clay stripe painted across narrow, slit eyes. They wear a cone-shaped woven hat, a cotton shawl and a thick raffia skirt and collect food from the villagers to deliver to the initiation camps.

The other female mask type, the *Tankagle*, functions as an entertainer performing songs and pantomimes with calabash rattles on the feet of the dancer. Male-type masks generally have stronger, more pronounced features with large round, tube-shaped eyes. The *Gunyega* "House Spirit" has a flat red or black face and is worn during racing competitions and is believed to help the runner win the race. The *Zakpai ga* "Fire extinguisher mask" with red paint around white tubular eyes checks to make sure all cooking fires are extinguished. The *Bagle*, grotesque featured entertainers, wear a wig made of strips of colorful cotton cord or cloth and carry a hooked stick with which to pull people from the audience to pantomime humorous social situations. The powerful *Bugle*, "Gun maskers" spirit warriors with dark faces, large beards, fangs, black-feathered wigs and fiber shields lead warriors into battle. The *Kaogle* "Chimpanzee" maskers sing war songs with slit gongs and pantomime aggressive behaviors. The *Dugle*, called the "Cow maskers", although they represent many animal forms, entertain at festivals.

The *Glegben* "Stilt dancer", *Bugle*, "Gun maskers" spirit warriors with dark faces, large beards, fangs, black-feathered wigs and fiber shields lead warriors into battle. The *Kaogle* "Chimpanzee"

Dan Mask



Images Courtesy of
©Ethnographica.com



Mano Mask

maskers", although they represent many animal forms, entertain at festivals. The *Glegben* "Stilt dancer" entertain with acrobatics and wear a woven wicker mask. The *Gagon* "Masculine masker" has a white-feathered head and a bird like beak with a movable jaw to allow the masker to sing at festivals. Finally, the *Glewa* "Judging masker" with a large mouth and moveable jaw, settles disputes and arranges "reconciliation" feasts between villages. The *Glewa* also have the power to punish wrongdoers and preside over the initiation camps.

Needless to say, masking traditions in Dan and Mano communities have changed over time especially due to the slave trade and colonization. Many villagers now work for wages in diamond camps and at the Firestone rubber plantation. Villagers have always measured prominence and success through talent, generosity and hospitality. Now, they spend their money on grand village feasts and strive to out do one another in terms of talent as dancers, musicians and artists. Success may also result in leadership of secret societies, a tradition which continues.

The Chewa

Like Dan and Mano people of Liberia, the people of the Chewa society who live where the countries of Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique meet, believe in the division between two worlds that exist inside and outside of the village. The women and children live inside the village. The *Nyau Yolemba* consist of wild animals and any other living being or thing that lives outside of the village and the *Kasinja* and *Kang* 'wing' wi have a dual existence, traveling back and forth between the two worlds.

The Nyau secret society is made up of Chewa men who perform funerary masquerades and initiation rituals.

The *Bona* ritual is performed during the first corn harvest after the *Utaya*, a funeral ceremony, if the deceased is deemed worthy of the ceremony. The *Bona* would be held for a chief, a chief's wife or others who held very important positions in the village. A concurrent ritual that takes place during the *Bona* is the initiation of the male youth of the village. The boys are taken to the initiation camp outside of the village to learn the secrets of the *Bona*.

For the ritual, three types of masks are created. Within these three types are over fifty different characters. The first type are the *Nyau*, wooden character masks, each personified by a spirit of the dead. Traditionally, the masks are painted red, black or white and are embellished with teeth made from wood or corn kernels, feathers, cloth, hide, fur, earrings and wigs. Other Nyau masks resemble Chewa ancestors and still others perform on stilts. One Nyau called a *Cayakamoto* "That which is on fire" embodies the sorcerer spirit who ignites strings attached to his costume during the ceremony. The second type of mask is a woven mask worn by the *kasinja* which are believed to be the spirit of the deceased. It is believed that the spirit of the deceased roams the village until the *Bona* ritual concludes. Feathers of chickens are used to represent the "elusive but earth bound spirit." The third mask type called the *Nyau Yolemba* is made by all members of the Nyau. It is a large, woven, full body mask made of grasses and corn husks in the shape of an animal, a car, a sorcerer or anything that lives outside of the village.

