





IROHIN

Taking Africa to the Classroom

SPRING 2001

A Publication of
The Center for African Studies
University of Florida



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Center for African Studies

Outreach Program at the University of Florida

The Center is partly funded under the federal Title VI of the higher education act as a National Resource Center on Africa. As one of the major Resource Centers, Florida's is the only center located in the Southeastern United States. The Center directs, develops and coordinates interdisciplinary instruction, research and outreach on Africa.

The Outreach Program includes a variety of activities whose objective is to improve the teaching of Africa in schools from K-12, colleges, universities and the community. Below are some of the regular activities, which fall under the Outreach Program.

Teachers' Workshops. The Center offers in-service workshops for K-12 teachers on the teaching of Africa.

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

Publications. The Center publishes teaching resources including *Irohin*, which is distributed to teachers. In addition, the Center has also published a monograph entitled *Lesson Plans on African History and Geography: A Teaching Resource*. Teachers may request for free copies of this publication.

Library. Teachers may borrow video tapes and books from the Outreach office.

Community and School Presentations. Faculty and graduate students make presentations on Africa to the community and schools.



Part of the Center's mission is to promote African culture. In this regard, it invites artists such as Dolly Rathebe, from South Africa to perform and speak in schools and communities.

Research Affiliate Program. The program enables African specialists at institutions which lack adequate resources to increase their expertise on Africa through contact with other Africanists and by accessing African-related resources in the University of Florida libraries. Two one-month appointments are provided each summer.

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Editor's Note

Every 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 broaden their knowledge about Africa and develop lesson plans to use in their classrooms. The creative lesson plans in this issue of *Irohin* were written by participants in the 2000 institute. Please feel free to use these materials in your teaching and share them with other teachers. Write or call the Center for additional copies.

Sincerely,

Agnes Leslie

Agnes Ngoma Leslie,
Editor/Outreach Director

Insert is Beverly Finley, playing an African drum, who also participated in the institute.



K-12 teachers who wrote the articles for this Irohin pose for the picture dressed in African clothing: James Miller, Tamara Bako, Kelly Verner, John Fuller, Sylvia McCullars, Robert W. Wendt, Agnes Leslie (Institute Director), Antoinette D' Assomption (presenter), Dorian Thrailkill, Ebony Young and Kathy D. Dyce.

Geography of Africa

By John Fuller



Objectives

- (1). The students will gain an understanding of Africa's diverse geographical makeup and the role that geographical features have played in the development of Africa.
- (2). They should gain an understanding of the size of Africa and learn of the locations of some of Africa's early empires.

Overview

In a class discussion go over the different geographical features of Africa using a wall map or overhead transparency of Africa. Have the students use a desk map or the Atlases located in their text book. Include in the discussion the following ideas and information.

1. The major physical features of African including the major mountain ranges, deserts, rivers and climatic regions.
2. The impact these geographical features would have had on the development of societies in Africa.
3. The major early civilizations of Africa including Ghana, Mali, Songhai and Zimbabwe. Include in the discussion the major trade routes of these empires, the cultural aspects of them, and the role the geography had on their cultural development.
4. The impact these geographical features had on the development of trade. Point out the narrow coastal plains, short length of the navigable parts of rivers from the coast. If available, show a video of the geography of Africa.
5. Have the students complete the map of Africa.
6. Have students use the map and an Atlas of modern Africa to answer questions to help them gain an understanding of the geography of Africa and of the areas occupied by the early

empires of Africa. The following are examples of the type of questions you might want to use:

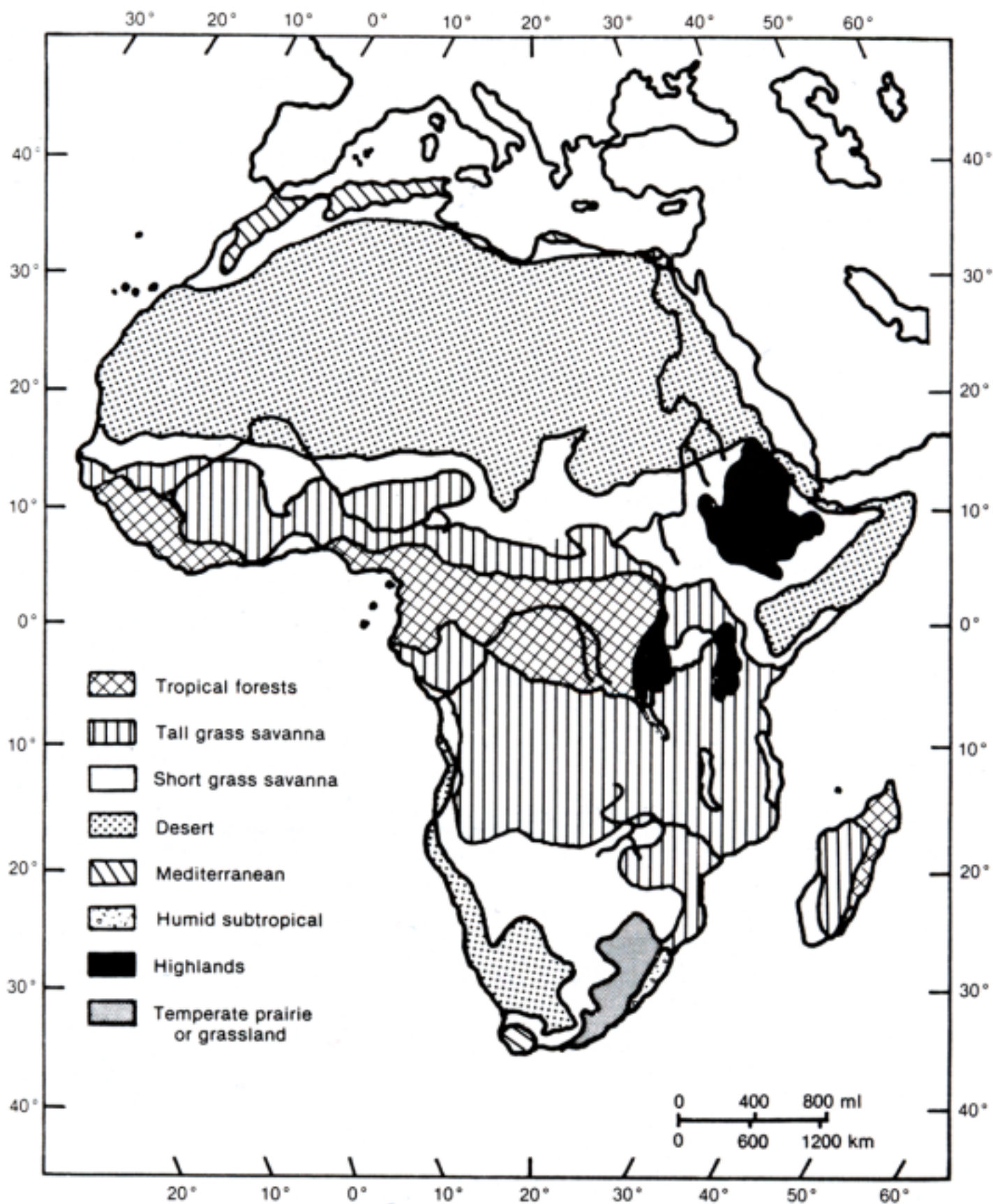
- Notice the narrow coastline of Africa and the lack of natural harbors. How would this impact the development of trade by the early empires?
- How would lack of harbors and coastal islands affect the development of maritime technology of the people of Africa?
- Look at the location of the empire of Songhai. List five present day African nations that are located there today.
- Look at the Climate Zone map of Africa in your Atlas. What are the four climate zones found in Africa?
- How would the type of climates found in Africa affect where the different empires of Africa developed?
- Africa is the second largest continent in the world. What is its size in square miles?
- The United States of America is 3,615,123 square miles. How many times would the United States fit into the continent of Africa?

Follow-up Activities

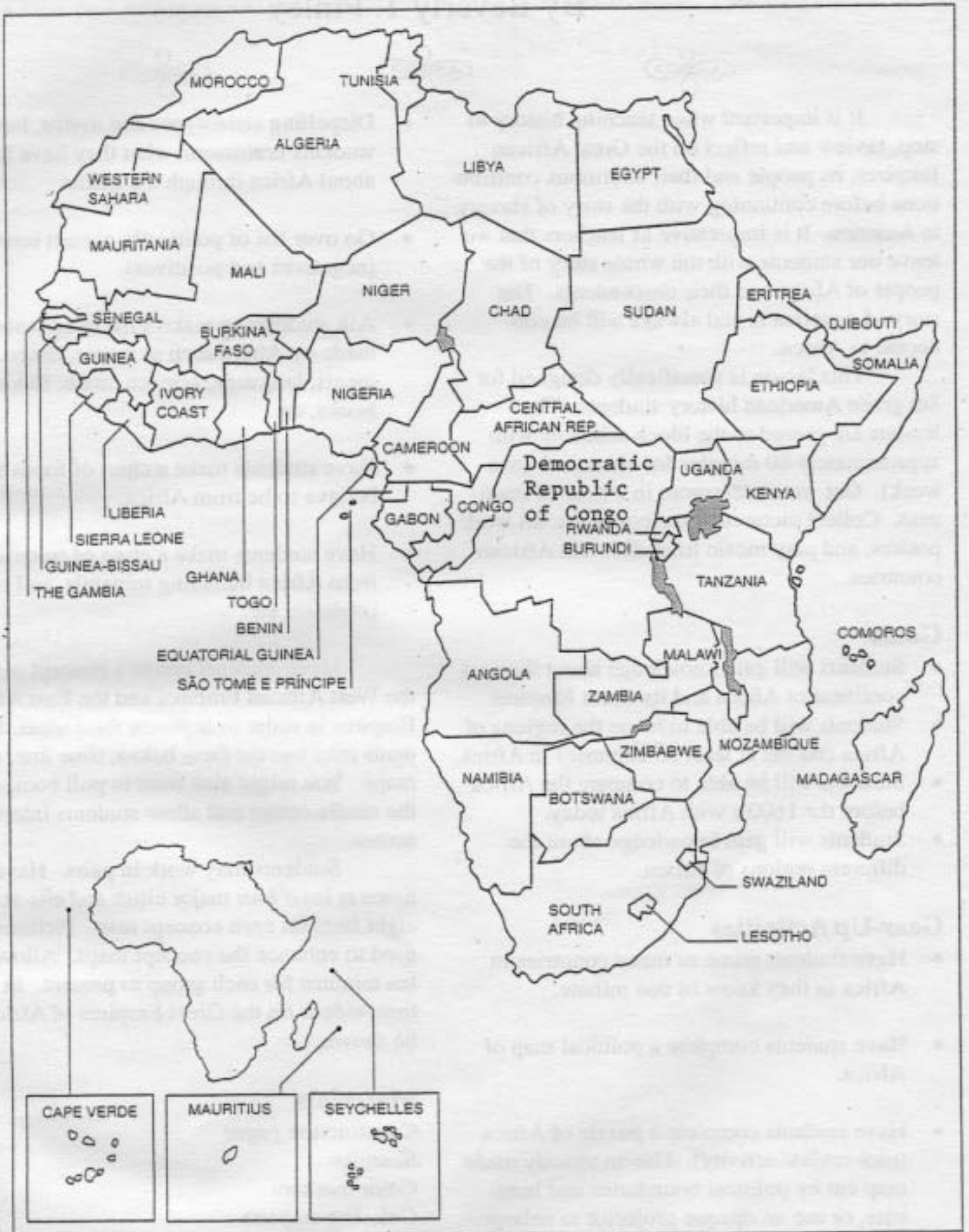
Have the students research in groups or individually, different countries. Each group could then present their information to the class using a poster to show a map, the flag, and other selected information.

Students could create travel brochures to promote one of the present countries of Africa. These could be displayed on a bulletin board to share the information.

ECOLOGICAL AREAS OF AFRICA



NATIONAL BORDERS PRESENT DAY



Africa and Its Vast Kingdoms

..... By Beverly T. Finley



It is important when teaching history to stop, review and reflect on the Great African Empires, its people and their enormous contributions before continuing with the story of slavery in America. It is imperative as teachers that we leave our students with the whole story of the people of Africa and their descendents. The story of America is and always will be connected to Africa.

This lesson is specifically designed for 8th grade American history students. The lessons are geared to the block schedule with approximately 80 minutes for class time (one week). Get your classroom in a state of readiness. Collect pictures of the continent, art work posters, and play music from different African countries.

Goals

- Students will gain knowledge about the vast continent of Africa and its Great Empires.
- Students will be able to name the regions of Africa and list at least 35 countries in Africa,
- Students will be able to compare the Africa before the 1600's with Africa today.
- Students will gain knowledge about the different regions of Africa.

Gear-Up Activities

- Have students name as many countries in Africa as they know in one minute.
- Have students complete a political map of Africa.
- Have students complete a puzzle of Africa (nice review activity). Use an already made map cut by political boundaries and laminate, or use an opaque projector to enlarge, trace and laminate.

- Dispelling stereotypes and myths, have students brainstorm what they have learned about Africa through the media
- Go over list of politically correct terms (negatives and positives).
- Ask students to make a list of contributions made by Africa such as music, dance, instruments, language, science, math, folk tales, books, etc.
- Have students make a chart of foods they believe to be from Africa.
- Have students make a chart of resources from Africa including minerals, and natural products, etc.

Have students create a concept map on the West African Empires and the East African Empires in order to organize their ideas. Students may use the facts below, time line, and maps. You might also want to pull books from the media center and allow students Internet access.

Students may work in pairs. Have them name at least four major cities and cite at least eight facts on each concept map. Pictures can be used to enhance the concept maps. Allow about ten minutes for each group to present. In addition, videos on the Great Empires of Africa can be shown.

Materials

Construction paper
Sharpies
Color markers
Coloring crayons

Africa's Major Kingdoms Through the 1800s



West African Empires and Kingdoms

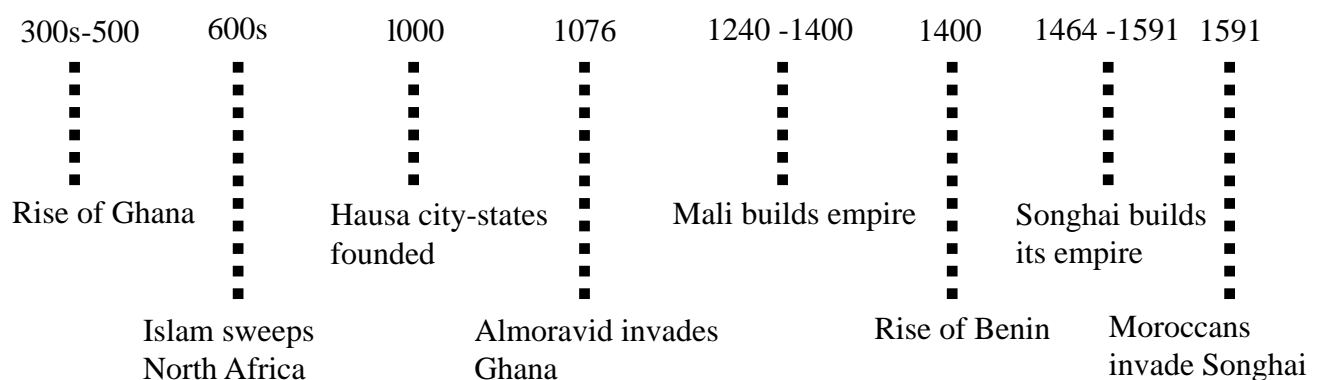
- Arab conquerors intent on spreading the Islamic religion swept into North Africa in the 600's.

One Arab wrote...

“There is a country where gold grows like plants in the sand in the same way as carrots do, and is plucked at sunset.”

- People in the “land of gold” called their home Wagdu, their capital.
- Kimbu, and the Soninke (soh-NIGN-kah) lived in an area that included parts of modern Mauritania, Senegal and Mali. Ghana rose to power between AD 300 and 500. It was the first of three empires to take advantage of a location that lay at the crossroads of trade”. The heart of the trade was salt, gold and ivory.
- Ghana had a strong central government and used their taxes to protect their people and surrounding areas. Taxes enriched the king and enabled him to build bigger armies, pay more officials and maintain the beautiful course that led the Soninke to give their kings a new title - Kaya Maghan, which means “master of gold.”
- By the late Middle Ages, most European gold came out of West Africa—a place little known to Europeans.
- Trade included a number of Africans. The system of owning people had existed for hundreds of years and in most parts of the world, including Greece and Rome. In addition, Africans enslaved other Africans they captured during wars. This type of slavery was much different from the slavery which later came to the Americas.
- The slavery practiced by Africans allowed enslaved people to earn or purchase their freedom. Sometimes slaves became part of the household.
- At first, trade with the Muslims across the Sahara enriched Ghana. The King of Ghana allowed the practice of Islam within the empire, some towns had as many as 12 mosques.
- In the 1000's, Muslims, Berbers from North Africa launched a war against Ghana. The battles exhausted Ghana's power, and in its place, two empires rose - Mali and Songhai. Both empires flourished from about 1240-1500's.

WESTERN EMPIRE



- Mansa Musa, leader of Mali, after his pilgrimage to Mecca, persuaded some of Islam's finest architects, scholars and other professionals to return with him to Mali. There they constructed buildings and schools in the famous Timbuktu. Mali was later taken over by Summi Ali leader of neighboring Songhai.
- In 1591, an army from Morocco marched into West Africa in search of gold. The Moroccan army defeated the Army of Songhai.

Kingdoms of the Grassland and Forest

- The Hausa people lived mainly in present day Nigeria. They formed city-states, which were self ruling states made of a city and its surrounding territory. By the 1100's some towns were encircled by walls.
- Lots of trading took place with surrounding areas, cotton, iron and animal skins. Trading of leather and other items reached as far as Morocco and Europe. Katsina and Kano became major centers of commerce and learning.
- Benin was one of the best known of the kingdoms in the rain forest area. People such as the Yoruba and Bini and many others lived in this area in states such as *Ife* and

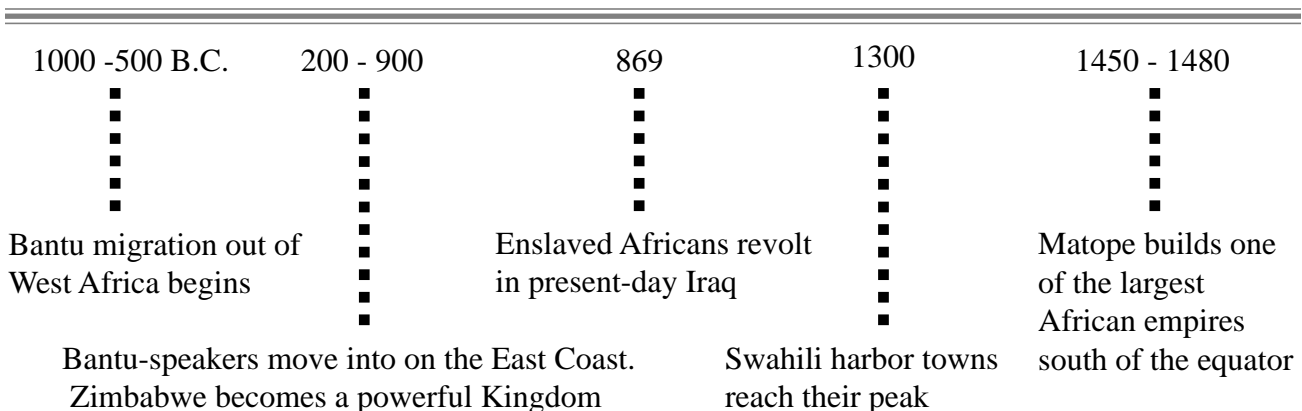
Oyo from 1400's and 1500's. The Oba, or ruler, named Ewuare greatly expanded the size of Benin. He set up a strong government.