The initiation ritual, which lasts for several weeks begins with the

women of the village brewing beer from corn while the Nyau and the young men go to the initiation camp. When the beer is fermented and the masks and costumes are complete, the masked dancers return to the village for a night of performance. At dawn, the *Kasiya Maliro*, the most important of all of the Nyau *Yolemba* is taken into the house of the deceased. He captures the spirit of the deceased and returns to the initiation camp where the woven mask is burned. When the smoke is released, it is said that the spirit of the deceased is also released to the wind and is set free to become a *mzimu*, an ancestral spirit who then may be reincarnated into the body of a descendent.

Besides their use in the initiation and funeral ceremonies, Chewa masks are also used to celebrate the independence during National Day celebrations and the Malawi Congress Party rallies support by adding masked dancers to their programs.

The Kuba

A third group of masqueraders, the Kuba people of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), an area of rainforest and savanna, are a multi-ethnic group with eighteen separate factions united under one king. The name, Kuba refers to "The children of Woot" after the founding ancestor.

Kuba masks are created for use during funeral rituals, royal celebrations and initiations. During the initiation rituals the boys live in the initiation shelter (Nkan) and wear masks into the village to frighten the women and children. The masquerades are often performed to recreate the creation stories of the Kuba people. The primary Kuba masks are the *Bwoom*, the nature spirit *Negesh* who is responsible to ensure fertility, health and a successful hunt. A *Mboom* mask represents the commoner. *Mwaash aMbooy* embodies the ancestor of mankind and his sister/wife is called *Ngaady aMwaash*. Various other character masks in the form of the wise man, mother and many animals including the elephant, the royal symbol representing great power, are necessary to teach societal mores to the Kuba youth during initiation ceremonies.

Kuba masks are owned by high-ranking or wealthy village members. They are carved from one piece of wood by master craftsmen. They have a high forehead with patterns and a design of small beads or cowry shells, expensive trade items also used as money. There is a band of beads across the eyes and extensive geometric patterns are woven, painted, incised and or carved throughout. The color blue represents especially high rank. Some masks are embellished with eagle or parrot feathers, raffia, cloth, leopard skins, leaves, bark and sheet metal. An elephant trunk would be represented by adding a flap of leather from the chin. The Kuba people look out of the nostrils in the mask in order to see. The eyes are not carved through.

The masks represented in this article all function as part of ritual performance within the villages where they were created. The secrecy embedded within the symbols of the masquerade may never be fully shared with the world. While similarities in function and media exist, they are all striking examples of rich and original art forms. Standing alone, their beauty is breathtaking. When studied within the context of the masquerade, they are even more astonishing. It is this study that will prove a true gift to any student.

Suggested Activities:

Literature

Why Leopard Has Spots: Dan Stories by Won-Ldy Paye
Mrs. Chicken and the Hungry Crocodile: by Won-Ldy Paye
Head, Body, Legs: A story from Liberia by Won-Ldy Paye
Monkey for Sale by Sanna Stanley- DRC
The Rains are Coming by Sanna Stanley- DRC
The Magic Tree: A Tale from the Congo by Gerald McDermott
The Mean Hyena: A Folktale from Malawi by Judy Sierra

Math

Geometric shapes and symmetry in African masks

Geography

Liberia, Ivory Coast, DRC, Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique on the map of Africa

History

Liberia, Ivory Coast, DRC, Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique

Art

Look at the masks: Describe, Analyze, Interpret, Evaluate

Local trip to the art museum, galleries or Museum of Natural History

Look at African Influence in contemporary art

Create masks with influences in design, form and style from the Dan, the Mano, the Kuba, or the Chewa:

In cooperative groups, students make a plaster form of face using Paris Craft:

1. Cast the mask forms using clay. Make sure to create holes around the edges to add embellishment and hanging wire. Carve to create pattern or wood texture.
2. Fire the clay
3. Paint using acrylic or watercolor
4. Take a "Nature Walk" to find materials
5. Add embellishments using raffia, feathers, leather strips, cotton, cord, shells, beads or other natural materials found
6. Create a masquerade figure on a mannequin and display!

Cook

Recipes from the area of study

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Commonalities in African Music

April Palmer

Africa is enormous. With 54 countries and thousands of languages, Africa lends itself to diversified cultures. Music is definitely part of those cultures. Each region of Africa has different music, whether it be variation in performers, vocalization, or instrumentation. But there are some commonalities in music that bring this humongous continent together in a small way. According to Dr. Fred Warren and Lee Warren, "the one common denominator for all Africans is their love of music and their almost total involvement with it."