- The Kongo consisted of a number of small kingdoms ruled by a powerful leader called Manikongo. The people of Kongo knew how to melt copper and iron. The Kongo became another area for trade.

East Africa

- Small trading communities grew along the coast. The main trading partners were Arabs. These states became very powerful in trading for gold, copper, ivory and slaves.
- By 1100 Kilwa had become the center of the East African gold trade. Kilwa was a walled city with wide streets, impressive palaces, and beautiful mosques.
- Zimbabwe built up a large trade with the coastal regions of east Africa
- The Bantu speaking people began a second wave of migration that continued from roughly AD 100 to 1000. They carried with them skills learned in their original West African homeland: mining, iron making, goldsmith and pottery.

EASTERN EMPIRE





Above: Map of Great Zimbabwe.

Below: An aerial view of the Great Zimbabwe Ruins.



What's In A Region?

Divide students into five groups. Each group will represent a Region of Africa: North Africa, West Africa, East Africa, Central Africa and Southern Africa. Students will need time in the media center and access to the Internet. Each group is responsible for a visual and oral presentation. Explain to the groups that they are on a fact-finding mission.

Terms to review: *imperialism, capitalism, nationalism, economics, exploitation, ethnic group.*

Suggested questions:

- What is the region like geographically? Natural resources, climate and physical features.
- What major countries does your region include?
- What ethnic groups make up your region?
- Can any of the ethnic groups in your region be traced to the Americas?
- What are some of the customs, languages and traditions of at least two groups within your region?
- How did imperialism affect your region? What European countries controlled your area?
- What are the major economic resources of your region?
- What are some major problems facing your region today?
- What is happening currently in at least two of the countries in your region? Internet suggestions: African News On-line <http://www.africanews.org/>

- Have students research art, music, and food from their area. With the excitement of the project, I'm sure they will want to share some of the art, music and foods from their region.

Suggestions for Presentation

- Use PowerPoint slides.
- Role play - Have students pretend they are investigators who are reporting on the different regions and complete an interview with people of the past and the present.
- Use art or drawing to answer the mission questions.
- Discussion groups - present the information orally and visually.
- Students may show parts of African Videos in their presentations. (20 minutes)
- Have students brain storm questions to answer in their group research topic. Students will have other suggestions, make sure each person in the group has at least two questions to research and share with their group and later to the class.

Homework Assignment

Have students write a four-paragraph essay on one of the following topics:

- a) What effect did imperialism have on Africa?
- b) Explain the contributions of a specific region or ethnic group to the world.

Culminating Experience

Bring guest speakers from the different regions. Have speakers come out to your school and discuss the history, art, music and literature of Africa. Contact the Center of African Studies in your area.

Africa Through the Senses

By Kathy Dyce



Africa is a huge, diverse continent. It is the second largest continent in the world. Africa is so vast that the landmasses of the United States, Europe, India and Japan could fit into it and there would still be plenty of empty space. It is the diversity of the land and the people of Africa the students will learn about through the use of their senses.

Objectives:

Each student will:

1. Develop core knowledge about the countries that make up the continent of Africa.
2. Select a country to research through the use of their senses and observation skills.
3. Create a 3-D puzzle map of the country selected.
4. Develop a rubric for evaluation.

Objective #1

Develop a core knowledge about the countries that make up the continent of Africa.

Week One. Begin a class and individual KWL chart. Complete the “what we know” and “what we want to learn” sections on a large chart to show all responses.

- All students are given a 3-ring notebook and a composition booklet for notes, journals and handouts.
- Explain goals and expectations for the unit “Africa Through The Senses.”

All classrooms should have a “WORD WALL” where new vocabulary for the unit being studied is displayed. Students write words on paper strips to be hung on the wall.

Besides the KWL chart students may use the five question words as a bases for acquiring knowledge.

Where? What? Why? When? Who? and How?

Where: location / comparison

What: continent / to be learned

Why: contributions / importance

When: period of time / history

Who: people

How: to put it all together

Week Two. During this time, the teacher will give an overview of Africa’s five regions- North Africa, West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa and South Africa.

North Africa encompasses the Sahara Desert and stretches from the Atlantic coast to the Red Sea. Countries include: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and Western Sahara.

West Africa includes the many countries clustered around the western curve of the continent, adjacent to the Gulf of Guinea and the Atlantic Ocean: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritania, Guinea-Bisseau, Liberia, Mali, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Cameroon.

Central Africa includes the countries to the west of the Great Rift Valley of Africa, located just north of southern Africa: Chad, Central African Republic, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

East Africa includes countries between northern Africa, southern Africa and east of the Great Rift: Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda and Sudan.

Southern Africa consists of countries in the southern part of the continent, plus the nearby island of Madagascar: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

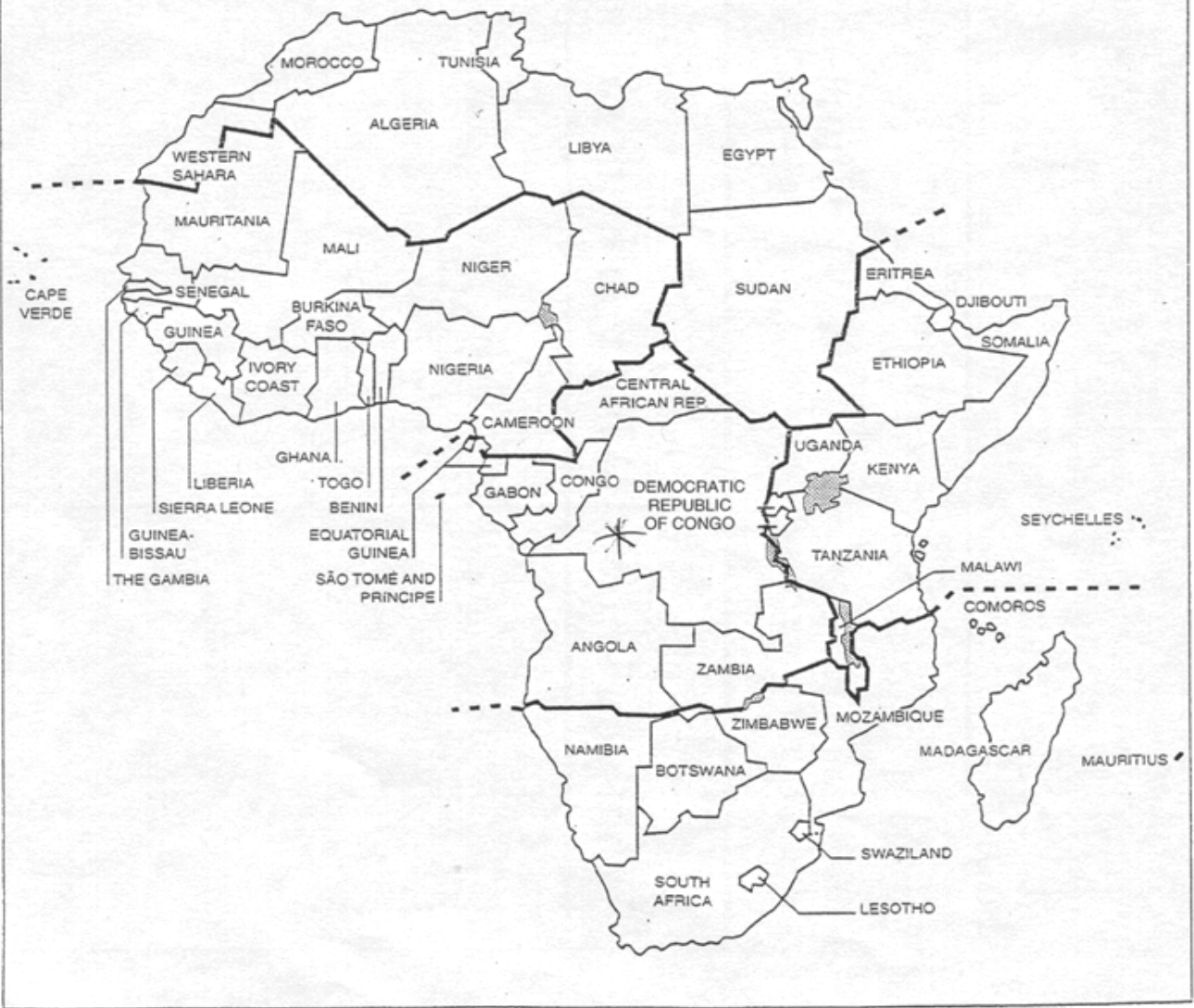
Topic: _____

KWL Chart

K What you know	W What you want to know	L What you learned

INTRODUCTION: REGIONS OF AFRICA PRESENT DAY

- 1. NORTH AFRICA
- 2. WEST AFRICA
- 3. EAST AFRICA
- 4. CENTRAL AFRICA
- 5. SOUTH AFRICA



Objective #2

Select a country to research through the use of the senses and observation skills.

Using Senses in Research. Our senses help us to compare and contrast things in our environment; they help us to distinguish fact from opinion. By using our senses, we are able to question things in our environment in order to be a good observer. When we use the senses to observe something in our environment, we relate our perception to something tangible to better understand it. For example, "It's as light as a feather."

Emphasize to the student...

**To Be A Good Observer,
One Must Ask Many Questions!**

The Sense of Sight Students will use descriptive words / drawing to identify how something looks.

Color. Use samples from a paint store and crayon samples.

Size. Drawing and measurement with standard and metric system.

Shapes. 3-D words, ie. teardrop, egg, pear, cone, cylinder. Look for a pattern.

Sights of Africa. Most of the information about Africa will come through the printed word and visual arts (Geography, People, Arts/Creativity).

"However privileged the ear in verbal cultures, it has always been true that man has lived by his eyes."

-Robert F. Thompson,
Black Gods and Kings

The Sense of Taste. Students will use their sense to describe something that can be tasted or eaten. Not everything should be put in one's mouth. Our taste buds comprise of four tastes: sweet, sour, bitter and salty. The description must be familiar to one's environment. For example, "Gross, this tastes like medicine."

The Sense of Touch. Students will use their sense of touch to describe how something feels when touched with the hands.

Texture. Contrast or connect something else with object. For example, smooth vs. rough, coarse vs. fine or hard vs. soft.

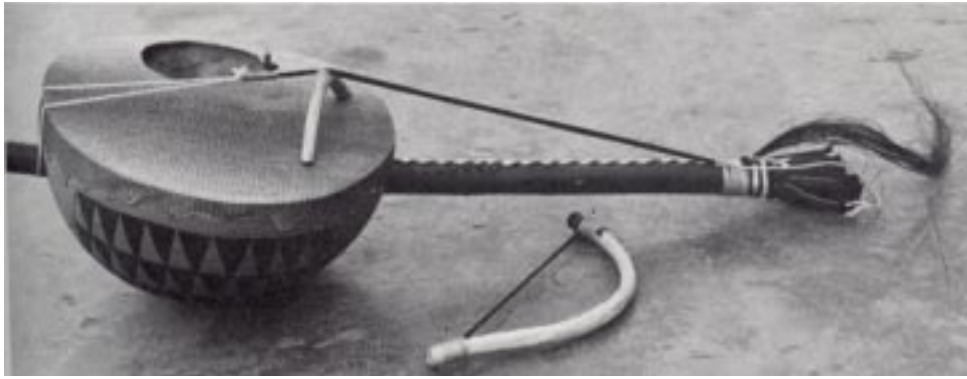
Weight. Heavy or light.

Moisture. Wet or dry.

Temperature. Hot or cold.



Many African artifacts, such as this "standing man," can be seen in museums in the US.



A duuliga violin made with a calabash container, snake skin, leather, a piece of horsetail and a twig.

The Sense of Smell. Students will use their sense of smell to describe scents within the environment. This sense as it relates to observing is limited. Some things do not smell. When students are describing a smell, they need to relate it to something that is familiar to most. For example, “It smells like baby powder.”
Smells of Africa: foods, spices and things within the environment.

The Sense of Sound. Students will use their sense of hearing to describe sounds in the environment. The class can make a list of sound words to refer to when describing the sound that is heard. The description must be familiar to one’s environment.
Sounds of Africa. music, languages, history, literatures and story telling.

Movement. Students will explore movement as a form of expression and communication. Create a vocabulary list that describes different forms of movements/purpose.
Movements of Africa: dance, music and drama.



*Above: Master drummer, Mohammed D’Acosta, cheered teachers in the Summer Institute with his drumming skills.
Left: Summer Institute teachers experience African music and dance.*

Objective #3

Students will create a 3-D puzzle map of the country selected.

Creating a 3-D Puzzle Map.

1. Get a current and accurate map of Africa.
2. Determine the size of the puzzle and placement in classroom.
3. List of materials needed.
4. Resources: people and businesses.
5. Time line for project.
6. The puzzle piece and what should be on it.
7. After completion determine who to share final product with. Ask question, "Who might be interested in learning more about my project?" P.T.A., parents, friends, neighbors, clubs, teachers, classes, art center, university, senior citizens, general public.

Objective #4

Develop a rubric for evaluation.

Development. Here are things to consider when developing a rubric for the African report. Other ideas may be added, but try to keep it simple. Determine specific things that should be in the written report. Score each of those areas and additional information can be a bonus for students.

Title page. Title, name, school, grade and year.

Neatness. Written report's focus, organization, support, details and conventions.

Map of Africa. Oral presentation of project, student creativity and audience participation.

Evaluation of the Unit.

1. The class will complete the KWL chart Section "what we learned" in groups during class. Students may do their own chart later at home.
2. The final evaluation will be a question the students will answer for themselves.

• "How can I do something creative with my knowledge about the subject that I have studied?"

• "What type of goals may I have now?" For example, to change something for the better or to explain something.

Selecting a Country for Research.

1. Students will select an African country to study. The class determines the selection process for selecting a country.
2. Brainstorm what research information should be in the report. Here is a list of things to be considered: official name, capital, flag, currency, map, language, food, population, people, customs, education, land, climate, vegetation, natural resources, news, events, traditions, animals/ insects, children, religion, clothing, weather, sports, recreation, art, music, dance.
3. Brainstorm what resources may help in the research of information. Here is a list of sources. books, maps, travel agency, businesses, university, library, almanac, friends, neighbors, newspapers, games, How-To Books, films, museum, teachers, internet, catalogs, dictionary, field trips, biographies, famous people, farm, performances.
4. Brainstorm ways to share research information through a product.

Written Format

Interview Community Resources

Collage of Words and Pictures

Booklet/Four Guide

Video Tape/Cassette

Musical

Diorama

Slide Show

Poem

Photographs

Model

Scrap book

5. Create time line for completion
6. After the brainstorming, the teacher will develop handouts for the students with specific information regarding #2, 3, 4, and 5.

Size of Continental Africa Compared to the United States



Introduction to Calligraphy

by Sylvia McCullars



Marking and writing can be traced back to early civilizations. Cavemen marked lines to indicate victory for killing beasts. As time passed, making letters and alphabets became an art. We know that quills were used in Colonial time and later reed pens. Reed pens were used in England prior to that. The history of reed pens in Africa seems very scarce, but we know reed pens were used to make Islamic letters of alphabets, as it is known Mohamed was skilled in Calligraphy.

The term calligraphy derives from the Greek word “good” or “beautiful” and refers to what masters called the art of fair writing. Further, Britannica says it implies a sure knowledge of the correct form of letters, for example, the conventional signs by which language can be communicated. Calligraphy is the skill to inscribe them with such ordering of the various parts and harmony of proportions that the cultivated, knowing eye will recognize the compositions as a work of art.

In Asia, calligraphy is considered a major art, equal to painting. In African art, lettering and words are mixed throughout textiles and are prevalent in some clothing styles, and of course in their literature, writings and books.



The Art of African Calligraphy

Objectives

1. To recognize Calligraphy as an African art form that dated back to the earliest times.
2. To show the technique of making a reed pen that was used in African calligraphy, especially Islamic calligraphy.
3. Observation of alphabet letters of art from Africa.

Art Activities

Cutting a bamboo pen (lesson plan and illustration by Ward Dunham). In Gainesville, bamboo can be purchased from Kanapaha Gardens.

Follow-up art activity can be the use of the pen and making strokes and letters or designs.

Materials

1. Calligraphy pens available in art stores in U.S.
2. Reed pens if available.
3. Black bamboo and knife for demonstration.
4. Maps of Africa and a globe.
5. Examples of African or Islamic calligraphy.
6. Visit www.catalog.com/gallery/techni.html for more information about how to make a bamboo pen.

The Truth About African Cloth

..... by Tamara Bako



Ever since I was a child, I have been interested in clothes, especially clothes from faraway places. The great variety of colors, patterns, and textures fascinated me. A few years ago, I wrote to a person in Ghana so I could learn more about his country. However, as do many Americans, I thought Ghana was a state, like Florida, and Africa was the country. I did not realize Africa was a continent. After writing and receiving a few letters, I sent him a camera with film so I could see photographs from Africa. His mother was a head seamstress in Sunyani and made me a traditional type outfit in Kente cloth, which I treasured. He also sent me some traditional sandals, which were pretty, but not as comfortable to walk in.

Initially, I thought Kente-type cloth was the only traditional African cloth, but have discovered through seminars and research that there are countless types of “traditional” African cloths, depending on the region, religion and ethnic group of the person as well as many other factors.

Variety in Traditional African Dress

I have also realized that African traditions are just as varied as any other continent’s countries. In addition, two African country’s traditional dress and clothes styles can be as different as Great Britain’s are from France’s or even more.

Some people in the same country may dress entirely different depending on the climate, their social status, societal role, religious preference, or the occasion. By the way, borders in African countries are arbitrary invisible barriers that have nothing to do with ethnic grouping or anything African, but were, rather, determined by Europeans. Therefore, some people across the borders of one country may dress alike while those in the same country do not.



Ashanti man from Ghana wearing the popular kente cloth.

Some Common African Clothes— their names, descriptions, and areas worn

Clothes	Description	Ethnic Group	Gender
dashiki	loose fitting shirt and pants	Yoruba	male
busuuti	long dress with sleeves	Uganda	female
sauka	long sleeveless dress	Uganda	female
buba	shirt with loose sleeves	Yoruba	female
gele	hat that is wrapped from cloth	Yoruba	female
iro	wrapped skirt	Yoruba	female
kanzu	long white robe	Uganda	male
agbada	robe-like with huge sleeves	Yoruba	male
lapa	wrapper type skirt		female

Modern African Dress

In the large cities, western clothes are regularly worn. However, with the concept of “negritude”, many Africans are returning to their roots by wearing their traditional cloths and dress. Often traditional African and modern western styles are combined to create a new multi-cultural style.

In rural areas, a traveler is much more likely to see traditional clothes with less western influence, but western clothes are seen there as well. However, if a person wants to see the “real” Africa, he or she should avoid the large cities and visit the rural areas because it is in those areas where Africans follow more of their particular group’s traditional way of life.

As mentioned previously, the style of dress depends a great deal on what part of Africa a person comes from. For example, much of Northern Africa is Islamic, which has a definite effect on their dress. Married Muslim women in the Middle East and many of their counterparts in Northern Africa often have their face veiled and wear loose, long conservative robes, whereas in other parts of Africa, the body is accentuated by dress.