According to David Akombo, music is "a cultural entity, part of the people's co-existence with Africa." In the West, music is mainly used as a source of entertainment. In Africa, according to Ruth M. Stone, "music stands apart from that in the West because it is clearly part of the fabric of life." Music is not something to be "admired in isolation." It is woven into the very essence of daily life.

Music plays a major part in very important functions such as birth, puberty, funerals, seasons, and traditional yearly events. When a baby is expected in an African village, music plays a very large role. It begins even before the baby is born. The entire village and the woman's family will perform a special song for the occasion, to ensure that the pregnancy and birth will be a success, and to celebrate that a new life will be brought forth. When the baby is about to be born, there is special music that accompanies this momentous occasion. Even the naming of the baby is honored with music.

Reaching puberty is a significant event in African culture. Many boys are circumcised, and songs make up part of those "circumcision rites." While their wounds are healing, boys are taught certain songs to sing which will aid in the healing of these wounds. When girls reach puberty, they are schooled in what a woman must do through ceremonies. Within these ceremonies, music is performed that is "designed to help the girl learn how to become a woman and a mother." These musical ceremonies also provide lessons on the history and culture of her village's heritage.

Funerals are usually a somber event in the West. In Africa, however, music is used to honor the loved ones who have passed. Music is an aid that helps the survivors of the deceased to take their minds away from death. The music that is played is as joyful and happy as possible, and is a way to celebrate the lives of the ones who have passed on.

Images Courtesy of ©Rob Lonsdale lonsdale@sonic.net

Ghanian Drummers



There are many traditional yearly events that occur in Africa, usually following the seasons. Usually, every month, there is at least one "festival" of some sort being celebrated somewhere in Africa. The festivals and the music that accompany them give the people a sense of kinship and loyalty with each other, and "oneness" with their community. Before a project is undertaken, there is music performed to ask the spirits to comply with whatever is trying to be accomplished. There is music for protection against the elements, such as fire and natural disaster. There is also music performed to ask the spirits for rain and healthy crops.

Another commonality in African music is the performer of the music. To be a proficient adult in many African societies means being able to perform song and dance with "some degree

of proficiency." According to Ruth Stone, "Music is not just something special but something social, and to be a social being is to know about performance." A lot of cultural groups in Africa provide apprenticeships for talented young people who receive individualized training with professionals.

The most vital people in a musical event are the performers, whether they be singers, dancers, storytellers, actors, or instrumentalists. The audience, the "receivers and shapers of the music," also play an extremely important role, for those are the people who "judge" the performance. According to Ruth Stone, "they praise, in the form of token gifts or speeches, and criticize, in the form of finely honed allusion."

Other "attendees" of these performances are ancestors and "tutelary" spirits. They are thought to influence and "enhance" the music being performed. Usually, the ancestors are there as the spirits of dead musicians who are "called" to attend a performance. Musical instruments are considered to be extensions of the player.



Images Courtesy of ©Rob Lonsdale
lonsdale@sonic.net

Young Ghanian Drummers



Ghanian Dancer

As mentioned in the beginning of this article, music is weaved throughout the everyday life of Africans. As such, the actual setting for performances can be any spot which is suitable for "collective activity." However, it is very unusual to find "permanent" structures for performances, such as concert halls or auditoriums. The usual practice is for everything to be in the "open air," and for the audience to stand around or close to the performers.

Audience members are sometimes invited to participate in the performance. According to J.H. Kwabena Nketia, "in some contexts, they may join the chorus; they may also enter the dancing ring either to dance or to give moral support to the dancers by placing coins on their foreheads or in their mouths, by placing pieces of cloth or kerchiefs around their necks, or by spreading pieces of cloth on the ground for them to step on." In mentioning this, there is usually not a wide path or boundary between the audience and the performers, "except where the nature of the performance requires this." Most musical performances are held outdoors. Usually, performances which are held indoors are reserved for

The instruments are considered to become "more or less human" depending on what role they play. According to Ruth Stone, "some instruments exhibit this idea clearly, with humanoid features carved and fashioned on them: the head and face of a woman at the end of a Mangbetu harp, the waist rings and feet of a woman at the base of a goblet drum, an mbira built on the stomach of a carved wooden figure of a person with arms uplifted."