Adinkra Symbols:

JEALOUSY



GOOD LUCK



KNOWLEDGE



SAFETY AND SECURITY



HOPE



HYPOCRISY



THE POWER OF GOD



UNITY



Clothes for Special Occasions

Adinkra Cloth from Ghana. *Adinkra* means good-bye in Ashanti. *Adinkra* cloth is normally only worn at funerals or period of personal or national mourning. *Adinkra* cloth is stamped with special symbols with a stamp made of calabash. The dye is mixed with mud so the cloth cannot be washed for a year.

Men wear the cloth with white background and women wear the one with colored backgrounds. They both wear the cloth in a traditional draped fashion.

agbádá



dashiki

An excellent resource book for the meanings of Adinkra symbolism is *African Accents Fabrics and Crafts to Decorate Your Home* by Lisa Shepard, published by Krause Publications in 1999. She also gives great instructions for making African arts and crafts.

Another book for those interested in *Adinkra* is by Jane Kerina called *African Crafts* published by the Lion Press in 1970.

The Importance of the Obete (apron)

In order for an *okpella* male to gain title status, he must go through important rituals involving the wearing of the *obete*. The first title status gained is manhood, the second is *Okpella*-hood and the third is *Oghalo* (elderhood).

The *obete* is made of red trade cloth appliquéd with angular designs. *Edo* traditions associate the color red with protective powers to ward off evil and protect its wearer.

Okpella Terminology

Omada is a indigo-dyed cover cloth or shawl worn by women whose husbands' hold title positions. It is the most complicated cloth work done by northern *Edo* women.

Older women also wear the *omada* draped over their left shoulder during festivals or ceremonies when they want to emphasize their title status. Titled women also wear *omada* after they die.

Ogbo - this world

Ega - a senior titled female elder

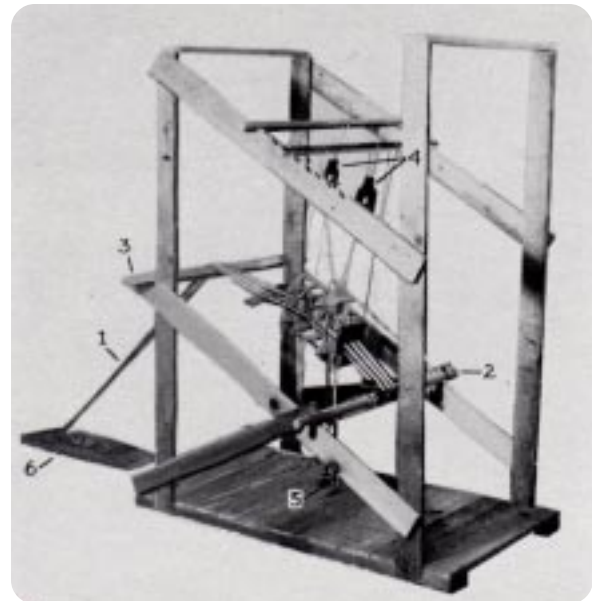
ilimi - the beyond

ugbakpi - spin and woven country cloth

The Importance of the Weaver

In many parts of Africa, weavers are looked upon with awe and wonder. Men are usually the professional weavers while women weave for themselves and their family. Women use an upright loom while men use a horizontal type. The type of loom determines the width of the strips of cloth, which in turn determines what type of cloth they will make.

Weavers are sometimes considered to be endowed with special powers and some use divination in their creation. Because cloth is such an integral part of life—it is there when a person is born, for special ceremonies and rituals, and when he/she dies. The weaver is an essential part of African culture whose cloth cannot be compared to factory-made materials which do not have the spiritual essence.

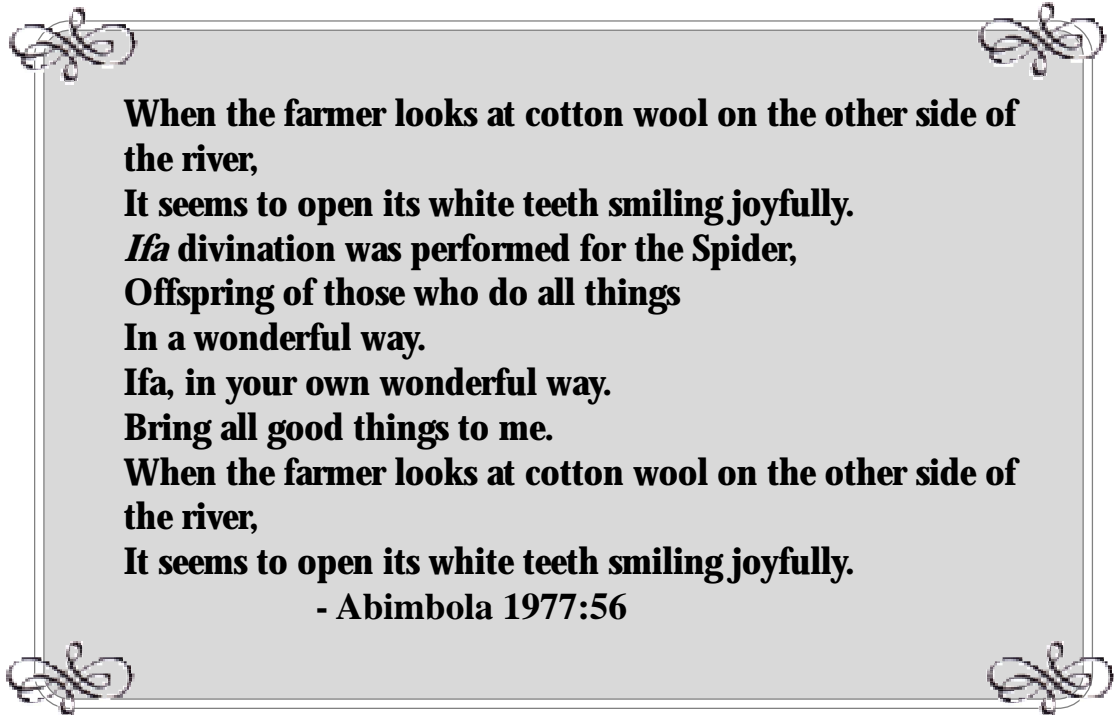


Above: A traditional African loom used to create Kente cloth. *Below:* Strips of Kente cloth are combined to produce a larger cloth; however a strips can also be worn as scarf



A Yoruba *Ifa* Poem

This poem compares a weaver to a spider. It reaffirms the idea of the supernatural involvement in the weaving of cloth, thus indicating the importance of the substance of the cloth being in harmony with the cloth designer - the weaver. It seems to suggest that the weaver must be able to dwell peacefully with the earth and the other “worlds” and the supernatural in order for the creation to turn out all right.



The Study of African Cloth in the Classroom

(1) Show and Tell.

There are many places a teacher can order traditional and modern African cloth to share with the class. There is nothing like the experience of actually being able to see, touch and wear African cloth. Order cloth from many different areas to illustrate the great variety in African dress. If the teacher cannot get the actual cloths, at least show illustrations —photographs and/or drawing of them and how they are worn.

(2) Discuss the Cloths.

Where each cloth was from, its function, and who would wear it - male, female, child, etc.

(3) Art Project.

Use some of the methods described. For example, do an Adinkra stamp project, tie and die T-shirts, or weave a simple shawl.

Yoruba words for different cloth and cloth decoration methods:

<i>adire</i>	cloth dyed in indigo
<i>adire eleko</i>	cloth painted with cassava starch
<i>adire eleso</i>	tie and dye
<i>adire eleko</i>	brush boutique
<i>adire</i>	cloth dyeing

Useful References Regarding African Textile

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- Spring, Christopher & Julie Hudson. *North African Textiles*, Smithsonian Press, Washington D.C. 1995.
- Stoltz Gilfoy, Peggy. *Patterns of Life - West African Strip-Weaving Traditions*. National Museum of African Art.
- Picton, John & John Mack. *African Textiles*, 1989.
- The Art of African Fashion*. Prince Claus Fund/ African World Press. 1998.
- Spring, Christopher. *The Treasury of Decorative Art - African Textiles*. Moyer Press. 1997.

Sources of African Fabric

- Afritex
350 7th Avenue, Suite 1701
New York, NY 10001
888-9AFRITEX
e-mail: info@afritex.com
- As-Hro Fabrics
2748 Wisconsin Street
Downers Grove, IL 60515
800-532-7476
- G Street Fabrics
Mail Order Service
12240 Wilkins Avenue
Rockville, MD 20852
800-333-9191
- Harlem Market
116 Street
New York, NY 10035
212-534-3377
- Harlem Textile Works
186 East 122 Street
New York, NY 10035
212-534-3377

Homeland Authentics
122 West 27th Street
New York, NY 10001
800-AFRICAN

Tunde Dada House of Africa
356 Main Street
Orange, NJ 07050-2703
973-673-4446

African Internet and Catalogue Resources

Adire African Textiles Gallery
www.adire.clara.net
e-mail: duncan@adire.clara.net

African Crafts On-line
www.africancrafts.com

African American Shopping Mall
www.aasm.com

African Fabrics.com
www.africanfabrics.com
770-996-3106

Gold Coast Africa
www.goldcoastafrica.com
800-818-5136

Kente Cloth Festival
www.kente.net
212-481-2481

Tunde Dada House of Africa
www.tundedada.com

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Adire Cloth: Yoruba Art Textile

By James Miller



The Yoruba people of West Africa are a people that have maintained a rich artistic tradition and creative genius for centuries. Wood sculpture, basket weaving, ceramics, weaving, iron works and leather works, are just some of the art forms the Yoruba produce in their society to express their values and beliefs.

This lesson focuses on a tie-dye resist technique called Adire Aleko.

Adire cloth is an art form produced by the women of Yoruba. Cloth is an important aspect of Yoruba and West African culture. Different Cloths convey messages, express feelings and convey prestige and wealth. The Yoruba ethnic group can be found in Nigeria, Togo and Benin so *Adire* can be found in different countries in West Africa.

There are two types of *Adire* cloth. *Adire Aleko* is a resist technique using cassava paste with flower and water. Feather quills or hard wooden sticks are used to create the different motifs and patterns seen on finished products.

Sometimes metal stencils are also used to create designs. One can also use hard stencils such as leather or cardboard if that is easier for the students.



Traditional Adire cloth comes in two's and is 2 1/2 yards long for each cloth. It is sown together to make one cloth.

Adire Oniko is a resist technique using raffia or string. The knots can create small delicate dotting patterns. Some can be large (*Alekete*) or very tiny depending on the width of your knot (*Olosupa*). For the sake of time, however, I have chosen to use *Adire Aleko*.

Each cloth design or motif has a name.

The same way Western artists give titles to convey a meaning or emotions, *Yoruba* artists do the same for their art. The names are expected to start a pleasant train of thought in the mind of the beholder. Names of popular cloths:

Life is Sweet

All the Birds are Here

Carefully Done by Hand

Four Friends Who Should Know What to Do

Three Coins are Scattered Around the Room

Activity

Ask your class to think of some things that make them feel good and turn them into titles.

Art Criticism

Show a cloth you have produced or an authentic cloth made by the Yoruba.

Discuss the patterns/motifs and their meaning and message the artist was trying to express.

Perhaps there is a story behind the cloth?

Can you identify the shapes?

How many squares are there on this cloth?

Are certain numbers important to the Yoruba people?

Art Aesthetics

Indicate to the students the art principles utilized in the cloth. Balance, for example, is an important principle in Yoruba art. Squares are used so often because it promotes balance for the framework of the piece.

The Yoruba say...

**“The pot that is as wide as it is high
does not fall and spill the soup.”**

In general, patterns are an important aspect of African art. A thought or concept is symbolized by the shapes in the artwork. Ask your students how they see shapes function in American society. Shapes repeated over again not only become decorative but also represent the importance of tradition in Yoruba society.

Sometimes the cloths can tell a story in history or commemorate an event in someone's life or in the society; for example, the birth of a child, the creation of the world or the crowning of a king. Ask your students about some important times in their life they could express on their cloth.

Crisscross designs in Yoruba art represent the coming together of all things. All things are not the same, but in life they will meet.



Some cloths tell a story in African societies.

Assessment

Create a procedure board so your students can follow along with each step. Ask them questions to help them understand the process.

Materials

- ◆ 2 cloths of 2 1/2 yards each.
- ◆ Corn starch resist: Corn starch, flour, alum.
- ◆ Rubber bands, string, or raffia.
- ◆ Hand tools: feather quills, wooden sticks, or popsicle sticks.
- ◆ Indigo dye or any dark blue dye.

Procedure

1. Spread cloth out on even surface.
2. Create a stencil or do a free hand approach.
3. Let paste dry completely.
4. Dip in dye. Traditionally they dip in the dye 3 times and use cold water.
5. When the dye is dry, wash off starch. For a traditional look re-dip one more time to soften the contrasts. Put salt in the dye or in the vinegar.
6. Once they are dry, sew the two cloths together. Ashe! Your cloth is ready to wear or simply display.



GLOSSARY

African Diaspora. Any part of the world where Africans or descendants of Africans live.

Calabash. An African gourd.

Cassava. A starchy African tuber.

Motif. A recurring prominent element in a work of art.

Prestige goods. Objects, which represent wealth, symbolically or literally. The ownership of these is restricted to very wealthy and/or powerful people.

Resist-dyeing. Any dyeing technique in which the cloth is prepared in some way so that the dye reaches some parts of the fabric and not others. This can be done through knotting or direct application of a wax or paste.

Adire Oniko. *Adire* cloth stitched with Raffia.

Adire Eleko. Painting or stenciling designs on the cloth with starch.

ALekete. Small circles within a spiral.

Olosup-Eleso. Large circles in shape of moons and fruits.

Adire. To take or to tie.

Raffia. The leaf fibers of the palm tree. Yoruba women use the raffia as thread for the *Adire* cloth.

REFERENCES

African Fabric Crafts by Dendel.

Flash of the Spirit by Robert Farris Thompson.

The Yoruba Artist by Drewal, Abiodun, and Pimborton.

RESOURCES

Videos, slides of *Adire*, a map of Africa, African cloths.

Invite guest speaker or storyteller to come and speak about African Art.

Different Types of Instruments in Africa

By Ebony Young

There are many types of instruments used in African music including rattles, bow harp, drums, flute, tambourine, thumb piano and the xylophone.

Many types of drums covered in leather skin are found. Different wind instruments used include flutes made from bamboo and animal horns. Body percussion is very popular especially hand clapping and foot stomping. Gourds are played with dried roots and shells attached to make noise when shaken.

Traditional music and dance is still practiced, but it is decreasing because of urbanization. Preservation of traditional music is given special attention in many of the countries because of its historical, political and cultural importance.



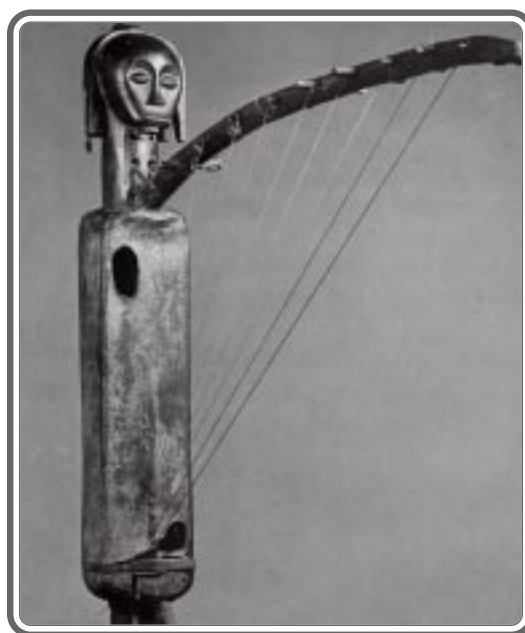
Decorated Africa drum.

Objective:

Children will be able to recognize different types of instruments in traditional African music.

Procedure:

1. Ask each student to clap their hands and stomp their feet. Explain to the students that in Africa the clapping of the hands and the stomping feet is a very popular way of making music. Also explain to them that music is a language, just like spoken words form a language.
2. Listen to different types of African instruments.
3. Have them name the instruments that they had just heard.
4. Have the students make their own African instruments and make their own music. Sing this song with them at the beginning and the end of the day:



Wooden harps are just one of the many string instruments found in Africa.

Q: How do you spell Africa?

A: A-F-R-I-C-A.

Q: What's the second largest continent in the world, the whole wide world?

A: Africa is the second largest continent in the world, the whole wide world.

Q: How many parts to Africa?

A: There are four parts to Africa. North Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa and East Africa.

Geometric Design in Angolan Pottery

By Kelly Verner



Angola and Its Arts

- ♦ Angola is located in the southwestern part of Africa.
- ♦ It gained independence from Portugal in 1975.
- ♦ Many different languages are spoken, but the official language is Portuguese.
- ♦ Traditional African religions are practiced, as well as Christianity.
- ♦ Angolan artists work with wood, bronze, ivory, stone, and ceramics.
- ♦ Ethnic groups have their own unique art.
- ♦ Before the late 1980's, the selling of arts and crafts was controlled by "Artiang," which was an arm of the Ministry of Culture. This monopoly has ended, and the art world of Angola has blossomed.
- ♦ The capital city, Luanda, has a population of 2 million and has an artists' market every Sunday.

Objectives

1. The student will create a decorated pot in the style found in Southwest Angola.
2. The student will gain background knowledge about the people of Angola.
3. The student will demonstrate an understanding of radial symmetry in the *oku-taleka* patterns.

Materials

clay, potters tools and wheel, pencils, brushes, paint, ink or glaze.

Procedure

1. Go over the facts about Angola and its people. Visit www.angola.org. It is maintained by the embassy of the Republic of Angola in the United States and contains a wide variety of information about arts and culture, as well as maps, newspa-

pers, stamps and much more.

2. Show students the five traditional shapes of Southern African earthenware. Discuss possible uses for the various shapes.

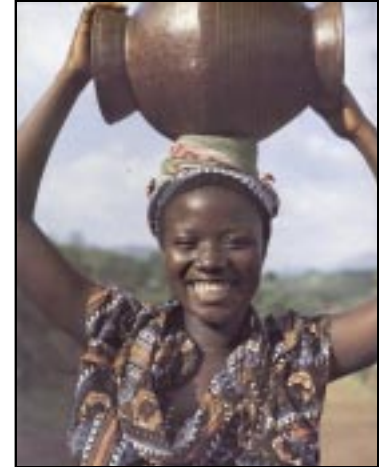
3. Ask the students to choose a shape and attempt to form it using the wheel. If no wheel is available, the coil method is a possibility.

4. Once the pieces have been fired, have the students choose one of the six patterns used by the Nyaneka-Humbe women in southwestern Angola.

5. Explain that these designs are called, "*oku-taleka*", which means, 'the drawings have to be looked at, or seen'. These patterns demonstrate radial symmetry.

6. Have the students lightly draw (carefully and slowly) the design on the neck or upper part of the pot. This is where the women in Angola draw the designs.

7. Fill in the design with paint, ink, or glaze. Fire as necessary.



Togo clay pot decorated with fine lines.

Evaluation

The student will be able to demonstrate an ability to create the geometric patterns on the ware and have a basic understanding of Angolan pottery design.

Reference: Gerdes, Paulus. *Women, Art, and Geometry in Southern Africa*. Africa World Press, Inc. Trenton, N.J. 1998.