Yet another commonality among African music is song lyrics. "In African music there is rarely a piece that is solely instrumental." Lyrics are extremely important in all African music. In the West, lyrics provide the song's message, which is what listeners are interested in. This rings true as well in Africa. Lyrics of songs are composed mainly by the vocalists who perform them. The content of the lyrics varies from historical events to love songs. Very rarely will you find lyrics to be overtly political. However, political "hints" may be slightly hidden in "cryptic expressions or familiar proverbs." Many African songs have religious references, even if the song itself is not classified as religious.

"restricted audiences such as kings, patrons, and friends, or for a limited group of people involved in a private ritual or ceremony." No matter the setting, the focus of the performance is on music as a social activity.

In conclusion, music plays a vital role in the lives of ALL Africans, whether it be in the Northern, Central, Southern, Eastern or Western regions. Even though each region has its individual type of music and performance, there are certain musical aspects that draw this huge continent together. Music is an everyday occurrence in Africa and has been that way since its beginnings. It weaves its way intricately throughout the daily lives of the people of the African continent.

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This lesson plan satisfies the following SSS benchmarks:

- SSS A141
- SSS A142
- SSS A248
- SSS B241

Objective

Students will understand the importance of music in African society and what musical factors are commonplace throughout the continent.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- posterboards
- glue sticks/tape
- "science project" display board
- markers, colored pencils
- computer (with PowerPoint installed) with Internet and LCD projector
- lesson instructing how to use PowerPoint/Jeopardy Template (see below)

A lot of patience!

Lesson Outline

This lesson is designed to take at least 7 days: 2 research days, 2 "put together" days, 2 presentation days, one museum display day. This is a "chunking" lesson, whereby a lot of information is going to be separated into 4 groups. Each group will become an "expert" on their "chunk" of information and will make a PowerPoint presentation to the rest of the class. (This lesson assumes that students have an awareness on how to use PowerPoint and the Jeopardy PowerPoint template (see below). If this is not the case, maybe take a class period to instruct)

First, form 4 "expert groups." Make sure that you have a "leader" in each of the groups to take on the role of administrator/museum curator. The 4 "chunks" of information will be as follows: the place of music in traditional African life (birth, puberty, funerals, seasons/traditional yearly events), setting of musical performances, song lyrics, and performers. A good suggestion is to already have copies of the information ready for the students to use (see bibliography for where to find information).

After each group has its assigned "chunk," emphasize that every student has a role. An idea is to have a good rubric in place so all

com). Assign a role to each student in the group, such as picture finder, PowerPoint writer, administrator/museum curator, and PowerPoint presenter (or any other role you choose). Emphasize that this project is a group grade, so if everyone does not perform their job, the entire group's grade will suffer. This will ensure that everyone is on task! It is one thing to choose not to do your work and YOUR grade suffers—it is quite another if your choice not to participate affects other students' grades!

Along with their PowerPoint presentations, each group is to have a "visual." The easiest way to do this is to have posterboards for each group. The "picture finder" is responsible for finding pictures and providing descriptions of those pictures regarding their group's information.

As each group presents their information, the other students are responsible for taking notes. As an incentive for taking notes, maybe emphasize that they will be graded or that they can use them on the test. Each group will be responsible for making a test on their information that the rest of the class will take. The test should be a combination of multiple choice, matching, short answer, and essay (how many of each is up to you). In addition to the test, each group will be responsible for putting together a PowerPoint Jeopardy review game (http://www.graves.k12.ky.us/tech/jeopardy_instructions.htm).