Kenyan Folklore and Art

By Dorian Thrailkill



Objectives

1. The children will be able to find Kenya in Africa on the world map.
2. Children will learn that oral literature preceded written literature and is a beautiful part of Kenya's and Africa's rich tradition.
3. Children will be able to identify the seven continents and understand that Africa is the second largest continent with 54 countries.
4. Read *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain*.

Materials

1. *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain* by Verna Aardema: Dial Books for Young Readers. New York, 1981.
2. A world map and a globe.
3. Overhead transparency depicting the other countries that would fit into Africa and transparency showing Africa's individual countries.

Procedures

Discuss with children the fact that Kenya's many ethnic groups have a well developed and sophisticated folklore which embodies their history, traditions and wisdom. Their legends recount the movement of people to and from the rift valley into the highlands, the grasslands and the lake regions.

Famous historical figures are represented in myths and legends. Myths include accounts of how cattle were given to a certain people by God. Folk tales try to answer etymological questions, such as why the hyena has a limp. In many Kenyan cultures, the message that men would not die was given to a chameleon, but he was so slow that a bird got to man before him and gave them the message.

Folk tales also recount the adventures of tricksters. In Kenya, tricksters are usually the hare or the tortoise. The ogre is another popular

evil character in many Kenyan folk tales.

Ask the children if we have similar folklore. They may be familiar with Paul Bunyon and can recount and compare some of our folklore. Ask the children if they think people in other parts of the world act like, dress like, eat like, or talk like they do. When they say "No", ask them if they know where Africa is.



Teachers should also emphasize that Africa has a well developed urban life. This is the National Bank of Kenya in Nairobi.

Make a chart stating what we already know about Africa, what we want to learn and then a blank column for what we have learned to be used last. Have children point to a world map and or the globe to show where Africa is. If they don't know where it is, show them and tell them that they are going to learn about a man who lives in Kenya, Africa (Locate Kenya on the map), and they're going to learn about the way he lives, and how it might be different or the same from the way they live.

Read and discuss *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti Plain*. Discuss the book with the children, asking them questions about Kenya and the Nandi people so they'll have a better understanding of Ki-pat and his way of life.

Information and Suggested Questions

- Why do you think the book is called *Bringing the Rain to Kapiti To Plain*?
- What do you think the man is doing?
- Now he made a bow, let's predict what he is going to do with the bow and arrow.
- Do you think these animals (giraffes, antelope) are afraid of the man?
- What kind of a place do you think they are in? Do they have little rain or abundant rain? Why do you think this? There could be varied answers, but it is hot for part of the year and wet the other part.
- Kenya is located on the East coast of Africa and the equator runs through the middle of it. Kenya is considered a tropical area because it is hot and humid. There are sand beaches, lagoons, rain forests, and swamps. The average temperature is 80 degrees all year long. Most (3/4) of Kenya consists of plains. It's very dry and the soil isn't very good for farming. The plains receive about ten to thirty inches of rainfall each year.

- There aren't any major cities there, but nomads travel throughout the land tending their flocks. There is a highland area in the Southwest that receives enough rainfall (40 to 50 inches a year) and has enough good soil to support farming. The majority of the people live here. There are forests and grasslands. Nairobi, the capital city, is located in the highland area.

- Have one or two children show where Kenya is on the map, and have the other children tell them if they are correct.

- Tell the children that they have learned about the plains in Kenya and the people who raise animals. Have them draw what they think the plains look like and what the people look like watching their animals.

- Ask the children if they think it is important to learn about other people. Yes! So that we can know that we are different but also have things in common.

Q. What is an acacia tree?

A. The tree on the cover of the book; any of a genus of trees or shrubs of the pea family, having finely divided leaves and growing in tropical or warm regions. (Scott, Foresman Advanced Dictionary, 1988).

Q. Which animal in the picture is an animal that might eat the others?

A. The leopard.

Q. Is this similar to where we live?

A. Discuss the plains and the highlands of Kenya, and discuss that not all places in Kenya look like this picture because there are beaches, swamps, etc.

Q. What is it called when it rains and rains and rains?

A. The Monsoon season.

Q. What are these animals?

A. The wildlife in Kenya is diverse. There are elephants, giraffes, lions, rhinoceroses, zebras, antelopes, buffalos, cheetahs, leopards, crocodiles, eagles, land ostriches, storks.

Q. In this picture it is very dry, what is it called when an area doesn't have water and it is very dry?

A. Drought. Most of the people in Kenya live in rural areas, but many people go to the cities every year. The people in rural areas farm and raise livestock. Some people live as nomads, and they travel the land with their herds to find food and water. The Nandi people are an example of a nomad group. They live in Western Kenya, in the plains, and they keep cattle, sheep, and goats as their way of life.

Q. What types of clothes do people in Kenya wear?

A. Most of the men in Kenya wear cotton shirts and pants or shorts, but many wear business suits. Most women wear cotton dresses or skirts and blouses and business suits. Some people that live in rural areas wear cloth that they wrap around their bodies. The nomads are especially known for this.

Q. What do you think Ki-pat will do with the arrow he made?

A. The children could give any answer, but according to the folk tale, he is going to shoot the cloud to make it rain.

Q. Is it really possible to shoot an arrow at a cloud to make it rain?

A. No.

Q. Is it okay to pretend in this story?

A. Yes!

Q. Look at the houses they live in. What do you think they're made of?

A. Most rural people live in small houses made of mud and wood. Cities have modern houses and buildings made of stone and cement.

Q. Do you think this a real story, why or why not?

A. No, because you can't shoot a cloud to make it rain.

Q. Why do people tell these stories, what is their purpose?

A. To explain things that occur around them.

Q. Do we do this?

A. Yes, we do sometimes. Even though Ki-pat lived far away from where we live now, and we are very different, we also have some things that are the same.

Evaluation

- Ask one or two children to point to the map and show where Kenya is. Have the other children correct or agree with the helpers.
- Assess the accuracy of the children's drawings.
- Finish chart stating the things they have learned about Africa.

Follow-up Activity

Divide students into four groups. Ask each group to choose a country that interests them from one of the major regions of Africa and make a report on that country.

Culminating Activity

Have parents prepare a few simple African dishes and help children dress in traditional clothing. Invite parents to come and listen to students present their group projects and serve African food that has been prepared. Enjoy and have fun!

Government: Understanding the African Political Situation

..... By Robert W. Wendt



Africa has seen many magnificent civilizations in its long past. Ancient Egypt, Ethiopia, Mali and Songhai are some of the mighty kingdoms that have existed on this continent. Africans have a strong heritage and diverse cultures, but this did not save them from the Europeans. Technology would be their undoing. Africans did not have the weapons that the Europeans possessed. The slave trade depopulated many areas of Africa, uprooting millions of Africans who were forced to go as slaves to North and South America.

Colonial Powers Emerge

Though Europeans had established some colonies in Africa, it was at the Berlin Conference where they decided to settle the scramble for African territory. The 1880's were viewed as the critical period during the age of Imperialism (empire-building, domination of a people politically, economically and militarily). Once acquired, the colonies were to be sources of raw materials and markets for the colonizers' manufactured goods. Cash crops like rubber and cocoa were to be grown for the colonial power at the expense of food crops needed for the African population's survival. The conquered people and their cultures were looked upon as inferior by the colonial power whose mission it was to civilize and Christianize them.

Trade took place between the colonial power and its colonies. The colonies were not allowed to trade with former neighbors who were under the control of another colonizing power. The boundaries these colonial powers drew were in no way logical. The lines divided ethnic groups in half or included groups that were hostile to one another. This played into the

hands of the Europeans who practiced divide and conquer tactics where they would favor one group, usually a minority, over the others. Recently, this hatred played out in Rwanda between the Tutsi and Hutus ethnic groups resulted in genocide.