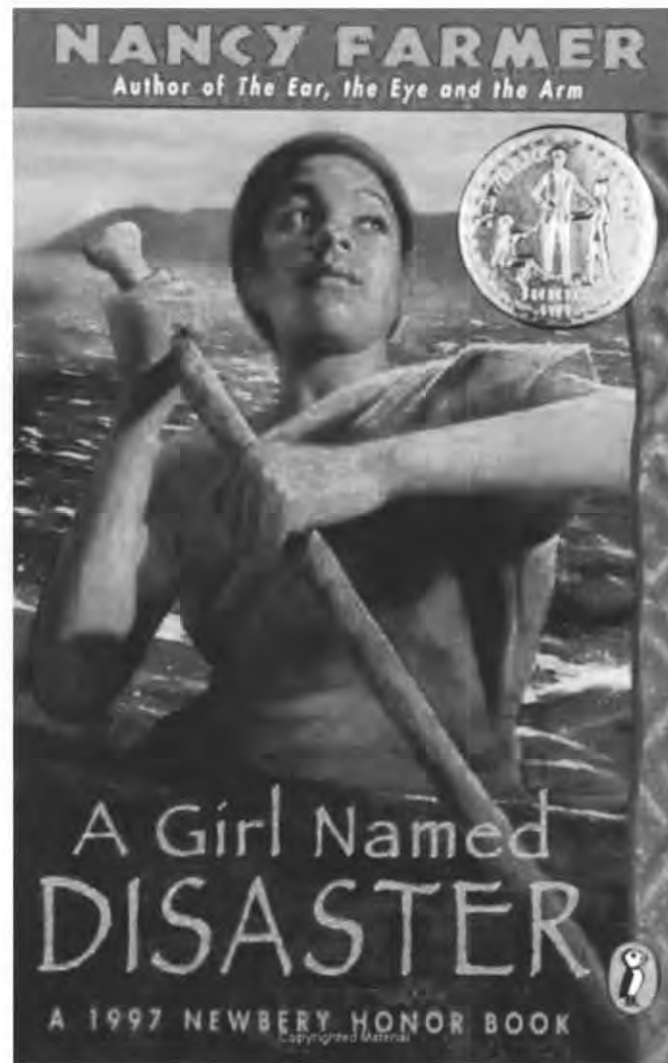
The culminating event for this lesson will be a "museum" display of each group's information. The administrator/museum curator will be mainly responsible for this role. Make sure that each group has a "science project" display board for this task. On this board, each group will be attaching pictures and a summary of their "expert" presentation (maybe copies of certain PowerPoint slides). This "museum" can take place in your classroom or in the library. Invite teachers and their students to come to your "museum" a few days in advance. While everyone in the group is responsible for putting their display board together, it is the administrator/curator's responsibility to "teach" your visitors about their expertise in the area of African music commonalities.

Bildungsroman: A Girl Named Disaster

Maryjo Tracy

Nancy Farmer's *A Girl Named Disaster*, a novel suited for middle school language arts classes, can be taught simply as an adventure story, a survival story, or a clash of cultures story. Another useful approach to understanding the novel, however, is to present it to students as an example of *Bildungsroman*, or the novel of development, in this case development of the title character, Nhamo, whose name among her Shona people means "disaster." The *Bildungsroman* genre shows how a fictional character progresses through various stages of life and how those stages mold the character. Well-known examples of this form of literature are Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*, James Joyce's *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon*.

A Girl Named Disaster is set in 1981, just six years after Mozambique's independence from Portugal and two years after Zimbabwe's independence from a small English tribe, which had ruled from 1965-1979 despite Britain's attempt, beginning in 1963, to grant Zimbabwe independence. Eleven-year-old Nhamo (Disaster) lives by Shona traditions in a round-house village in Mozambique. Her father, Proud Jongwe, a Mtoroshanga Zimbabwean, has deserted his wife and daughter because he murdered a man in a neighboring village and must flee. Left unprotected as a result of her husband's desertion, Nhamo's mother was attacked and killed by a leopard. Following a village cholera epidemic, Nhamo must run from her village as she is commanded by her ambuya (grandmother), or else endure marriage to a cruel, much older, diseased man who already has three wives who will certainly poison her out of jealousy if she doesn't die first from beatings the husband will doubtlessly inflict upon her. This man is the brother of the man Nhamo's father murdered. Nhamo is presumed to be the root cause of the cholera epidemic because an *ngozi* (evil spirit) of the murdered man is spreading the disease. Therefore, her forced marriage to the brother is designed to be an appeasement payment to the *ngozi*—after all, Nhamo, though an outcast in many ways in her mother's village, is an attractive, nubile young girl. Though she fears the prospect of escaping alone to Zimbabwe, Nhamo cannot disobey her grandmother as her elder. Her goal is to reach Zimbabwe by means of a short rowboat trip—her grandmother figures two days—on the Musengezi River. In Zimbabwe, she hopes to contact her father and his family, the Jongwes. What she doesn't know is that because of Portuguese damming of the Zambezi River and subsequent creation of the massive Lake Cabora Bassa,



the journey will be much more drawn out than anticipated. She will be swept north into that treacherous lake. Also, her father is dead, and that means the Jongwes, her relatives in Mtoroshanga, will be the ones who will either accept or reject her. Nhamo's story definitely embodies many examples of *Bildungsroman*'s predominant elements that contribute to the coming of age of a protagonist; these include childhood influences, journey and self-education, and successful or failed integration in society following the journey. In Nhamo's case she gains and reinforces knowledge that the spirit world and the real world are one and inseparable in her everyday life and existence.

Childhood Influences

For Nhamo, not only is her childhood development strongly colored by the desertion of her father and the death of her mother, but also by the fragmented way she discovers information about her parents. Under the influence of strong beer at Portuguese Joao's trading post, Nhamo's grandmother tells the story of Proud Jongwe, remarkably, to a crowd of strangers: "Nhamo held her breath. No one had ever told her about Father. If she approached when someone was speaking of him, people immediately changed the subject." (Farmer 53) Nhamo is startled when her grandmother begins talking about her mother since this is such an unusual, yet desired, occurrence: "Your mother grew slowly, said Ambuya. . . . Runako, your mother, was worth waiting for. Did you know she could read?" (Farmer 21) Beyond tidbits she learns now and then about her mother, Nhamo physically and spiritually creates her own image of her mother since, of course, she has no photograph of her. She steals a village-shared magazine cover showing a Westernized woman lovingly spreading margarine on bread for her daughter and imagines that this could be her own mother. She often walks to a secret place where she has hidden "Mother" under a flat stone, unrolls her, and has conversations and "tea parties" with her. Of course, one of the important things she takes with her on her journey to Zimbabwe is this treasured picture.

Perhaps the most important childhood influence on Nhamo is her knowledge about the Shona creator *Mwari* (God), witches, spirits, healers, and other spiritual aspects of her traditional upbringing. She is fascinated by the stories she surreptitiously listens in on at the men-only dare and by all the other stories that come to her legitimately from her elders, especially her grandmother. Nhamo herself becomes an expert storyteller and uses her stories to comfort herself and others.

Journey and Self-education

An Enotes discussion of Bildungsroman on the Internet says this about the importance of the coming of age journey: "Traditionally, this growth occurs according to a pattern: the sensitive, intelligent protagonist leaves home, undergoes stages of conflict and growth, is tested by crises . . . then finally finds the best way to use his/her unique talents. Sometimes the protagonist returns home to show how well things turned out." The physical journey Nhamo faces is as important as her childhood influences in her village for her growth and development. The prospect of this journey into the unknown is a huge emotional challenge for Nhamo, who asks her grandmother, "How will I know when I've gone far enough?" and her grandmother replies, "When you come to electric lights . . . "You've never seen them, but they're bright—bright as a hundred fires! You must be very careful crossing the border, though. . . . The ground is full of land mines." (Farmer 79)

When her journey to Zimbabwe accidentally changes course at the sand banks, and she heads into the dangerous Lake Cabora Bassa, she is forced to draw on the teachings of her childhood, her imagination, and her extraordinary resourcefulness in order to survive. Nhamo develops muscular strength as she paddles



Children bugging

the boat; and she hunts, fishes, forages, makes rope and twine, and plants a garden using seeds she has scavenged from a former village of Portuguese settlers. On one island of her travels, she builds a treehouse and makes plans to build a new boat to replace Crocodile Guts's leaky one. While following a troop of baboons for safety in foraging, she makes new discoveries about the land, edible plants, and herself. Her faith and confidence grow alongside her fears and in the midst of her toil. When she is nearly overcome by the physical and mental challenges before her, her mother's spirit encourages her and she perseveres.

Integration, Alienation, Vocation

In Chapter 31, Nhamo reaches Zimbabwe where traditional village women offer her food, but they are afraid that she might be a witch. After leaving the village and walking on, Nhamo finds herself gazing from outdoors into the windows of a white family's luxurious home; when discovered, she is treated like an animal, and dogs are sent to attack her. The trauma of this experience makes Nhamo believe that she is possessed by the evil spirit of *Long Teats*. Feelings of alienation for the protagonist are prevalent at the beginning of the last section of the novel.

The scientific research center at Efi, which Nhamo collapses in front of, represents a period of integration in the new world she has fled to. In many ways the place delights her as she recovers from

illness and malnutrition, but it is also very confusing for Nhamo as she is introduced to modern conveniences like electricity.