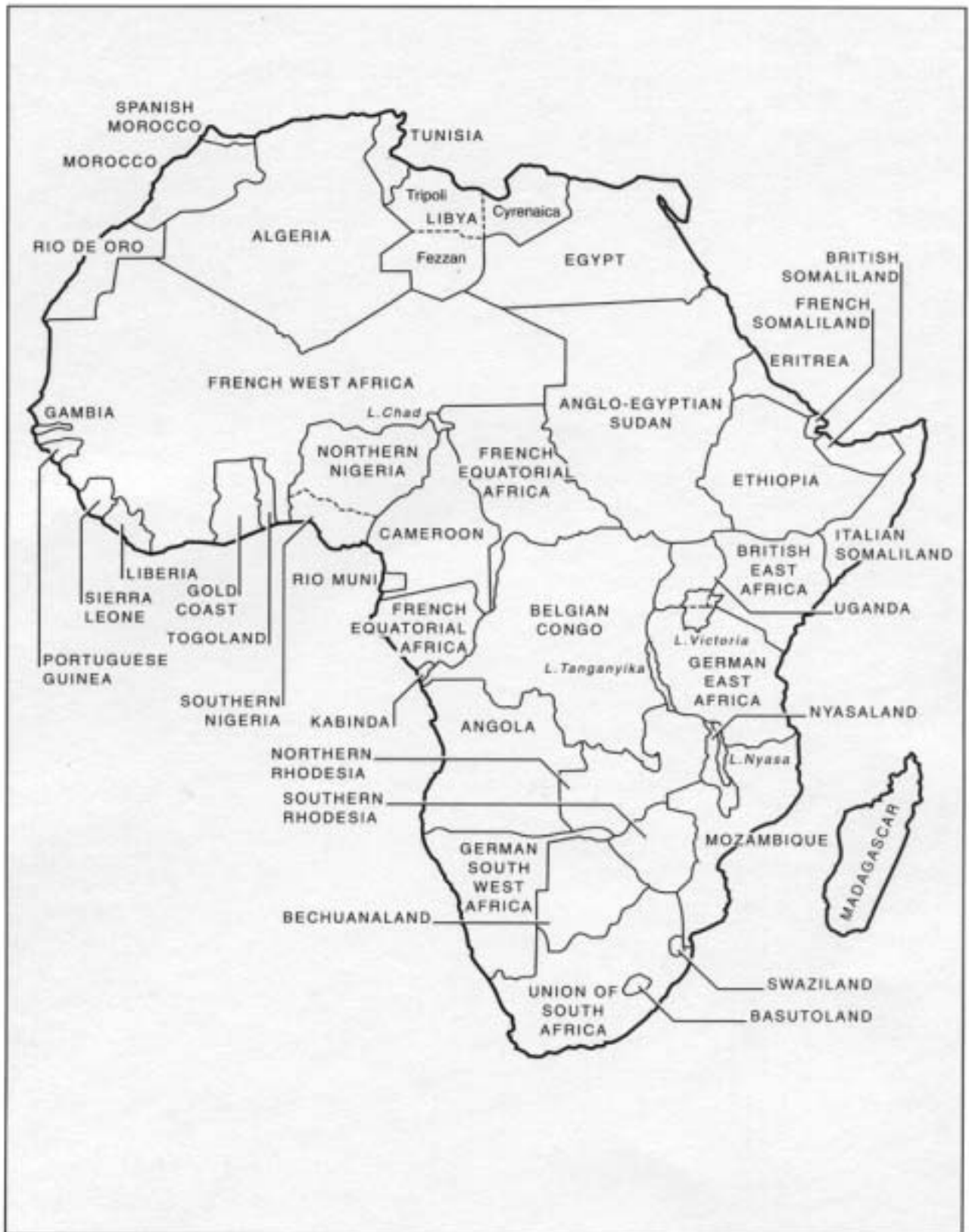
A Conqueror's Rule

The British were the most liberal of the Imperialists and ruled both directly or through traditional rulers who were subject to the crown. Although the British territory was much richer in mineral and agricultural wealth, the French had the largest empire in Africa. The French followed a policy of assimilation in which everyone was forced to adopt the French culture.

Belgian rule followed the principle of paternalism where it was the personal property of the king. Their rule, as well as the Portuguese rule, was the most harsh for the Africans who were forced to labor for their conquerors or suffer mutilation. Unlike the British or French, the Belgians did nothing for education or infrastructure like roads and railroads. When they left, after the Congo had gained its independence, there were less than 50 college graduates in the entire country and only 15 doctors.

The Spanish, Germans, and Italians had colonies in Africa as well. However, Germany lost her colonies because of her defeat in World War I. Only two African countries, Liberia and Ethiopia, escaped this age of colonization. Liberia had been settled by ex-slaves from the United States and Ethiopia which had been a Christian kingdom since the days of the Roman Empire. However, Italy did try to conquer Ethiopia near the start of World War II.

COLONIAL BORDERS 1914



Fighting for Independence

Colonial rule in Africa ended in three waves, the first being in the 1960's with the British, French and Belgians giving independence to their possessions. Most countries gained their independence without much bloodshed; however, there were exceptions such as in Algeria where the French came to regard it as a piece of France.

The second wave came in the 1970's with the end of Portuguese rule in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau. South Africa, Zimbabwe and Namibia round out the countries that gained independence in the 1980's and 1990's. South Africa ended its policy of apartheid in 1994. This policy made Africans second class citizens in the country where they were in the majority. Nelson Mandela, who had been detained for 27 years, was elected as the first black president.

Colonial rule had been authoritarian and most colonial powers left artificial institutions such as a national constitution and a parliamentary democracy which people were not acquainted with. The new governments believed they would eliminate poverty, banish illiteracy and reduce the population growth and disease. In handing over the political institutions, the former colonial powers maintained a controlling interest in each country's economics. Without this basis, the new governments were bound to fail. Also, new countries were left with the artificial colonial boundaries. These boundaries were given meaning by the OAU or the Organization of African Unity in 1963 when its members agreed not to interfere in the internal affairs of another neighbor and to respect all colonial boundaries.

Most multiparty systems gave way to one party rule. In some countries, they were overthrown by military coups. The new rulers would do no better than their civilian counterparts they had replaced. In Nigeria, for example, since its independence in 1960, there have been 28 years of military rule. In some cases, military rule gave way to tyranny and reigns of terror as under Idi Amin in Uganda. Some countries

survived this political trend, including Botswana which maintained its parliamentary multiparty structure since the time of its independence until today. By the 1980's, 60 percent of African countries had been under military rule.

The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union did much to keep this political trend toward dictators in place. As each power sought to attract allies to their ideology, it gave its strong men financial aid that reinforced misgovernment instead of political and economic reform. The United States was guilty of keeping Zaire's dictator, Mobutu Seko, in power under this practice. He looted the country of money that should have gone into the societal system of that country. The Congo, as it was renamed, is today in danger of disintegrating as a state just the way Somalia did on the Horn of Africa, which the United States and the United Nations tried to prevent before withdrawing in failure in the 1990's.

Sometimes the African states played one side against the other as Egypt did when the Soviet Union built for it the Aswan Dam, and later, after the Soviet Union had been kicked out, the United States rewarded Egypt with millions of dollars in aid for making peace with Israel. Angola became a pawn in the 1970's where the United States and the Soviet Union fought a proxy war. The Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) was backed by Cuban troops acting for the Soviet Union. The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) was backed by the United States. This civil war is yet to be resolved.

Economic and Social Troubles

From the period of the 1960's to the latter part of the 1980's, many African countries slipped deeper into debt that robbed them of needed capital of improvements in the infrastructure, education and health services. The dream that had accompanied independence had not become reality for a number of reasons. Sub-Sahara Africa had become the poorest region on earth. Standards of living had fallen nearly 25 percent since 1960. Things began to

change with the end of the Cold War.

In the 1990's, there has been some very nasty conflicts: the 1994 genocide in Rwanda involving the Tutsi and Hutus ethnic group; the religious war between the Muslims and Christians in Sudan over the imposition of the Islamic penal code; the continuing struggle in Angola between the MPLA and the UNITA; and the crisis in the Congo involving neighboring African states.

Africa has made progress in both the economic and political areas. The push for change has come largely from the people who are demanding better lives and an end to tyranny, corruption and respect for human rights.

A Changing Political Arena

Political observers have been encouraging with 34 African countries having held multiparty elections since 1996. During this era, the economic giant of Africa, South Africa overthrew white minority rule establishing by election Nelson Mandela as its first African President. Already there has been a peaceful transfer of power between Mandela and Mbeki who became the next elected president Thabo.

In Nigeria after the military government scrapped the results of the 1993 presidential election, the military government stepped down in 1999 allowing elections, which restored civilian government to that country. The United States hoped for this development because Nigeria is its 2nd largest supplier of oil. Obasanjo, the newly elected leader, will have much to do trying to keep its over 250 ethnic groups from fighting and ensuring that all the groups get a share of the oil revenues which has been a source of conflict in the past. For this huge country to try the democratic model is indeed encouraging for all of Africa.

Democracy seems to be making a comeback, though problems such as freedom of the press, the development of opposition parties access to the government media, voter fraud, and respect for human rights must still be addressed.

The United States, under the Clinton administration did a better job of talking about

Africa in terms of partnership rather than as the superpower dictating to its client state; however, it failed to address the genocide in Rwanda. Aid to Africa actually fell from \$826 million in 1991 to \$689 million in 1997. This was partly due to the Republican-dominated Congress that did not share the administration's views on a number of issues. One of its key pieces of legislation, the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which will allow African goods to enter the United States duty free and replace aid with trade is still bottled up in Congress as well as an initiative to cancel all \$4.5 billion in African debts to the United States. Another Clinton initiative was the African Crisis Response Initiative, which is a force composed of several Africans being trained and financed by the United States for the purpose of intervening in conflicts when the need arises. Once again the United States must be aware of being labeled Imperialist if it goes too far with any interventions, not that interventions involving United States troops will occur in light of the United States failure to restore Somalia to a working government. For Africa, the future is filled with much hope, but also uncertainty. The United States was not consolidated as a nation until after it had fought a civil war.

Activity 1

On a current map of Africa put the colonizing power's name next to the country it occupied - Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal, Germany, Italy, and Spain. [Refer to Colonization map.]

Activity 2

How would you redraw the boundaries of these countries to reflect political realities? [Refer to current map of Africa in this issue.]

Activity 3

Find the hidden African countries on page 40.

FIND THE HIDDEN AFRICAN COUNTRIES

C O N G O S I E R R A L E O N E C H A D B S D
R P M T M X Z A N G O L A G H A N A L H U A U
K E N Y A L A U P U L I O N Y A P E G T R O R
D S Y O U M I X R I H I P P O P O T E M U T K
K U T H R G R B G N I G E G Y P T H R A N O I
N D A R I A E P Y E D J I B O U T I I U D M N
U A P A T B L N O A R M Y E N A S O A R I E A
L N M T A O T A D M A Y O T T E W P S I A A F
I R O B N N N I G E R U G A N D A I O T I N A
B E E T I A T I G R G A M B I A Z A U I V D S
E A T N A T U N I S I A F A S O I G T U O P O
R E U N I O N M O R O C C O T R L O H S R R N
I M G U I N E A B I S S A U A Y A R A C Y I A
A L E M U R C A M E R O O N F X N I F A C N M
W E S T E R N S A H A R A C R O D L R M O C I
T M A Z I M B A B W E N Z O I T R L I E A I B
O N S E N E G A L O R T E M C U P A C L S P I
G B O T S W A N A O W I B O L I B Y A M T E A
O C M A D A G A S C A R R R N Z A M B I A Z E
S E Y C H E L L E S N T A O G S O M A L I A E
N O T A N Z A M I A D L E S O T H O L X I N N
N I G E R I A M O Z A M B I Q U E M A L I C I
E Q U A T O R I A L G U I N E A M A L A W I N
C E N T R A L A F R I C A N R E P U B L I C O