When the scientists at Efifi determine that it is time for Nhamo to travel to Mtoroshanga to meet her relatives, the Jongwes, and go to school, she is beset with more rejection except from her great-grandfather. Her great-grandfather takes her on a trip to "visit" her father; that is, to the chrome mining area where he lies dead and buried in a collapsed tunnel. But, more importantly, he connects her to her family history and gives her a wedding photograph of her parents.

By the end of the novel, Nhamo is no longer called "Wild Child," and she is proclaimed all grown up and beautiful by one and all of her admirers at Efifi. Nhamo continues to hang on sentimentally to her links to her village in Mozambique, but her integration in her new world seems clear at the end of the novel: "Nhamo thought about living in the village again. She would have to spend her days pounding mealies and hauling water. She wouldn't have any books. Most of her fellow students hated studying, but Nhamo loved it." (Farmer 288)

A Girl Named Disaster is a very teacher and student friendly book. The author helpfully provides a detailed list of characters on two pages before the first chapter. Also, before the first chapter, are extremely useful maps for locating Mozambique and Zimbabwe on the continent, for fictional locations, and for tracking the protagonist's journey. Following the last chapter is a good glossary identifying unfamiliar words for American readers, mostly Shona unless otherwise noted. Finally, at the very end of the book, are two important sections titled "The History and Peoples of Zimbabwe and Mozambique" and "The Belief Systems of the Shona."

Classroom Application

Middle school language arts teachers who want to present *A Girl Named Disaster* as Bildungsroman will probably find a series of Concept Webs an important learning strategy. The web center, or Main Topic, of each web created will be an element of the Bildungsroman genre: Childhood, Journey, Self-education, Relationships, Alienation, Vocation, Integration. A diagram of the basic format of the Concept Web appears below:

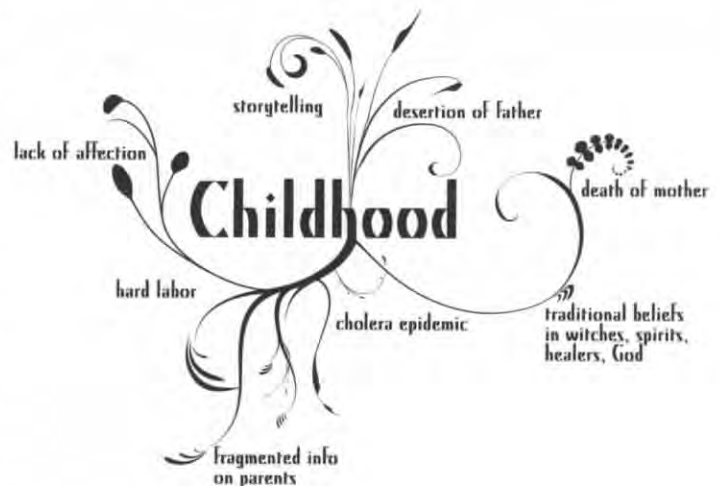
The Related Ideas radiating from the genre elements will be examples for each genre element from the reading and discussion of the novel.



Example

Main Topic (center of web) – Childhood

Related Ideas (spokes in web) – death of mother; desertion of father; fragmented information about parents; storytelling; traditional beliefs in witches, spirits, healers, God; lack of affection; hard labor; cholera epidemic



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The Minerals of Africa

William L. Derausie

This session describes:

- A. *The economics of oil and diamonds from Africa*
- B. *Follow up readings and project*

Africa's Natural Resources and Economics

Notably in Africa, Botswana and South Africa have experienced economic success. The latter has a wealth of natural resources, being the world's leading producers of both gold and diamonds. South Africa also has access to financial capital, numerous markets, skilled labor, and relatively sound infrastructure in much of the country.

Botswana is also a major producer of diamonds and over a quarter of its budget goes toward improving the infrastructure of Gaborone, it's largest city and capital and one of the world's fastest growing cities. Other African countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Cameroon, and Egypt are making comparable progress economically.

In addition to vast mineral wealth such as that found in South Africa and Botswana, several countries in Africa also have considerable oil reserves. Nigeria sits on one of the largest proven oil reserves in the world and has one of the fastest-growing economies in the world. From 1995 to 2005, economic growth picked up, averaging 5% in 2005. Other oil producing countries experienced much higher growth (10+%), in particular Angola, Sudan and Equatorial Guinea, all three of whom are on track to double or even trip their oil output by 2020. These oil producing countries in Africa have not escaped the notice of countries with a heavy demand for oil such as the U.S. and China. It is anticipated that by 2015, Africa will supply 25% of the U.S.'s oil.

Diamonds and South Africa: A Brief History

In 1867, a diamond was found near the Orange River, in the wilds of South Africa. Placer diamonds were found between the Vaal and Orange Rivers later that year, and in March 1869 an 83-carat diamond was discovered. By the end of 1870, there was a full-fledged diamond rush. By 1880, new investments were pouring in. Cecil Rhodes and seven partners owned a block of 90 claims in the De Beers Mining Company Ltd, named for its land holdings on the old De Beers ranch.

After De Beers set up its "searching-houses" in March 1883, its diamond production rose significantly, which indicated that there had been a hemorrhage of diamonds from the workers in the mines. By the time that the South African mines were in full production in the late 1890s, 100,000 carats a year (about 8% of the total) were being recovered by searching the African contract workers leaving the compounds for home, giving some idea of the losses there must have been in previous years.

After a classic financial struggle played out on the stock market, the major diamond mines were unified under single management, De Beers Consolidated Mines Limited, founded in Kimberley in 1888. The Barnato family, Cecil Rhodes, and the London banking family of the Rothschilds had major holdings. By the end of 1889, De Beers held a virtual monopoly not only on the Kimberley diamond trade, but on the world diamond trade. Commentators predicted that the enlarged De Beers would use its monopoly to cut production, leading to higher prices for diamonds, and in fact, it did so.

The diamond empire of De Beers is now one of about 600 companies associated with "South Africa Inc." (officially called The Anglo American Corporation of South Africa, 44 Main



Street, Johannesburg). Anglo American controls South African gold mines as well as diamond mines, and almost half the capitalization of the Johannesburg Stock Exchange represents companies owned or controlled by Anglo American.

South Africa now produces only 15% of the world's diamonds,

which is not enough on its own to provide much leverage over world markets. The richest diamond mines in southern Africa are new fields in Botswana. De Beers holds 50% of these through its subsidiary Debswana (De Beers Botswana Mining Company), whose diamond production is larger than that of all the South African mines put together. De Beers still controls 80% of world diamond trading. But it can no longer control the market using its own resources, and is therefore evolving to become the dominant company in a traders' cartel, rather than the dominant company in a producers' cartel.

Diamonds, Death & Destruction

Jonas Savimbi

During the 1990s and into the current decade, rebel armies in Angola, Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) exploited the alluvial diamond fields of these countries in order to finance wars of insurgency. Alluvial diamonds, unlike those mined in the deep kimberlite "pipes" of Botswana, Russia and Canada, are found over vast areas of territory. Alluvial diamonds have, from colonial times, proven difficult to manage and to regulate. Because of their high weight-to-value ratio, the ease with which they can be mined, and endemic corruption in the global diamond market, alluvial diamonds became a ready target for rebel armies.

The trade in conflict diamonds began in the early 1990s with Jonas Savimbi's UNITA in Angola, but was quickly copied by the Revolutionary United Front in Sierra Leone, with assistance from Liberia's warlord president, Charles Taylor. It was then taken up by rebel armies in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and has affected the diamond industries of Guinea, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire as well. As much as 15% of the world's \$10 billion annual rough diamond production fell into the category of conflict diamonds in the late 1990s. Hundreds of thousands of people died as a direct result of these wars, and many more died of indirect causes. Millions of people were displaced for half a generation, health and educational infrastructure was destroyed, and development was reversed.

Follow-up Research

Thinking About Diamonds

<http://blooddiamond.pacweb.org/thinkingaboutdiamonds/>

Edward Zwick, Director, Blood Diamond Rapaport International Diamond Conference, New York, Feb. 5, 2007

Additionally, his ideas creates different and sometimes interesting reactions to the teaching of African History. As an instructor, it is important to strive for new and innovative ways to reach the students, such as the internet and articles.

Plan of action:

Have the students read the article and write a page on his/her reactions:

Interaction:

In just a short period of time (three weeks) the students hopefully will become interested in Africa and follow current events.

Follow-up:

Do current events at least three times a week.



The Botswana Unified Revenue Service Building. This is one of the most modern buildings in Botswana, located in Gaborone. This is where they collect taxes.

